



# Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Minutes

<b>Date:</b>	<b>11 November 2020</b>
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>Zoom Conference Call</b>
<b>Steering Group Members Present:</b>	Julia Davies (Chair), Rob Bennett, Sarah Chapman, Andrew Clayden, Mike Dormon, Robin Jewett, Rowan Lloyd, Clare Maynard, Jan Reynolds, Maria Tasker, Gini Trower, Jacqueline Veater, Anne Washbourn, Christina Whellams (Minutes)
<b>In attendance:</b>	11 residents 2 representatives of Websters Estate
<b>1. Apologies:</b>	None received

## 2. Minutes of the Last Meeting and Matters Arising

- a. The minutes of the last meeting were agreed.

## 3. Public Forum

- a. A resident asked for clarification on the number of dwellings that had to be built within the 3 Parishes and suggested that, to achieve the required number, 30 houses are located within each Parish. The Chair explained that the settlement area for the Neighbourhood Plan as defined by East Herts District Council (EHDC), is Stanstead Abbots, St Margarets and includes the Folly which is a small part of Great Amwell. The settlement area is seen as one area, not divided into 3 parishes, for the purposes of the plan, so there is no requirement or expectation that each parish has to take a specified number of homes. Great Amwell are a category 2 village which means they do not have to provide any new homes, but it was noted that two sites have been identified within Amwell Lane.
- b. An area map was presented to the Group and an explanation as to the settlement boundary was given. It was noted that there are approximately 23 dwellings that have already been granted planning permission or have been built since April 2017 which can be included within the allocation of 94 dwellings. Not all of the remaining sites are expected to be developed because sites may not be available or they fall within certain criteria, such as floodzone 3.
- c. The Chair further explained that EHDC expect developers to liaise with the Steering Group, and we have been in close contact with the developers for site H3 (Netherfield Lane). She added that to begin with the whole area was considered, rather than just brownfield, and that the next step would be to ask EHDC to release greenbelt which would allow us to combine two sites and build 65 homes. In addition, there is the benefit that some of the land could also be given to the Baesh Almshouses Trust to provide community housing.
- d. The resident asked why the field at the top of Trotters Gap has not been considered, and it was explained that this is agricultural land which hadn't been put forward by the owner. The call for sites process had only a few responses and all were in the Green Belt. Most sites on the map had been identified by the Steering Group but eventually proved unsuitable. It has been a huge task to find sites where 10 or more houses can be built to achieve affordable housing, which the community want.
- e. A resident asked if the Steering Group were aware of the Netherfield Homes planning application for a development on Kitten Lane for 35 dwellings. The Chair confirmed that we were aware and explained that the scoring system used to identify suitable sites meant that it was low down on the list.
- f. A resident enquired about access to the proposed H3 site, and the Chair explained that the intention was for Netherfield Lane to become a cul-de-sac and that access to the new development would be via a new access turning off Roydon Road. This would also ensure that Tarmac are unable to use the lane, which they had proposed for various routes in their Quarry application.

- g. A resident queried why they hadn't been able to see Netherfield Lane allocated for greenbelt from the 42 sites that were originally considered, and asked when this had changed. It was confirmed that Netherfield Lane has always been on the list for consideration for release from the greenbelt and the site assessment map was presented to the group along with an explanation behind the process.
- h. A resident raised his concern that there had previously been objections by the Parish Council to build on green belt sites, but now there appears to be a reversal on those objections, which he still felt were not feasible and were unsustainable. He also queried how members of the Parish Council, who also sit on the Steering Group, are able to vote on their own proposals and felt this was a conflict of interest. The Chair explained that 4 years ago, she had been told by EHDC that the Parish Council would need to accommodate 94 houses within the village, which is what the Neighbourhood Plan group had been set up to do, but if sites to accommodate these homes could not be found by us, the Council would take on this task themselves. This would mean that the village would have no say in where development would appear. It is appreciated that no one wants further development but we need to meet these demands.
- i. The Chair went on to say that the brownfield site on Netherfield Lane previously had no scope for employment, and this had also been a concern for District Councillors, so Websters have included an area of employment and potential for a medical site within their plans. A resident was concerned that the Steering Group have been given information by developers that is not in the public domain, but it was clarified that we have been liaising with the developers as encouraged by EHDC and that it's for the benefit of the community.
- j. It was noted that out of 8 councillors on the Stanstead Abbots Parish Council, there are just 3 that sit on the Steering Group, and there are no conflicts of interest. Jacqueline Veater (JV) added that she has worked on around 15 Neighbourhood Plans and the Steering Group membership has always varied.
- k. A Steering Group member asked that consideration is given to the fact that everyone involved are volunteers and that a huge amount of work is being done within sub-groups. There is a large number of people involved and we are all working to protect our village.
- l. A resident raised concern about the length of the process and how it feels like things are being rushed through. The Chair gave assurance that nothing is being rushed through and reported that we had every intention of holding physical presentations for the consultations but that the Covid-19 pandemic has meant we have had to review how to hold the exhibition. This is the first of 3 consultations and the work on it is only just beginning.
- m. The Chair thanked the public for expressing their concerns effectively.

