



Melksham Neighbourhood Plan

Steering Group Meeting

Date: Wednesday 28 September 2022
Start: 6.30 pm

Present:

Steering Group Members Present

Councillor David Pafford (MWPC)
Councillor Alan Baines (MWPC Sub)
Councillor Graham Ellis (MTC)
Councillor Pat Aves (MTC)
John Hamley (MTUG)
Chris Holden (MCAP)
Councillor Mike Sankey (WC)
Shirley McCarthy (Environment)

Officers

Teresa Strange (MWPC)
Lorraine McRandle (MWPC)
Linda Roberts (MTC)
Patsy Clover (MTC)

Task Group Members:

Councillor Richard Wood (MWPC)
Councillor Mark Harris (MPWC)
Councillor Colin Goodhind (MTC sub until Councillor Pat Aves arrived)

Planning Consultants:

Vaughan Thompson (Place Studio)

MTC	Melksham Town Council
MWPC	Melksham Without Parish Council
WC	Wiltshire Council
MTUG	Melksham Transport User Group

MINUTES

1. Welcome & Housekeeping

The MWPC Clerk pointed out the various fire escapes as this was a new venue for the Steering Group to meet in.

2. To note apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor John Glover (MWPC) who had a leave of absence from the parish council with Councillor Baines attending as substitute, Colin Harrison, and Wiltshire Councillor Mike Sankey, who was at another meeting and would attend later.

3. To elect new Chair & Vice Chair of Steering Group

The MWPC Clerk sought nominations for Chair. Councillor Baines proposed Councillor Pafford as Chair; who was happy to stand. There were no other nominations.

Chris Holden arrived and joined the meeting.

The proposal was seconded by Shirley McCarthy.

Resolved unanimously: To appoint Councillor Pafford as Chair.

Councillor Pafford took the Chair.

Shirley McCarthy asked for it to be minuted that Councillor Richard Wood had been an exceptional and positive Chair for many years and been a cohesive and constructive influence on the Steering Group. The steering group agreed with this sentiment.

Nominations were sought for Vice Chair; there were none forthcoming and Councillor Pafford explained that there had been comment in the past that the Steering Group had always been chaired by a member of Melksham Without Parish Council and that had been because no one from the Town Council had either been nominated as Chair, or was prepared to accept a nomination as Chair, and therefore felt that it would be appropriate for a Town Council representative to come forward now, and if not, then a community/organisation representative.

Councillor Goodhind proposed Councillor Ellis as Vice Chair, and this was seconded by Chris Holden. Councillor Ellis accepted the nomination, and there were no others.

Resolved: To appoint Councillor Ellis as Vice Chair.

4. Declarations of Interests & Register of Interests

There were no declarations of interest, with a reminder for those who had not already done so to complete a Register of Interest Form for interests in the whole of the Neighbourhood Plan area.

Councillor Aves arrived and joined the meeting, and Councillor Goodhind stepped down as substitute in her absence.

5. Public Participation

There were no members of public present.

6. To agree Minutes of Meeting held on 29th June 2022

Resolved: To approve and for the Chair to sign the minutes of the meeting held on 29 June 2022.

7. To receive update on Task Group work to date and approve briefs for Locality Technical Support packages

Vaughan apologised for the lateness of his paper. He explained that he had followed the Area Board briefing prepared by the MWPC Clerk for the public, and had fleshed it out. Key documents needed to be approved and commented on in order to set the brief for the next few months.

Vaughan clarified that a lot had been produced over the spring and summer behind the scenes with AECOM and that a consultancy package had been secured. Some task groups had had active input, but others hadn't. Vaughan was happy for members of specific task groups to take the lead when discussing their work – green spaces, heritage, and design.

