

ST. NICHOLAS HURST PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE HURST NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN WORKING GROUP HELD VIRTUALLY VIA "MICROSOFT TEAMS" ON TUESDAY 21ST SEPTEMBER 2021 at 7.30pm.

PRESENT: Councillor Wayne Smith (Chairman, St Nicholas Hurst PC), Lou Robinson, John Edwards and Brian Thomas.

OFFICERS: Mrs. M. Bradshaw (Clerk).

0140 **Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Duncan Kendall, Penny Curry, Gemma Moore and Mac Stephenson.

0141 **Prejudicial Interests**

There were no prejudicial interests to declare.

0142 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 17th February 2021 were approved.

0143 **Matters arising**

JE reported that he had written to the Conservation Officer at Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) but had received no reply.

RESOLVED: the Chairman to chase for a response.

0144 **Update on the Local Plan**

The Chairman reported the Local Plan is still being worked on and it is hoped that WBC will go out to consultation in November 2021. The major new elements of the plan will be the sites which will replace the originally proposed Grazeley Town. The consultation period will last approximately 8 weeks and straddle the Christmas period.

With regards to the Lodge Road proposal, two public events will be held on the 7th and 14th October, 3.30pm-7.30pm.

Chairman's Initials

The site at Sawpit Lane/School Road has been appealed and an Inspector is waiting to be assigned. The same applies to the application for the telephone mast at Whistley Green. The Planning Inspectorate are suffering a backlog from Covid.

0145 **Update from Group**

LR/JE updated the group on the 50 page draft Biodiversity report they had been working on. LR noted that the document is still being added to and the picture changes on a daily basis – this is a significant report which will provide evidence for the Inspector. At this point in time, the following points were noted:

- There is a public duty to have regard to conserving biodiversity and there should be an awareness campaign to this end;
- With regards to the Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA), this can be produced by the Neighbourhood Planning Working Group in the same way Warfield completed there's. However, as the competent authority, WBC is supposed to lead on this. The Group resolved that they would ask WBC to complete the HRA.
- Agriculture and Nitrate Vulnerable zones, Surface Water zones and Ground Water Protection – discussion was held regarding a specific policy is required. It was agreed that this was unnecessary and it was important to simply note to residents that the zones exist.
- Discussions with WBC have highlighted that there is a conflict between preventing flooding (by keeping ditches and gullies clear) and destroying natural habitats. Its was noted that, albeit areas of the village flood during high rainfall, no houses in present memory have suffered flood damage. It was noted that the cellar in The Green Man public house had flooded a couple of years ago. It has to be remembered that Hurst is a wetland and it is being eroded.
- Nature Recovery Networks (NRN) – the Group resolved that a policy needed to be added to cover this, with any development taking this into account.
- Discussion was held around the recordings of species. LR/JE concurred that data on TVERC, which developers reply upon, is not conclusive. JE advoked "iRecord" - a site where anyone can uplift information relating to species. It was agreed that use of this site could be encouraged through the forthcoming Parish Council newsletter. The Group resolved that priority should be given to connectivity in conjunction with a NRN.

Chairman's Initials

- Discussion was held around the public open spaces for which the Parish Council has responsibility; namely, the community orchard and playparks. The Group agreed that biodiversity would continue to be encouraged and the Chairman confirmed that items such as log hives were to be placed at the community orchard along with more wild flowers. It was agreed that hedgerows should be encouraged.
- Wildlife and habitat corridors were discussed and consideration given as to where these may be. It was agreed that the JE/LR would draw up a map for further consideration and that advice would need to be sought.
- The Chairman said that with a newly formed Parish Council he would ask new Members if any of them had an interest in joining the Working Group.
- LR reported that the three major areas which still need producing are Housing, Landscape/Design and Transport/Travel. Housing will be considered after the Local Plan is agreed and LR/JE will work on Landscape (LR) and Design (JE). LR stated that she would be unable to take on Transport/Travel and additional resources would need to be sought to complete this.

0146 Timeline going forward & keys tasks to be achieved before next meeting

Ahead of the next meeting, to be confirmed, the following tasks to be completed:

Resolved:

- The Chairman to chase the Conservation officer at WBC for a response;
- WBC to be contacted to complete the HRA;
- NRN policy to be drafted;
- iRecord to be promoted via Autumn Parish Council newsletter;
- LR/JE to produce a map to consider green corridors;
- The Chairman to seek new members for the Working Group; and
- LR/JE continue to work on the draft Biodiversity report.

Date of next meeting – 20th October 2021, 7.30pm.

The meeting ended at 10.30pm.

Signed.....

Date.....

Chairman's Initials