

**MINUTES  
BECKINGTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN  
STEERING GROUP MEETING  
CLIFFORD HOUSE  
16 JANUARY 2024**

**Present:**

Chair - Sue Shipley (SS)

Vice Chair - Sue Wonnacott (SW)

Project Planning - Mel Usher (MU), Sarah Ball (SB)

External Communications - Jennie Tyler (JT), Paula Fox (PF), Debs Byrne (DB)

Treasurer and Liaison with Parish Clerk - Andrew Tyler (AT)

Secretary, Internal Communications and Website - Ben Richards (BR)

**Apologies:** Jo Hole (JH), Alex Richards (AR), Stuart Todd (ST), Clive Winterbourne (CW)

**Introduction:** SS welcomed those present and thanked JT and AT for hosting. It had been agreed that ST would attend meetings as and when required to advise the SG in his capacity as the parish council appointed planning consultant.

**1. Minutes of last meeting**

SS had circulated draft minutes of the previous meeting via email. No amendments were raised and the minutes were approved.

**2. Actions arising from last meeting**

It was agreed that actions arising would be dealt with under the relevant agenda items.

**3. Terms of Reference (TOR)**

A draft document had been circulated for consideration. MU requested clarification on the role of the parish council, particularly concerning the section on delegation of financial authority and what had already been agreed. It was agreed that the draft TOR would be amended to include the delegation already approved by the parish council. It was agreed that SG meetings would not be open to members of the public and that the draft should be amended to reflect this. It was agreed that the section on Declarations of Interest needed to stipulate how these would be formally recorded. Details should also include where each member lives (road/street only).

**Action** SW to provide a further draft for consideration.

PF advised that parish council meetings will have a standing agenda item to cover SG matters. It was agreed that a SG member should be present.

**Action** SS to attend parish council meeting on 13 February 2024.

SS noted that although Ben Keevil had originally expressed an interest in being part of the SG, he had not attended any meetings and had not been allocated a role. He was still included in the WhatsApp group and had access to the shared drive.

**Action** SS to write to Ben Keevil politely advising him that he will be withdrawn from WhatsApp group and shared drive as he has been unable to dedicate the requisite time and input to the SG.

It was noted that there was still no representation from Rudge or Standerwick on the SG and that the SG should ensure that activity engaged the whole of the parish. The survey publication and distribution may provide opportunity to identify and recruit volunteers from both villages.

#### 4. Overview of Recent Planning Activity

AT provided the group with an overview of planning activity in the parish since 2012, in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework, the Mendip Strategic Land Availability Assessment (2012), the Mendip Local Plan Part 2 (2021) and the outcome of the resultant Judicial Review of the increased housing allocations for Norton St Philip and Beckington. Although the revised allocations had been ruled unlawful, there remained a requirement for an additional 505 houses across Mendip. AT provided a plan of the main sites that had been identified in the original 2012 assessment. PF recommended that all SG familiarise themselves with the Mendip Local Plan Part 2.

AT noted that the Mendip Local Plan runs until 2029 and that work on the next plan would normally be expected to start in around 2027. However, it was possible that the new amalgamated Somerset Council might decide to start this process earlier. He noted that neighbourhood plans would play a key role in informing this process.

It was agreed that the NP needed to consider historic constraints on development, notably listed buildings, the capacity of the two roundabouts on the A36 and drainage and sewerage issues in Beckington. It was noted that the issue of phosphate run off was a matter for Somerset Council and was not something that the SG could influence as there was no direct impact on the parish.

**Aternote:** Following consultation with ST, it should be noted that the Local Plan Part 2 was adopted in December 2021. The following extract from the Somerset Council website is included for information:

*Following a Judicial Review into Local Plan Part 2, the following site allocations were deleted from the plan on 16 December 2022 – MN1, MN2, MN3, BK1 and NSP1 and remitted to the council for reconsideration. The remainder of adopted Local Plan Part 2 is not affected. A related Judicial Review into the changes made to the Mendip Policies Map was dismissed on 14th July 2023. More information is contained in the Executive Report – 10th July 2023.*

*The Council is currently undertaking the process required under paragraph 6 of a High Court Order made on 16th December 2022 to consider where to allocate 505 units consequent on the judgement. This may result in new allocations and amendments to development boundaries once complete. This Order was updated on 14th July 2023 setting specific dates for consultation and submission of proposals by 1st July 2024.*

*A Local Development Scheme (LDS) was agreed at Somerset Executive on 4 October 2023 setting out a timetable to replace former district plans with a single Somerset-wide development plan by 2028.*

*The LDS also confirms the timings and scope for a partial update of the Local Plan Part II*

*to identify existing or new housing sites to provide only for 505 dwellings by 2029. This will not be a wider review and may include some applications under consideration and permissions already granted.*

Further information is available at:

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/planning-buildings-and-land/adopted-local-plans/?district=Mendip>

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/planning-buildings-and-land/somerset-local-plan/>

## 5. Comms Update

JT updated the SG on the work of the Comms Work Group and provided a proposed timeline of activities to inform residents of how the NP survey would be launched and delivered. It was agreed that a separate Survey Work Group was required to consider and draft the survey content ahead of the next SG meeting. Membership of this group was agreed as SS, PF, MU and SB. The following communication timeline was agreed:

