

Amport Parish Council

Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Meeting 29 Jan 24 Record of Decisions

Members present:

Diana Stephenson (DS), Chair
Robert Talbot Rice (RTR, Amport Rep
Geraldine Grimshaw, East Cholderton Rep
Tim Grimshaw (TG), Secretary

In attendance:

Sharon De Bru (nee Brentnall) (SB), Consultant (Bluestone Planning) by Zoom
Chris Harris, Chair APC (Agenda item 5)

Apologies:

Anthony Putt, Weyhill Rep
George Foster (GF)
Clare Hemmings (CH)

1. **Introduction.** The Chair welcomed members to this, the seventh NPSG meeting. The principal purpose of this meeting was to receive updates on planning from the WGs, and to finalise arrangements for the Community Engagement event on 27 Feb 24. DS welcomed GG, RTR and AP formally to the NPSG; they had been observers at the last Meeting.

2. **Record of last meeting and Actions arising** (Secretary). The record of the last meeting had been posted on the NP page of the APC website. The Chair formally signed the record. Actions arising:

- DS to consider with APC plans potentially to develop the Village Design Statement (VDS). **Closed.** APC has decided that there is little benefit in updating the VDS, mindful that the Design Codes Study and eventually the NP itself will supersede it.
- TG to circulate an example HNS Survey for NPSG Members to comment.
Complete.
- TG to take forward plans for the implementation by TVBC of a HNS with a target of completion by end-May 24. **Complete.** Update in Agenda item 9 below.
- DS agreed to resolve the grant situation and apply for sufficient funding through the precept. **Complete.**
- GG to consider plans for a community engagement meeting in EC before end-Dec 23. **Complete.** Feedback in Agenda item 3 below.
- RTR to consider a Community Engagement meeting in Amport, perhaps in late-Jan 24. **Complete.** Agenda item 4 below.
- DS to prepare a Communications Plan, ideally with support from an expert in the field. **On-going** - Agenda item 8 below.
- DS to sign the WG ToR and arrange for them to be published on the APC website.
Complete.
- TG to provide copies of the Code of Conduct forms to Clerk APC for the record.
On-going - awaits completion of all initial WG meetings.
- TG to convene next NPSG meeting. **Complete.**

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3. **Feedback from Community Engagement 14 Dec 23.** GG noted that the event had been well attended (30 people from across the Parish). The discussion unsurprisingly centred on: housing development, green spaces, important views, transport/road speeds, Parish Council engagement. There had been limited 'engagement' at the event – this emphasised again the need in the arrival brief for strong emphasis on the need for feedback and the use of post-its. Some said that they had difficulty reading the posters. TG noted that in the formal feedback record from the event, approved and posted on the PC website, he had drafted 'stand notes' and recommended SG/WG members host each of the four stands. Feedback also suggested that there should be more on next steps (eg HNS, Design Codes Study).

4. **WG leads update.** (Geraldine, Anthony, Robert)

- **East Cholderton (ECWG).** GG noted that the ECWG was formed, comprised 6 members and had two meetings (record posted on the Parish website). The ECWG had led the last CE event (Agenda Item 3 above). The next ECWG meeting is on 12 Apr 24. They had allocated areas to WG members for engagement activity and were poised to distribute HNS envelopes. The early ECWG issues were as follows:
 - protecting (through policies, green spaces, important views), the corridor from Mullens Pond through to Ampport, along Pill Hill Brook, which ties in protection from pollution, conservation areas in EC, Hawk Conservancy 'overflight', former 'watercress beds', the Trout Farm, the Fen and the Green.
 - protecting rural nature of our 'hamlet': land around big houses, spaces between dwellings and fields around (e.g. the sheep field by Elmstead Park), and important views (e.g. from London Lodge)
 - understanding the pan handle perspective, an eclectic mix of houses/owners/tenants, potentially a stronger alignment with neighbouring villages of Cholderton and Quarley. GG had just recruited a member to the ECWG from the pan handle, which was anticipated to add real value.

- **Weyhill (WWG).** TG provided the Weyhill report from AP in his absence abroad. The WWG has met twice. They have already canvassed local opinion and had an event in Weyhill around the time of the Coronation; they feel we have a strong sense of local opinion. They support the HNS and favour strong encouragement of online completion (through face-to-face, Facebook, whatsapp or email) offering to deliver hard copy if required. The issues being pursued by the WG are:
 - the need for a community area, perhaps on Michaelmas Field.
 - a passionate objection to the new developments ('consider housing but not a housing estate').

The next WWG meeting is planned for 4 Mar 24.

