

Harberton Parish Neighbourhood Plan (HNP)
Minutes of the Meeting of the Steering Group

7.00pm Monday 4th September 2023 at Harbertonford Village Hall Meeting Room

In attendance: Cllr Chris Bowley, Alex Crowe (late), Cllr Douglas Hambly (Chair), Sally Lougher, Prana Simon, Cat Radford (Parish Clerk/HNP Minutes Secretary).

Apologies: Peter Cogley, Jem Friar, Alex Crowe gave apologies for expected lateness.

Members of the public: 2

Public Session

2 members of the public introduced themselves, one as a representative of the landowners for the land part of Ford Farm (adjacent to Meadow Close) and one as representatives of landowners of the land at Preston Farm.

Both were in attendance at the meeting as a response to the Site Options Assessment document that had been shared with them in which their sites had been noted by the report as being suitable or potentially suitable for inclusion within the Neighbourhood Plan. Further discussion commenced under item 7 of the agenda.

Agenda

1. **Apologies** were received as above and sanctioned.
2. **Elect new members to the committee** (if any) None elected.
3. **Declaration of Interests**
 - 3.1. Register of Interests Steering group members were reminded of the need to update their register of interests if they have changed.
 - 3.2. Declaration of Interests No interests were declared on items on the agenda.
4. **Approve Minutes** of the last meeting. **It was AGREED** to accept the minutes of the meeting of 10th July 2023 as an accurate record.

NB The meeting agenda was taken out of order. Items 7.1 – 7.35 were discussed before returning to item 5. Alex arrived soon after discussion of item 7 commenced.

5. **Update on actions** from the last meeting

Item	ACTION	Owner	Progress
230710 6	Make contact with the owners of Little Owl Cottage and request information on the property as noted in the Design Code draft.	Jem	No update. Cat agreed to contact the owners if no update were to come from Jem.
230710 7	Update the proposed timeline and bring it back to the next meeting.	Alex	Alex had prepared an updated timeline which was presented to the meeting. It was AGREED to adopt the revised draft. <i>Agreed revised timeline appears below.</i>
230710 7	Members of the steering committee will read the draft plan ahead of the next meeting to re familiarize themselves with the content, and bring thoughts and comments to the next meeting.	ALL	For discussion at agenda item 9.
230710 7	Compile a redrafting framework for prior circulation and discussion at the next meeting. This document would refer to material that should be in the plan (drawing from consultation etc) and refer to weaker	Alex	For discussion at agenda item 9.

	material in the current draft that could be revised or removed.		
230619 6.2.1.2	Think about possible questions to ask farmers and landowners.	Cat	Ongoing.
230619 6.2.1.2	Talk with Cllr Richard Morris with regard to brokering conversations with farmer and other landowners.	Alex	Ongoing

Adopted revised timeline

September	Redraft NP (except some sections on site allocation and energy), using Housing Needs Assessment, Design Code, SEA scoping doc, Site Options document, Community Conversations write-up, etc
October	STAGE 2: Site consultation event STAGE 2: Energy consultation event Development work on NP policies and community initiatives
November - December	- Complete redraft of NP and deliver to AECOM as input to SEA - Continue development work on NP policies and community initiatives as necessary - Check in with SHDC to "reality check" we're on the right track. - Develop a plan and publicity campaign for final consultation, including drafting a questionnaire STAGE 2 continued: - Focused public engagement work on specific issues as necessary - Build delivery mechanisms for aspirational policies/projects
January	SEA delivered - Update draft NP using input from SEA and SHDC etc if necessary STAGE 2 continued: focused public engagement / project delivery mechanisms
February - March	STAGE 3: Final consultation event + questionnaire
March - April	Analyse final consultation responses and update draft NP as necessary Final check in with SHDC and other key stakeholders to "reality check"
End April	Submit final draft to PC for submission to SHDC for referendum

6. Design Code

- 6.1. Receive draft 2 of Design Code and responses to comments made on draft 1 It was noted that draft 2 had been received and all attending members had read it.
- 6.2. Consideration any further comments for AECOM before document sign off Comments received from Prana had been circulated with the agenda. No further comments were made. **It was AGREED** to forward comments received to AECOM for consideration. **ACTION: Cat** will liaise with the AECOM Design Code consultant on finalising the draft design code and to go ahead with a meeting to discuss revising the Character Boundary as per the agreement made at the previous meeting.
- 6.3. Consideration of any actions for the Steering Group in light of responses received to queries raised No further actions were discussed, however note was made to correspondence concerning publication of the draft Design Code between the Parish Clerk (Cat) and a member of the public. The Clerk was supported for making the decision to publish the draft design code, understanding the circumstances in which this decision was made.