1 February	Post on Beckington Facebook page. The same information to be posted on the NP website and in Network Magazine.
<b>Action</b>	Comms Group to finalise text for Facebook, NP website and Network.
2-4 February	Leaflets to be delivered to every house in the parish. NB Volunteers will be required for this.
<b>Action</b>	Comms Group to coordinate production of leaflet.
12 February	Survey Group to meet at 7 pm at 4 Goose Street to produce a draft list of survey questions.
4-6 March	Launch invitation to be delivered to every house in the parish and posted to local stakeholders.
<b>Action</b>	Comms Group to coordinate production of the invitation.
14 March	Launch event at Beckington Village Hall, 6.30-8.30 pm. To include food and drink.
15-17 March	Survey to be delivered to every house in the parish. To involve door knocking to explain what is required.
14 March – 11 April	Four-week window for surveys to be returned. During this period there would be two or three public Q&A sessions conducted across Beckington, Rudge and Standerwick.

It was further agreed that laminated posters and flyers would be produced for display around the parish.

**Action** Comms Group to coordinate.

## 6. Key Stakeholders

A list of key stakeholders had been produced and posted on the shared drive. It was agreed that further discussion would be required on how to engage with them, but that formal engagement would only take place once the results of the residents' survey were known.

## 7. Neighbourhood Plan Production and Content

It was agreed that, although the NP is not solely about housing, this would be an important issue and that consideration should be given to design principles and a housing needs

assessment (HNA). SS advised that technical support for an HNA has already been approved through the Locality neighbourhood planning support programme. This will determine and identify population planning and other data to inform the NP. SS, AT, BR and PF will form a sub group to lead on this. How we quantify members of the public who have links to the parish, and would like to live here, must also be considered.

**Action** SS to coordinate the first online briefing meeting re HNA with Locality and AECOM. PF to confirm whether liaison with Locality can be direct or must be via the Parish Council.

The SG agreed that an Environmental Assessment would need to be included in the NP. Discussion focussed on whether there was a limit to the number of technical packages that could be included.

**Action** MU to raise this with ST and seek his advice.

It was agreed that the NP should consider the needs of small businesses and changes in working practices that may have come about with the increase in working from home. It was also agreed that the definition of amenities needed greater precision and how issues such as parking, schools, shops and medical facilities were addressed.

## 8. Financial Update

The SG discussed the financial spreadsheet produced by AT ahead of the meeting. AT stressed that the income/expenditure forecast was imprecise and that greater detail was required to refine broad assumptions. He noted that of the current budget allocation of £7,900, the projected spend was £4,500. Any funds unspent by 1 April would have to be returned. It was not clear whether the SG could re-apply for a further grant.

**Action** SS/MU to seek advice from ST re the availability of a second grant.

It was agreed that SG members would identify potential spends as a matter of urgency. Ideas floated at the meeting included:

- Production of briefing boards for the launch and subsequent meetings
- Paying an architect to assist with design principles
- Paying a photographer to produce a library of key images of the parish and areas for inclusion in the NP document.
- A supply of branded stationery that can be used throughout the project for the production of leaflets etc
- The appointment of an associate to assist ST.

**Action** All SG members to submit ideas to AT by Monday 22 January.

AT confirmed that he would be addressing the expense claims already submitted.

## 9. Website and Internal Communications

The SG noted the excellent progress on the website to date. AR was requested to address the following on his return:

- The website to go live no later than 1 February to coincide with the Facebook post.
- The contacts section to be updated to include a photo of each SG member, where they live (street only) and how long they have lived in Beckington parish.
- Website to include the logo – yet TBC.
- Existing map to be replaced with the official map showing the parish boundary.

**Action** All to provide AR with photo and background information.

**Afternote:** By 26 January please.

SS asked all SG members to alert the group by WhatsApp if they post anything new to the shared drive. Information should include what has been posted and why.

#### 10. Adviser Remit

SS advised that no Terms of Engagement exist for ST. She would be speaking to him about his workload and allocation of tasks and whether there was scope for him providing additional support via an associate. She requested that all liaison with ST be conducted via the Chair and MU only.

**Action** SS to liaise with ST.

#### 11. Project Plan Review

SS would like to end each meeting with a review of the Project Plan. She was concerned about areas where we are behind the intended timeline for C1 although C2 (the launch) was on schedule. The following points were agreed in discussion:

The summary page only of the Project Plan to be posted on the NP website with the detailed version contained in an internal document.

An Engagement/Communications Plan should be published so that residents know what to expect, how we will be engaging with the public and what events will take place. The plan needs to include detail on how residents can access information, get involved and make their views heard. It was agreed that this needs to be ready in time for the launch on 14 March but that we should take advice from ST on what form it should take. JT noted that the headlines were already on the website and that these could be developed to include further information.

**Action** MU to request clarification from ST.

#### 12. Any Other Business

SS advised that Somerset Council has published a paper covering options to address a projected £100m funding gap for the next financial year. A public consultation has been launched via an online survey that will run until 22 January. Details are available on the Somerset Council website.

The SG discussed the importance of framing survey questions correctly to get the maximum benefit from our own consultation.

**Date of Next Meeting:** Tuesday 20 February 2023 at 6.30pm.

**Venue:** Clifford House, Beckington.