

Agreed MINUTES OF MEETING
of the
WEST CHILTINGTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN COUNCIL
MONDAY 8 SEPTEMBER 2014
Held at St Mary's Church Hall West Chiltington

Those in attendance:

Amanda Apps	Trevor Fitzpatrick	Lucy Maxwell
Muriel Astley	Sondra Fulbrook	Barbara Monks
Julie Best	Judy Fryer	Marshall Monks
John Blackhall	Christina Gage	Clive Needham
Anne Bradford	Nick Gage	Jane Needham
Bruce Bradley	Bill Griffiths	Carys Pickett
Gillian Bradley	June Giuffredi	Rob Pickett
Olivia Brass	Carol Hudson	Mark Price
Terry Clare	Lawrie Hudson	Richard Pike
Damian Collins	Denise Jamieson	Jean Smith
Gary Constable	Norman Kirby	Mark Russell
Louise Constable	Heather Lane	Nigel Smith
Ken Crawford	Clive Needham	David Stoner
Shirley Crawford	Jane Needham	Phil Tapsfield
Anne Bush	Norman Kirby	Robert Thornton
Sean Davis	Peter Lloyd	Elaine Woods
Sharon Davis	William Marsden	Denis Wright
Barbara Eadie	Dan Maxwell	Suzette West

Jane opened the meeting at 7.30pm; she had stepped in to run the meeting until a new Chairman had been elected. She asked that those attending the meeting sign the attendance sheet and add their email address if they wished to receive minutes, etc.

1. **Apologies for Absence** had been received from:

Terence Bermingham	Sarah Fooks
Barry Drennan	Harvie Steele

2. **Matters arising from last meeting.** Jane had misread a name on the August sign in sheet; Jeanette Hughes should have read Jeanette Wright.

Actions from last Minutes. Harvie was to have spoken to Barbara Childs at Horsham District Council (HDC) to see if he could obtain clarification whether West Chiltington has to specify a precise number of houses to be built and specify specific locations for development or could generalise as to unspecified locations of limited size. Norman responded that this would be dealt with later within Item 4.

3. **Election of new Chairman.** Two candidates had come forward:- Norman Kirby and Clive Needham. A brief personal statement from each had been circulated to NPC Active Members prior to the meeting. After a 'show of hands' vote of Active Members present Norman was declared Chairman and Jane handed the meeting over to him.

4. Update on Development decision making.

Norman said how pleased he was to see such a large attendance. He explained that the NPC had hoped to have a draft initial Plan ready at the last [August] meeting, but as there had not been sufficient input from the Planning and Built Environment Working Group (P&BEWG) it was decided to reconvene and approach this key element of the Plan in a different way. He had taken over as P&BEWG Leader upon Harvie's resignation and the group had been meeting on a weekly basis and had a new methodology in place and some progress is being made. HDC had only just advised that a Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA) process had to be undertaken. This seemed excessive for the number of homes WC would potentially have to build. It will be a very lengthy process: the scoping phase has been done. Norman underlined the fact that no decisions had been made yet as to where sites for potential development would be allocated but that HDC had advised that it is necessary for the Plan to identify specific developable sites and specific numbers of dwelling units. He went on to make a presentation (attached as separate document).

There followed a lengthy question and answer session, with Norman, aided by Robert and Denis (both Parish Councillors with extensive knowledge of previous planning issues):-

- The Plan is expected to identify specific sites for the next 15 years as an on-going process dealing in periods of 5 years.
- The NP Officer at HDC has only just advised that she had advertised to developers for sites to be brought forward, and potential developers are to contact the Parish Clerk. (Storrington has already advertised.)
- The P&BEWG have not yet completed feasibility studies of any of the present Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) sites.
- HDC have deemed Smock Alley undevelopable, but Norman said this is still being assessed as HDC's reasoning is unclear and the limited information about its decision is contradictory. This standpoint was questioned by some of the attendees.
- Consultation within the Parish started with monthly Meetings in September 2013; the Housing Needs Survey (HNS) in March and continued at the Village Show in July and is ongoing.
- Emails to the Response email address Response_wcnp@outlook.com are welcomed and all will receive consideration.
- In undertaking the Equalities Act 2010 Impact Assessment, one group of Parishioners (the very elderly and handicapped who may well be lonely) have been identified. The Parish will liaise with neighbouring villages to jointly organise participation in suitable activities. If there are any other groups it was requested to advise the secretary.
- The consultation with parishioners will have to be widely extended to with outside bodies/stakeholders – Water and other Utility Companies/Parishes, etc.
- Once the Plan is finalised it is cleared by HDC, published and then consulted on with Parishioners for a statutory period of 6 weeks. All representations are recorded; the Plan is amended as appropriate; then goes to HDC for approval.
- After this the Plan goes to an independent examiner, who will advise of any changes that need to be made before HDC organise the formal Referendum (around Spring 2015).
- If the Plan is approved by Parishioners (ie 50% or more of those who vote) it then becomes part of Planning law for West Chiltington Parish.

