

# GORING-ON-THAMES PARISH COUNCIL

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**Your attendance is requested at a meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, to be held at the Parish Council Offices, Red Cross Road, Goring on Monday 9 May 2016 at 8.00pm  
Public and press are invited to attend**

Members are respectfully reminded of the obligation to declare any interest relevant to business to be conducted at this meeting and of the convention as to withdrawal from the meeting for the relevant item unless the interest is not one that debars the member from speaking thereon.

## **AGENDA – ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**

Please note that the public and the media have a right to make audio and visual recordings of council meetings. It would be helpful if those wishing to record could contact the Council before the meeting so that we can ensure the necessary facilities are in place. The Chair of the meeting will advise the public that the meeting is being recorded. A request to record a meeting shall only be refused if the Chair of the meeting believes recording would disrupt the meeting. There are no restrictions on anyone at a council meeting using Twitter, blogs, Facebook or similar social media provided that the Chair does not consider their actions are disrupting the proceedings of the meeting.

1. To receive apologies for absence
2. To receive declarations of interest
3. Public forum: *An opportunity for the public to address the council. With the permission of the chairman, the public may also speak about specific items of business as they arise.*
4. Minutes from previous meeting (available at [www.goringplan.co.uk](http://www.goringplan.co.uk)) (Appendix A)
5. Matters arising
6. To receive Chairman's report (Appendix B)
7. Report on Working Group Activity and preparations for May14th Consultation
8. Timetable
9. Proposed formation of a Site Selection Management Group (SSMG)
10. Finance
11. AOB

**DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP  
at the Goring Parish Council Offices on Monday 14 March 2016**

Present: Chairman David Wilkins, Stephanie Bridle, Michael Stares, Tom Rothwell and 1 member of the public

**1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Nigel Gilson and Andy Best

**2 Declarations of interest**

None

**3. Public Forum**

John Boler enquired about progress on deciding how the sites will be scored against the criteria and by whom. He was concerned that value judgements may be applied by members of the committee.

TR replied that each stream would review objectives, measures and policies consistent with objective assessment, followed by an open and transparent review of all streams in order to normalise standards against each site for compliance.

JB suggested an independent outside assessor to judge objectivity.

DW said that, at this stage, the committee had not decided to adopt or exclude the services of a public figure but such a person would necessarily have to have a good understanding of the aims and processes involved in the development of a Neighbourhood Plan. In any case the Steering Committee clearly had a central role in the process though this did not preclude the participation of an independent individual.

JB noted that a high level of fairness and transparency was required and suggested that the Committee ask the Chief Planning Officer of SODC who would be well qualified and independently – minded to chair a one- day workshop for this purpose. SB and TR pointed out that the CPO would be responsible for the conduct of SODC's review of the final plan and for that reason would not be a suitable member of the body determining which sites should be proposed for development.

MS added that a consultation process would take place after site selection and that the Committee would then justify its decisions in the public domain. At that point it would be possible for objections to be made if it was felt that due process had not been followed. Moreover, all decisions will go through the process of approval by the GPC, SODC and the Examiner.

SB has asked the Returning Officer of SODC if the Committee will be involved in setting up the referendum. She also asked JB to reassure any inhabitants of Goring who are concerned about the transparency of decisions made.

<p>TR completed the discussion by adding that the explanation of this process would be the most important aspect of the next public forum..</p>	
<p><b>4. Minutes from previous meeting</b> The minutes of the last Steering Group Committee meeting held on 25 January 2016 were approved unanimously.</p>	
<p><b>5. Matters arising</b> Those members present agreed that in future in the interests of transparency the GPC would be asked if it would be possible to publish all minutes in draft format on the website until they are formally approved at the following meeting.</p>	
<p><b>6. Chairman's report</b> The Chairman's report summarising the period from 25 January to 5 March is available on the website. It was accepted unanimously.</p>	
<p><b>7. Reports on Working Group Activity from 25 Jan to Village Consultation 5 March</b> TR's report is available on the website. It was accepted unanimously.</p>	
<p><b>8. Timetable for actions from 5 March</b></p> <p>TR said that the 4 page questionnaire on site criteria was in the process of being printed by Goring Press. 10 volunteers would fill the envelopes which will be distributed to 2727 households during the weekend of 19/20 March, to be returned by 10 April. The results will be scanned and processed electronically to extract the data.</p> <p>MS, on behalf of the Committee, congratulated TR and his team on a great job.</p> <p>DW asked whether there were other significant areas to be addressed, especially in design and format. He suggested personalised name badges.</p> <p>TR said that the planning for the next consultation needed to start immediately, that the 4 evidence gathering websites which have collected evidence and are developing policy will have identical and consistent stands at the next consultation. More communication and marketing is required, including more information in the Goring Gap News.</p> <p>TR proposed a marketing person who might be willing to help.</p> <p>SB suggested that David Bermingham approach the Amenity Association as well as younger groups of the village in eg the Football Club and the</p>	