It was confirmed by Vaughan that NHP#2 was running about two months late as a result of work on site selection. It had been hoped that by November, the list of preferred sites to put forward would have been compiled. However, it is anticipated that the report will be received in November and that a shortlist of sites will be prepared after that. Vaughan explained that it had taken longer to get the technical support packages than anticipated, evidence gathering had been slower, and summer holidays had had an effect. He hoped that the Steering Group could catch up a bit but some of the processes are unavoidably set in terms of period of time and engagement required. Vaughan was aware that the aim was to have a plan made as close as possible to July next year to avoid speculative development when paragraph 14 protection from NHP#1 expired.

a) Assessment and Information to inform approach to housing (together with the Local Plan)

i. To review and approve site assessment methodology produced by AECOM

Vaughan explained that the call for sites had identified about 90 sites to go forward for assessment, using the Site Suitability Assessment prepared by AECOM. Once the proposed methodology has been approved, AECOM will produce a shortlist of sites they consider to be most suitable to meet the NHP (Neighbourhood Plan) area's share of housing needs and targets. This will take approximately three months. The resulting shortlist will be passed to the Housing Task Group and the NHP Steering Group to narrow down the shortlisted sites for preferred options to be included in the NHP. Vaughan explained that the

methodology must be sound and robust to identify viable sites. Some of the sites will be on Wiltshire Council's list for the Local Plan Review but Wiltshire Council won't disclose their shortlist until Q2 of 2023. The Steering Group needs to minimise the chances of tripping over Wiltshire Council at this stage. Vaughan thought that Wiltshire Council would be looking at big ticket strategic sites with their main activity to the North East and East of Melksham plus an expectation on Shaw and Whitley, which gave the Steering Group an opportunity to lead on the latter.

Given the recent delay on the Local Plan Review, Chris Holden wondered whether it would be possible for the NHP Steering Group to take the lead on the strategic housing allocations rather than Wiltshire Council. Vaughan thought that it wouldn't be impossible for a NHP to take on board the entire housing liability, but that this would be an enormous ask due to the housing numbers involved and the complicated strategic site and therefore he wouldn't recommend it. He thought that it would be preferable to allocate the necessary amount to meet local needs and make a meaningful contribution to the overall target; which is about 10% of the Melksham & Bowerhill allocation, and perhaps the whole amount for the Shaw & Whitley allocation.

The suggested strategy was to look at previously developed/brownfield sites first. The Town Centre Master Plan would help with this. It had been agreed with Wiltshire Council that the Site Assessment would restrict itself to smaller greenfield sites attached to, and on the edge, of the Settlement Boundary. AECOM would therefore rule out divorced sites but may consider smaller components of the larger sites.

The MWPC Clerk cited the library, Upside/Station Yard and Merretts Yard as examples of brownfield sites.

Vaughan explained that a site has to be voluntarily put on the table by a developer to be allocated but sites can be identified as an aspirational site for regeneration, when preparing the shortlist.

Resolved: To approve the site assessment methodology produced by AECOM.

Vaughan advised that to obtain the best sites locationally and for community benefit, dialogue with landowners would be carried out. The best time for community engagement may be at the Regulation 14 consultation stage due to the tight timescales for the Plan review.

ii. To approve for publication the Housing Needs Assessment undertaken by AECOM

Vaughan advised that the Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) had been produced by AECOM. He explained that this was a desktop assessment to assess affordability of housing in the NHP area between Melksham, Melksham Without, and Shaw and Whitley and had examined type, tenure, size, and quality.

Shirley McCarthy was concerned that the HNA seemed to skip between the old core strategy and last year's Local Plan Review and made a lot of assumptions based on the 2011 census. She wondered whether it could be updated for the 2021 census as this could influence numbers because of the Covid 19 pandemic. She also felt that there was a need to differentiate between national requirements and local needs and cited the example of the Chippenham HMA area where it had been estimated that an additional 20,400 dwellings would be needed.

