

Minutes of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group (NPWG)

Meeting Date: 22 July 2026 **Location:** Cotswold Gate Care Home

Attendees

- **Geoff Haines** (NPWG Member/Scribe),
 - **Tony Jones** (NPWG Member)
 - **Ian Spicer** (Architectural Designer, new member),
 - **Karl Morris** (Mayor, NPWG Member)
 - **Andrew Foster** (Dep Mayor, NPWG Member)
 - **Jennie Craven** (BTC Councillor, NPWG Member/Chair)
 - **Jacqueline Neagle** (BTC Councillor, NPWG Member)
 - **Tom Williams** (Head of Operations, Burford School)
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Meeting Summary

Review of Public Engagement (July 13th Event) The group reviewed the feedback from the public event held on July 13th, which saw an energetic turnout of over 100 residents. While the event was successful, members noted the need for better demographic representation in future sessions. Specifically, the group discussed holding daytime sessions for parents and "mini sessions" at **Burford School** to engage the youth and sixth-form students. Engaging students was highlighted as vital since they represent the long-term future of the town.

Communications Strategy Christina is currently developing a communication strategy. A primary requirement is the creation of a **generic neighbourhood plan email account** to manage correspondence officially rather than through individual accounts. The group prioritised sending an immediate acknowledgement email to everyone who signed up at the July event. Future updates will be disseminated through multiple channels, including the Town Council website, *The Bridge* magazine, and various community groups like the WI and Burford District Society, to ensure maximum reach,

Budget and Town Council Motion The group must provide a project plan, risk assessment, and budget to the Town Clerk (Christina) for the upcoming **August 5th Town Council meeting**. It was agreed to propose an initial budget of **£5,000** for the current financial year to cover immediate needs such as consultancy retainers, a subscription to the Oxfordshire Alliance of Neighbourhood Plans (£25–£50), and room bookings. A larger sum, potentially **£15,000**, may be protected for the following year. The group also discussed the possibility of seeking business match-funding in the future.

Consultancy and Procurement A robust debate occurred regarding when to engage professional consultants. Some members advocated for early involvement to define "terms of reference" and provide "realistic news" regarding housing mandates, while

others suggested doing more groundwork internally first to save costs. The group agreed to evaluate three local firms, prioritising those with local heart and knowledge over distant practices, The procurement process will follow **official governance frameworks** to ensure the selection is unambiguous and "duty-ridden",.

Plan Focus and Themes Members agreed that the plan must not focus solely on housing, which can be divisive and often stems from resistance to specific proposals, Instead, the plan should lead with the four other key areas: **Wellness, Infrastructure, Environment, and Economy**. By addressing community needs like leisure facilities, safe environments, and infrastructure first, the group hopes to build a more constructive vision for the required housing (~100 houses by 2043).

Burford School Liaison Tom Williams provided an overview of the school's situation, clarifying that the school and the **Burford School Foundation** are separate entities. The school is interested in exploring "unlocking mechanisms" where school facilities—such as parking, coaches, and energy projects—could benefit the wider community. Practical suggestions included improving car park fencing to allow for public coach parking while maintaining student safety,

Steering Committee and September Forums The group will function as a steering committee, with specific roles allocated based on skills. **Public forums** are scheduled to begin in September. These will use a simplified format asking residents "What do you want?" and "What don't you want?" to generate requirements. The group plans to hold a **working workshop on August 19th** to map out the detailed project timeline using physical aids like brown paper and post-it notes,

Action Item	Assigned To
Set up a generic Neighbourhood Plan email account and manage attendee data.	Christina
Email local businesses to update them on the plan and invite them to future forums.	Tony Jones
Speak to the editors of <i>The Bridge</i> regarding their email distribution reach.	Karl Morris
Draft a comparison/evaluation of the three consultancy firms based on previous notes.	Jennie Craven
Gather example project plans from other neighbourhood plan groups (e.g., Rise Norton).	Jennie Craven

Confirm availability of the Boarding House dining room for the Aug 19th workshop.	Tom Williams
Circulate the terms of reference for the Steering Committee for review.	Jennie Craven
Prepare a "straw man" list of ideas/requirements for each of the five forum themes.	All Members
Provide holiday dates for September to facilitate forum scheduling.	All Members

Produced by Gemini Notebook, prompted by G Haines

Access to original data together with output here:

<https://notebooklm.google.com/notebook/7dc02c38-3192-4756-9562-b204ed54ad90>