- For background information, the Housing Needs Survey of 2009 led to the identification of the Calluna (Jayswood – market value houses), and Bracklyn (market value bungalows) and Steele Close (affordable housing) sites.
- The Steele Close development has been held up for 4 or 5 years by legal discussion and because the original developer lost interest. HDC is handling the discussions with parties including a housing association who will deliver the homes
- Social/Affordable housing was allocated in one location in 2009, but now HDC have changed the process so that future sites may contain mixed housing.
- West Chilton residents have been offered priority for the new market value housing at Bracklyn and Jayswood for the first 6 months of marketing, but it is clear that they have not been especially attractive to locals (comments were made regarding how expensive the homes were).
- The 2014 HNS highlighted the need for social/affordable homes (shared equity or for rent), in both 2009 and 2014 there was also an identifiable wish to downsize, but this would not necessarily free up any capital due to the high price of land within the Parish (Bracklyn circa £300,000 per plot).
- Complaints were made that the HNS Report was not available on the Parish website. **Action Norman/Jane will investigate.** [This has now been actioned.]
- The Parish Council has a statutory duty to carry out a HNS every five years. It was due at the time the WCNPC started up and the timing was fortuitous. Every home in the Parish received a survey form. HDC required WCNPC to use an outside agency - AiRS – meaning that the questionnaires/types of questions asked were nationally approved, but not particularly relevant to a semi-rural community like West Chilton.
- The Parish Council has always realised that social/affordable housing cannot be built given the price of land. The National Planning Policy Framework, however, requires local authorities to accept that market value homes might well have to be accommodated in order to provide for affordable homes as part of the development.

Discussions continued to range over roads, school places/parking, medical provision, bus services, SHLAA sites, the work that WCNPC had already undertaken on topics other than Planning, the difficulty of engaging Parishioners, etc.

It was explained that HDC initially had tried to put Parishes off producing their own Plans, but once communities became aware of the clear positives in having a Plan in place and the growing problem of inappropriate housing being dumped on communities by 'planning by appeal' the number of Plans being worked on increased across the district. However, it must be noted that no Plan will be given approval before the HDC's own strategic plan is approved. The difficulties of getting responses to specific requests and questions from HDC were highlighted – they are so focussed in on their own problems that getting answers from them is frustratingly slow. HDC have a statutory obligation to support communities to produce Plans.

It was suggested that NPC had not undertaken any other work or consultation within the Parish, this was strongly refuted (people were referred to past Minutes and other information on the NP pages of the Parish Website). Until recently it had been the same dozen or so people at the monthly meetings all working hard between times to formulate objectives and policies within the Topic areas.

Q How will Parishioners know when a developer comes forward? This is a Parish Council (PC) matter and they are used to being approached by potential developers. PC meetings are held in public. The PC is well aware that the Parish can only support a very small amount of housing.

When the Plan is in place the PC has the duty to review it annually and write a new one every 5 years.

Q If the Smock Alley Site was included in the Plan, is it not a concern to NPC that this suggests to HDC that this is the sort of development West Chiltonton will accept? Norman said that in principle any further development on adjacent sites would be resisted because of an absence of an identified housing need. However, he was not so sure that it would be this simple.

Q Regarding the provision of Social/Affordable housing, will this be controlled by a housing association and will there be a solid guarantee that local people get priority? If affordable housing is provided HDC has confirmed that local people will be approached first to be allocated a home. In the case of shared equity housing the purchaser cannot be prevented from selling to someone with no connection to the Parish at some point in the future.

Q If there is an obligation to provide social housing can we make sure that the properties are rental rather than shared equity? HDC's policy is that 70% of the provision should be rented but that has to be across the board, and therefore probably not applied in a small specific location.

Robert mentioned that there are two vacancies on the PC at present and candidates would be welcomed to come forward and get involved.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.45pm. The next meeting is on **Monday 13 October 2014 at 7.30pm in St Mary's Church Hall.**