

Harberton Parish Neighbourhood Plan (HNP)
Meeting of the Steering Group
7.00pm Tuesday 17th June 2025 Harberton Parish Hall

Harberton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (HNPSG) Members: Francesca Smith, Jono Stirrup, Anne Watson

Minute Secretary/Parish Clerk: Cat Radford

Apologies: Guy Soulsby

Members of the public: 2

Public Session

No comments

Agenda

1. **Apologies** Were received as above. Whilst the meeting was quorate, it was noted that only 2 voting members were present.
2. **Steering Group Membership** *Note resignations from the committee and elect new members (if any)* There were no resignations and no new members. It was noted that someone had responded to the call for volunteers that had been circulated, and the Clerk will put them in touch with the Chair.
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. To declare any interests No interests were declared on items on the agenda. The Clerk responded to members queries as to what interests would need to be declared.
4. **Minutes** *Consider approval of the following minutes:*
Minutes of the meeting of the Harberton Parish Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group 19th May 2025*
Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Harberton Parish Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group 29th May 2025*

Minutes were reviewed and there were no amendments proposed for accuracy. As there were only 2 voting members present, it was agreed to carry forward signing the minutes until the next meeting.

5. Update on actions from meetings*

Ref	Action/Task	Owner	Progress
2407158	Send the email as drafted by Alex to the green space landowners. (Using a list of the sites in the draft chapter to identify the landowners).	Clerk (Cat)	Ongoing
Updated 202505195	Update draft Neighbourhood Plan <i>to include Parish Council comments on energy chapter and flooding chapter, consultation responses re Local Green Spaces and Views, also add references to consultation throughout document as necessary (re roads parking flooding nature etc). Also work in other stakeholder comments outstanding (including District Council officers and comments from the District Councillor, John McKay), comments from the meeting with new committee members, held on 9th December 2024 and newly drafted sections including: Parish Profile Annex, desired footpaths map, maps of bus stop and safe crossing.</i>	Alex	Ongoing
202410146.2	Pursue Harberton footpath and bus stop with DCC.	Clerk	COMPLETED A report detailing the correspondence

			<p>between the HNPSG, the Integrated Public Transport Team and the Principal Highways Development Management Officer had been circulated to HNPSG members.</p> <p>This showed discussion about the viability of creating a bus stop on the A381 at Langridge Cross, and the vision for a new pedestrian footpath from Harberton village centre connecting to the proposed bus stop.</p> <p>The Principal Highways Development Management Officer could not support the idea, as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - asking a developer for piecemeal routes and bus stop infrastructure would not be possible when considering the legal tests of S106. - Serious road safety issues were flagged on assessment of the sites. - The maximum acceptable walking distance to a bus stop in Manual for Streets is 800m to ensure their use. - concerns were raised about the safety of vulnerable road users crossing the A381 especially at night, due to high road speeds. <p>The Steering Group therefore acknowledged that the enquiry had been pursued but considered unfeasible by Devon County Highways. It was noted that members of the public can flag down buses on the A381.</p>
20241014 6.2	Get Foreword from the D.Cllr John McKay. <i>Agreed to defer chasing this until after the work with AECOM has been concluded.</i>	Jono	Ongoing
20241014 6.2	Tidy up evidence base folder and create index <i>It was noted that material exists on the website and Alex has been keeping a folder, but this needs to be organised and properly indexed.</i>	[Unallocated until relevant]	NA
20241014 6.2	Identify and commission copyeditor and designer for final form of doc <i>It was noted that there is the possibility of using the in-house team at South Hams District Council, but this will require a budget.</i>	[Unallocated until relevant]	NA
20241014 6.2	Checklist of final editing tasks incl <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add hyperlinks to references in text • Check permissions of people in photos (eg SHV photo currently used in Env chapter) Check all refs to NPPF - NPPF para numbers have changed in 2024 update.	[Unallocated until relevant]	NA
Updated 20250218 5	Produce a revised draft of the Parish Profile Annex and forward to Alex for inclusion within the Reg 14 draft that will be presented to the committee in full, once complete. Alex to support Francesca in accessing the DropBox to support narrative development.	Francesca	Ongoing
Updated 20250218 5	Identify an approach and make a recommendation to the committee on the creation of a list of non-designated heritage	Jono	Ongoing