Social Club.	
<b>9. Village Consultation 18 April</b>  MS added that it is necessary to show evidence behind the policies, that material for the Consultation needs to be livened up. The next meeting should be dedicated to the Consultation.  SB suggested that John Howell, MP, be invited to the Consultation – agreed unanimously.	
<b>10. Finance</b>  DW had submitted a revised budget to the Goring Parish Council although the overall sum is the same. An initial grant application had been made to SODC and there were currently discussions about a second grant under Locality.	
<b>11. AOB</b>  There was no other business.	
The meeting closed at 21.20. The next formal meeting is on 9 May at 20.00 in the Council Offices.	

# Goring on Thames Neighbourhood Plan

## Chairman's Report 9 May 2016

### Background

In May 2015 Goring-on-Thames Parish Council (GPC) took the decision to produce a Neighbourhood Plan following the Localisation Act of 2011.

A Neighbourhood Plan ("the Plan") is a community-led framework for guiding the future development, regeneration and conservation of an area. It is primarily about the use and development of land but can also identify the implications on local infrastructure and facilities. It is a concept that is now in widespread implementation across the country with over 1200 local communities developing Neighbourhood Plans and over 50 already approved for the basis of future planning in their area.

GPC advised South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) in September 2015 of the intent of the residents of Goring-on-Thames Parish to produce a Plan and that the Parish Council will be the body that formally submits the Plan to SODC as the 'relevant authority'. GPC also advised SODC that the Plan will be for the area enclosed by the boundary of the Parish of Goring-on-Thames. This proposal was put to consultation by SODC. The designation of the neighbourhood plan and the proposed boundary was confirmed by SODC on the 20th November 2015.

The Plan has to take account of relevant Policies and Regulations (eg National Planning Policy Framework) and is produced in consultation with the local community as well as relevant authorities (e.g. SODC). It is subject to independent examination and approval before being put to a public referendum by GPC, most likely in May 2017.

If accepted, the Plan will be submitted to SODC for adoption. Once adopted (the technical term is "made") by SODC the Neighbourhood Plan will be part of the statutory development plan for the area. This statutory status gives Neighbourhood Plans far more weight than some other local documents, such as parish plans, community plans and village design statements.

When the Plan development was initiated the requirement was to provide a minimum number of 86 dwellings. However SODC will, during the period of production of the plan, be producing and implementing their revised core strategy for a period up to and including 2031. It is possible that the number of dwellings that are required to be provided by the Plan will be increased. Since the referendum and adoption of the plan will be after the publication of the revised core strategy, the development of the Plan must and will consider options for an increased number of dwellings. While the plan is proceeding on the basis that 86 dwellings must be provided, as a working hypothesis options up to and including a total number of 150 dwellings will also be considered.

Please note, it is the responsibility of the Steering Group and those working to produce the plan to deliver a plan that meets the dwelling commitment and will therefore be accepted

by the external examiner and SODC. Influencing the number of dwellings required is out of scope of the Plan development activity. This is the responsibility of the Goring Parish Council.

## Development of the plan

Following the decision to undertake the Plan, under its 2015 Standing Orders and Procedures, GPC established an Advisory Committee named the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NPSG) to produce a draft Plan.

