



Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Meeting	St Margarets/Stanstead Abbots Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Meeting
Meeting date:	9 September 2019
At:	Red Lion
Present:	Julia Davies (Chair); Leah Pybus (minutes); Mike Dorman; Rob Bennett; Andrew Claydon; Robyn Jewett; Mike Allen; Janet Reynolds; Rowan Lloyd; Gini Trower; Katherine Rutherford; Joe Dumont (Councillor); Jacqueline Veeter (project manager); Sarah Chapman; Clare Maynard; Maria Tasker;;Anne Washbourne.
Apologies	Sharon Strutt (Great Amwell);
Guests	Emma Waltham (Watton-at-Stone)

1. Coping with developers (Emma Waltham, Watton-at-Stone)

- Emma Waltham from Watton at Stone Parish Council joined the meeting to share their experiences in building relationships with developers as part of neighbourhood planning. (Their target was 90 units.) They identified two different sites for potential development based on an independent assessment of sites, in addition to a small brownfield site big enough for 20 units:
 - SITE 1 - Woodhall Estate: a family owned site wanting to develop rental properties on the land over the long term but were looking to build more houses on the site than were wanted in the plan and out of line with the vision of the village in terms of position of houses;
 - SITE 2 - Fairview: large enough for 60 units.
- Fairview was the preferred site as it matched the vision and expectations of the village in terms of housing density, but difficult to see how benefits to the community would be included given that green belt was being given up. Section 106 money had historically brought limited value.
- The planning group wished to work with both developers however to bring them both into the plan but based on the vision of the village. They agreed that each developer would build 60 houses each so that both benefited from the plan, but within the expectations of the village. Along with the brown field site unites, this gave them 130, beyond the requirements and therefore future proofing the plan.
- EW stressed the need to bring the community along, building an understanding of the need to expand (no choice) and stressing the opportunity to be visionary for the village as part of the process, working with local land owners to improve the village, and giving the village influence over the design of houses.
- EW talked about the need to be clear as part of the planning process on what Section 106 funds can be used for so they can be used quickly and are not lost, and the importance of identifying green spaces for additional protection.

2. Sub-group feedback:

- **Management:** Group is still following up on calls for sites: BT, Network homes and Lea Valley. Great Amwell round about site is being blocked due to fear of development on green belt and coalescence/setting a precedence for the future use of green belt.
- **Heritage:** Heritage report now in drop box for all to read. Provides all the information for the policy document. Thanks to RB for such an excellent and thorough report.
- **Housing:** Criteria have been further modified and scoring and weighting being looked at. Now have approx. 30 sites will be assessed against new criteria with issues around the weighting to be resolved. Criteria set are on the basis of clarity, fairness and objectivity. Need to tackle efforts in Great Amwell to add criteria to discount certain sites so that criteria agreed are applied equally across all sites. 3 Parish Councils need to then agree criteria and the sites – this will be in November.

Group meeting on 19 September and 1 Oct will finalise the sites. Housing design hasn't moved on over the summer but is now needed to finish the character assessment.

Development underway: Application in for two flats over the old BikeActiv shop: only counts against quota if they were not residential units before. Would add a unit if one residential unit were being made into two. The 8 units at Spinney will count towards total.

- **Ecology:** Priority now is to map the sites to be put forward for green protection and to set the new green belt boundary.
 - **Communications:** Discussion was held to talk about transport with councillors and highways, including:
 - Electric points for cars in car park and community hall.
 - Speeding issues – doing test down Roydon Rd to assess need for control measure.
 - Pollution – turning of engine signs but need planning permission to put signs up.
 - Bicycle racks to encourage people out of the cars. New Stanstead Airport – Hertford cycle path noted.
 - Need to evidence that parking in the village to use the train by people outside of the village to take action, e.g. time zone on Lawrence Avenue.
 - Better bus service.
 - **Community:** Not progressed over the summer. Looking into Terracycle recycling options of specific brands of packaging, including packaging that isn't accepted in council recycling. £259 per box for private boxes so very expensive. Public boxes are free but not readily available. Looking at using a location in the Maltings that could be used as a library - DJ not averse but it would be out of working hours because of dangers around traffic.
- Katherine to catch up with CM to get up to speed on the work of the group to date and what is needed next, e.g. engagement with Amwell school, Willowthorpe care home and Scouts (with Robyn).
- **Business:** No progress since the last meeting.

3. Evidence base

- JV has provided guidance on building the evidence base for each of the groups – what needs to be compiled (distributed) and the need to collate this on an on-going basis rather than leaving it to the end, so that the main plan can be referenced back to the evidence. We can reference our own evidence reports with further references in rather than all the detailed references going into the main report. Some planning groups produce a separate document with all the underpinning reports used. (Buntingford have done this.) **Action:** JV to send link to LP to circulate to the wider group. (actioned but site not working)
- It is sufficient to include main minutes and notes of meetings within steering group meeting minutes so long as these are made publicly available (CM does this via the website), rather than keeping minutes for all sub-groups.
- Depth of evidence to designate something as a protected green space is needed so that the evidence describes the space and why it is important – this could go in a separate report.
- Buildings: non-designated heritage assets that are not publicly recognised can be protected in the same way as green sites for protection – report on this and why the sites are special.

- Locality website has more guidance and road map provides further steer – <https://locality.org.uk>

4. Sub-Group meetings

- **ACTION:** LP to organise doodle poll for sub-group leads to meet.

5. Finance

- £7976 grant successfully granted from Locality with thanks to MD for his work on submitting this.

6. AOB

- **ACTION:** JD in contact with broom to understand their experience with Tarmac and the gravel pit.

7. Next meeting:

- **Steering Group meeting:** Monday 4 November, 7.30pm at the Café, the Maltings