

**Westbury sub Mendip Neighbourhood Plan Working Group**  
**Minutes 11 January 2026**

**Present** - Chris Langdon (Chair) [CL], Mick Fletcher [MF], Penny Colwill (PCo), Ros Wyke [RW] (Zoom), Sue Isherwood (SI), Dave Maguire (DM), Tony Westcott (TW), Al Hood (AH), Ralph Ward (RWa)

**1. Apologies.** None. Not present: Adamos Euripidou, Guy Timson.

As previous meetings, as RW is now chair of the East Mendip Planning Committee it would not be appropriate for her to comment or participate in discussions re the Roughmoor Lane (RL) planning application. She would therefore excuse herself from the meeting during such discussions.

**2. Matters Arising**

a. Minutes of October meeting of NPWG were accepted. **Action: MF** to publish pdf copy of minutes on PC website.

b. It was confirmed that Cllr Heather Shearer (HS) came to last village Hall meeting. HS focus will be on RL development issues. HS will be sent a draft copy of NP. **Action: MF** to send copy of NP to HS.

c. No response yet received from Somerset Council (SC) to the recent PC letter on putting PC comms on the planning portal despite reminder.

d. CL had not managed to speak to GT re details of playing field facilities for the NP.

**Action: CL** to contact GT to discuss supply of playing field facilities information for inclusion in NP.

e. It was confirmed that a conservation appraisal note had been circulated by CL.

f. CL confirmed he had sought advice from Stuart Todd (ST) re Church Commissioner's (CC) feedback and advice on basic conditions. Help will be sought from ST to produce a) basic conditions statement and b) a consultation statement. RW confirmed there was some money in the PC budget for this. **Action: CL** to get quote from ST for additional work.

g. CL said SC planners had not responded to the pre submission version of the NP. CL agreed to chase up SC. (post meeting note - SC planners' comments now received.)

**3. NP pre-submission**

a. Feedback received from approx. 10 individuals/organisations/focus groups. Comments included typos, image quality, additional consultation, repetition of policy guidelines, if basic conditions met, lack of justification in places for deviation from policy, potential elimination of future development sites. The main feedback items were discussed and actions agreed to take forward. **Action: SI** and **PCo** to be responsible for proof reading draft NP. **Action: AH** to be responsible for improving image quality in NP.

RW said Taunton had carried out a review on green wedges in their NP. **Action: RW** to provide details of Taunton NP standalone report re green wedges

Agreed there was a need strengthen conservation area appraisal. **Action: ALL** Comments to be provided on draft conservation area appraisal.

RW thought there was a need to make more reference to comments about protecting the landscape in the NP.

CL requested those tasked with drafting edited copy in response to feedback do so within 10 days (by Wed 2st Jan)

**b. CC comments.**

Agreed term “organic” was not specific enough. Needs to be addressed in the review of the various sections.

Agreed we need to emphasise local housing need with full reasons given in justification, particularly with reference to village surveys. Need to highlight things that matter to WSM re housing whilst linking it to national/local policy. It was noted that the Mendip Local Plan would reach the end of its life shortly so its provisions would carry less weight. The justification for housing needs to explain why we should deviate from local/national plans with evidence.

Policy H1- make specific reference to Settlement Character Report for WSM

Policy H2 – suggestion was organic meant historical growth rates/incremental growth not large developments. We should explain in justification. RWa felt organic referred to the character of the village growth.

We should define what we mean by “small” re development size again by reference to Settlement Character Report.

There is no definition of sustainability, so we don’t have to define it.

H3 – the mix of housing should be defined by local need which should be spelt out in justification.

SC1 – we don’t have repeated patterns in the village like an urban settlement. We don’t want national design practice for housing type and street layout. We want developers to follow settlement character assessment.

SC2- comments refer to green spaces and green wedges as same thing. This is not what draft NP says. CCs have not read it correctly.

We are not saying there can be no development on current green wedge areas. We want any development to maintain some “shards” of green space. The maps may need to be amended to reflect this.

There was a need to identify where topography of green areas rules out development.

