



**Stanstead Abbots Parish Council, St Margarets Parish Council and
Great Amwell Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan meeting**

**Minutes of the Neighbourhood planning meeting held at 7.30pm
In Stanstead Abbots Parish Hall on 17th October 2019**

	Action			
<p>Councillors present</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>Stanstead Abbots Parish Council Paul Breach Sarah Chapman Julia Davies Mike Dormon Mariesa Howlett Julia Witting</p> </td> <td style="width: 33%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>Stanstead St Margarets Parish Council Roger Chapman Nigel Copping Nick Cox Clare Maynard</p> </td> <td style="width: 33%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>Great Amwell Parish Council Tom Foy Richard Goding Ann Hardy Mark Richardson Peter Troughton</p> </td> </tr> </table> <p>In attendance Mike Allen - Chair Sharon Strutt – Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee Member Jacqueline Veater – Planning Consultant Anne Washbourn – Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee Member Christina Whellams – (Minutes) Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee Member</p>	<p>Stanstead Abbots Parish Council Paul Breach Sarah Chapman Julia Davies Mike Dormon Mariesa Howlett Julia Witting</p>	<p>Stanstead St Margarets Parish Council Roger Chapman Nigel Copping Nick Cox Clare Maynard</p>	<p>Great Amwell Parish Council Tom Foy Richard Goding Ann Hardy Mark Richardson Peter Troughton</p>	
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<p>1/19 Introduction Julia Davies (JD) welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Steering Group members.</p> <p>She provided a brief background surrounding the Neighbourhood Plan and the expectation set by East Herts District Council for us to identify sites for at least 94 extra homes in or adjacent to the village. She explained that if, as a community, we are unable to meet their requirements, then East Herts are likely to increase the number of dwellings and identify sites themselves. This therefore means that this meeting is crucial for agreeing the sites. JD added that since we have begun working on the plan it's been encouraging to see how enthusiastic members of the Steering Group are.</p> <p>She continued to explain that sub-groups had been formed with a focus on areas such as Housing, Ecology and Heritage. We have drawn up criteria to assess possible housing sites which work with our vision. The vision is to <i>“thrive as a diverse and inclusive rural village that supports varied livelihoods and promotes community cohesion and well-being. We will promote sustainable development that provides locally affordable housing whilst protecting the vibrant historic character of our area, enhancing our riverside and green spaces for wildlife, recreation and natural flood defences, and recognising our place in the wider Lee Valley corridor”</i>.</p>				
<p>2/19 Apologies F Adams (Great Amwell) J Hickford (Stanstead Abbots) R Imroth (Great Amwell) R Hewson (Great Amwell) R Taplin (Great Amwell)</p>				
<p>3/19 Declaration of Pecuniary interests (DPI) It was noted that Nigel Copping (NC), Mike Dormon (MD) and Tom Foy (TF) are Trustees of St Margaretsbury Trust.</p>				



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4/19 – To consider the criteria devised by the Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group for selecting sites for development within the Neighbourhood Plan Area.

1. Anne Washbourn (AW) and Sharon Strutt (SS) presented the Site Selection and Assessment Process. They explained that the reason for carrying out the process was because we need to provide for at least 10% growth in Stanstead Abbots. This equates to at least 94 new dwellings, as outlined in the District Plan and which is our target figure. The new dwellings need to be completed between 1 April 2017 and end March 2033 and that sites must be available i.e. landowner is agreeable or actively seeking to develop their site.
2. The steps in how the process has been achieved were explained at the meeting. This began with site identification, carried out by four methods:
 - (i) walkaround,
 - (ii) public consultation & survey,
 - (iii) call for sites and
 - (iv) sifting through planning applications.
3. After sites were collated, the site assessment process began and this included a 3-stage process:
 - (i) initial sift,
 - (ii) critical criteria only,
 - (iii) full site assessment.
4. At each stage, the team had to agree the form the assessment would take and at each stage several sites were eliminated. After completing the full site assessment for each of the remaining sites, they were ranked according to score. The team are currently at the site selection stage with discussions with the LPA and public consultation still to take place. Following on from that the team will develop policies and site allocations.
5. Stage 1 - AW referred to Map 1 in the presentation and explained that 58 sites were initially identified. At the stage 1 sifting process, this was reduced to 46 sites.
6. Key considerations for housing sites were then looked at (outside green belt, brownfield, outside flood zone 3, preventing coalescence, attracting affordable housing, and the proximity to settlement boundary).
7. Stage 2 – the team had felt that there were still too many sites to take to full site assessment and that there were a number of critical criteria that would make a site unsuitable. Once the critical criteria sifting process was complete, there were a total of 31 sites (as indicated on the map 'Round 2' circulated prior to the meeting).
8. Stage 3 – the team then developed an assessment criteria matrix (circulated prior to the meeting) and had tested its effectiveness on one site scored independently by several team members.
9. Members at the meeting asked for clarification on what ribbon development referred to in the matrix (point 2.1). This is a single line of dwellings extending a settlement along a road without using the land behind.
10. Members at the meeting asked for clarification on what 30dph referred to in point 2.9 of the matrix. This was reported to be 30 dwellings per hectare.
11. SS continued to explain that the sites were then placed in a ranking order and those that achieved the highest scores are those known to be available and, with either planning permission, or advanced architectural drawings. It was further clarified that sites need to be available, and that the team have not investigated ownership of all sites or the willingness of all owners to put their sites forward at this stage but would start that process now.
12. SS followed on to present a map showing the top ranked sites and the team's preferred sites. She explained that sites are largely within the settlement boundary or very close to it and that there were minimal sites within flood zones. It was noted that this map had not been circulated prior to the meeting.