Vaughan explained that this was symptomatic of an assessment being made when things which should have been published hadn't been, for example, the Local Plan hadn't been published although some information in it had been published, and the 2021 Census material hadn't been published either. The HNA had to be written at a point in time using the evidence available. However, it wasn't set in stone and could be reviewed in the future when circumstances and needs would be different, but it wouldn't be possible to ask AECOM to do the work again. He queried whether this would make a material difference to the findings.

Vaughan ran through the headlines in the HNA that will have a direct impact on the policies in NHP#2:

- Nobody on average income or below in the NHP area could afford to buy a house but a substantial number of people on an average income will be able to afford a house if they are a subsidised or discounted market housing; which are typically shared ownership housing or under the Government's new "First Homes" scheme¹ and therefore a recommendation was made in the assessment that the equity share should start at 25% to enable residents to afford a Shared Ownership house; a policy that puts the Melksham NHP area different to the rest of Wiltshire.
- The Government has a default figure of 30% discount for First Homes with AECOM recommending a 40% discount for Melksham in their HNA and this is something else that the NHP can be different to the rest of Wiltshire. Depending on what affordable housing level that Wiltshire

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/first-homes-scheme>

Council set in the Local Plan Review, say 30 or 40%; 25% of all the affordable housing will have to be under the “First Homes” scheme; the rest can be Shared Ownership. This will mean that discounted housing to buy should make up just over half of the Affordable Housing provision through the future housing provision, by developer contribution; which is higher than normal, its usually about 25%; and with that, there would be less affordable housing to rent, more like 45%. With the Local Plan Review currently considering a housing allocation in excess of 2,000 for the Melksham area for the Plan period; the 30 or 40% affordable housing allocation will probably meet the affordable housing need in the area; this doesn't mean that the NHP#2 can't contribute to this too.

- It was noted by AECOM that there are a lot of four-bedroom houses in Melksham and Melksham Without (particularly in Melksham Without) which they believe needs to be balanced out a little with three and four bedroom houses but smaller units as well.
- It was also noted by AECOM that there has been a substantial growth in the population of older people in the NHP area meaning that there was a need for a more substantial number of supported living/extra care houses. These would be better placed in more accessible locations such as the town centre or on brownfield sites.
- AECOM had been asked to look at distinct requirements for Melksham & Bowerhill (principal settlement) and also Shaw & Whitley (large village) as these have separate designations in the Core Strategy/Local Plan. There is a greater proportion of owner occupation, and less affordable housing. in Shaw & Whitley.

Chris Holden was advised that developers can pay off Wiltshire Council to avoid having to build affordable housing but this was refuted, and was advised that developers may argue that a policy is not viable.

Shirley McCarthy asked whether it was common to suggest in a HNA that a town might like to take more older peoples' housing than needed. Vaughan explained that all strategic housing figures are driven by Government expectation towards meeting future Government growth targets, which applies to Melksham. There is no immediate answer regarding anticipated numbers of older people. However, it must be recognised that older people do fuel the economy and so needs must be balanced.

It was noted by Councillor Pafford that it would be necessary to bear in mind the pressure of demand for specialist care for older people when considering housing provision and that demand might come from outside the NHP area.

Vaughan reminded the Steering Group that the primary aim of the NHP would be to focus on what the community needed or on what would improve lives. Strategic issues would be Wiltshire Council's responsibility. The Steering Group needed to make sure that the NHP did its job by taking account of local statistics and using an evidence-based approach from the HNA. In addition, the Local Housing Needs Survey had been undertaken and its result also reported in the HNA; which provided local feedback on what local housing needs were. He felt that Planning shouldn't be too parochial as people did move around meaning that new people would come to the town and add to its vitality. He explained that even AECOM's statistics would have to be extrapolated. Vaughan requested that the Steering Group approved the report with any requested amendments. Once approved, the report could be used as an evidence base for the needs of the NHP. It could also be published by MTC and MWPC as a response to speculative planning applications.

