

**NOTES OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN TEAM MEETING HELD AT
VARIOUS LOCATIONS VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS, SONNING ON MONDAY 10
JANUARY 2022 AT 6.45 pm.**

PRESENT: Jeremy Gilmore (Chairman NPSG), Nigel Borshell, Cllr Michael Firmager (WBC), Trefor Fisher (SPC), Mike Hart (Society), Lesley Heaney (Society), Tim Pascall, Mark Saunders (Sound only). Lesley Bates (Minutes).

The Chairman welcomed everyone, thanked them for attending the meeting, particularly Mrs Heaney, who had expressed concerns about development in Pound Lane (S), and been invited to join the NP Group.

APOLOGIES: Apologies were received from Tony Farnese (SPC), Bob Hine (Society), Bob Hulley (Society), and Peter Morrison (SPC).

MINUTES OF 29 November 2021. The Minutes, having been previously circulated were taken as read and agreed.

QUESTIONNAIRE. Further analysis.

The Chairman said that there was not a lot more that could be done except Green Spaces. Mr Fisher was working on Infrastructure.

LOCAL PLAN UPDATE

The Chairman said that he felt that the NP Group should submit their thoughts on the LPU. LB said there was need for a consensus of views amongst members. Mr Hart agreed and said that it might be difficult to respond as a group and better for everyone to respond as an individual. Mr Borshell felt it would be possible to decide if the group were broadly in favour or broadly inline with the question there were the results of the Questionnaire. The Chairman said that most people felt that they had to accept sites 1 and site 8. And some development. Mr Hart said that he had been wading through the Local Plan document and found that WBC's advisors rejected some proposals for similar reasons to the group. Mr Hart was still concerned that agreeing to site 8 would lead to major development on the Golf Club and did not agree with site 5 being linked to site 8. Mrs Heaney said that 100 houses plus 13, or 37, plus a Care Home was over development and didn't fit the area. Mr Hart said that site 8 was similar to Sunrise and the Society wanted to object. Mr Fisher didn't think the SPC's views would be too different, but they were waiting for their meeting with WBC on 13 January. Mr Saunders wanted to know if sites 5 and 8 were still separate sites or just one site 8 and said that Care Home on top of Care Home was overdevelopment. Mr Saunders also wondered if opposing site 8 would lead to 2000 houses being built on the Golf Club and if the inclusion of site 8 was set in stone. Cllr Firmager said that he wasn't against some small development but 13 houses plus a Care Home on 101 and 101a Pound Lane was a lot. WBC did need care Homes but already had 80% of its capacity and another Care home was being built in Wokingham centre, this should fill their current need. The idea of 2000 homes on the Golf Club was just a rumour and, if built, would link Sonning to Charvil. The Chairman asked about site 8, would it stop at that or make it easier for the 2000 houses to be built, Sonning couldn't just say no to everything. Mr Hart said that site 8 wasn't a certainty but site 5 already had permission for 13 houses. Site 8 was back land development and in the countryside and could set a dangerous precedent. Mr Borshell said that site 8 was earmarked for 24 houses but this number could increase, if site 8

went ahead. Couldn't Sonning argue against any further development as it had filled its quota and any more development would be unmanageable. Mr Pascall said that it could be said that it did reflect the views of the community and that site 8 was accepted reluctantly. Mr Hart said that site 8 was not the favoured choice and the Chairman confirmed that it was 4th in residents' preferences. Mr Fisher said it was a dilemma as a higher number accepted it than those who did not. There was no doubt that Sonning had taken a bigger hit than the 7 per year that a parish of this size might expect. Mr Borshell said that the 13 houses on site 5 would become 37 with site 8. Mr Fisher would speak to the Chairman after the meeting on the 13th so that a draft could be drawn up. Mr McCabe had been asked, and had confirmed, that site 8 was one site. If the Care Home was built on site 5 there would be no access to site 8. Asked if the entrance would be via Pound Lane Mr Hart said that he had assumed that it would be via the Bath Road.