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<p>13. The next step is for the team to seek parish council approval at this meeting. Once this is achieved, then landowners would be contacted, consultations with LPA will be held, the team will begin developing policies for each site, then public consultation will take place. The parish councils would be asked for their approval of a final list of sites before the Regulation 14 statutory consultation.</p> <p>14. Mike Allen (MA) thanked the presenters for their presentation and for the work carried out to date. He invited members to ask questions.</p> <p>15. Julia Witting (JW) and Paul Breach (PB) asked how the team had reached the conclusions they had, as they didn't feel they had sufficient information to vote and were concerned that a large site (C2) had now been removed from the sites list. AW explained that there were 8 people on the housing sub-group, all of whom had agreed the scoring and together they had identified measurable questions (e.g. whether there was a flood risk) based on the Environment Agency map, and added that the level of detail presented should provide sufficient information. TF added that the sub-groups have put in hours of work with a lot of robust arguments to agree the scores, and that it's not feasible to go through such a level of detail at this forum. The Steering Group representatives acknowledged that the spreadsheet of the other sites we have considered should be available at the consultation. NC (NJC) felt that it would have been preferable for the extra information presented at the meeting, to have been circulated in advance, in order for decisions to be made. However, all acknowledged that this process is not set in stone at this stage and that further information can be passed on to members for their consideration. It was agreed that if there were any sites of immediate concern, that we could review them at the meeting via the matrix.</p> <p>16. Mariesa Howlett (MH) enquired about the weighting for each point. Jacqueline Veater (JV) explained that the team had not used weightings, just scores (between 0 and 4) for each site, against the assessment criteria. The output was a continuous list of site scores that go down gradually without the need to differentiate between them further. PB also noted that the public's view on the potential location's represented just one component out of 19 in the assessment criteria.</p> <p>17. JW asked about the impact on traffic and parking as she had been aware that the development in Chapelfields had caused difficulties for residents parking, and that there were similar issues in Millers Lane and South Street. From the information that has been presented, she felt that development sites were mostly to the east of the village increasing traffic flow through the village. JV explained that the approximate number of homes is 94 which is a small number compared to the size of the village. Parking provision should be in accordance with EH Parking Standards and those standards should sufficiently stop overflow parking. Clare Maynard (CM) added that in November, JD and herself will be attending a meeting with East Herts in relation to parking, and that there is ongoing work in relation to speeding, traffic, etc.</p> <p>18. Recommendation 1 - (i) That the site assessment criteria for the current sites and any sites that may come forward before the submission of the Neighbourhood Plan to East Herts District Council should be approved.</p> <p>Great Amwell PC – Approved</p> <p>Stanstead St Margarets PC – Approved</p> <p>Stanstead Abbots – Approved</p>	
<p>5/19 To consider the sites put forward for housing development within the Neighbourhood Plan designated area</p>	



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1. NJC raised his concern about site 28 (The Wilderness) as there has been an active campaign to stop this development and wanted to understand why it was included within the plan. The site assessment ratings matrix was reviewed for this site. It was noted that for point 2.11 the score given was 4 based on the environment agency map and that laying surface water, which the site regularly experiences, does not fall within the criteria. The total score for this particular site was 62.
2. It was noted that this site is woodland and could provide community infrastructure if it's not currently accessible by the community. The Ecology sub-group have been identifying green spaces but it is not possible to allocate this site as greenspace as it is unfortunate that a planning application for this particular site had already been submitted.
3. MA acknowledged that the criteria consolidates a lot of information on the sites and by reviewing the site at this meeting, it confirmed the criteria works.
4. PB asked for the site C2 (land south of Station Road) to be reviewed at the meeting using the matrix. The total score was 46. PB noted that 48 is the cut-off point on the Site Assessment Ratings List and that the developer had put forward 120 dwellings for the site. PB pointed out that the exclusion of C2 by a narrow margin was, in his view, premature as it offered an entirely different model of achieving the targeted increase in housing. PB requested that Stanstead Abbots PC hold further discussions on the proposal as a whole to consider whether it was in the best interests of that Parish.
5. MA asked for site C1 (Marsh Lane) to be reviewed as there were some concerns about its score. This site was of an area and size that could contribute to improved infrastructure. There were queries as to whether private roads were considered in the assessment criteria. The team felt the criteria covers it adequately but noted that this matter would be considered at a planning application stage. The total score was 50, the site was partly in a flood zone 3 although it was noted that the actual area of building would be outside this. and falls in a greenbelt area which served no green belt purposes.
6. **Recommendations**
 - (ii) **The list of sites put forward should be approved for the purpose of consultation with the public.**

Stanstead Abbots PC – Approved, by 4 votes to 2 with council members JW and PB voting against. They endorse the model but in the public consultation process would like it made clear and transparent that, had C2 scored 2 points more, it would have been included in the list of sites.

Great Amwell PC – Approved. In terms of site C2, there had been a robust exchange of views as to its score on adjacency to the village, and felt that the scores should not have been so generous, with it potentially scoring 45 or less.

Stanstead St Margarets PC – Approved, but they object to site 28.

- (iii) **That the final list of sites along with other policies in the Neighbourhood Plan and Action Plan are presented to a future meeting of the three Parish Councils.**

Great Amwell PC - Approved

Stanstead Abbots - Approved

Stanstead St Margarets – Approved

7. MA thanked attendees for their attendance and participation. The meeting closed at 10.13pm



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- **Further information on any items above can be obtained from the Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, Julia Davies, at juliadavies890@btinternet.com**

Signed..... Chair date.....