The MWPC Clerk put the matter into context by explaining that the current Reserved Matters planning application for Semington Road was for predominantly four and five bedroom houses. It had been explained that three bedroom houses were needed but this couldn't be proved; but now this evidence was available. Again, with the proposed development at Upside (Station Yard), the developers were asking about whether flats should be for older people or younger people, which the HNA could help to determine.

Councillor Richard Wood commented that the HNA may force Wiltshire Council to consider the need for bungalows on new developments such as Land East of Semington Road.

It was noted that the Housing Task Group had already reviewed and made comment on the HNA, with the resulting report as a result of amendments suggested.

Resolved:

1. To accept the Housing Needs Assessment report subject to an amendment to paragraph 61 stating that the housing numbers are a requirement on the area, and not a housing need/choice.
2. To publish the final HNA report, subject to the amendment above, as part of the evidence base, now, ahead of the Regulation 14 consultation.

b) Protecting valued local green space

Vaughan explained that Katie had been working with members of this task group.

John Hamley confirmed that the task group had been asked to identify 60/70 sites against five characteristics and measure their acreage. About 50% of the work had been completed. However, an understanding of the sites was needed, and no-one had put their names forward to look at the outstanding sites on the list. Once all the sites had been considered, James from Place Studios would decide if more information was needed. A software issue also needs to be resolved.

The MWPC Clerk explained that 180 sites had been put forward by the public. These had been whittled down to about 55 as some hadn't met the required criteria. It was agreed that the two councils would coordinate work on the missing sites and identify the outstanding landowners.

Vaughan confirmed that the quality and robustness of the evidence gathering for these was imperative for sound designations in the NHP. Landowners will have a specific opportunity when they will be contacted to confirm or object to their land being designated, and will have that opportunity to do so all the way up to Examination stage. They also are able to make a legal challenge if they feel that the process has not been done properly, so it's important that the process and evidence assessments are done thoroughly at all stages of the process. The chosen sites would feed into draft Neighbourhood Plan at Regulation 14 consultation stage.

c) Green Gap Designation (new)

i) To review and approve brief to AECOM

Vaughan explained that an opportunity to carry out this piece of work had arisen and good progress had been made since this new piece of work being brought on stream at the last Steering Group meeting. This was as a result of comments by the Planning Inspector for the appeal hearing for the site to the rear of Townsend Farm (Planning Application: 20/07334/OUT) that there was no Green Gap policy in NHP#1.

This policy is all about the prevention of coalescence of one distinct settlement with another. It gives land a "green belt" like quality, but doesn't stop the building of house extensions or small developments, or even farming, but does stop substantial changes. It's for very defined pieces of land.

The policy is not that difficult. However, the key is to get right evidence base, meaning that the proposed brief needs to be sound and therefore the work must be completed by a qualified landscape architect. This service has been hopefully secured with AECOM via the Locality Technical Support. This is a bit of a windfall, as when the process with AECOM was started it was thought to be an

add on, paid for, piece of work; there will be a small fee for the co-ordination work undertaken by Place Studio.

Members were directed to the Brief for the work by AECOM that was previously circulated in agenda packs; for validation this evening by the Steering Group. This did not include a set methodology as there are several ways to do this, and this is to be determined by AECOM undertaking the work. Various potential green gaps had been identified to inform process. The gaps would stop Melksham coalescing with Bowerhill, Berryfield, Beanacre, Semington, and also maintain separation between Shaw and Whitley.

Discussion took place about extending the proposed green gap between Bowerhill and Melksham into the site where an application had been made, and refused, for 240 houses (Planning application 20/08400/OUT Land South of Western Way).

It was also mentioned that the land to the east of the A350 between the A350 and the old Christie Miller site may be suitable for industrial development and has previously been submitted by MWPC and the Steering Group as such in previous Wiltshire Council consultations.

Councillor Ellis mentioned that any possible conflict between housing required for the Canal Link project and the landscape gap work mustn't be overlooked.

It was confirmed by Vaughan that the green gaps/ flood plain on either side of the river Avon wouldn't qualify as landscape gaps as they weren't situated between one defined settlement and another.

