

**NOTES OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN TEAM MEETING  
HELD VIA ZOOM IN VARIOUS LOCATIONS IN SONNING ON MONDAY  
21 SEPTEMBER 2020**

PRESENT: Jeremy Gilmore (Chairman NDPSG), Andy Bell (Society), Nigel Borshell, Rebecca Bullard, Ali Driver, Paul Etherington, Trefor Fisher (SPC), Mike Hart (Society), Bob Hine (Society), Bob Hulley, Rory Herdman, Tim Pascall, Ian Runnalls, Lesley Runnalls, Lesley Bates (Minutes).

APOLOGIES: Apologies were received from Tony Farnese (SPC), Gordon Jones, Caroline Kuipers and Peter Morrison (SPC).

WELCOME. The Chairman welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending the meeting, then asked everyone to introduce themselves. Referring to the list of Areas to Cover on the agenda, the Chairman said that once everyone was clear which group they would like to be involved in, they could form smaller groups and meet up via Zoom. Currently there were twenty volunteers.

REPORT ON CURRENT STATUS. The Chairman said that the decision to begin the process had been taken and Wokingham Borough Council had been notified. In order to proceed WBC required a map showing the area the Plan would cover and it had been agreed to include the whole parish of Sonning. Following a mailshot to every household in the Parish, an Open Meeting to explain the process to the community had taken place in the Pearson Hall on 18 February 2020. At the end of the evening twenty volunteers had signed up to assist with the production of the Plan. Unfortunately, the Covid-19 epidemic had delayed the process. The Steering Group had met on 1 September with a view to assigning responsibilities (see notes). There were numerous examples of existing Neighbourhood Plans, which could be used as reference and close links were being maintained with Eye and Dunsden PC. The list of Areas to Cover on the agenda was not exhaustive and could be added to as necessary. The first step was to appoint team leaders. WBC had stressed the importance of involving the community at all stages by holding a series of public events etc. but circumstances had intervened. It would be important to have parishioners in agreement with the process as it developed. Ways of doing this were discussed, including a Facebook page. Mr Etherington said that there had been a good turnout at the Hall, and he would be happy to do a leaflet drop and suggested asking the primary school parents as they were an important section of the community. Mr Borshell suggested Sonning Buzz as being a way to reach a different section of the community. The Chairman said that the Conservation Area Assessment was a good tool as a starting point was already three years old. Additionally, it did not apply to the whole parish. Mr Hart said that it was important to understand where Sonning was now, where everyone wanted to be, and how to get there get there. Mrs Bullard asked how the views of such a diverse community could be gathered, and how to ensure all those voices were heard. The Chairman said that each group would prepare appropriate questions for inclusion in the questionnaire and theses would be aimed at getting as much feedback as possible. Mr Hart said things had to be put into context, how things currently were and how residents would like to see it in the future. A matrix showing the results would show how different sections of the community voted and this would help decide the future. Mr Gilmore said that the more diverse the Team group were the better and spreading the word was essential.

DISCUSSION OF AREAS TO COVER. Following the discussions (and subsequent emails to the Chairman) the agreed area responsibilities were as follows.

- Finance/Grants. **Mr Morrison.** Mr Driver said that, due to work commitments, he was unable to take on the responsibility for seeking and applying for grants. Other members required to cover grants.
- Historic Environment and Conservation Area. **Mr Hart.** Other members were required for this group.
- Landscape/Environmental Issues. **Mr Borshell.** Mr Etherington. Mr Driver would be able to provide information on the natural environment but could not attend meetings.
- Social/Community Issues. **Mrs Bullard.** Other members were required for this group.
- Transport and Other Infrastructure. **Mr Fisher.** Mr Hulley.
- Liaison with WBC and Alignment with Local Plan. To be agreed.
- Media and Communications. **The Chairman** said that he felt he could cover email and the website but would need assistance with social media.
- Housing Development. A lead person is required for this. Mr Herdman. Other members were required for this group.

NEXT STEPS. The Chairman asked that everyone decide which group they wished to work on, although he agreed it was possible that some groups would overlap. Mr Borshell asked if any of the neighbouring parishes had produced a plan. The Chairman said not but several were either in the process or considering a plan. Mr Fisher said that Hurst were in the process of producing a plan and they were similar in many ways to Sonning and were in the Wokingham Area. The plan would need to include some housing development. Mr Etherington asked if this was necessary. Mr Hart said that unfortunately it would not work if the plan said no development and an existing site, off Guarde Road, had already been included in the WBC Local Plan. If Sonning came up with some suggestions for alternative development in areas that might be considered of less importance than those mentioned in the recent Call for Sites these important sites might be preserved. Advice from the Oxfordshire councillors had been that the plan should cover at least the next 50 years. Mr Fisher said it would be easier to argue against future development if Sonning had a good Neighbourhood Plan. Mrs Bullard suggested that housing development should be added to the Areas to Cover list. The Chairman said it was an important consideration and would be added to the list. Mr Hulley said that the governments new housing proposals needed to be looked at carefully and asked about using professional advice. The Chairman said that there would probably be a need to employ professionals, and although the grant allocation had been increased, it would be important to spend the money carefully. Mr Etherington suggested that Mrs May (MP), should be asked for her advice on the governments planning proposals as she lived in the area.

ANYTHING ELSE. Mr Driver asked that the Chairman should continue to look for a good example of a neighbourhood Plan. The Chairman said he would, and he would also set up the website so that all relevant documents/information could be displayed for information.

DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING. There was some discussion about the regularity of meetings, and it was agreed to hold meetings monthly initially. The Chairman would circulate potential dates.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 7.55 pm.