

Honeybourne Parish Council

Neighbourhood Plan Review Steering Group Minutes of Meeting
Tuesday 5th August 2025, 6:30 pm, Honeybourne Village Hall, Harvest Close

Present:	Cllr Heath Jobes (Chair of Parish Council- chairing until Steering Group Chair Elected), Cllr Trevor Askew, Cllr Stephen Sidwell, Cllr Sandra Walsh, Mrs Melanie Bent, Mr Martin Clark, Mrs Judi Mellor, Mr Ian Mellor and Mr Stuart Nimmo
In Attendance:	Linda Stanton (Parish Clerk) Mrs Wendy Hopkins (Brodie Planning) – arrive 7:00 pm – depart 8:00 pm Ms Charley Simpson (Brodie Planning) – arrive 7:pm – depart 8:00 pm

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS (10 minutes)

The Chair of the Parish Council welcomed all members to the inaugural meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. All members introduced themselves, stating their name, background, and interest in the Neighbourhood Plan.

2. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN (10 minutes)

An invitation for nominations for Chair was made. Cllr Trevor Askew proposed Cllr Heath Jobes, seconded by Cllr Sandra Walsh. The vote was unanimous. Cllr Heath Jobes was duly elected as Chair of the Steering Group.

3. APOLOGIES (5 minutes)

Apologies were received from Mrs Wendy Pickler.

4. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were made by any members present.

5. TERMS OF REFERENCE (10 minutes)

The Steering Group Terms of Reference (Appendix 1) were presented and agreed.

5.1 FUNDING SOURCES

It was noted that the Parish Council had resolved to fund review costs from general reserves, and that Wychavon District Council funding would be pursued to replace the withdrawn £10,000 government Localities funding.

6. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT (15 minutes)

6.1 Purpose of Neighbourhood Planning

The Chair outlined the purpose of Neighbourhood Planning, emphasizing the following key points:

- **Controlling development, not stopping it:** Neighbourhood Plans help ensure housing comes forward through planned allocations rather than uncontrolled speculative applications
- **Community empowerment:** Neighbourhood Plans give communities the power to shape development in their local area
- **Statutory planning document:** The plan sits alongside the South Worcestershire Development Plan as a legal planning document
- **Local policy setting:** Enables local communities to set planning policies for their neighbourhood that must be taken into account by local planning authorities when making planning decisions
- **Framework for development:** Provides a framework for guiding future development to meet local needs and priorities
- **Community protection:** Allows communities to identify important local features, allocate land for development, and design policies that reflect local character

6.2 INTRODUCTION OF PLANNING CONSULTANT (5 minutes)

Mrs Wendy Hopkins, Planning Consultant from Brodie Planning, introduced herself and her colleague Charley to the group. Mrs Hopkins informed the group that she was also the planning consultant who helped make the Honeybourne Neighbourhood Plan in 2020, providing valuable continuity for the review process.

7. CURRENT PLAN OVERVIEW (5 minutes)

Mrs Hopkins provided an overview of the current Neighbourhood Plan, which was adopted in April 2020 and runs until 2030. She explained that the existing plan contains 14 key policies covering:

- **Housing policies (H1-H6):** Including housing allocation, housing mix, housing types, and design principles
- **Environmental policies (H7-H11):** Covering local green spaces, landscape protection, trees and hedges, agricultural land protection, and flood prevention
- **Community and transport policies (H12-H13):** Protecting community facilities and footpaths/cycle paths

Mrs Hopkins mentioned that the purpose of this review was to modify the existing plan to align with the current National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Emerging South Worcestershire Development Plan. She explained that she would be reviewing the plan against these updated frameworks and would be responsible for writing the revised policies. She noted that the plan has been successful in managing development while supporting planned growth over the past 5 years.