	assets for inclusion in the Heritage Chapter. Clarification: The output required is list of non-designated heritage assets in the Parish, with some comment on why they are considered important in the community; for example a simple table. Ideally this would be a collective process with others in the community.		
Updated 20250218 5	Forward 'Desired Footpaths Map' and 'Map of Bus Stops and Safe Crossings' to Alex for inclusion in Regulation 14 draft	Guy	Ongoing
Updated 20250519 5	Write Consultation Statement <i>This is an annex on "how this NP was created"</i> To be completed once the Regulation 14 consultation is completed	Anne	<i>To complete when Reg 14 complete</i>
20250519 5	Find out what the Basic Condition Statement (required of all NPs) is.	Anne	COMPLETED for discussion at Item 9
20250519 5	Select images for inclusion in the draft plan.	Guy	Ongoing
20250318 10	Guy to draft paragraph on sewage pipes and send to Alex who will log when received.	Guy	Ongoing
20250422 6	Liaise with Cllr Chris Bowley on flooding matters in Harbertonford, to ensure they are reflected in the flood mitigation chapter, requesting advice from Peter Cogley as required. The Clerk to support liaison between Jono and Cllr Bowley.	Jono	Ongoing
20250519 2	To draft an advertisement for Harberton Village Life and the Harberton Email Circular in order to proactively recruit new members to the HNPSG	Jono	COMPLETED
20250519 5	To send a query to SHDC to ask if there is any mechanism (or role that the NP could play) to help inform the Local Planning Authority (LPA) on what Section 106 could/should be imposed.	Clerk	COMPLETED SHDC Officer response summarised "I do not think there is any significant scope for NP involvement. [...] I do not consider that it is appropriate for a NP to include specific guidance on this issue."
20250519 6.2	To publish the 2025 Housing Needs Assessment.	Clerk	COMPLETED
20250519 6.3	i) To update AECOM of the decision not to allocate Winsland House, and that under the circumstances, the HNPSG is coming to the understanding that a SEA will no longer be required. ii) To raise a query with AECOM to make sure that the HNPSG has not misunderstood the situation and whether any SEA work needs to be done.	Clerk	COMPLETED Response received for discussion at item 8.

6. **Steering Group Terms of Reference** *Update on consideration of revision of the Terms of Reference*

Members of the Steering Group were informed that there had been some discussion outside of meetings on whether it is desirable and/or possible to disassociate the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group from the Parish Council. This would involve dissolving the current committee, and re-establishing the Steering Group without it being a formal Committee of the Parish Council.

The Clerk had sought out example Terms of Reference documents in place for other Neighbourhood Plan Steering Groups, showing that some were more informal. Advice had also been sought from The Devon Association of Local Councils, who advised that the neighbourhood plan is a formal project, with legislative and technical requirements and as such does not lend itself to being driven by a group which is not governed by the responsibilities and accountability of a Local Authority committee. Whilst a steering group may be a way of undertaking some of the tasks, the council is ultimately responsible for any formal stages.

DALC suggests that the functions of the group would possibly need various actions and decision-making requirements which go beyond an informal group. A committee structure may suit this purpose well and it could still include non-councillor members (but it must be Chaired by a councillor). However, it is important that the process is open to the wider community allowing them to play an active role. As the process of creating a neighbourhood plan is an ideal opportunity to work with the community and find out what is important to them, and how they envisage the future of their area.

There was discussion in which it was queried the benefit of disassociation, rather than making minor amendments to the current Terms of Reference. It was proposed that Committee Meetings of the Steering Group could be short, receiving and approving reports provided by Working Groups that are able to meet more regularly and informally and therefore process the work required more rapidly.

To proceed with this quickly ahead of the August break from meetings, proposed changes to the Steering Group's Terms of Reference should be made to the Parish Council's July meeting.

ACTION: The Clerk circulate example Terms of Reference documents to members. **ALL members** read and make comments on this before the next meeting of the Parish Council.

7. Neighbourhood Plan Workstream* *Update on and consideration of updated workstream (responsibilities and timeline)*

A draft Workstream document had been produced by Anne. **ACTION: All** to provide **Anne** with feedback on the Workstream document ahead of the next meeting.

Some members requested this be posted in an online filing system, such as Google Drive or DropBox.

It was agreed that 'Workstream Review' could be a standing item on future agendas, in order to slim down the 'actions update' table.

8. Strategic Environment Assessment* *Update and consider response to AECOM consultant*

With regards to the 'additional reasonable alternatives' work, AECOM consultants had confirmed that there may not be a need to appraise any additional options if the intention is to no longer allocate sites within the Neighbourhood Plan (recognising that this is to be confirmed with respect to Ford Farm). AECOM can explain the context within the Environmental Report, which will provide a useful narrative contributing to the evidence base.