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- **Amport (AWG).** RTR provided an AWG update. Formation of the AWG was a little behind the other two WGs. He had invited five parishioners to join AWG. The first formal meeting would likely be in mid-March. The next Community Engagement Meeting would be run by AWG and likely would galvanise support. RTR was given suggestions from NPSG members for people who might be interested, which he agreed to follow up. RTR was planning for the next Community Engagement Meeting at Amport School on Tue 27 Feb 24 at 4pm. TG noted that TVBC had agreed to attend to explain HNS plans, and AECOM had agreed to attend and explain Design Codes issues. The meeting noted that the early timing (at the School's request) might suit those not able to make the evening timing of earlier events but it would be problematic for working households. It was suggested that the Hawk Conservancy and School should be invited formally to attend. **Action:** DS agreed to contact Amport School and the Hawk Conservancy to encourage their formal representation at the event. DS agreed to lead on communications for the event. **Action:** DS to advertise the Community Engagement event on 27 Feb 24.
5. **TVBC Local Plan.** DS noted that TVBC had now agreed circulation for consultation of the Local Plan, inviting feedback from PCs and individuals.
- SdB noted that there was little significant change from earlier drafts of the Local Plan and that it was in the early stages of formal consultation (the formal 'adoption' of the Plan likely was Q2 2026). The meeting noted that the PC might note that the SHELAA sites identified in the Local Plan (principally in Weyhill) were neither wanted, nor sustainable¹.
 - CH had reviewed the Local Plan and sought Parish Council opinion. He observed that – on the face of it – the Plan may not have been properly thought out. It is crucial that policy on planning is properly co-ordinated with key points from other areas such as education policy, energy policy, the health / medical systems, the transport systems, as well as funding from the Treasury in central government. A planning policy on its own without coordination in these areas is not sensible. For example, there were two new housing sites proposed in Ludgershall and one at Thruxton Aerodrome, which would likely impact the Parish – not least increased traffic on the Andover Road linking Andover and Ludgershall, and on housing need in the Parish. CH noted that the PC would offer observations on the Local Plan to TVBC once all perspectives had been received.

¹ The SHELAA (Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment) is 'a technical document incorporated within the Local Plan, which provides information on sites; submitted by Landowners and Agents, for potential housing, economic development, Gypsy and Travelling Showpeople, Self-Build housing etc. in relation to their suitability, availability, and achievability. The SHELAA will only identify sites which have been promoted to the Council; it does not allocate sites. The inclusion of the site in the SHELAA does not imply that the Council would necessarily grant planning permission.' [extract from TVBC's website]

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The meeting noted the four tier 'Settlement Hierarchy' in the Local Plan, which defines those towns and villages which have a settlement boundary. TG noted that larger communities (e.g. Andover) are Tier 1. Stockbridge is in the next level, Tier 2. Monxton & Ampport (twinned as the settlements since they benefit from and have access to services and facilities with a nearby settlement), Weyhill and Thruxton are identified as Tier 3. Any settlement not defined in Settlement Tiers 1-3 is considered *countryside*, which includes smaller villages and hamlets where there are limited services and facilities; East Cholderton is in Tier 4 (no settlement boundary) and afforded the strongest protection from future development.

6. **Writing the Neighbourhood Plan (NP).** SdB had provided a limited circulation of a skeleton NP Report format to the Chair and Secretary before the meeting, for comment. SdB noted that it was an early working draft. Some of the Report would be required to meet specific neighbourhood planning requirements. Evidence to demonstrate community engagement and support proposed policies is required. The Ampport NP Survey had provided important perspective. WG input was required on the effects the NP might achieve to help better develop the Parish, or to protect it from unwanted development. **Action:** WGs to provide feedback on the development or protective 'effects' required from the NP (e.g. as covered in WG reports above). Evidenced feedback from CE events would be important. **Action:** DS and TG to provide to SdB comment on the skeleton and inform subsequent development of the Plan. The aim was to provide a substantive Report at draft by end-Mar 24. SdB noted that the impact of the HNS and Design Codes Study would need to be absorbed into the NP in mid-24. The SG noted that it would be prudent to include the development of Ampport House in the NP, perhaps against a worst-case scenario to ensure appropriate protection in the NP. The SG discussed whether the NP might identify sites for future development and noting that the Local Plan had not identified development sites at this stage, was minded also to stay silent. **Afternote:** Correction. The Local Plan requires that 'Neighbourhood [Development] Plans will need to make provision for the following minimum housing requirements ...' and requires ten from the Ampport Parish NP².