Vaughan reminded members that gathering evidence wouldn't force the Steering Group into a decision and that it would be advisable to consider more sites rather than less. AECOM would then assess all the proposed sites and decide which did and didn't qualify.

Resolved: to approve the landscape gap brief for AECOM with the amendment to include the two fields in between Bowerhill and Melksham in the scope of works.

d) Further addressing climate change

Shirley McCarthy provided an update on the task group's work explaining that the task group members had looked at other NHPs, adapted these appropriately and relooked at NHP#1. She explained that Cornwall was a very progressive county and that although their topography and types of renewables were slightly different, they had been useful to crib. Unfortunately, they couldn't wait for the Chippenham NHP to use some of their ideas as they had only just gone to consultation and so had not yet been through the

Examination stage. She mentioned that Katie's research had unearthed an adventurous form of words meaning that it may be possible to go beyond building regulations.

Vaughan advised that good progress has been made on reviewing the Plan, with the policy updates currently being drafted by Katie at Place. This group was working to the programme and this was useful as many of the climate change policies were cross cutting against other aspects of the Plan review.

On being questioned about the validity of a policy insisting on the building of all houses with south facing roofs and solar panels Vaughan explained that this could be encouraged through design codes but may be restricted by building regulations and legislation depending on the location.

Wiltshire Councillor Sankey arrived at 19.59

e) Planning for future vitality of the Town Centre

i) To review and approve the Town Centre Master Plan brief produced by AECOM

The current NHP has a Town Centre policy to protect its vitality and character and includes edge of centre development within 300 metres. There is also a Priority Statement that has a commitment to produce a Town Centre Master Plan.

There had been significant change since NHP#1 was made, due to the opening of the Melksham Campus building. It was noted that the Blue Pool and the library were now empty, and that Melksham House would soon become available. Changes of land use and regeneration opportunities within the town centre could also be a possibility, with the Town Centre Master Plan the ideal vehicle for these. Vaughan advised that he was seeking the agreement of the Steering Group and MTC to advance the Master Plan, which was being undertaken by AECOM as part of the Locality Technical Support package; as detailed in the brief/contents page previously circulated in the agenda pack. This has been reviewed by the Town Centre Task Group.

Vaughan provided some background information advising that there were a distinct vision and objectives for the town centre. Different qualities were involved in town centre place making. Important factors were:

- vitality of the economy, ensuring that buildings and public spaces were used appropriately for the sustainable future of the town,
- culture and identity and the need to find out why people want to come to Melksham,
- townscape and heritage taking advantage of the fantastic conservation area.

- the need for sustainability and to minimise the need to travel – trying to achieve a maximum 20-minute journey
- ensuring quality of access, inclusion and safety for the elderly and disabled.

AECOM will produce a master plan comprising words and maps for planning and projects. The master plan will look at land uses, vacant sites, and under used spaces to stimulate the vitality of the town. Consideration will also be given to flexible and affordable workspace.

Decisions could be made re the library and the car park as these are on the Call for Sites list put forward by Wiltshire Council. The other important area for consideration is the “Cluster” area around the Campus – Blue Pool, the Assembly Hall, and Melksham House. AECOM will look at harnessing those buildings and sites in the ‘civic quarter’ of the town. The report will provide quick wins and longer-term opportunities. These options don’t have to be used; allocations don’t have to be made; it could just be recommendations/aspirations. It was noted that Vaughan and the MWPC & MTC Clerks had recently met with Wiltshire Council and they have agreed to collaborate with the NHP Group to bring forward the future and vision for their sites. Vaughan will be insisting that AECOM weave in community engagement as part of the Master Plan process.

Shirley McCarthy reminded members of the need to try and disturb the earth as little as possible when building as soil is a great carbon store. She commented that developers should try to adapt buildings rather than knock them down and start again. Vaughan agreed that this could be included under considerations for sustainability.

