

Minutes of the Burford Neighborhood Plan Working Group (NPWG)

Date: 27 May 2026 **Time:** 10:10 AM **Location:** The Tolsey (Chambers)

1. Attendees and Apologies

Present: Jennie Craven (Chair), Geoff Haines, Andrew Foster, Paul Newman, Tony Jones and Christina Edgar Hiatt (Town Clerk).

Apologies: Councillor Corinne Ash, Councillor Michael Tubenheim, Corinne Hoge, Gordon Jolly, and Ann Youngson. **Note:** The group noted that David Cockfield is leaving, and a new name may be put forward soon. Ann Youngson, a writer with a background in corporate strategy, has expressed keen interest in joining.

2. Progress Recap and Survey 2

The group had delayed meetings until after the elections to confirm the new council composition. It was agreed to **release Survey 2**, which is ready to go. The survey will be conducted **primarily digitally** to save costs and increase efficiency, as physical copies had a low return rate previously. It was also noted that it should be a Councillor that issues the release of questionnaire and also that the responses received by a Councillor due to the sensitive nature of information from residents and needs to adhere to GDPR.

3. Roles, Responsibilities, and Forum Restructuring

A major discussion occurred regarding the formalisation of the steering group and its sub-groups (forums).

- **Terms of Reference (ToR):** The Chair will draft ToRs for the steering group and the forums to ensure consistency and formalise operations as the group expands.
- **Forum Consolidation:** The group agreed to consolidate the 10 previously identified forums into **five core themes** to make them less onerous and ensure better consensus:
 1. **Infrastructure:** Traffic, roads, parking, and mobility.
 2. **Community & Wellbeing:** Sports, leisure, community hub, and intergenerational projects.
 3. **Planning & Heritage:** Planning and development, town character, and historic design.
 4. **Environment:** Environment, sewage, water, climate change, and biodiversity.
 5. **Economy:** Sustainable tourism and business.

4. Public Engagement: Kickoff Meeting for Neighbourhood Plan (NP)

The group discussed a physical "kickoff event" to rally public interest and recruit forum volunteers.

- **Date/Time:** Originally proposed for July 15th, the date was changed to **Monday, 13 July (7:00–9:00 PM)** to avoid a clash with the World Cup semi-finals.
- **Venue:** Provisional booking for the **Warwick Hall**
- **Format:** A presentation followed by "storyboards" or breakaway tables for the five themes where the public can use post-it notes to provide feedback and sign up.

5. Consultant Strategy and Site Allocation

The group debated the scope of the plan, specifically regarding **housing site allocation**:

- **Consultant Advice:** Tom McCulloch (Community First Oxfordshire) advised **against** including specific sites to avoid controversy and shorten the timeline to 18 months for NP.

- **Member Argument:** Andrew argued that *not* allocating land leaves Burford vulnerable to "speculative development" and being overruled by the Secretary of State if housing needs aren't met.
- **Alternative Plan:** Andrew proposed a radical idea to allocate the recreation field in the local plan to meet area requirements while maintaining council control via a legal "swap" for other land if development were ever required.
- **Additional Quotes:** For resilience and cost-benefit analysis, the group will need to seek at least two further quotes, so from a smaller firm: **Pelegram Ltd** that Geoff will invite to the next meeting on 10th June.
- **Scope:** The Town Clerk stated that the Well-being, Community assets and value is critical and key to this work for NP and to include aspects such as biodiversity.

6. Budget and Finances

The estimated cost for a two-year project is **£20,000–£25,000**. The Town Clerk stated that she is aware of some NPs locally that have cost £60,000.

- **Funding Sources:** Potential funds include redirected reserves from the zebra crossing (£21,500) and the bridge closure projects, provided the internal auditor and Council approve.
- **HGV Reserves:** There is a potential proposal to use HGV some of the reserves (approx. £116,000) for the traffic-related elements of the plan, as these funds are intended for traffic improvements.

7. Administrative and Legal Oversight

The Clerk (Christina) raised concerns regarding the **administrative burden** and legal compliance.

- **Capacity:** The project requires significant staff time (initially estimated at 3–4 days a month) which is currently unavailable.
- **Compliance:** All data collection must be managed through official Council channels (Microsoft 365/Teams) rather than personal accounts to comply with GDPR. The legal importance of deliverables and outputs is key to be correct and we may need to include additional costs and activities for this.
- **Project Management:** A formal risk assessment and project management plan are required. Christina will provide examples of these to the Chair to draft a starting point for these for review. The plan needs to be resilient.
- **Budget:** For next years budget the target to get the figures included is September/October 2026 with the approval of

8. Action Items

Action Item	Responsibility
Draft Terms of Reference for Steering Group and Forums with minimum quorate	Jennie
To work with C Hoge & Town Clerk to issue Survey 2 for residents	Jennie
Contact Isabelle Parker to book Warwick I Hall for 13 July	Paul
Contact J Arnall to see if ok to put flyer's on chairs at Burford Festival	Paul
Invite Pelegram Ltd to the June 10th meeting for a presentation & quote	Geoff
Request Council approval for the Neighborhood Plan notification to WODC	Christina
Create a draft project management plan and risk assessment	Jennie
Create an expectations document for resident's minimum forum involvement	Jennie
Design a flyer/leaflet for distribution at the Burford Festival	Paul

Establish a secure digital data storage area for NP documents & consultations Christina

9. Future Meetings

- **10 June:** 1:00 PM at Cotswold Gate (Consultant interview).
- **22 June:** 2:00 PM.
- **7 July:** 2:00 PM (Teams/Online).
- **Additional meetings maybe required as key to prepare for the Kick-off meeting.**