

**Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group**  
**Minutes of meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2025 at 2pm**  
**in the Parish Library**

**1. PRESENT**

Chris Alford (Chairman), Gary Andrews, Stephanie Cassidy, Gerald Cramp, Tracy Longley, Glenn Back, Jim Colwell and Ian Ross (Vice Chairman)

**2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

David Conroy, Mark Healey and Stephen Goss

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None declared

**4. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 2025**

**Resolved** that the Minutes of the meeting on the 13<sup>th</sup> August be approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

**5. REVIEW OF PROGRESS WITH THE DRAFT PLAN**

A great deal of progress had been made with the Draft Plan although it was recognised that a lot of input, in terms of maps and ownership remained to be completed, especially for the Local Green Space Appendix. Chris said that he would write to persons or Companies who may be able to help with ownership, in particular relating to Bramlings and Old Downs Woods. He thought that provided we show accurate information and clear boundaries the ownership details could be added later, prior to the Reg 14 Consultations. Chris handed out plans for Members to check actual boundaries against the plans. Tracy will then update plans and issue to SDC to provide in the correct format. Derek Stebbings has also suggested that all mention of the Metropolitan Green Belt should be removed from the Local Green Spaces Appendix.

At the meeting with Sevenoaks Officers on 13<sup>th</sup> August a number of plans had been requested for insertion in the Draft Plan and initial copies of those plans had been received.

Jim advised that current figures for traffic flows in Ash Road are now available and will send the data to Gary for inclusion in the Community Aspirations section of the Plan.

It was proposed to submit the Draft Plan to Sevenoaks DC in October for consideration along with a request for a Strategic Environment Assessment and a Habitat Regulations Assessment.

At the Parish Council Meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> September it was made aware of the latest programme which included the Council's consideration of the Plan in December prior to the Reg14 Consultations in February/March.

Chris also reported on the Government's intention to produce plans to reorganise local government in Kent and to publish them as part of a consultation process next year. It is understood that the plans will affect Sevenoaks DC which could be incorporated, with other Authorities, in a larger regional Council.

An article providing an update of progress for residents is to be included in October's Hart magazine.

## **6. DRAFT LOCAL PLAN**

Chris reported that at the last meeting, the Group urged the Parish Council to engage a Planning Consultant to examine the draft Local Plan on its behalf, when it is published in October/November 2025. This was agreed by the Council at its meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> September along with a further suggestion that it uses Tony Fullwood (who represented it for the previous plan which was withdrawn) as he has been appointed by Fawkham Parish Council and it would be possible to share the cost. It is understood that the sharing has been agreed except on matters where there could be a conflict of interests.

## **7. FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

The engagement of Derek Stebbing as the Groups Planning Advisor was being paid from Government funds (20 days). It was understood that the Government will cease paying towards Neighbourhood Plans on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026. It was essential therefore for the Group to ensure that it uses up the Government's funds by that date.

Approximately £20,750 remained in the Parish Council's budget to support the Plan and this would be needed to engage Derek Stebbing to advise on the responses made by the public, land owners and businesses to the Reg 14 Consultations. Additionally there will be costs needed for printing and publishing the final plan.

**Resolved that the Chairman**

- (i) Arranges an on line meeting with Derek Stebbing to discuss future arrangements.**
- (ii) Produces an account showing expenditure to date from the Parish Council's budget and Government Grant as well as future anticipated costs.**

**8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

8th October at 2pm in the Library, Ash Road, Hartley.