The membership of the NPSG was subsequently approved and the NPSG appointed by GPC following an election process by the Volunteers. The members appointed Stephanie Bridle, Andy Best, Nigel Gilson, Mike Stares (currently chairperson), David Wilkins, and the overall Programme Manager (NPPM), Tom Rothwell in an interim role. Tom Rothwell was subsequently confirmed, by GPC, as the programme manager for the Plan and as a permanent member of the NPSG. Brandon Hancox was appointed as the Link Councillor.

The following working groups were established to progress development of the Plan.

- Living in the village (e.g. current situation and future requirements)
- Housing Need and Design (e.g. what type of housing, affordability)
- Site selection criteria (prioritised by the community at large)
- Site Identification (e.g. availability, suitability)
- Sustainability analysis (e.g. infrastructure, health, education, recreation, travel, wildlife)

The following functions and functional groups were also established

- Programme Leadership
- Marketing, Communications & IT support including surveys, web and social media
- Evidence management and data analysis

An Operational Management Group (OMG) chaired by the NPPM and including the leaders of the Workgroups was formed to manage day to day progress.

There are approximately 50 volunteers working on developing the plan, many giving a significant amount of their time to it. In the year since this initiative started it is probable that the volunteers have collectively contributed 7 - 10 person years or more of effort, which had it been necessary to purchase this from one of the consultancies that specialise in Neighbourhood Planning would have cost in the region of £600K - £1m. The key milestones and achievements are

## Key milestones

#	Date	Description
1	15/04/2015	Goring-on-Thames Parish Council AGM, Need for Neighbourhood Plan raised by group of villagers
2	22/05/2015	Goring-on-Thames Parish Council EGM to consider undertaking a Neighbourhood Plan. Unanimously approved. Cllr Hancox appointed as link councillor.
3	18/6/2015	Leaflet drop to all homes in village, asking for volunteers and inviting to inaugural meeting.
4	25/6/2015	Inaugural volunteer meeting and presentation
5	26/6/2015	Consultation with volunteers and voting for Steering Group
6	10/8/2015	Approval of Steering Group membership by Goring-on-Thames Parish Council
7	14/9/2015	Approval of Neighbourhood Plan terms of reference by Goring-on-Thames Parish Council
8	21/9/2015	Submission of formal application to SODC to undertake a Neighbourhood Plan, plus proposed geographical boundary for the plan.
9	03/10/2015 & 05/10/2015	Volunteer workshops to mobilise and organise volunteers into working and functional groups
10	09/10/15-06/11/2015	SODC consultation on proposed boundary and Neighbourhood Plan application.
11	To be included	Definition and approval of terms of reference for working and functional group leaders
12	To be included	Formation of Volunteer working and functional groups
13	12/10/2015	Approval of SG programme manager by Goring-on-Thames Parish Council
14	20/11/2015	Establishment Goring on Thames Neighbourhood Plan and boundary approval
15	01/01/2016	Opening of invitation to submit sites for consideration
16	16/1/2016	Public Consultation
17	25/01/2016	Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Public Meeting
18	30/01/2016 -	Housing Need and Living in the Village Survey
19	05/3/2016	Public Consultation
20	14/03/2016	Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Public Meeting
21	20/3/2106 – 09/04/2016	Site Selection Priorities Survey
22	29/03/2016	Sustainability Scoping report submitted and consultation initiated
23	31/03/2016	Closing of invitation to submit sites for consideration
24	14/5/2016	Public Consultation
25	July 2016	Consolidation of all information and development of draft plan and proposed sites.

## Approach to producing the Plan and some common issues raised by the village

It has been a fundamental principle that the plan will reflect the views of the community as a whole. The creation of the Plan has and will continue to be via an open, transparent process that is backed by a good evidence base. There has been widespread and thorough community consultation to date, which will continue through the completion of the Plan.

### Evidence based approach

A frequently asked question at the public consultations has been “Where do I vote for the sites I want / don’t want?” A fundamental principle at the start of the plan development was that the decision on sites to be adopted should be based on consultation on what is needed by the village and what is important to the village as a whole rather than a simple vote on preferred sites, which would almost inevitably be aligned to parochial considerations and “nimbyism”.