Resolved: to approve the brief produced by AECOM.

ii) Car Park Review – To provide feedback on scope brief, to agree status of this review evidence document, to agree further consultation with stakeholders

Vaughan explained that an important part of the town centre offer, and a large part of its land use, is car parking, and analysing the current and future needs of car parking, in the context of the town centre being attractive and increasingly more sustainable is an important part of the Master Plan.

Car parking was a controversial topic and therefore this piece of work has been ringfenced as a distinct piece of work. AECOM have agreed to complete the Car Park Study as a free bolt on to the Town Centre Master Plan.

Vaughan had put together a brief for this piece of work, which used examples of working car park studies elsewhere in the country, particularly for market

towns; and it was for the Steering Group to decide if they would like to proceed with a Car Park Study.

Discussion took place about the location of car parks in the town. The general consensus was that the main car park is in the wrong place for current times as it draws traffic into roads where the desire is for traffic to be reduced. It was agreed it would be preferable for the town's car parks to be on the outskirts of the town centre but accessible by public transport. It was suggested that the Lowbourne car park and library site could become the main car park for the town. The audit will be useful to see which car parks are underused etc.

Vaughan explained that this could be an opportunity for AECOM who can consult and engage with stakeholders and consider out of town car parking.

Resolved: to proceed with this piece of work and approve the Car Park Study brief produced for AECOM.

Members agreed an extension to the meeting for an additional 15 minutes; until 8.45pm.

f) Protecting our local heritage

A quick update was given on this work due to the limited time left in the meeting, with no decisions to be made by the Steering Group. The task group were looking in detail at the sites put forward by the public consultation in June on non-designated heritage assets. Some 14 sites were put forward, which are considered to have historic importance but are not Listed. Like the green spaces piece of work, an assessment process is being undertaken and landowners will need to be informed; the shortlisted sites will go into the draft Plan for the Regulation 14 formal consultation.

g) Strengthening locally Distinctive Design Policy (Guide/ Code)

i) To review and approve brief produced by AECOM.

In NHP#1 there are already design policies and a snapshot Character Appraisal statement which provided characteristics for different areas of town and the villages in Melksham Without. The design guide and code work for the whole NHP area will build on this with more detailed work. The next stage would be to take the brief forward to the next level involving more detailed consideration of national design guidance and criteria.

Resolved: to approve the brief produced by AECOM. Shirley McCarthy abstained and wished for that to be recorded.

h) Ensuring that local priorities are addressed as the bypass project is developed

Vaughan confirmed that the priority statements in the current NHP need to be brought up to date. Work will be undertaken through liaison with Wiltshire Council and the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust.

Following a meeting of the task group with Steve Wilson at Wiltshire Council, the MWPC Clerk confirmed that the Steering Group would have to wait for the Local Plan Review to see if Wiltshire Council intended to safeguard a route. No information had been forthcoming to enable consideration to be given to the M4 to Dorset A350 study being undertaken by Highways England. It was noted that therefore Wiltshire Council would not be submitting their Outline Business Case for this project until the Spring.

Steve Wilson had reviewed the Priority Statement, and felt it was fine moving forward, and could have most of the historic background information removed as no longer up to date for NHP#2.

i) Ensuring that local priorities are addressed as the Melksham Canal Link project is developed

It was confirmed that a meeting had been held with the local Wilts & Berks Canal Trust & Melksham Link Project Manager who were happy with the current priority statement. It was noted that a review of the draft policies would be carried out to ensure that all the policies complimented each other. They too were awaiting the outcome of the Local Plan Review to see if their proposals were carried forward as Strategic Sites.