7. Site Options Assessment *NB this item was taken out of order, after item 4.*

- 7.1. Receipt of final draft of Site Options Assessment and responses to comments on draft 2. The final draft of the Site Options Assessment had been received. It was noted that minor comments on typos and references to the parish as a whole had been adopted. Calls to include footnoting to reflect the impact of the pandemic on rural businesses and working patterns were not taken forward, commenting that wording used was not 'assertion' but reflective of statutory planning policy and noting that the Neighbourhood Plan document can take a different policy approach to this area based on evidence of rural business operations and working patterns.

In response to requests for inclusion of the Oak Tree Field site to be included in the report AECOM had replied with the comment that *'Our standard approach is that it is only sites that haven't already been assessed through the planning process (planning application) or in a Local Planning Authority assessment are assessed in full so as not to duplicate work. The principal of development on the site has been established through the planning consent so this site ca now be*

taken forward into the site selection process along with any other sites that have been rated green or amber and compared along with other candidates against Neighbourhood Plan objectives to select the best sites to meet the housing requirement. If the Steering Group would like to carry out its own assessment to compare with other sites this can be done using the Locality toolkit and associated proforma which has been written for this purpose. It was acknowledged that an additional note at paragraph 3.4 of the Site Options Assessment explained that the site could be allocated if planning permission is not implemented. Members of the steering group were satisfied with this response.

- 7.2. Consideration of any actions for the Steering Group in light of responses received to queries raised (for example, undertaking a site assessment of Oak Tree Field) In line with reports and comments above, members of the steering group were satisfied that Oak Tree Field was considered a 'Green lit' site and could be included in Site Options presented as part of consultation.
- 7.3. Receive any responses from landowners/agents to Site Options Assessment draft. It was reported that Cat had forwarded electronic copies of the draft Site Options Assessment to those landowners and agents who had provided an email address. Paper copies would be distributed to the remaining 3 landowners without email access shortly.
 - 7.3.1. Land at Tristford Road, Harberton, Totnes site reference SH_23_22_08/13. As this site had not come forward in the 2022 Call for Sites contact had been made with the agent to ascertain if the land was available for development. It was confirmed that the landowner does not wish the land to be put forward for development and it was requested that this be noted and highlighted in any upcoming public consultation.
 - 7.3.2. Old Allotment Field, Harbertonford Reference: SHLAA 2017: SH_23_01_13 Call for Sites 2022: NP7 CfS7 It was noted by the agent that the landowner is keen for the site to go forward, but sees that it is red lighted.
 - 7.3.3. Land Part of Preston Farm, Harberton Site Reference NP6 The landowner's agent confirmed in writing ahead of the meeting that the landowners are very happy to accommodate the required number of houses to meet the needs of the village together with offering some plots for affordable housing. The landowners will also be pleased to provide some amenity space and will avoid developing any of the land in the Flood Zone. The Steering Group were asked to assure the villagers that whilst the site could accommodate the 65 houses it would not be their intention to develop beyond the number the village need.

Further verbal feedback was offered by the member of public (MoP) attending as a representative of Preston Farm, noting that development of Preston Farm would be dependent on the Ford Farm site (reference SH_23_17_16, CfS4, NP4 'Land East of Harberton') going forward, as otherwise there would be a gap between two areas of development that wouldn't be acceptable.

Drawings were presented showing a potential development site on a much smaller portion than reflected in the site assessment. This potential site would be bounded by the current tree line and existing highway. Drawing this boundary around development would avoid development on the flood plain, and any development within sight of St Andrew's Church. Landowners were minded to develop approximately 10 homes within this site.

The landowner's representative was asked what the landowners really wanted to achieve by putting the site forward within the Neighbourhood Plan. In response he commented that as landowners who had been local to Harberton for several generations, they wanted to give the opportunity for the village to expand, to provide the means for those young people who were brought up in the village to have the opportunity to continue to live in the village. They wanted to offer amenity land as well – space either the village community as a whole, or the individuals to buy the houses to enjoy.

The landowner commented that development of this site would be respectful of current village residents, as current housing is not overlooked by this land. Development on the proposed plot would also not be overbearing and would also respect the sensitivities of development near the church.

