

**Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group**  
**Minutes of meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> August 2025**  
**at 2pm in the Parish Library**

**1. PRESENT**

Chris Alford (Chairman), David Conroy, Stephanie Cassidy, Gerald Cramp, Tracy Longley, Glenn Back, Jim Colwell. Mark Heeley, and Ian Ross (Vice Chairman)

**2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Gary Andrews and Stephen Goss

**3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None declared

**4. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 3RD JULY 2025**

**Resolved** that the Minutes of the meeting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> July be approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

**5. MEETING ON THE 30<sup>th</sup> JULY 2025 WITH DEREK STEBBING**

Chris and Mark reported on the considerable progress with the draft Plan. Derek Stebbing advised that he thought our Plan was about 80% complete and suggested a number of changes, which have been completed, and that plans/maps should now be attached. He confirmed that he was happy for us to submit the draft to SDC with these changes and there is no need to reference back to him. SDC has advised that they require the whole Plan including Appendices to be sent to them electronically. Various members were allocated tasks for obtaining plans from SDC. Derek had hoped that we could start our Reg 14 consultation this year but understood the need to keep our Plan separate to the SDC Local Plan consultations which are due to start in November 2025. It was agreed that the Reg 14 consultation should commence in February/March 2026.

Further work is now required on the Appendices, the main one being Local Green Spaces. Tracy said that she had obtained ownership details for the Green Spaces apart from Hartley Wood, Bramblings Wood and Old Downs Wood. In the case of Hartley Wood there appeared to be a number of plots in private ownership and Gerald added that many years ago the western

side of the wood was sold off as building plots, but nothing materialised from this action and it is now all in the Green Belt and is protected Ancient Woodland with Tree Preservation Orders and has a Wildlife Reserve designation. Chris added that approximately half the wood east of the main north/south path is owned by the London Borough of Southwark and was designated as a Village Green approximately 20 years ago. This gave people the right to roam in perpetuity. Mark said that he was not aware of an owner for Bramblings Wood.

**Resolved that**

- (i) if the landowners cannot be located for any of the plots, those plots be removed from the list of Local Green Spaces,
- (ii) Hartley Wood be removed from the list, not only due to the problems of locating all the owners but also due to its zoning as Metropolitan Green Belt, its designation of protecting wildlife and the fact that half the wood is designated as a Village Green.
- (iii) the Plan should be issued to SDC during October 2025.

## **6. MEETING WITH SEVENOAKS DC OFFICERS 13TH AUGUST**

Chris and Mark reported on a meeting with Sevenoaks Officers that morning aimed at sorting out the detailed arrangements and timings for the next stages of the Plan. It also included arrangements for securing SEA and HRA Assessments, the preparation of Maps, the publication of the Local Plan and the Regulation 14 consultation dates for the Neighbourhood Plan. This resulted in the attached revised Timeline which allowed separate dates for the two sets of statutory consultations to avoid confusing residents.

Enquiries were made as to whether Sevenoaks maintained a local list of non-designated Heritage Assets and the answer given was that one is being developed this coming Autumn (Sevenoaks contact Rebecca Lamb). A request was also made for a Map containing the Groundwater Source Protection zone for Hartley.

## **7. PUBLICATION OF SEVENOAKS LOCAL PLAN**

**It was agreed** that the Parish Council should be advised of the importance of securing the services of a Planning Consultant to deal with the issues in the Plan on behalf of the Hartley Community. This consultation is currently timed for October/November 2025.

## **8. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN – REG 14 CONSULTATIONS**

The Group discussed the arrangements for the final statutory consultations which were planned for a 6 week period from the middle of February to the end of March 2026. Glenn offered to start drafting and developing the consultation papers and would seek help, when needed. These documents must be ready by the end of January 2026 and cleared with Derek Stebbing.

**The Group agreed these arrangements.**

## **9. FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

Chris reported that the Government is withdrawing its financial support to Neighbourhood Plans at the end of the financial year on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026. The Hartley Plan had so far secured most of its expenditure on surveys and reports from the Government. Hartley Parish still has some £20,000 of support in its earmarked reserves and should be warned that some further limited funds might be needed, particularly to meet the cost of employing Derek Stebbing after the end of the financial year to assist in responding to submissions from the Reg 14 consultations.

**It was agreed** that every effort should be made to maximise the Planning Consultant's time to ensure we spend his time on the project in this financial year.

## **10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Provisionally on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2025 at 2pm in the Library