

Harberton Parish Neighbourhood Plan (HNP)

Meeting of the Steering Group

7.00pm Monday 3rd November 2025 Harberton Parish Hall Committee Room

Steering Group Members Present: Jono Stirrup, Francesca Smith, Guy Soulsby, Anne Watson

Working Group Members Present: Joanna Poulton

Apologies:

Minutes Secretary: Cat Radford (Clerk)

Public Session

- Thanks were given to their Steering Group for their hard work.
- The Steering Group were asked, that given that the planning permission on Oak Tree Field has lapsed, will there be any mention of the site within the plan.
- I was responded that, as far as HNPSG members know, there are still some unresolved matters relating to the Oak Tree Field site.
- It was commented that the dwellings planned for the Community Land Trust development at Oak Tree Field would have counted towards the indicative housing targets for Harberton, prior to the planning permission having lapsed. Comments were made that it is possible that there would be the presumption that the land would have been allocated. It was commented that there are a number of challenges as to why it is difficult to allocate this site in the Neighbourhood Plan: it was noted that because the site had planning permission it was not included in the Site Options Assessment, and was not included in recent public consultation exercises. It was noted that the site has a particular status as a rural exception site (i.e. would not normally be consented for residential development but are considered for/approved to deliver affordable housing). Advice given in 2024 by the Local Planning Authority was not to include reference Oak Tree field due to its rural exception status. It was commented that the Neighbourhood Plan narrative could refer to the history of the Community Land Trust and to ask the Locality Planning Authority, when asked for comment on the regulation 14 draft, for their advice on inclusion, and if advice had changed following the change of status of the site.

Agenda

1. **Apologies** No apologies
2. **Steering Group Membership** *Note resignations from the committee and elect new members (if any)* None
3. **Declaration of Interests**
 - 3.1. Register of Interests: Steering Group and Working Group members are reminded of the need to update their register of interests if they have changed.
 - 3.2. To declare any interests (nature and scope) on items on the agenda
4. **Minutes** *Consider approval of the following minutes:*
Minutes of the meeting of the Harberton Parish Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group 8th October 2025*

RESOLVED: To sign the minutes as an accurate record without amendments

5. Update on actions from the previous meeting*

Ref	Action/Task	Owner	Progress
20251008 6.1	Amend the display to correct status of Preston Farm site from 'Red' to 'Amber' whilst still on display in Harberton	Jono	COMPLETED
20251008 6.2	input the results of the questionnaire to the online form on the week beginning 27 th October, to enable results to be shared with the Steering Group at the next meeting on Monday 3 rd November.	Francesca and Jono	COMPLETED.
20251008 6.2	add additional questions to the questionnaire post closing date of 24 th October, in order to be able to identify those responses received on paper, and to provide initials for the person inputting data.	The Clerk (Cat)	COMPLETED

20251008 7	Undertake a review of re-drafted chapters, and present revised draft to the Steering Group ahead of its next meeting.	Delegated to working group member: Joanna Poulton	COMPLETED
20251008 8	Provide a verbal update to the Parish Council on the contents of the Environment Chapter and its draft policies.	Jono , with support from Anne in identifying key points	COMPLETED It was noted that at its meeting on October 14 the Parish Council responded to a public query for its policy on off-grid private sewage treatment. It was noted that the Parish Council doesn't currently have a policy and therefore look to the Neighbourhood Plan Committee to look at this matter in more detail, requesting an independent expert to support drafting of policy. The HNPSG responded that the Draft Plan currently refers to regulations laid out in the National Planning Policy Framework NPPF rather than develop a new local policy and were satisfied with this approach.

- 6. Housing Consultation Results Review** It was noted that 87 questionnaires had been returned and data compiled. It was noted that, whilst postcodes in the parish are large and a single postcode can span both wards, the majority of respondents who gave responses were Harberton based.

In response to the question 'Do you agree that the Ford Farm site should be included in the Harberton Neighbourhood Plan, following its reclassification by AECOM as 'Amber' (marginally suitable if constraints can be mitigated)? 79.9% of respondents said 'No', 20.9% said 'Yes', with the remainder responding 'Don't Know'.

