

Opinion

Planning Update

with Margaret Howell
Chair of the Group

Battle Neighbourhood Plan
Your monthly update

Battle Neighbourhood Plan

It seems a long time since 2015, when the decision to commence the Battle Civil Parish Neighbourhood Plan was initiated, by the late Councillor Richard Jessop.

The first meeting was in July 2015, with ten members, a professional consultant and Richard Jessop as the chairman.

By January 2017 Maurice Holmes took over the role of Chair and the consultant had long departed.

It took until October 2017 for our present consultant, Donna Moles of Moles Consultancy to agree to prepare the various submissions that need to be presented. Prior to that, two further consultants had agreed to come on board but pulled out.

By April 2018, Maurice had been replaced by Councillor Andrew Brown as Chair, to be followed in July by Councillor Andrew Ratchliffe. I took over from Andrew in April, whilst I was still a Councillor. I subsequently opted not to stand again for another four years, as I could see a heavy workload approaching.

The entire group, which at the moment has eight members, (although one is



technically an advisor), are unpaid volunteers. Some have full time jobs, or part time ones. Three councillors attend Council meetings once a month, as well as any committees to which they might be seconded.. This could be an additional two committees, as well as working groups for

specific project.

Our advisor has been scrupulous in preparing the local green spaces document. He was helped by a past member, (who worked full time) in walking the footpaths, and roadways, listing all the trees. He also checks the Rother District

Council website and completes mapping, with the help of another member. Another colleague deals with any issues relating to site selection, the deputy chairman keeps the website up to date, another councillor prepared historic details, and another one who also works full time, is listing our engagements with the public.

It took some time for the sheer complexity of formulating a Neighbourhood Plan to emerge. The original brief was set out in the Localism Act of 2011 and has seen many changes since then.

Preparation of the Plan involves a great deal of research, particularly as Battle Civil Parish is the largest within Rother District Council. New skills have had to be developed, and we have all learned a lot about the National Planning Policy Framework.

An essential task is to engage with the community, and for this, we have our website: battleneighbourhoodplan.co.uk. our facebook page: [facebook.com/BattleNeighbourhoodPlan](https://www.facebook.com/BattleNeighbourhoodPlan) or for general enquiries, use "enquiries @ battleneighbourhoodplan.co.uk