7.3.4. Ford Farm site reference SH_23_17_16, CfS4, NP4 'Land East of Harberton'

The MoP attending as a representative of the site at Ford Farm commented that the density proposed by the Site Options Assessment is outrageously high and queried whether the calculations within the Site Options Assessment were correct – noting reference made within the report to calculations based on 80% of the area of the site didn't appear to tally with the calculation made. It was commented that this site has a lot of mature trees, hedgerows and a flood zone. The site much smaller than it first appears, making it impossible to achieve 24 houses. A constraints plan was included with the landowner's response to the 2022 Call for Sites which detailed this. A preapplication has been submitted to the local authority proposing development of up to 9 houses. It was commented that the rationale for density of development

was twofold; firstly, if taking account the Joint Local Plan's requirement of 20 homes in Harberton, of which 12 are likely to come forward through development of the Community Land Trust site at Oak Tree Field there is a remainder of 8 dwellings to be found for Harberton. It is noted however that wider assessment of the Parish sees an allocation for Harbertonford Village of 30 homes, which the sites that have come forward and assessed as part of the Site Options Assessment will struggle to meet.

The Ford Farm representative, a Land Promoter working with the local landowners, commented that the landowners do not want to see this site being over-developed and consider up to 9 homes with generous gardens and lots of space as being appropriate.

In response to the question from the steering group as to what the landowner hoped to achieve from the site and why it was being put forward for development. the representative commented that the landowner's family have owned Ford Farm for many years, and in the past sold the parcel of land to enable the development of Meadow Close. The landowners would like to see slow, controlled growth of the village and would like to see family housing made available to encourage more generations of young people come into the village. Their intention is to provide family housing, at a mix of sizes, focusing on places where people want to live. They are cautious of changing the character of the village and are of the opinion that this is one of the natural points of the village to grow – particularly as the site is served by roads off the A road to Totnes and that would not draw any additional traffic through the village centre.

There was discussion with both representatives on whether either or both sites could bring forward affordable housing, or affordable rented housing. There were discussions about density required to bring forward affordable housing on the sites themselves or if a contribution would be made to provision of affordable housing elsewhere. Examples were given in which Section 106 funding has been used to support Community Land Trust development. It was noted that an agreement had been made with the South Hams Affordable Housing Officer to share the Harberton Parish Site Options Assessment report once received in order to open discussions about bringing forward affordable homes on smaller plots of land, or if there were opportunities to work with South Hams District Council on development. There were also comments on whether conditions could be placed on planning permission or through policies within the Neighbourhood Plan that could restrict sale of development to local people.

Opportunities for self-build were also discussed, where it was commented that self-build sites on village boundaries can be attractive for families seeking a more affordable option. It was suggested that those who buy a house are likely to reside in it for 3 years, and those who build a house are likely to stay 20 years. Discussion about possibilities for self-build were heavily caveated, commenting that for the landowners this option introduces a much greater risk around raising development finance.

When asked how proposed houses would be built, it was commented by both representatives that once planning permission was granted, or the site allocated within the neighbourhood plan, it would probably be passed on to a local developer/builder a builder to buy the site and take on the plans to completion. When queried whether land could be sold to a developer to manage properties for rent – for example a registered provider - it was commented that the most likely scenario would be development to sell. The representative of the Ford Farm site made it clear that they cannot make any promises on behalf of the landowners as to what they may or may not do in the future. Unless locked into a planning agreement the landowner is free to sell the land to whoever they want.

It was commented that the agenda of the landowners represented and the agenda of the community shared through recent consultation are the same, noting the opportunity to keep these conversations going to create the best conditions to bring forward develop that both landowners and local people want to see and to avoid risk of a scenario in which the land is sold to developers who bring forward development that no one wants.

It was commented that there appears to be appetite to do something really radical, special and exemplary to support sustainable communities, combining development of homes with amenity space, such as the development of a community orchard, or natural responses to flood risk.

It was noted that such ambition for the development of community spaces would need to be met by willingness for the management required, potentially by a community management group, but most likely by the Parish Council.

It was agreed by the representative of Ford Farm to share the pre-application as made to South Hams, noting that it is very high level and drafted as a means to enter into discussion. Having

waited for several years for the Neighbourhood Plan to be completed, they are now on the path to develop a planning application and are beginning to undertake the necessary surveys towards this.

7.3.5. Winsland House site references SH 23 15 08/13, SH 23 15 08/13/16 , CfS5, NP5

A letter had been received from Eden Property Group, co-signed by the landowner raising a number of points under three headline themes: inaccuracies in the draft report, response to the assessment of the site, clarification on the role and purpose of the draft report.

