

Westbury sub Mendip Neighbourhood Plan Working Group
Minutes 31 August 2025

Present - Chris Langdon (Chair) [CL]. Mick Fletcher [MF], Ros Wyke [RW], Penny Colwill (PCo), Dave Maguire (DMg), Tony Westcott (TW)

1. Apologies. Guy Timson. Not present: Sue Isherwood, Al Hood, Adamos Euripidou

2. Minutes. The minutes of the meeting held on 6 August were agreed. **Action:** MF to post pdf copy of minutes on the PC website.

3. Matters Arising

a) CL will arrange a meeting with Cllr Heather Shearer. MF and any other available NPWG members to attend.

Action: CL/MF to arrange meeting with Cllr Shearer.

b) Response to PC Comms ref CC/RL. An inadequate and inaccurate response received from SC re placing PC correspondence on RL application on the planning portal. No response was received to the question of whether or not SC had forwarded PC proposal for a controlled crossing.

Action: RW/PCo to suggest to PC that they write to SC to follow up these issues.

c) Community Space working group progress. As many village groups were struggling to recruit active members it was agreed to defer this action till the October meeting as it was not an immediate priority.

4. Agreeing final Neighbourhood Plan Consultation copy.

Because of limited meeting time item b) was dealt with before item a).

b) **Draft 6** – review and agree copy for Community Facilities: Sustainability: Employment community land.

Before the discussion started RW clarified that social housing requirements only started for developments over 10 houses, not 7 as it appeared in the Local Plan.

Community Facilities – It was agreed we could not allocate derelict barns (brownfield site) for community development as we would need to have agreement of all interested parties. CC have refused to sell the land to PC and intend to put it on the open market so they would not agree to such a restriction. In general, it was agreed that the copy for this section was ok. The grammar needs to be amended, particularly in the justification section para 8.2. It was felt that more justification is needed regarding the playing fields, outlining the current playing field facilities and the vision of possible improvements to the facility such as toilets, pavilion etc. It was suggested Guy could do this.

Action: GT to add more detail about playing field facilities and hoped for improvements in justification section.

Sustainability – Tensions between policies in different sections of the plan were highlighted and discussed. The conclusion appeared to be that apparent contradictions were inevitable eg need for more parking as rural community but need to drive down our CO2 emissions. It was agreed that where necessary, contradictions had to be discussed for individual planning applications and the best compromise reached in each scenario.

For Policy S2 it was suggested that the wording be amended to include .."and consistent with other policies in this plan".

Policy S3, points 2 and 3 were considered to be covered by the Local Plan and therefore a duplication and they could be removed.

In Policy S4, it was agreed that it should include reference to the fact that “Developers should take account that Westbury sub Mendip is a spring line community when considering potential flooding issues”. A sentence would need to be added to the justification for this section to explain what a “spring line village” is and the particular flooding issues suffered by Westbury sub Mendip as a result.

There was a discussion highlighting the need for a policy to prevent large scale solar panel arrays/wind turbine farms in or adjacent to the village. This could also be highlighted in the Views section.

Action: CL to circulate a revised Policy S2.

Employment – A lot of discussion around travel impacts of employment opportunities in Westbury sub Mendip given that most people on Lodge Hill Industrial estate are not village residents. It was agreed that supporting home working in the village was important and it would support the sustainability aims.

It was felt that there was a need to include in the Employment Policy some reference to supporting agricultural businesses though recognising the tension of this with traffic and pedestrian safety issues in the village. Agriculture is important to the village character.

Community Aspirations – MF’s suggested addition for this section was agreed. Regarding the table of aspirations and actions it was agreed that the final column, “Action required by” should be removed.

a) **Agreeing Final Draft** – CL has incorporated many of the suggested amendments made by various group members into a latest draft. MF raised an issue re the way the views section was perhaps too broad and didn’t articulate the impact on the way specific views of village character features might be lost by particular planning proposals. We don’t want planning proposals to block or spoil views of, for example the church or our agricultural landscape and the slopes of the Mendip Hills. We need to stress how the views are valuable to the historical context of the village and its current character and evidence why it was important. TW confirmed he had tried to do this in respect of one of the views in the Environment section and would amend his wording for another view. It was agreed no final decision would be made on wording until after the next consultation round.

5. Next Steps

It was agreed that Jo Milling’s response on 9 May 2025 to our initial draft plan raised no concerns about the draft plan not meeting the Basic Conditions. We will need to include as many of the proposed changes as possible in the current draft plan but ensure the draft plan is presented to the PC at their October meeting for them to agree it as the pre submission draft. We can then start the six week consultation using the agreed pre submission plan. It was recognised that we need to get confirmation from SC if an environmental impact assessment and wildlife impact assessment is needed or not. We also need to obtain a list of the required statutory consultees.

Action: CL to contact SC re impact assessments and list of required consultees.

CL will forward latest draft with latest agreed amendments for PCo and SI to start checking and editing. Note, we as NPWG don’t have to get all our potential amendments agreed before the next round of consultations. We have the six week consultation period to consider both our proposed amendments and amendments arising from the consultation exercise before producing the final draft plan.

Action: PCo and SI to edit latest draft plan provided by CL.

In the next few weeks, we should all consider the detail of how the consultation exercise will be carried out. This might include focus groups, village meetings, WhatsApp group, availability of hard copy draft plans in shop/church/pub. We can discuss exactly how we run the consultation exercise at the next meeting.

Action: All to make suggestions for how consultation exercise will be carried out.

CL going on holiday at the end of the week so any of his uncompleted actions will be passed to MF.

6. Follow up action ref NPWG to PC regarding Roughmoor Lane application?

No time to discuss. Refer to next meeting

7. AOB - David Mason. It was agreed DM had fulfilled his contract. He had sent his invoice to old clerk.

Action: CL to advise DM to re send invoice to new clerk of PC

8. Date of next meeting.

Action : CL to circulate potential dates

Meeting closed.