

**Neighbourhood Development Plan Witherley Parish
Minutes of the meeting of the Steering group Wednesday 13 November 2019
Witherley Parish Rooms**

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

Also, in attendance: Derek Doran, Gary Kirk (Your Locale) & Barry Smith (Chair of Housing Theme Group)

Apologies: Derek Ridgway, Mark Simpson

1. Declaration of interests

Helen Bullivant's property abuts one of the sites in Ratcliffe that came through in the Parish Council's Call for Sites, so is subject to a site assessment.

2. Past Minutes

Minutes from 13 November agreed.

Matters arising

- The steering group noted the minutes from the housing group in which they stated that: *Following discussion of matters raised at the Steering Group meeting on 9 the October, the following statement was unanimously agreed: The Housing & Built Environment Theme Group reject any suggestion that its members would demonstrate bias in their deliberations and will continue to adhere to the Parish Council's Code of Conduct and the Nolan Principles.*
- Environment group meeting did not take place on 4 November.
- Fran Belcher has not sent through the Historic England's required criteria – KC to follow up.
- Brief discussion about different approaches to whether SEAs need to be undertaken by different planning authorities. Noted that HBBC seem to be particularly risk averse in challenging bodies when they suggest a SEA is necessary. Potential for doing a Historic Impact Assessment as a way of managing the issues Historic England may raise. We will keep this issue on the agenda given the substantial delay it could present to our timetable if an SEA is required.

3. Financial report

KC reported that an application to Locality for budget variation to cover the site assessment work, which has been at a higher level than initially anticipated, has been approved. GK confirmed that a further application can be made to Locality to cover the activities that these funds had been allocated for before they were diverted to cover the site assessment costs.

4. Theme Group updates:

Housing & Built Environment Group – site assessments

All agreed that these conversations should remain confidential. All agreed that to ensure effective, transparent and effective communication we needed to ensure that communication around sites is only presented, as part of the whole NDP, in the community consultation events.

DD thanked the housing theme group for all the work that they have done to get us to this point. He reported that it was a complex process, not least because there were so many sites, 12 in total, more than many plans he has previously worked on. This is in part because we took the decision to assess the sites that have come through HBBC's SHELAA process as well as the ones that came through from the Parish Council's Call for Sites. DD confirmed that this approach has given us a very good overview of all potential development sites in the Parish and therefore gives us a strong, defensible position for our neighbourhood plan. The fact that we have really scrutinised all potential development opportunities, examining all possible developable sites, shows our commitment to exploring the potential for housing in our Parish, despite having no current housing targets set by HBBC.

The meeting then went through all 12 assessments individually to confirm the scoring.

HB raised a query on score for question 8 (important trees, woodlands & hedgerows) for sites 7 & 8. She felt that this should be amber rather than red given the environment group had found no sign of ancient trees or hedges. All agreed that this score should be changed for those two sites. This doesn't change the overall score for site 7 which remains as Green one and site 8 changes from red negative five to red negative four.

Noted that question 12 for areas outside Witherley should be scored n/a rather than green. Noted one assessment where this needed to be changed from a green to n/a. DD will check all assessments to ensure that this has been consistently applied.

There were some queries on a few of the other assessments, but these were clarified by DD and the Steering Group agreed all other scores, subject to the changes noted above, as submitted.

The Steering Group formally agreed that the two sites appropriate for further exploration are:

Site 3

Site 10a

DD then outlined the next steps. The next Housing Group meeting is on 20th November. At that meeting they will review the draft letters that will then go out from the Parish Council to all the site owners and will also include their scored assessment. All landowners can discuss/challenge the scoring with us. We may respond by email or agree to meet with landowners. It was suggested that any agreed meetings would be with Derek Doran & Barry Smith as Chair of the Housing Theme Group, both to respond to challenges and to start the process of more detailed discussion with the preferred sites owners. It was agreed that the Housing Group should also be asked to review the remaining assessments with the aim of identifying one or two other potential, reserve sites. These could then be agreed by the Steering Group at its next meeting

All agreed again the need for confidentiality. Any queries to be passed to KC as Chairman.

Natural & Historic Environment Group

The Group has a list of tasks to complete sent by John Martin from Your Locale, but HB, DW & DF highlighted that they hadn't had a meeting with him since the Summer and that the scale of work which the group had been faced with was substantial and overwhelming. There was some confusion within the group about the essential tasks that still need to be completed for the NDP, versus what are the 'good to haves'. There was some discussion about how this could best be resolved – either by sending all the information completed to date to JM for him to do a desk-based exercise, as he had requested, or by sitting with JM to resolve the issues in person. Given the lack of clarity within the group it was agreed that a meeting with JM was the best route. GK highlighted the risk that given there seemed to be a lot of outstanding work still to be completed it could delay the timetable for the delivery of the plan. It was agreed that the meeting with JM and Environment group to review the work should create an agreed action plan, with target dates for completion. This could then be brought to the Steering Group and additional volunteers be found to support the work if necessary.

Community Resources & Sustainability Group

Chapter has been drafted.

5. NDP Timetable

As circulated previously by KC

6. Dropbox

All agreed that the agendas and minutes from all the theme groups must be put onto the Dropbox. Environment & Historic Group to do this as a priority. BC offered to do this for the Group if all the relevant material were to be emailed to him.

7. Any other business

HB highlighted that a second Duke of Edinburgh volunteer would be working with the Environment Group.

LD highlighted that she had circulated the Design Guide. She thanked the Environment group for their contributions – many of which had been included. This would now be reviewed by the Housing Group.

8. Next meeting

7.30pm Monday 2nd December, location tbc.

Meeting closed at 9.30pm