7. **Strengthening Governance.** TG noted that the primary structural activity is to form and make effective the Ampport WG. Forming Specialist Groups (for example in highways, education, business, conservation, community, and photography) would follow and provide a Parish-wide perspective on specialist subjects. TG had provided the Chair with a draft Specialist Group Terms of Reference (ToR) for comment. RTR noted that it would be important to have close working between the WGs and Specialist Groups, for maximum efficiency and to avoid confusion. TG commented that the draft ToR covered this. **Action:** DS to comment on the draft Specialist Group ToR, for subsequent circulation to other SG members.

² TVBC Local Plan p54, Spatial Strategy Policy 5.

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8. **Communications.** DS updated on communications planning. The principal objective would be to ensure all parishioners are aware of, and have the opportunity to engage with, Amport's NP work. She noted that communications planning identifies the principal media:

- social media (the most impactful and likely to generate valuable opinions);
- written 'drops' (such as the NP survey flyer that initiated the NP discussion and the HNS);
- the PC website (already has a wealth of information but may not be well used);
- *WhatsApp* groups (noting some forms are not GDPR compliant for NP purposes, although business/private groups meet GDPR³ requirements - permissions);
- *Instagram*;
- media (e.g. newspapers), for example leading up to the Referendum where the NP is 'made', or not;
- Walking the streets – face to face contact was often very effective, if there is a common understanding of the key messages;
- Parish and other noticeboards (e.g. at The Hawk Conservancy and The Hawk Inn).

In principle, 'little and often' was the mantra. DS argued that raising questions, and focusing on impactful headlines and straplines was more effective than (lengthy) text providing information. Increasing the intensity of communications closer to key events would be important. **Action:** DS agreed to circulate a draft Communications Plan to NPSG for comment.

The early focus of the next phase of NP communications would focus on community engagement events, and the HNS and Design Codes Study. **Action:** DS to focus communications on CE, HNS and Design Codes topics. The meeting discussed how data was stored and the GDPR specific needs, and agreed a better understanding was required for explanation in the Communications Plan.

9. **Housing Needs Survey (HNS).** TG updated on HNS planning. The purpose of the HNS was to determine the need for affordable housing and support the NP by providing data for housing needs (size, type, quantity, design requirements e.g. for disability). TG had received from TVBC the HNS envelopes, one for each household, addressed and including: a NPSG covering letter from DS, on behalf of NPSG/APC; a TVBC covering letter; the hard copy survey; explanatory notes on affordable housing definitions; and a self-addressed envelope to return the survey. The survey was online and now live⁴. Completion for most would take 10-15 minutes; those with potential affordable housing needs in the future would complete the second part of the survey. The survey closes online on 11 Mar 24, with hard copy post being accepted by 17 Mar 24. TVBC would provide a draft report by 29 Apr 24, for NPSG review by 6 May. The Final Report would be provided by TVBC by 13 May 24. TVBC had confirmed that they would attend the next Community Engagement event.

³ GDPR – general data protection requirements.

⁴ <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/88MHXZX>

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10. **Design Codes Study.** TG updated on progress with the contractor AECOM on this government funded Study, coordinated through 'Locality' their agent. The Study's aim is to 'ensure that Parish style is reinforced by well-designed development, and that potential developers are provided with a reference point for *locally distinctive design*'. The kick-off meeting with AECOM had been hosted by TG on 28 Jan 24, and AECOM had then completed their own site visit. AECOM had agreed to provide to Sec NPSG a draft format of their Report by 9 Feb 24. They had agreed to attend the CE event on 27 Feb 24 and would table in advance draft design code questions for NPSG to consider. A mature draft of their Report would be passed to NPSG by end-Apr 24, with a final draft by end May 24. Locality complete a quality check and would likely publish the Report not later than end Jun 24.

11. **Future plans.** TG noted that future plans included:

- WGs identifying effects required from the NP (WG leads);
- Community engagement event 27 Feb 24 (Amport WG);
- Supporting the Housing Needs Survey (closes 11 Mar online, 17 Mar 24 hard copy) (WG leads);
- Supporting the Design Codes Study (TG);
- First draft NP (SdB).

12. **Any other business.**

- **Planning support.** The meeting noted the need for a substantive discussion with Bluestone Planning on future scope and funding, including stronger clarification on whether there might be additional funding through Locality once their grant funding 'window' had opened. **Action:** DS to discuss with SdB future scope of consultancy support and funding.
- **Next NPSG Meeting.** The meeting agreed that the next NPSG meeting might be during the week 29 Apr 24 would be helpful to take drafts of the HNS and Design Codes Study Reports and provide feedback. **Action:** TG to convene the next NPSG Meeting.

Prepared by:

Approved by:

Tim Grimshaw
Sec NPSG
9 Feb 24

Diana Stephenson
Chair NPSG
9 Feb 24