

Westbury sub Mendip Neighbourhood Plan Working Group
Minutes 9 December 2024
Waterslade

Present - Chris Langdon [CL] (chair), Mick Fletcher [MF], Ros Wyke [RW], Tony Westcott (TW), Sue Isherwood (SI), Dave Maguire [DM], Alistair Hood (AL), Penny Colwill (PCo)

1. Apologies Adamos Euripidou, Guy Timson

2. Minutes. The minutes of the meeting held on 4 November were agreed.

Action: MF to post copy of minutes on the PC website.

3. Matters Arising. A discussion was held re the RL timetable. It was agreed to set out in the PEW the likely timetable for the outline planning development and the likely subsequent steps in the planning process to keep the village updated. **Action:** CL to draft article and circulate for agreement.

CL reported he had updated PC on highway pedestrian safety matters and the PC was to escalate this with Highways. There is evidence that the speeds near the post office are close to 20mph so should be able to get a 20mph speed limit imposed. It was suggested Church Commissioners should bear the cost of any changes to 20mph. It was agreed the PC should be encouraged to make an application to Highways to introduce a 20mph limit in the village.

4. Neighbourhood Plan Aims and Objectives – Stuart Todd feedback. ST has commented on second draft of NP aims and objectives and these were discussed. Agreed we need to protect the brown field site. There was some discussion over the need or otherwise for allocation of sites. It was suggested the ST be asked how we achieve these aims. Agreed we should accept what ST says is in planning remit and what is aspirational but we need to consider if the aspirations are reasonable in the NP timeframe. We need to identify a priority order for the aspiration aims and agree a process to move them forward.

TW had considered design codes used in other NPs but none were in the Mendip area. Questioned whether we could use an existing design code and tweak it to reflect WSM needs and then employ a consultant to draft the resulting code? It was noted that the government have said that they will have a national design guide. There is help available to support the writing of design guides but it was thought that we might not meet the criteria for this help. We need to discuss this with ST as there is limited capacity in the group to do this work. It was suggested we don't delay the work on the NP because of the design code and simply refer to one being produced shortly.

Aim 1 refers to a Transport and access Plan. We need to be clear what we mean by access. It was agreed to ask ST if we can address transport and access issues through the policies rather than have a dedicated Transport Plan. SW said the PC will be considering allocating money in the budget to assist with the writing of the NP.

RW said Mendip does not have a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) so we can only get contributions to infrastructure via a S106 agreement. It was suggested we ask ST if a S106 agreement can be applied to any planning application that increases the number of bedrooms or living space in a property. **Action:** CL to discuss design codes, S106 and need for a Transport Plan with ST.

5. Neighbourhood Plan Policy Drafting CL reported on the responses from ST to our questions about writing policies. ST had commented on the acceptable element of the draft

policies provided to him by NPWG and had suggested rewrites for other parts. A discussion was held on the way forward. Decision that best to ask ST to write draft policies based on agreed aims and objectives as circulated with the NPWG and others (including possibly Ralph Ward and James Lewis) to consider drafting copy of preface / evidence or justification for each policy section. It was agreed we would work in pairs to draft out these policy justifications.

RW highlighted concerns with the Housing Aim 2. There was a conflict with small scale development and social housing provision and RW wondered if we could also insist on social housing provision in developments of less than 8 houses?

It was decided that we should ask ST to draft the policies with the group drafting policy justification statements as below.

Settlement character - SI, CL

Housing - MF and James Lewis

Landscape Environment - TW (though mostly done)

Highways/Transport – Added into policy statement list by CL post meeting

It was felt that there was less need for policy justification in the following areas because they were aspirational rather than planning matters:

Community Services

Sustainability

Action: CL to instruct ST ref drafting of actual policies and NPWG task pairs to draft policy justifications as detailed above

It was stated that we need to be transparent with the village when drafting the NP about the conflict of village wants for green spaces and the desire for infill rather than large developments. RW said she would make a draft list of “green spaces” in the village for inclusion in NP. **Action:** RW to list potential green spaces

6. Housing Needs Statement Update We have had a response to our comments from CNB (Chris Broughton) and their second draft reflects some of our comments, particularly that the village is not required to meet the housing needs identified in the report with other parameters affecting what is viable and practical for the small size of the village. A third model for forecasting affordable need has been included in the report as requested. The advice from ST was that the report was an independent source of evidence. We should draw upon it together with other sources of evidence (eg from our own consultations), when preparing a justification for the aims and objectives identified in the plan..

7. Highways(Pedestrian Safety) – Agree next steps. A meeting was held with Lichfields and details of this have previously been circulated by email. At the suggestion of the NPWG the PC has called for an urgent meeting with Highways. No response has been received and PC will chase this up. The meeting needs to be with senior Highways officers. It was recognised that job cuts may be impacting on Highways ability to attend a meeting.

Action: SI to chase up Highways for a meeting

Other avenues for pressurising Highways/Planners re A371 safe crossing were discussed and included through the press and via Local Community Networks. RW suggested a question being asked at the full council meeting on 18 Dec to include:

- a. we are disappointed that we are unable to talk to council officers regarding a safe crossing of the A371
- b. Highways’ comments just give standard advice

- c. We want to pull Highways and Planning together to get the best result possible for our community. Other local parish councils have similar issues. We are not alone.
- d. We need to speak to senior Highways officers about what we want for a safe crossing of A371 and to work in partnership with Somerset Council to get the best solution.

Action: MF to draft question for council meeting

Items 8, 9 and 10 from the agenda were cut from the meeting because of lack of time.

11. AOB Concern was expressed about the current occupation of the brownfield site. The legal basis of the occupation was unknown and the group did not want this occupation to impact on the potential purchase of the site by the village. MF said he had contacted the CCs and they were aware of the current use of the site. They had instructed bailiffs who had served the occupants with a notice to quit. PCo agreed to contact Mike Phelps to ascertain if he had given permission for the site to be used by the current occupant. **Action:** PCo to contact Mike Phelps

12. Next Meeting Agreed to be Monday 13th January at 8pm at PCo's house.

Meeting closed.