It was further confirmed that if the Neighbourhood Plan is not intending to allocate, there could be merit in re-screening the Plan in due course to determine whether an SEA is still required. It was noted that without a re-screen for SEA, with confirmation from the consultees that a SEA is no longer required, the Neighbourhood Plan would fail to meet its basic conditions, as the legal requirement for SEA would have not been met. This is due to the fact that the Harberton Parish Neighbourhood Plan has already received a positive screening determination for SEA from the Local Authority. A re-screening exercise could also take a considerable amount of time to complete (and would need to be undertaken by the Local Authority).

In light of the above, and given that AECOM has made significant progress with the SEA to date, the most straightforward option would be for AECOM to finalise our assessment and provide the HNPSG with a completed SEA Environmental Report in good time for Regulation 14 consultation. AECOM has taken this approach for other Neighbourhood Plans in the past where a decision on whether to allocate sites has either changed or has become more complex due to wider factors.

AECOM reminded the Steering Group that the Environmental Report will contain three key sections:

1. Summary of SEA scoping – including the responses received from the consultees and how these have been addressed through the SEA.

2. Consideration of reasonable alternatives – including the spatial options which AECOM has considered to date alongside a narrative explaining the position with respect to allocating sites.
3. Appraisal of the Neighbourhood Plan policies, once received.

AECOM will need a relatively final version of the draft Neighbourhood Plan (particularly the policy wording) to complete Section 3.

Members commented that whilst there is a plan in place to reach Regulation 14 consultation, significant work is required on the plan to get it to that phase.

AECOM had offered a call to talk through the above. The Clerk suggested that another member of the Steering Group may wish to take this on.

9. Basic Conditions Statement *Review and discuss draft Basic Conditions Statement template, discussing structure of the plan and relationship between objectives and policy***

It was noted that Neighbourhood plans must meet certain 'basic conditions' before they can come into force. These are tested through the independent examination, before a neighbourhood plan may proceed to referendum. The basic conditions for neighbourhood plans are: have regard to national policy; contribute to the achievement of sustainable development; general conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan for the local area; and, compatible with EU obligations.

There was discussion on the format and requirements of a Basic Conditions Statement. It was noted that the Basic Conditions Statement requires each of the policies within the Neighbourhood Plan to be cross referenced against overarching strategic policies within the National Planning Policy Framework and the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan (JLP).

Having undertaken the task to tabulate the policies within the plan, it was commented that the relationship between the Objectives and the Policies weren't immediately apparent.

To support this work going forward: **ACTION: The Clerk (Cat)** would forward to **Anne** the following documents:

- All the Draft Chapter Response Templates that were shared with the Parish Council, as these lay out each of the chapter policies against a series of objectives.
- The draft plan dated 2020, which included footnotes that referenced Local Plan and NPPF policies.
- A 2024 draft of the plan on which South Hams District Council Officers made comments.

ACTION: Anne agreed to continue working through this material to support work on the Basic Conditions Statement.

10. Housing Consultation *Plan and actions*

During conversation it was suggested that display boards made for the 2024 consultation be reused, and make clear indications as to what aspects have changed. This would include decisions made by the Neighbourhood Plan committee not to allocate Preston Farm.

Members present did not think it necessary to invite representation from land owners/agents/promoters to further consultation, although it was noted that the land promoters working with the owners of the site at Ford Farm had offered to hold an independent consultation meeting to answer questions about plans for that site.

A working group is looking at the questionnaire and a plan for the consultation exercise and bring this to the steering group for consideration.

It was suggested to test consultation materials with a cross section of members of the community ahead of consultation going live, to understand if the materials are received in the way expected, or if further refinements or explanations are required.

11. Summary of actions before next meeting

Noting that a number of actions have been transferred to the new Neighbourhood Plan Workstream document, and therefore no longer be carried forward on this listing.

Ref	Action/Task	Owner
20250617 6	Circulate example Terms of Reference documents to members. Read and make comments on this before the next meeting of the Parish Council.	The Clerk (Cat) ALL
20250617 7	To provide Anne with feedback on the Workstream document ahead of the next meeting.	ALL
20250617 9	Forward to Anne the following documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All the Draft Chapter Response Templates that were shared with the Parish Council, as these lay out each of the chapter policies against a series of objectives. • The draft plan dated 2020, which included footnotes that referenced Local Plan and NPPF policies. • A 2024 draft of the plan on which South Hams District Council Officers made comments. 	The Clerk (Cat)
20250617 9	To continue working through material to support work on the Basic Conditions Statement.	Anne

12. Confirmation of next meeting date and venue Tuesday 15th July 2025