We need to clearly distinguish green spaces and green wedges with justification for specific areas.

Evidence for green spaces and green wedges is in the Character assessment.

An arial photo would clearly show the green wedge character of the village.

**Action: RWa /MF** to review NP with reference to CC comments

HP1 – It is clear CC have failed to explore all the possibilities of improving pedestrian safety in connection with the RL development. We have identified a potential safe crossing scheme which warrants further investigation. CC’s comments are specific to their RL development. This is a NP to cover 15/20 years so we need to take a longer view in the plan of highways and pedestrian safety.

Parking provision was discussed. We need to elaborate on the local need in the justification section. Current parking policy does not reflect current vehicle ownership in the village, the lack of current and future parking provision and the lack of public and alternative travel provision to serve the residents of our rural village.

**c. Colin Booth (CB) comments** re controlled crossing and footpaths. It was acknowledged that early consultation with CB as local footpaths officer might have been beneficial. TW confirmed he had explained the pedestrian safety issues with CB at focus group meeting. CB comments on improving line of site by removing hedge and railings should be explored. RWa noted the betterment argument was being used selectively by Highways re sight lines. It was noted a 20mph speed limit was desirable but that consideration should be given to sighting any additional signage on or in stone wall boundaries to A371 to prevent

obstruction of footpaths and to make the signage more acceptable from a heritage stand point.

NP should retain requirement for a safe crossing with need to explore how this is best achieved. **Action: CL/DM** to refine safe crossing proposal. **Action: CL/TW/PCo** to have further discussions with CB

d. **Axel focus group** Feeling that NP had conflicting views eg do we want small developments or no developments? Feeling NP reads as a list of things we don't want though RWa felt the NP did not read in a negative way. Questions raised about was the village a thriving community? Maybe for some but not for others. **Action: TW/PCo** to respond to Axel focus grp comments in editing relevant sections of draft.

e. **NHS comments** Consensus was this was a bit of a cop out by NHS. It is well known that NHS provision is poor and underfunded and local GP surgeries are under severe pressure. Planning authorities know this but have still approved many larger developments that WsM will see in places like Cheddar, Wells and Haybridge. All we can do is perhaps suggest in NP that any development requires a contribution to local GP/pharmacy/care provision as a S106 condition.

f. **Village consultation.** It was agreed village consultation meeting should be put back to Sunday 22 February. **Action: CL** to rebook village hall with Pete Munday.

g. CL will discuss with ST what if anything further is needed before final submission of NP to SC. **Action: CL** discussion with ST

#### 4. Roughmoor Lane Application

a. This is still not listed for a Planning East committee meeting.

EA has withdrawn it's objection so likely to be listed soon. Next meeting is 3 Feb. **Action: RW** to be asked to notify NPWG when she is aware that RL application is listed.

NHS comments on lack of GP etc provision was not considered to be a reason why RL application would be refused.

CPRE did object to sub standard Landscape Visualisation Assessment. The report has not been changed. CL has asked CPRE to comment on how planners can decide on the impact of RL development on the landscape if sub standard assessment has been carried out.

A reminder was given for allocated speakers to prepare their 3 minute presentations now.

**Action: RWa** to share his approach to speaking at the planning meeting.

Speakers are:

PCo - PC overview

Fletcher Robinson (CPRE) /Landscape

DM – Highways/Pedestrian Safety

Steve Gamble – Sewage

CL – Process

MF/BF – Overdevelopment

**Action: MF** to set up a WhatsApp group of speakers to aid comms in run up to committee meeting

**Action: CL** to check if Kerry Glanville can offer thoughts / fine tune arguments / messaging that CL sent (referred by Malcolm Harding)

#### 5. AOB

a. PEW deadline is Thursday. Need to make reference to meeting of 22 Feb and date of Planning Committee meeting if known. **Action: CL** to draft PEW article.

b. Tilted balance was explained. Given lack of 5-year housing supply plan balance is in favour of approving planning applications. Tilted balance concept does not apply to protected areas eg National Landscape.

**6. Date of next meeting.** Wednesday 25 Feb at 20.00. Host tbc.