Respondents were also asked to give comments. Two summary documents had been compiled. One summarising positive comments about development and one summarising concerns.

It was noted that positive comments in support focused on delivery of affordable housing for local people and that new housing is vital to maintaining the villages sustainability and preventing demographic decline. It was noted that development should be conditional on adequate mitigation of flooding, sewerage and traffic issues, and of 'good design'.

The document summarising concerns were themed around flooding and drainage and concerns about development increasing flood risk, overcapacity of sewage systems and wastewater, impact of increased traffic on narrow roads, lack of local infrastructure and services, threat to the character and heritage of the village, impact of development on ecology and the environment, low housing demand, querying whether Harberton Parish is the best place for affordable development. Some comments raised concern and lack of trust in planning processes. Some respondents commented on feeling pressure to accept building simply because national targets demand it.

The HNPSG was pleased with public engagement in the consultation event and considered a return rate of 87 questionnaires as being comparable with the 102 questionnaires returned in response to the 2024 housing consultation survey.

RESOLVED: **ACTION:** The Clerk to publish the summary of results on the Neighbourhood Plan pages of the Parish Council website.

7. Housing Allocation Decision on Ford Farm Site

RESOLVED: the Neighbourhood Plan would not allocate the Ford Farm Site for housing development.

8. Review of draft Harberton Parish Neighbourhood Plan document

A member of the Working Group was invited to introduce the most recent updated draft plan.

- It was noted that it was significantly different in structure, with the intention to help the plan be more easily digestible. Each chapter has been given the same structural framework.
- It was commented that the biggest and most controversial piece is the Housing Chapter. The HNPSG was therefore asked to read this closely.
- The HNPSG was asked if a reader would find a Parish Profile helpful and if it is required, or a duplication of context sections. **It was AGREED** that a one-page overview would be helpful to provide information about the parish for those reading the plan outside of the Parish, and retain the context sections at the front of each chapter.
- **It was AGREED** that the foreword be written by the HNPSG, rather than the District Councillor and signed by the Chair of the Parish Council and Chair of the HNPSG.
- Further advice will be sought on the paragraph being drafted about the process of developing the Neighbourhood Plan – specifically as to regulation 14 and examination stage.
- **It was AGREED** to remove the Community Actions from the main body of the document and include as an appendix.
- There was a discussion as to how the Neighbourhood Plan could be most useful to the Parish Council and the Local Planning Authority, and what tools could be provided within the document that could support decision making processes.
- There was a discussion on the most effective process for bringing the plan to the Parish Council for approval. **It was AGREED** that the plan as drafted be updated with briefing notes for the Parish Council ahead of its next ordinary meeting in November.

ACTIONS as above: Delegated to **Joanna Poulton**.

9. Neighbourhood Plan Workstream

Was reviewed and updated. During this discussion it was queried whether a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required, particularly as it has been determined by the HNPSG not to allocate any land for development. Given the budgetary constraints, the HNPSG find it difficult to understand why an SEA is required.

RESOLVED: **ACTION:** the Clerk to liaise with Neighbourhood Planning Officer on whether a SEA is required.

10. Summary of actions before next meeting

Ref	Action/Task	Owner
20251103 8	• To update the plan as drafted with briefing notes for the Parish Council ahead of its next ordinary meeting in November. • to remove the Community Actions from the main body of the document and include as an appendix. • to draft a one-page 'Parish Profile' overview to provide information about the parish for those reading the plan outside of the Parish, and retain the context sections at the front of each chapter	Delegated to Joanna Poulton
20251103 9	To liaise with Neighbourhood Planning Officer on whether a SEA is required.	Clerk

11. Confirmation of next meeting date and venue

- **1st December 2025** Harberton Parish Hall Committee Room
- **5th January 2026** Harberton Parish Hall Committee Room – if quorate.
- **NB:** The Neighbourhood Plan meeting being held on 3rd February will be accommodated in the main hall, around the annual pantomime.

Meeting closed at 20:54