

Westbury sub Mendip Neighbourhood Plan Working Group
Minutes 30 June 2025

Present - Chris Langdon (Chair) [CL], Mick Fletcher [MF], Sue Isherwood [SI], Ros Wyke [RW], Penny Colwill (PCo), Dave Maguire (DMg), Guy Timson [GT], Tony Westcott (TW)

1. Apologies, Al Hood

2. Minutes. The minutes of the meeting held on 2 June were agreed. **Action:** *MF to post pdf copy of minutes on the PC website.*

3. Matters Arising

- (i) Councillor Heather Shearer to be invited onto NPWG and added to circulation list and be briefed by CL / MF to prepare for committee hearing on RL – where RW may not be able to speak on the application as public views already expressed.
- (ii) RW has checked with Planning and Highways to confirm there will be no charge to the developers for the Mortar Pits land as they are barred by law from charging anything.
- (iii) Parish Council has written to Church wardens to encourage them to seek parking places for the church users. (PCo)
- (iv) CL concerned that not all correspondence with Planners and HA has been published on the Planning portal. A list of all files has been prepared, including safe road crossing guidance, and would be published on the Community website **Action:** *MF.*
- (v) MF queried whether it is possible to track visits to the website – GT responded No.
- (vi) Village Day display – invited ideas and feedback on potential green spaces (see attached map) and Sports Council design for multi-use community hall. Suggestions for Hall included larger kitchen and bar area; need for an office and community room was questioned.

4. Pre-app meeting with planners on Community space

Teams meeting with RL case officer Amelia Elve. Main concerns were scale of Hall, listed building impact and access to parking. Planners were looking for more detail, but this would depend on more detail on the RL proposal. Without more guidance from the planners, it was clear there would be little extra benefit from a formal outline application than was provided by the space allocation in WM1. A key issue remains to be access to adequate parking.

It was agreed to start developing ideas for the Hall with a separate working group in collaboration with the Village Hall Committee. **Action:** *PCo & SI to contact VH Committee*

5. Neighbourhood Plan draft

A draft neighbourhood plan was sent to Planning in April and a response from Jo Milling (JM) was received in May, which had been forwarded to Stuart Todd (ST) for comment. In a Teams meeting earlier today with ST, attended by CL, MF and TW the following actions were agreed:

- (i) More work required on identifying and justifying green spaces and heritage assets; green wedges need to be respected as part of National Landscape. Concern was expressed that JM had clearly not read the draft NP in context with the VCA report.
- (ii) Housing constraints on scale and pace of development are very important to the village and we need a more acceptable way of expressing this. It was accepted

- that it is not possible to require affordable housing to be held in “perpetuity”, unless organised as a community land trust – not appropriate here.
- (iii) The draft NP needs some conversion to “planning speak” to “to encourage organic growth/ respecting rather than avoiding/ etc.” **Action:** *ST to work on policy wording over next two weeks*
 - (iv) Refer to Heritage England Register (HER) and use it to identify and justify any additional local heritage assets, eg, stone walls. **Action:** *PCo & SI*
 - (v) Planning gain – whilst the NP needs to be careful to ensure any planning gain sought is proportional to development for RL the potential 50% extra houses over minimum requirement on WM1 > more community space?
 - (vi) Clearly separate NP policies in boxes from justification by tightening wording. **Action:** *CL to edit justification text*
 - (vii) Green spaces to include Coles Field, Court House Farm front lawn, Hollow area above Shop, Playing Fields (already separately designated) and triangle to S of Church but need justifying within criteria set out **Action:** *MF to review.*
 - (viii) RW suggested a Section 4 Regulation order would give more teeth to the Dark Skies policy, noting that Lodge Hill and Stoneleigh are not included.

6. NPWG advice to PC ref RL application amendments

It was agreed that the recent amendments to the CCE’s application evidenced a frustrating and disappointing failure to respond to feedback from the PC, NPWG and residents. It was agreed that the key issues to be addressed were:

- (i) 20mph speed restriction did not address the pedestrian safety requirement
- (ii) Recognition of visual impact on views out from and into National Landscape area
- (iii) Design Principles does not adequately address access to Community space and multi-user path
- (iv) Inappropriate location of kids’ play area
- (v) Drainage – concerns over size of pipes and discharge location; not connected to mains; adequacy of drainage field
- (vi) Access to Strawberry Line

Action: CL to draft and circulate advice to PC for meeting on 2 July

7. Aob: None

8. Date of next meeting: 6 August 2025 8pm at SI’s