LOCAL GREEN SPACES

The Chairman said that WBC hadn't included any Green Spaces for Sonning in the LPU and he had mentioned this in the group's letter, which also pointed residents to the online survey. This was circulated to all households along with the WBC leaflet, which included a map showing WBC's preferred sites for Sonning as 1, 5 and 8. Mr Fisher said that Sonning was lucky to have a lot of green area but the draft list was quite long, would Sonning be asking too much? What were the priorities? Mr Hart said that each application had to be shadowed, and there was insufficient time to do this before the deadline on 24 January. The Chairman would circulate details to everyone, including Cllr Firmager. Mr Fisher said that Mr McCabe definitely said that it was not too late.

PREVIOUSLY SUBMITTED LP SITES AND OTHER PLANNING MATTERS.

Site 10: RAMS/Old Readingensians. The Chairman said that, as Chairman of the group, he had received an email from Readingensians regarding the need for the Club to relocate due to its increasing popularity and membership. They planned to find another, larger site, and to sell their existing site for development, indicating that the site could provide 100 houses. Cllr Firmager said that he and other WBC Councillors had met with representatives of the Club some time ago where the possibility of moving to the Berkshire Sports site had been mentioned and that their site was no longer sustainable. RAMS had been approached a couple of times since but had not responded, it wasn't clear why. Mr Saunders said that he understood that WBC wanted to build on the RAMS site. Berkshire Sports could accommodate RAMS but they had not heard back from them. Mr Hart said that Sonning Lane would be a nightmare with any addition to the existing numbers playing sport, the Lane was already jammed when sports were being played. RAMS needed to move to progress further in the league. The Chairman suggested that they might just be testing the water. Mr Borshell said that it was the group's job to respond to the LPU. There were a lot of speculative ideas, policies needed to be in place so that if any materialised they would have to fit into those policies. Mr Fisher said that he had heard that completion of site 12 was likely between 2025 and 2030. It would be nice if WBC were to include Sonning in any discussions about future development. The Chairman asked if there was any news on the Care Home on 101 and 101a Pound Lane. Mrs Heaney understood that the application would go in very soon, this was a separate development to the one on site 5/8 and policies to protect against this proposal and other future ones were impotent.

NEXT STEP – Policies etc.

The Chairman said that these needed to be fleshed out and then circulated, it would be helpful if everyone could comment. Mr Fisher said that he would like to say how much the hard work that the Chairman had put into the analysis had been appreciated. Was a standardised form, with an agreed format and colour, required, the Chairman thought not, there was no need to produce formal diagrams at this stage. The important thing was to produce the policies and then to fit them all together. Mr Fisher said that there was a lot of text. Mr Hart felt there was a need to agree the number of pages, a concise document was preferable. Mr Borshell thought that a maximum of 50 pages should be adequate. The Chairman said that there were some gaps, Community, and Conservation Areas for instance. Mr Hart said that he had been working on the CA, it just needed to be completed and the response to the LPU had to be worked on. The possibility of meeting with other Parishes was discussed and LB agreed to contact Twyford and Charvil regarding availability. Mr Hart, Mr Fisher and the Chairman all agreed to take part. Mr Fisher said the Tony Farnese (SPC Chairman) had been approached by the agent for the proposed SDL in Ruscombe in the hope of gaining SPC's support for the scheme. Mr Fisher said that he would normally welcome discussions but meeting with Barton Wilmott could be seen as supporting the scheme. The Chairman said that he thought it best not to meet with them, and this was agreed. Mr Borshell said that many questions had been raised in the questionnaire and he felt that a lot of the feedback was irrelevant and outside the groups remit. There were many comments about road safety (speed/noise, number of vehicles etc), which was not the group's responsibility. Mr Fisher said that SPC were very frustrated with WBC Highways, for instance a scheme to reduce the speed of vehicles entering Pound Lane from the A4 had finally agreed with Highways only for the police to object to it. Currently SPC were pursuing a Community Speed Watch, which the police were supporting, and he agreed to forward an email giving details. Mr Hart said that the key issue was through traffic, but this wasn't mentioned. Mr Fisher had seen a Highways and Transport video which had a black line at the top with '3rd Thames Crossing' written on it but nothing else. Mr Hart said that Oxfordshire might be against the 3rd Bridge, but WBC should still support it. Mr Pascall suggested that Eye and Dunsden were developing a Neighbourhood Plan, would it be worth including them in discussions, but Mr Hart said that they were in agreement with Oxfordshire and against any 3rd Bridge.

DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING. The next meeting would be held on Monday 31 January at 6.45 pm, location to be agreed.