In answer to a query as to whether the NHP#2 housing allocation would include the Canal project's enabling development the MWPC Clerk advised that proposed developments to enable the Canal Link were numbering some 900 dwellings and so at that size of development would be a Strategic Site to be allocated by Wiltshire Council, and not the Melksham NHP.

j) SEA (Strategic Environmental Assessment) – To review and agree the scoping document produced by AECOM

Vaughan explained that any sites advanced through the NHP would have an environmental impact which would need to be mitigated. The best way of doing this would be to assess the sites through a strategic assessment which David Way had agreed was necessary. A scoping report had been prepared by AECOM with the purpose of looking at air quality, biodiversity, climate, flood, soil, landscape, and transport. AECOM would compare the current situation with proposals and devise strategies to minimise impact. This would be needed before NHP#2 went to Regulation 14 consultation.

Councillor Pafford pointed out an error on page 64 where it was stated that Bath was approx. 10km to the east of the Neighbourhood area.

Shirley McCarthy reiterated her concern that any assessments should include reference to the need to avoid soil disturbance and agreed to provide the document referencing this to the MWPC Clerk.

Councillor Baines pointed out two errors on page 41 clause 6.6 where The Spa, Bath Road had been omitted and where it stated that Folly Lane was in Shaw not Whitley.

Vaughan confirmed that AECOM would review all the sites put forward and consider each site's environmental impact and mitigation strategies. This work needed to be done before the draft Plan can go out to consultation at Regulation 14 document. It was good that this work had commenced as policies can be fed into the process in a timely manner, with the site assessment work coming at the end of the programme.

Resolved: to approve the scoping document produced by AECOM with the amendments noted above.

8. To agree next steps (work streams for Oct, Nov. Dec)

All work streams would now be progressed following the approval of briefs this evening.

9. To review Programme Dates

The Steering Group noted the new dates published for the Local Plan Review, with the publication of the draft Plan at Regulation 19 stage delayed from Autumn 2022 to Quarter 2 2023.

10. To approve Community Communications

The MWPC Clerk explained that there was a lot of community engagement at the beginning of the Summer with several consultations undertaken, and that it would be useful to feedback to the public on the results of the engagement and the Next Steps. Councillor Sankey had fed back at the recent Area Board meeting and a written update had also been provided.

Resolved: to publicise the briefing prepared for the Area Board on the NHP mailing list, via social media, on the MWPC and MTC websites and in the Melksham Independent News.

11. To consider policy request from Melksham Without Parish Council that annexes cannot be used as a separate dwelling in the future

The MWPC Clerk requested the inclusion of the policy request in NHP#2 as MWPC ask for this as a condition in every planning application for a conversion/annexe.

Vaughan confirmed that to convert an annexe to a separate dwelling required new planning permission as a separate unit, but could look at putting something into NHP#2.

12. To approve latest invoices and note current financial report.

An invoice from Place for £5,156.00 (£6,187.20 including VAT) had been received and related to work undertaken on the Housing site selection and other work and included travel expenses. Apart from the travel expenses the rest of the invoice would come from the £10,000 Locality grant funding.

Resolved: to approve the payment of the invoice.

13. To review Terms of Reference further to parish and town council review

The MWPC Clerk stated that MWPC weren't happy with community organisation members being MTC and MWPC members as they believed that these members shouldn't be dual hatted as there could be a conflict of interest. She asked if this could be reviewed again and ratified by MTC.

14. To review and approve Membership of the Steering Group

The MWPC Clerk brought to members' attention that Colin Harrison was happy to continue as a Steering Group member, but to be transparent had pointed out that he represented the Chamber of Commerce which was no longer functioning. The Chair of BRAG had put himself forward to be a member of the Steering Group.

Resolved: to approve Mark Blackham, Chair of BRAG (Bowerhill Residents Action Group) and Colin Harrison of the former Melksham Chamber of Commerce as members of the Steering Group.

Councillor Baines wished his objection to a member of a residents' group being a member of the Steering Group to be noted.

15. To agree date and venue of Next Meeting of Steering Group

Resolved: The next Steering Group meeting to be held on 30 November at 6.30pm at the MWPC meeting venue.

Meeting closed at 8.50pm

Signed
Chair, 30 November 2022