[Reference: Appendix 2 - Pages 18-19 of the existing Neighbourhood Plan showing the relationship between vision, objectives and the 14 policies]

8. WHY WE ARE REVIEWING THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN (10 minutes)

Mrs Hopkins explained the reasons why the Neighbourhood Plan requires review, despite only being 5 years old and originally planned to run until 2030:

- **Legislative Changes:** Despite the plan running until 2030, significant changes by the current government mean our plan is no longer fully compliant with current legislation and requires updating to maintain its legal status.
- **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Updates:** Recent changes to the NPPF may conflict with some of the existing policies in the current plan.
- **Emerging South Worcestershire Development Plan:** The new local plan being prepared will supersede the 2016 South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) that the current Neighbourhood Plan was designed to conform with.
- **Risk of Reduced Statutory Weight:** If the plan becomes out of step with current national policy and the emerging local plan, it may carry less weight in planning decisions, potentially making it less effective in protecting the parish's interests.
- **Professional Assessment of Urgency:** There is a need to ensure the plan remains legally compliant and maintains its full statutory weight in planning decisions to continue effectively controlling development in the parish.

Mrs Hopkins emphasized that this review is proactive - updating the plan now will ensure it continues to provide strong protection for the community's interests and maintains its effectiveness as a statutory planning document.

[Reference: Appendix 3 - Pages 5-7 of the existing Neighbourhood Plan explaining the statutory process and the importance of keeping plans current]

9. REVIEW PROCESS AND TIMELINE (20 minutes)

Mrs Hopkins outlined the proposed process for reviewing the Neighbourhood Plan, explaining that this would be a comprehensive update rather than minor amendments:

Proposed Methodology:

- Detailed review of each of the existing 14 policies against current NPPF requirements and the Emerging South Worcestershire Development Plan
- Assessment of which policies need significant revision, minor updates, or can remain largely unchanged
- Identification of any new policy areas that may be required since the original plan was adopted in 2020
- Professional rewriting of policies to ensure legal compliance and effectiveness

Key Milestones and Timeline: Mrs Hopkins indicated that the review process would typically take 12-18 months from start to finish, involving several key stages including policy review and drafting, community consultation, formal submission, independent examination, and finally a local referendum.

Resource Requirements: Professional planning expertise would be provided by Brodie Planning throughout the process, with the Steering Group providing local knowledge and community liaison.

Community Engagement Strategy:

- Multiple consultation stages would be built into the process
- Public meetings and events would be organized at key milestones
- Use of various communication channels including the parish newsletter, website, and social media
- Formal consultation periods as required by planning regulations

Mrs Hopkins emphasized that community input would be essential throughout the process to ensure the updated plan continues to reflect local needs and priorities.

The Steering Group agreed to the overall approach outlined, recognizing the importance of maintaining an effective planning framework for the parish.

10. INITIAL PRIORITY AREAS FOR REVIEW (10 minutes)

Mrs Hopkins facilitated a discussion asking Steering Group members to identify priority areas for review. To assist members with this task, the following guidance was provided:

- **Which policies may need significant revision:** Members should review the existing 14 policies and consider:
- **Housing & Design policies (H1-H6):** [Review Appendix 4 pages 20-21, 24-25, 27-31](#) - Are the housing allocation, mix requirements, and design standards still appropriate?
- **Environmental policies (H7-H11):** [Review Appendix 4 pages 32-33, 35-37](#) - Do the Local Green Spaces still need protection? Are there new green spaces to protect? Are landscape and biodiversity protections adequate?
- **Community & Transport policies (H12-H13):** [Review Appendix 4 pages 44-45, 47-48](#) - Are the listed community facilities still viable? Are there new facilities to protect or footpath improvements needed?

New issues since 2020 to consider: [Review Appendix 4 pages 12-15](#) (*original Issues and Opportunities*) and consider what has changed:

- Climate change and sustainability requirements
- Changes in housing need or demographics
- New development pressures or opportunities
- Infrastructure changes (broadband, transport, utilities)
- Community facility changes or new requirements
- **Solar farm developments:** Concerns raised about solar farm developers targeting good agricultural land in the area, potentially destroying biodiversity and wildlife habitats
- **Railway station parking:** Honeybourne Railway Station serves a vast catchment area but lacks adequate parking provision, resulting in commuters parking throughout the village. Need for dedicated parking facilities to be addressed

New sites for protection or allocation:

- Any new green spaces that have become important to the community
- Any sites that may be suitable for future development
- Areas that may need additional protection from inappropriate development (including solar farms)

ACTION: All Steering Group members to review the existing Neighbourhood Plan (available on the Parish Council website) using the specific Appendix 4 page references above, and provide their feedback to the Parish Clerk by [16th September 2025](#).

11. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES (5 minutes)

The newly elected Chair, Cllr Heath Jobes, outlined the roles and responsibilities based on the agreed Terms of Reference:

Chair Responsibilities:

- Lead steering group meetings
- Represent the steering group at Parish Council meetings
- Liaise with planning consultants and other external bodies
- Ensure project timelines and milestones are met

All Members Responsibilities:

- Attend steering group meetings regularly
- Contribute expertise and local knowledge to the plan development
- Take responsibility for organising and delivering community engagement activities
- Review draft documents and provide feedback
- Organise and run consultation events and public meetings
- Take turns in taking meeting minutes and circulating to the group if the Clerk is not available
- Actively participate in all aspects of the NDP review process
- **Provide all work in completed form to the Parish Clerk**

Meeting Arrangements:

- **Frequency:** Monthly meetings, or more frequently as required during key phases of the project
- **Duration:** Meetings will typically last no more than **2 hours**
- **Venue:** Village Hall or other suitable parish venue
- **Timing:** Evening meetings starting at **7:00 PM** to accommodate working members
- **Quorum:** 3 members including the Chair (or nominated deputy)

Administrative Arrangements: It was agreed that the Parish Clerk will work in conjunction with the Chair to set agenda items for future meetings. Meeting minutes will be taken by the Parish Clerk where possible, with steering group members designated to take minutes when the Clerk is unavailable.

Communication with Parish Council: Regular updates will be provided to Parish Council meetings, with key decisions and recommendations requiring Parish Council approval.

12. NEXT STEPS AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING (5 minutes)

Next Meeting: Tuesday, 30th September 2025 at 7:00 pm, Honeybourne Village Hall

Action Points for Members before the Next Meeting:

1. **Familiarise yourself with the Current Plan:** All members are encouraged to look at the existing Neighbourhood Plan to get a feel for what we're working with. Don't worry about understanding everything - focus on getting an overview. The plan is available on the Parish Council website, and hard copies can be provided if preferred.
2. **Policy Review Assessment: Using Appendix 4 as guidance, consider:**
 - **Housing & Design policies (H1-H6)** - pages 20-21, 24-25, 27-31
 - **Environmental policies (H7-H11)** - pages 32-33, 35-37
 - **Community & Transport policies (H12-H13)** - pages 44-45, 47-48
3. **Identify New Issues:** Consider new challenges since 2020, including:
 - Solar farm development concerns
 - Railway station parking issues
 - Climate change and sustainability requirements
 - Infrastructure and community facility changes
4. **Site Assessments:** Identify any new sites needing protection or allocation
5. **Feedback Deadline:** All feedback to be provided to the Parish Clerk by **16th September 2025** in completed form
6. **Terms of Reference:** Agreed Terms of Reference to be presented to Parish Council for formal approval

Parish Clerk Actions:

- Prepare neighbourhood plan article for the parish newsletter with meeting update
- Promote the Steering Group work on the Parish Council Facebook page
- Check with IT contractor regarding setting up a shared drive for Steering Group documents

The meeting concluded at 8:00 pm

Members of Steering Group:

Cllrs Heath Jobses (Chair of Steering Group) ,Trevor Askew, Stephen Sidwell, Sandra Walsh, Mrs Melanie Bent, Mr Martin Clark, Mrs Judi Mellor, Mr Ian Mellor, Mrs Wendy Pickler, Mr Stuart Nimmo

H M Jobses
H M Jobses (Nov 15, 2025 17:13:44 GMT)

15/Nov/25

1.Honeybourne Neighbourhood Plan Review Steering Group Minutes - 5th August 2025

Final Audit Report

2025-11-15

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