

ST. NICHOLAS HURST PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE HURST NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN
WORKING GROUP
HELD VIRTUALLY VIA "MICROSOFT TEAMS" ON
WEDNESDAY 20TH OCTOBER 2021 at 7.30pm.

PRESENT: Councillor Wayne Smith (Chairman, St Nicholas Hurst PC), Lou Robinson, John Edwards, Duncan Kendall, Brian Thomas, Penny Curry and Mac Stephenson.

OFFICERS: Mrs. M. Bradshaw (Clerk).

0147 **Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Gemma Moore.

0148 **Prejudicial Interests**

There were no prejudicial interests to declare.

0149 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 21st September 2021 were approved.

0150 **Matters arising**

JE asked the Chairman if he had been able to follow up a reply from the Conservation Officer at Wokingham Borough Council (WBC). The Chairman apologised for not having sought a reply and would duly contact him.

RESOLVED: the Chairman to chase for a response.

0151 **Update on the Local Plan**

The Chairman reported the Local Plan is on track and will go out to consultation in November 2021.

Chairman's Initials

0152 Update from Group

LR/JE updated the group on the policies they had been working on. LR reported that she had commenced work on the Landscape report. Both JE and LR are working on habitat corridors and have divided the Parish into nine areas with the idea of setting out settlement identities, views and landscapes. Good progress is being made.

LR had held a meeting with TVERC. She informed them that approximately 34,000 records which Lavell's Wetland Trust (LWT) maintain are not on their database. TVERC has agreed to speak to LWT to get these missing records put on. This will inevitably boost the biodiversity of Hurst.

JE noted that only eight further records had been recorded on iRecord despite putting links on the Parish Council website and an article in The Hurst Word. He felt that somehow this had to be promoted further and participation encouraged.

0153 Timeline going forward & keys tasks to be achieved before next meeting

It was noted that in terms of the timeline going forward, help was needed on the working group. No one had responded to the calls for help for a transport expert to help with the Transport report. JE noted that LR had carried the weight of all of the work in terms of research and report writing. He felt the time had come for the group to buy in the help which is required. It was noted that the group had been inexpensive to operate but this had been at the detriment of quick progress. Discussion was held around the various expertise which may be required and the cost of such commissions. Transport and Landscape remained the two large areas. LR agreed that she could help JE with updating the Design for Hurst if someone else could take over the Landscape report.

The Chairman said he would be happy to make enquiries with his counterpart at Finchampstead to ascertain what consultants they used. It was agreed that if professional help could be quickly commissioned, progress could be achieved in the New Year with a view to going to Regulation 14 in the Summer of 2022. The cost of any consultants would need to be presented to the Parish Council for approval. With a meeting on the 2nd November 2021 it was not sure whether this deadline would be met.

Mapping was discussed and LR said that she could do with help from BT to achieve this. Discussion was held regarding any available expertise in the village. MS stated that he knew a retired parishoner who may be able to help. The Chairman said that Councillor Kate Beauchamp may be able to give some advice. Both would follow up and report back.

Chairman's Initials

The Chairman reported that he had sought guidance and had been advised that in an ideal world he would not be wearing dual hats as the Chairman to both the Parish Council and the Working Group. Likewise, the Clerk would not be working for both parties. The Chairman and Clerk had both been the subject of unbearable scrutiny causing them much personal upset. He stated that he had taken on the role for the right reasons, with the expectation that someone was lined up to replace him. Unfortunately, with members of the group dropping off one by one, that never materialised. Likewise, the Clerk agreed that her position was also difficult as people assumed both roles were intrinsically linked.

The Chairman felt it essential that the time had now come for the working group to be a separate group which reported to the Parish Council when it had updates to give. This would give the group greater flexibility and a chance to work in a different way.

He believed that there should be Parish Councillor representation on the group. LR confirmed that this concurred with research she had done in 2019 which stated that the working group should report to the Parish Council but, apart from this, there were no regulations as to how the group should operate.

Members of the Group said they fully understood and respected the decision of both the Chairman and Clerk. They thanked them for their significant contributions.

Going forward, PC agreed to be Clerk to the group with JE agreeing to take over as Chairman.

Resolved:

- Costed proposals to be sought from consultants to provide help with both Transport and Landscape reports;
- The Chairman to enquire as to which consultants Finchampstead used;
- MS to speak with the retired parishoner he knows to see if help could be provided with mapping. Likewise, the Chairman to speak with Councillor Kate Beauchamp; and
- Both the Chairman and Clerk to step down with immediate effect with JE taking over as Chairman and PC taking over as Clerk.

Date of next meeting – 24th November 2021, 7.30pm.

The meeting ended at 8.50pm.

Signed.....

Date.....

Chairman's Initials