

WEST CHILTINGTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN COUNCIL

APPROVED Minutes of meeting in West Chiltington Church Hall At 7.30 pm on Monday 12 January 2015

Present:

Muriel Astley	Norman Kirby (Chairman)
Ann Bush	William Marsden
Sarah Fooks	Judy Fryer
Robert Thornton	Phil Tapsfield
Denis Wright	Carys Pickett
Rob Pickett	Marshall Monks
Lawrie Hudson	Carol Hudson
Sean Davis	Sharon Davis
Lucy Maxwell	Daniel Maxwell

1. Apologies for absence – Terence Bermingham, Simon Booth, Barry Drennan, Clive Needham, Jane Needham

2. Matters arising from meeting 10 Nov 2014

None.

3. Report on active members meetings

10 November 2014

The meeting was arranged to discuss the proposals of the Planning & Built Environment Group relating to the policies on sites for development to be included in the Neighbourhood Plan. The meeting concluded that it had not had sufficient time to consider the appropriate papers and chose to defer consideration.

8 December 2014

A much more detailed presentation was made by the Planning & Built Environment Group but the active members decided to defer a decision until the Smock Alley planning application was determined. At the time it was thought that this would be on 20 January but it is now understood that it will now be considered in February. One member explained his hope that a decision by Horsham would give the NPC a steer. Another suggested that the planning officers at Horsham appeared to be in favour of approval but if the committee turned it down it would almost certainly go to appeal. If there is an appeal the outcome might not be known for up to a year.

During the course of discussion it was clarified that having followed through the

processes for evaluating sites explained in previous meetings the working group had determined that a very small number of sites with no more than 15 houses on each site appeared to be suitable for development over the plan period. Apart from general planning factors affecting the choice of sites the dominant driver was the need for affordable homes. Within the factors considered was the long standing policy related to the Category 2 settlement status which is preserved in the draft Neighbourhood Plan and strengthened in the Horsham District Planning Framework.

Denis reported that there were signs that Steele Close was moving towards a resolution. He also reported that Thakeham's plan was going to consultation and Storrington's was well advanced.

As well as the development issue the active members had accepted with regret the resignation of the secretary and the NPC has subsequently been without one. One of the consequences of this is that any communications to the response email site will not have been answered. A new email address wcnpc.secretary@gmail.com should be used in future.

The Chairman went on to explain that as a consequence of recent events the future of the Neighbourhood Plan was hanging by a thread because of the lack of active engagement by active members. Two members, with significant Parish Council responsibilities were providing support in important areas but the bulk of the work, including now the secretary duties was being left with him alone as no volunteers had come forward. He invited members to speak to him if they were able to offer assistance. Much of the work that needed to be done was technical in nature and would involve significant report writing. Consideration might need to be given to obtaining professional support.

4. Neighbourhood Plan Objectives and Policies

Active members had seen the draft Neighbourhood Plan in August and it had not changed a great deal since then except to reorganize the policies to distinguish land use and other policies and to fill in some gaps. It was still in a somewhat raw state and Phil was working on tidying it up to eliminate repetition, include some images and make it more coherent as a single document.

Nothing related to the allocation of sites was considered but apart from that all the other objectives were reviewed and approved. The other land use policies were also reviewed. Items that were discussed more extensively included:

- Characterisation – there was concern that appropriate weight should be given to the beauty, nature and character of the village. This is not contentious. There are some references already and they will be reviewed as part of the work that Phil is doing.

- Infilling – there had always been widespread opposition to infilling, although there had been considerable support in responses to the Village Show consultation. Horsham, however, had indicated that a negative policy was unacceptable and it had been amended to align it to the general policy that all development in the parish had to meet a local need.
- Safe transport and footpaths – there was considerable support for the objectives in these areas. It was pointed out that policies in these areas would need to be pursued through the active involvement of members of the community as resources at the Parish Council were severely stretched.
- Natural Environment – policies in this area were very general and there was a need for them to be made more specific to West Chiltington. It was recognized that aside from Monkmead Woods there were few specific sites of especial environmental interest but members were asked to consider to what extent refinements could be made.
- Sports and Recreation – The position in relation to the proposed Youth Club facility was clarified. The NPC was strongly supportive of developing improvements in facilities for children and young people amongst others but was remaining neutral on any individual project until the Parish Council had reached a decision. It was agreed that an important factor in that regard was the need for a robust business plan to accompany any specific proposal.
- Community Infrastructure Levy – there was some uncertainty as to how this actually worked in practice and it was agreed that more research needed to be conducted to ensure that the best use was made of the opportunities

5. Any other business

Marshall Monks asked if a group of residents could present some comments on the Housing Needs Survey at a future meeting. The Chairman asked him to send him a brief note on the objectives of such a presentation and he would see if the issue could be included in the next meeting.