The approach that has been adopted is therefore

1. To engage with the village to understand the needs and priorities for any development.
2. To invite the submission of potential development sites, to give as wide a choice as possible of potential sites.
3. To understand and apply the regulatory and sustainability constraints.
4. To do all of this in as open and consultative a way as possible.
5. In due course, to consolidate and consider all the information in an open, transparent and consistent process to determine the sites that best fit the above and that provide the number of dwellings the plan is required to deliver.

### Common issues

The following issues have been raised a number of times during the consultations and in writing. The NPSG believe it is important that the scope and responsibility of the Plan is clarified in respect to these and similar issues

1. The school is full – the plan cannot proceed and more dwellings cannot be built until the Plan resolves this problem.
2. The medical practice is over loaded – the plan cannot proceed and more dwellings cannot be built until the Plan resolves this problem.
3. There is too much traffic in the centre of the village – the plan cannot proceed and more dwellings cannot be built until the Plan resolves this problem.
4. The proposed Archimedes screw at the Weir – the plan should consider this development.

These issues, while understandably of major concern to the village, are not within the scope of the governments Neighbourhood Planning Framework. The power of a neighbourhood plan and the scope of its formal impact is in its ability to determine where development should take place. It is not a catchall and does not have the power to resolve all issues within the village, nor to refuse to deliver the number of dwellings unless the issues are resolved. The responsibility for resolving these issues lies with other agencies and bodies.

However the NPSG recognise that these are real and critical issues to the village and that the development of the Plan provides a unique opportunity to surface the issues and engage the



relevant bodies in their resolution. The approach that has and will be adopted to such issues is

1. To consult with the village to determine the issues.
2. To research and qualify the issues.
3. To facilitate and encourage discussions with and between the responsible bodies to encourage resolution of the issues.
4. To identify sites that may be suitable for development to provide alternative or additional facilities and whose owners have indicated their willingness to consider such use and to facilitate discussions between the relevant parties
5. To document the issues in the Plan, noting any constraints and identifying the bodies responsible for resolving the issues.
6. If appropriate and with the support of the village, initiate subsequent local sub groups to continue to address the issues

Specific actions taken on the above issues are

1. The school - a meeting has taken place with the Head of the School and its governors. A report has been produced and is available on the web site. Interim discussions have taken place with Oxfordshire County council who are currently the body responsible for schools. The position can be summarised as
  - a. To the best of our knowledge, OCC have made no projections of numbers resulting from the increase in housing. Given the likelihood under the plan of an increase in numbers and the physical constraints under which the school operates we will be seeking a formal policy statement from OCC
  - b. The school believe that the increase in dwellings may result in an increase in applications for places beyond its capacity. There is a bulge in the school intake that will work its way through during the period of the plan which may help alleviate any issues, but the number of school places required is difficult to forecast.
  - c. During the period of the plan the current government's intention is that all schools will become academies and have a greater degree of self-determination.
  - d. The position is thus somewhat fluid in that it is the level of demand for places is unclear and the responsibility for resolving capacity issues may change during the lifetime of the plan. However it is clear that this does and will lie with either OCC or the School. We will continue to liaise with both bodies to clarify the situation
2. The medical practice - A meeting has taken place with the medical practice leadership. The position can be summarised as
  - a. The Medical Practice leadership welcome and are committed to providing medical services to the increased number of residents from the new dwellings.
  - b. The funding approach adopted by the NHS is based on the number of patients in each practice i.e. more patients equals more funding.
  - c. The Medical Practice leadership recognise the potential need for increased facilities and are considering the potential options.
3. The traffic in the centre of the village and other congestion points. The position can be summarised as
  - a. The traffic congestion in the village is already under consideration by the Goring Parish Council.

- b. The Plan will, if considered a priority by the village, take into account the impact of any proposed development on the existing traffic levels, but will not engage in resolving any traffic issues unless directly related to a specific development e.g. if either of the two brownfield central village sites are adopted and move forward.
- 4. The Weir – this is out of scope of the Plan except to consider any impact it may have on proposed sites whose risk of flooding may be impacted (increased or decrease) should the proposed development of the weir go ahead.