#### **4. Response to the policies from the 3 Parish Councils/Public**

- a. Claire Maynard (CM) reported that following the 3 Parishes meeting, there had been a resignation of a St Margarets Parish Councillor and following on from developments it is hoped that they will reconsider. Nick Cox (Chair, SMPC), Tom Foy (Chair of Great Amwell) and Julia Davies (Chair of SAPC) have submitted a query to EHDC with regards to the process of the meeting and await feedback.
- b. Mike Dormon (MD) reported that of the 4 amendments proposed policies, 1 and 3 were agreed; 2 and 4 were not. As the decisions had to be unanimous, we are seeking clarification as to how we proceed.

*Amendment 1* - That the three parish councils request that the neighbourhood plan be amended in respect of site SASM H6 (Amwell Lane) - to replace 2/3 storey in height to 1/2 storey subject to Great Amwell PC's agreement

All agreed

*Amendment 2* - That the three parish councils request that the neighbourhood plan be amended to preserve the greenfield site SASM H4. (Chapelfields/East of St Andrews)

Two out of 3 agreed

*Amendment 3* - That the three parish councils request that the neighbourhood plan be amended to maximise locally affordable housing, such as social housing or similar.

All agreed

*Amendment 4* - That the three parish councils request that the neighbourhood plan be amended to preserve the greenfield site currently protected by greenbelt status, namely the northern part of SASM H3 known as the "Almshouse Field".

Rejected by 2 to 1

## **5. Response to change of boundary on the Websters site**

The Chair mentioned that the developers of Websters' field are concerned that there would be less space for landscaping – particularly with regard to the entrance and the Baesh Almshouses. The Chair proposed looking at the boundary closely next time.

## **6. Comments from Sub-Groups**

- a. *Business* - JV talked through the content for policies of High Street, Homeworking, Tourism/Farm diversification, and Design of Employment Premises.
- b. *Transport* – this policy has been amended to incorporate the current parking standards, and to include on-street parking suggestions. SMPC are asking the bus company to notify them when there are diversions so that this can be communicated to the community.
- c. *Heritage* – nothing further to report.
- d. *Community/Sustainability* – policies will be sent through. It was noted that we need to respond to AECOM's queries.
- e. *Housing* – the site behind the church needs to be considered/incorporated. The final AECOM report has been received and we need to take on board the additional criteria. It has not been shared widely at AECOM's request.
- f. Concern has been raised for the site in Amwell Lane (on the right) as there are 4 very large trees with equally large roots, and a pumping station. It was noted that we are unable to access the site and EHDC who own the land will not declare if the site is available. Tom Foy (Chair, Great Amwell PC) is asking one of his Councillors to chase Anna Osborne (Asset and Estates Manager at EHDC) and Cllr Bob Deering has also followed up. AW added that on inspection of photographs, the plan of the site shows a different outline and that clarification of the boundary is needed. JV reported that Bengo had a similar site and were able to negotiate for it to be a public space.
- g. *Community Assets* – JR reported that she had been through the document with JV, and that she has emailed the Parish Councils asking for their support.
- h. *Ecology* – JV has been finalising and will share once complete. CM reported that BK is still wishing to remain involved with the Steering Group but that personal commitments have meant she has not been available. She is happy to look over any documentation or assist in policy writing if it is needed.

## **7. Timetable for consultation on policies**

- a. It was acknowledged that the 3 Parish Councils have given permission for the Steering Group to approve all remaining policies, so it was therefore suggested that a meeting is held in 3 weeks.

- b. The consultation process needs considering and it was agreed that we should cover the journey of the Neighbourhood Plan to avoid the same questions that are repeatedly asked at meetings. It was agreed that we should direct the public to the website and offer a leaflet drop to those who are not able to access online. Consideration will also be given to presentations in halls, although it was noted that for the last public event, attendance at The Folly was very limited. Concern was expressed at how vulnerable the elderly are feeling about leaving their homes, so thought needs to be given on how we reach out to them.

**8. Feedback from consultation**

- a. This item will be carried forward to the next meeting.

**9. Finance Update**

- a. MD requested that the next invoice from JV is submitted within the month.

**10. AOB**

- a. There were no items raised.

**11. Date of Next Steering Group**

- a. The date of the next meeting will be Wednesday 2 December 2020 at 7.45pm