Inaccuracies refer to:

- the availability of the site (the SOA comments that availability is 'not known' when it was confirmed that the land was available for development on response to the 2022 Call for Sites),
- the size of the site given as 5.31 hectares as assessed by the 2017 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and not the c3.9ha area, reduced following the sale of Winsland House and its curtilage from the site.
- the housing yield of 149 is calculated incorrectly, commenting that appropriate density would be far lower than the 35 dwellings per hectare figure used in the SHALL and copied in the draft report, owing to the site's location and characteristics.

Further comments were made in response to errors and assumptions made within the report with regard to specific constraints, giving further clarification with regard to heritage, landscape impact, sustainability, highways, site levels, trees and availability. Full responses suggest that none of the potential constraints identified represent a fundamental challenge that would serve to prevent residential development on the site, commenting that all the issues are material planning considerations that would need to be considered when development proposals are prepared in detail.

The letter concludes with comment on the clarification on the role and purpose of the draft report, commenting that to conclude in this report that so many of the 17 sites assessed are not appropriate for allocation at such an early stage of the is premature. It was commented that to state that a site is not appropriate should mean that it has at least one fundamental obstacle which is unlikely to be overcome at the planning application, suggesting that this is not the case without considering more comprehensive details.

It was AGREED that the letter should be forwarded to AECOM Site Options Assessment team as if there are inaccuracies within the draft report they should be corrected. **ACTION: Cat** agreed to forward the letter. It was noted that the letter from Eden Property Group is very detailed in its comments and therefore should bring forward a clear response from AECOM.

It was AGREED to include comments made by the representative from the Ford Farm site with regard to suspected inaccuracies in the calculation made on housing density for the site.
ACTION: Cat

It was AGREED to accept the offer from Eden Property Group to share the outcomes of the Heritage Report as referred to within the letter. **ACTION: Cat** to request the Heritage Report.

It was AGREED that a meeting should be held with representatives of the Local Planning Authority (South Hams District Council (SHDC) Development Management) as soon as possible to discuss the outcomes of the Site Options Assessment overall, to investigate site constraints as identified by the Site Options Assessment and to ask for comments on the acceptability of the sites for future development. It was noted that since a considerable amount of time has elapsed it would be appropriate to understand if SHDC's current position on the development of Winsland House.

It was noted that in preparation for the meeting Cat had attempted to make contact with the Neighbourhood Planning Officer at South Hams District Council, and had some concerns that this position had been vacated. **ACTION: Cat** to contact South Hams District Council with regard to setting a meeting with representatives of the Local Planning Authority as soon as possible.

It was agreed to make contact with South Hams District Council Affordable Housing Officer to request a meeting to discuss the Site Options Assessment report. **ACTION: Cat and Prana**

8. **Stage 2 Community Consultation**

- 8.1. Community Energy Consideration of any actions towards October event. Not discussed.
- 8.2. Farmers and Landowners Report back on actions for consideration. Not discussed

- 8.3. Site Options Assessment Consider actions in preparation for exhibition. It was agreed to attempt to hold conversations with the Local Planning Authority before making any further plans for public consultation. It was noted that the date of 28th October had been agreed on which to hold consultation and therefore a meeting with the LPA should be sought ASAP.

9. Preparation for redrafts of Neighbourhood Plan

- 9.1. Receive redrafting framework Alex had made and circulated a skeleton outline that set out a proposals on how to reframe and restructure content and undertake a redraft of the plan.

It was commented that the current draft of the plan had clearly been written by committee and that it was necessary for the redraft to be held and structured to ensure one clear voice. It was noted that there was specific expertise within the group that would be important to draw on - particularly with regard to the housing and sustainable energy chapters. There was comment that the plan will have multiple readers and will need to be written in a form appropriate for local residents, the Neighbourhood Planning Inspector and for developers. It was agreed that it will be necessary to balance narrative outlining context and aspiration with appropriate policy wording. It was also noted that if the plan includes reference to specific community aspirations, then it would be appropriate to include reference to how these aspirations could come about and/or be managed.

ACTION: ALL individual members of the steering group were invited to make any detailed comments directly to Alex to enable him to absorb these when undertaking rewrites.

ACTION: Prana agreed on rewrites to the Housing Chapter and bring it to the committee.

ACTION: Alex agreed to continue to undertake redrafts of the remainder of the plan.

- 9.2. Discuss outcomes of Steering Group members review of the most recent draft plan (dated 27th February 2020). Comments and reflections were incorporated into discussion above.

