

Work on our Neighbourhood Plan is well underway. When finished, it will become part of the Borough Council's Local Plan. Our plan's resultant planning policies will be used in the determination of planning applications in the parish. These policies cannot block development that are already part of the Borough's Local Plan. But they can shape where development will go and what it will look like. So, it is important that the local community gets involved and has its say.

Feria Urbanism, our independent consultants, visited on January 18 and 19 for the first formal meeting. Over the two days, they met with me and other members of the Steering Group. They also toured the area, including visiting several possible development sites that were submitted to the Borough Council's Call For Sites .

There will be several community events which will help shape the outline and develop the contents of the Plan. Invitations have been sent to local organizations and businesses; however, the events will be open to anyone connected to the parish. Numbers for some of the Engagement Events will be limited so if you wish to attend a session please reserve your place, using the contact details given below. The evening sessions of the Community Design Forum will be open to all members of the community.

The Engagement Events will help local people and groups develop and share their ideas for the future development of the parish. Feria will also explain the wider Neighbourhood Plan process. The subsequent three-day Design Forum will use the ideas from the Visioning Engagement Events. There will be short presentations from local organizations, and businesses – and from other stakeholders, including landowners and property developers.

COMMUNITY DESIGN FORUM FINAL PRESENTATION

Thursday 22 March
Matfield Village Hall
7.30pm

Join us for a presentation of the
outcomes from the Forum

Outside groups have also been invited as observers including neighbouring parishes (four of whom are themselves preparing the own Neighbourhood Plan); Borough and County Councillors; High Weald AONB; and Kent High Weald Partnership.

Details of how this aspect of the Forum will operate will be available via the contact details given below and on the parish website .

To finance these events, we have secured a grant of £7,000 from a Central Government fund. Further funds from that source are likely to be available in the next financial year. The parish council has set aside £3,000 for this financial year. A further £16,000 is in the budget for next year; this has been taken from reserves, to avoid any call on the precept.

To co-ordinate the development of the Plan, the Interim Steering Group has been formally constituted. Its Terms of Reference were endorsed by the parish council on January 5 and adopted by the Group itself on January 22; they will be posted on the parish website, and on the Neighbourhood Plan's website, when it is up-and-running.

Currently the Steering Group has twelve members, including three parish councillors*: Liz Akenhead; Jane Buckley Sander; Lynne Butler*; Ian Clear; Simon Galwey; David Goodridge; Rory Foster; Simon O'Donnell; Tina Middleton; Kevin Sparkhall*; and Paul Spedding. I am acting as Interim Chair, a position it is

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hoped can be taken by someone who is not a parish councillor. More volunteers are needed to support this project and, from time to time, the Steering Group will advertise for help with specific activities.

The Steering Group aims to meet at least monthly; agendas and minutes will be published on the website already mentioned. Whilst it is not intended that meetings will be held in public, anyone wishing to attend would be welcomed as an observer. Queries about items on the agenda, or about the minutes, will always receive a reply.

The decision to appoint Feria Urbanism was based on the leadership they will bring to the project, their experience, and their track record. Despite the 'urbanism' of their name they do have a very good grasp of the needs of a rural community. The parish council is confident they will deliver a bespoke plan, designed specifically for Brenchley and Matfield.

You can play your part to keep things moving, either through your community group, or as an individual, by supporting the engagement events. If you belong to a group, please contact your representatives to check that they have received an invitation to the engagement events; if you are a representative of a group, please reply to the invitation.

Chris Woodley

Contacting the Steering Group: email: BandMNP@gmail.com or contact one of the members.

Further information;

Feria: <http://www.feria-urbanism.eu/>

TW Local Plan: <http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/residents/planning/planning-policy/new-local-plan>

Parish Council: <http://www.brenchleyand->

matfield.co.uk/content/parish-council

