

**Neighbourhood Development Plan Witherley Parish
Minutes of the meeting of the Steering group Wednesday 9 October 2019
Witherley Parish Rooms**

Present: Kay Conway (Chair), Dave Wilkins, Brian Conway, Dayle Flude, Laura Dyer, Helen Bullivant, Derek Ridgway, Mark Simpson

Apologies : Maureen Cook

1. Declaration of interests

MS declared a non-pecuniary interest in the land owned by his family farm in Fenny Drayton. HB declared a pecuniary interest in the ecological survey report

2. Past Minutes

Minutes from 19 September agreed.

Matters arising

- NatureSpot decision going to Parish Council on 10th October
- It was noted that the meeting of the theme groups was held last Monday, 30th September.

3. Theme group updates

Environment group

A meeting now being scheduled for 4th November

Housing group

Next full meeting of the group on 23rd October. Some members meeting on Tuesday 15th October with Derek Doran from YourLocale to review the site assessments which have been undertaken. The outcome will then be reviewed by the whole group on 23rd with the aim of drawing up a priority order for the Steering Group to consider.

Community Sustainability and Resources

Reviewing the potential policies. Next meeting scheduled for 24th October.

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

KC & BC attended a meeting with Fran Belcher, Rob Foers of HBBC Planning and John Preston of the RCC to discuss progress. HBBC highlighted that they are currently under some pressure to support Neighbourhood development plan processes as Newbold Verdon & Desford are coming to the point of formal scrutiny. These two plans were expected to be completed by now but both have had to do a Strategic Environmental Assessment because of the scale of the potential housing developments.

KC outlined the draft timetable which was discussed with HBBC & RCC. RCC will help with the community consultations – which is to informally share and test the key policies and proposals prior to the formal consultation phase. Once this is complete the plan then goes to the Parish Council who, if happy with it, passes it on to the RCC for mandatory Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

screening. This process is to determine whether we need to do a full SEA. The RCC's screening assessment, together with the full plan, is then sent to Historic England, Natural England & Environment agency to review. This process takes up to 5 weeks. **Fran Belcher** to share the screening criteria that Historic England use to assess the SEA statements for our information. If no SEA is needed then we go into the formal Regulation 14 consultation which is managed by the Parish Council. This is a 6-week statutory process. All landowners, agencies, businesses, residents are consulted (all who work, live, and do business in the Parish). To support the consultation, the hard copy plan will be distributed widely into public spaces (pubs, Churches etc) and put on appropriate websites and so on. People will be invited to comment. All the comments will go back to the Parish Council, who then pass them to RCC to collate the responses. The WDNP Steering Group and Parish Council will then need to respond and make any potential amendments as a result. The plan will then be examined by an independent Inspector before proceeding to Referendum.

The meeting discussed a draft timetable which had been created by the RCC following the meeting, with key milestones. This timetable suggests that going through all of these stages would take us to a potential completion date of May 2020. One variable to the timetable is if we do need to do an SEA, up to 6 months could be added to the timetable. This is dependent on us having the first draft of the plan ready by the end of November for Parish Council approval. Everyone agreed this was an important but challenging deadline. There was some discussion about how realistic it was, given the work still to be completed, but given the potential risk because of the growing pressure on HBBC around its land supply, it was agreed we should aim for this deadline as any delays could make the Parish more vulnerable to speculative planning applications

Each theme group to discuss its progress with their Your Locale representative to identify key actions to be completed to meet the end of November deadline. This list should then be sent to KC for circulation to the Steering group.

5. Sustainable Site Assessment SSA

Some members of the group expressed some concerns about the perceived level of transparency around the assessments. They had some queries about the questions being used to complete the SSA and whether there were additional questions that should be added to give a more accurate assessment. All members of the Steering Group recognised that this area of work will be the most potentially contentious of the plan. It will be highly scrutinised by our fellow residents as well as landowners who have submitted sites, so it was acknowledged that there is a real need to be particularly careful on how we manage the process. *It was agreed that the Housing Group will review the best practise check list created by Locality at its next meeting to confirm they have been following it.* LD & BC outlined that the assessment questions were guided by Derek Doran from YourLocale and that it was a checklist he had used for previous plan processes. They confirmed that the Steering Group will have the opportunity to see all of the assessments and make additions if they think there are any key elements missing. These would need to be backed up by the evidence. The one additional issue specifically raised at the meeting as missing,

which it was believed had been included in other neighbourhood plan assessments, was a question on the distance to schools, given the high level of affordable housing we are aiming to achieve. **LD/BC** to check that specific question with Derek to see whether it should be included. There was then a discussion about managing the declaration of interests, at both the Housing Group and the Steering Group when the priority ordering of assessments is being discussed. It was acknowledged that we will need to record and be sure that all involved in the discussion of sites, are aware of all the contributing members' potential conflicts of interests/loyalty. Whilst any interest that isn't financial will not preclude a person from the discussion, it is important that everyone in the discussion is aware of potential conflicts and that this is recorded.

6. Ecological Survey

Going to Parish council tomorrow for approval. It was confirmed that the company which made the donation to support the work were content with the quality and fitness for purpose of the work.

7. Dropbox

Agreed that all the Theme Groups should be loading information onto the Dropbox. Each Theme Group to confirm that they have a nominated member to do this.

8. Recording Bat Locations on Field Inventory

DW liaising with the Bat Society to assess known roosts and foraging sites for inclusion in the plan.

9. Climate Pledge

HB highlighted the Climate Change emergency pledge made by HBBC which aims to develop a range of local actions to make the Borough climate neutral by 2030. The group discussed how we can include actions in our plan to contribute to achieving this pledge. HB has made contact with the Council for any guidance on actions we might include.

10. Any other business

Housing Group to consider the issues around potential windfall sites that we think may become available in the near future, which have not been offered up

11. Next meeting

Wednesday 13th November, location tbc.

Meeting closed at 9.50

Finance Report, Derek Ridgway, omitted at meeting, sent in the next day.

We have spent £736.02 out of our £1k. We have not received invoices for £230 being the meetings in Fenny and Witherley. Of the Consultants money, we have spent £2k out of the £7.6k leaving a balance of £5.6k.