10. Any other business

10.1. Finance

- 10.1.1. It was reported that Cat had been asked by PTFA caterers of the Community Consultation for catering costs, but a formal summary of costs had not yet been supplied. **It was AGREED** that should a final summary be presented, this could be checked and signed off with Alex before presenting directly to the Parish Council for payment.
- 10.1.2. Prana presented costs of £4.25 for photocopying and **it was AGREED** that the payment be approved by the Steering Group and that Parish Council would be asked to authorise payment.
- 10.1.3. After discussion **it was AGREED** to make three bound colour copies of the Site Options Assessment to forward to landowners who did not have access to email at a cost of £129.60.

- 10.2. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Process Update It was reported that Cat had made contact with the AECOM SEA team to inform them of the updated timeline for completion of the plan. Members of the Steering Group were informed that Stage 1, and 2, SEA Screening and Scoping are now complete. The next step is Stage 3, the SEA Environmental report that will contain three sections: The summary of SEA Scoping; Consideration of Reasonable Alternatives; and, Appraisal of the Draft Plan. AECOM consultants had proposed a meeting be held in the coming weeks, The main outcome of those discussions will be to understand the preferred approach (particularly in relation to the proposed allocations within the plan) and ensure that the appropriate reasonable alternatives are considered through the SEA. It was noted that whilst there is no defined approach to the consideration of reasonable alternatives, good practice is to have a think about what the potential contentious issues within the Neighbourhood Plan might be, and explore these in further detail. Alex and Prana both expressed an interest in joining a meeting, subject to timing. **ACTION: Cat** would respond to AECOM to ask if it would be preferable if a meeting was held before, during or after consultation with the community and after a meeting could be held with the Local Planning Authority.

- 10.3. Community Land Trust (CLT) Prana commented that she had invited Nick Williams to contribute to the Housing Chapter of the Neighbourhood Plan to ensure that the narrative best supported the ongoing work of the CLT. There was discussion on whether to include a specific agenda item on the CLT at the next meeting. It was commented that there was a standing item on the agenda of each meeting of the Parish Council for feedback on progress of the CLT, and it was commented that this was considered the appropriate mechanism for flow of information. It was commented that Parish Councillors who were also members of the Steering Group would use this opportunity to ask questions. There was general agreement that inclusion of the Oak Tree Field site was considered important as bringing forward affordable housing for local people and members of the

Steering Group wanted to support this becoming a reality. **It was AGREED** that Nick would be asked to draft a one page summary about the CLT for inclusion within the Neighbourhood Plan.

11. Summary of actions before next meeting

Item	ACTION	Owner
230904 6.2	To liaise with AECOM Design Code Consultant on finalising the draft design code and to go ahead with a meeting to discuss revising the Character Boundary as per the agreement made at the previous meeting.	Cat
230904 7.3.5	Forward the letter from Eden Property Group to the AECOM Site Options Assessment team as if there are inaccuracies within the draft report they should be corrected.	Cat
230904 7.3.5	When writing to AECOM SOA consultants to include comments made by the representative from the Ford Farm site with regard to suspected inaccuracies in the calculation made on housing density for the site.	Cat
230904 7.3.5	Contact Eden Property Group contact and request the Heritage report as referenced by as referred to within the letter.	Cat
230904 7.3.5	Contact South Hams District Council with regard to setting a meeting with representatives of the Local Planning Authority as soon as possible.	Cat
230904 7.3.5	Make contact with South Hams District Council Affordable Housing Officer to request a meeting to discuss the Site Options Assessment report.	Cat/Prana
230904 9.1	All individual members of the steering group were invited to make any detailed comments directly to Alex to enable him to absorb these when undertaking rewrites.	ALL
230904 9.1	Alex and Prana agreed to collaborate on rewrites to the Housing Chapter, and that Prana would undertake a first draft before forwarding to Alex for the next phase.	Alex/Prana
230904 9.1	Continue to undertake redrafts of the remainder of the plan.	Alex
230904 10.2	Respond to AECOM SEA consultants to ask if it would be preferable if a meeting was held before, during or after consultation with the community and after a meeting could be held with the Local Planning Authority.	Cat
230904 10.2	Ask Nick Williams to draft a one page summary about the CLT for inclusion within the Neighbourhood Plan.	(unallocated)
230710 6	Make contact with the owners of Little Owl Cottage and request information on the property as noted in the Design Code draft. Cat agreed to contact he owners if no update were to come from Jem.	Jem/Cat
230619 6.2.1.2	Think about possible questions to ask farmers and landowners.	Cat
230619 6.2.1.2	Talk with Cllr Richard Morris with regard to brokering conversations with farmer and other landowners.	Alex

12. Date of next meeting 7pm Monday 25th September 2023