

**Neighbourhood Development Plan Witherley Parish
Minutes of the meeting of the Steering group Thursday 19 September 2019
Ratcliffe Culey Church**

Present: Kay Conway (Chair), Dave Wilkins, Brian Conway, Dayle Flude, Laura Dyer, Maureen Cook.

Apologies : Derek Ridgway, Helen Bullivant, Mark Simpson

1. Declaration of interests

None declared.

2. Past Minutes

Minutes from 13 August agreed.

Matters arising

- Fran Belcher from HBBC wasn't able to attend tonight's steering group meeting but she would be very happy to set up a specific meeting to discuss progress. KC to action. Group discussed the role HBBC could/should be taking and whether we should be having more contact with HBBC. MC highlighted that we did receive the early stage support from LRCC and they are contracted by HBBC to provide that support. HBBC doesn't engage until the plan is fairly fully developed, so now is the time to be making contact and getting their advice and input.
- Housing assessments that need the input from Environment group have been passed by Barry Smith (Chair of Housing group) to Helen Bullivant. DW to check that the group has all the information needed to complete the relevant sections.

3. Theme group updates

Environment group

Ecologist Dave Nichols gave a presentation at the last meeting on the work to date he has carried out, surveying the selected areas of the Parish. Within his final report he will highlight those areas that are of higher quality for our parish. Of particular merit is the Gravel Hole area by the bridge in Ratcliffe, which he suggested could become a nature reserve. Some willow whips been planted there but, following a request from the Environment group, the Parish Council have ordered that they should be removed as this could affect the biodiversity of the area. The group is also looking at the green corridor around the rivers and has concluded that we need to protect them for both separation reasons (between Witherley & Atherstone to stop urban sprawl) and to protect biodiversity. Environment group to check with John Martin whether we could stipulate our desire for a protected green corridor for whole of the river area in the neighbourhood plan. There was some discussion about the fact that most of the area around the river is in the green belt so we would want to protect all of it from development, not just the land surrounding the river. We noted, however, that we may be able to give even greater protection for the river corridor. Environment group to explore with John Martin. HB sending all the data to John Martin which he will then process into the format for the report. DW to contact John Martin from YL to check progress on policies and how we are doing on the timetable and estimated date for completion

Housing group

Meeting last week cancelled due to IT challenges. Next meeting on 24th September. The Group has taken the different sites which came through the Parish Council's call plus the SHELAA sites, and has undertaken draft assessments. Specific questions relating to landscape and visual impact, important trees and hedgerows, biodiversity and ancient monuments, have, as noted in

matters arising, also been passed to the Environment Group to review the relevant questions and grade according to the scoring matrix provided. DW to check that the group has all of the information/maps etc to answer the questions and will contact Barry Smith if not. The draft assessments undertaken by the group will be quality assured and checked by Derek Doran, the YL specialist.

Design guide – first draft in place but needs more work. LD to do some further editing this weekend and will then circulate to whole of the steering group. LD also highlighted that once we do identify sites we can do more work on planning for the type of buildings, building locations within the sites and materials used etc

Facilities/services & transport group

Last meeting was held on 23rd August. Group have done a first draft of their chapter which has gone to Gary Kirk. He suggested it needs some further work and incorporation of relevant policies.

KC to circulate to the whole of the steering group the updated draft Heritage List for Witherley Parish prepared by the Conservation Officer of HBBC. The list is prepared according to strict criteria so if we identify additional areas for consideration they will have to be agreed by HBBC's Conservation Officer. DF has identified lots of fascinating history which could provide a really useful archive and information for the history of the parish. This information could also help support some of the proposed community actions that could emerge in the draft plan.

There was some discussion during the updates about how the groups interlink, the danger of disconnect and the need for transparency. We again reiterated, and everyone agreed, that none of the groups is making decisions and all have a vital role to play to develop the NDP. The groups are considering specific information, working up proposals and drafting information relevant to the focus of their theme group. Inevitably this means that the members of these groups have a more detailed understanding and involvement with some elements of the work. This does not mean, however, that they are making decisions for the whole group. All of this work will be presented to the Steering Group for discussion, comment and agreement before being put into the final draft. It is also important to note that the final document needs to be agreed by the Parish Council, which is the accountable body. This is the document that will then go out for public consultation, and this consultation will inevitably raise some issues which may necessitate further changes before we submit to HBBC.

4. NDP First Draft Informal Consultation – dates, venues, format

The meeting discussed the timetable for how and when we share this with wider members of the parish. A number of actions were agreed.

- Agreed we should ask YL to give us a status report on how far we are from having a draft plan. What do we still need to do, what are the gaps and the timescale to finish? Are all the groups at the right stage for delivery to have a draft ready? Is a mid November consultation realistic? It was agreed that we need a clear milestone/ project plan from Your Locale which gives us a clear overview of where we are and what still needs to be completed. KC to talk to Gary Kirk – see if he can come to our next meeting to talk it through with us.
- LRCC are contracted by HBBC to run the consultation events for us so KC to check with LRCC their availability in mid November w/c 11th or w/c 18th and to get them to tell us the format they use and the information they need from us to enable them to do this. Again, it would be useful if they could attend a future meeting to talk this through in detail.

- Meeting noted that the Parish Council has signed an SLA with HBBC to deliver the plan against a specific timescale. We had suggested, in an already revised timetable, that our consultation would happen in October so if it's moving we need to tell HBBC and get their agreement. Once KC has info from YL and LRCC she will talk to HBBC to update them.

5. NatureSpot

Out of the work from the Environment Group came the recommendation to support our membership of a website to develop an understanding and record the flora and fauna in the Parish. £200 set up cost and £50 annual subscription thereafter. The Steering Group agreed that we should propose that the Parish Council subscribes to NatureSpot.

6. Any other business

- KC wanted to formally thank all of the field walkers who have contributed so much to our understanding of the nature, flora and fauna of our Parish. They have been exceptionally generous in giving so much of their time and their efforts are very much appreciated.
- An email from HB was read out by DW and noted and agreed by the group.

7. Next meeting

7, 8, 9 or 14 October depending on feedback from theme groups and YL.

Meeting closed at 9.40.