

# **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN WORKING GROUP HELD AT THE PARISH ROOM, BUCKLAND NEWTON ON THURSDAY 15<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2015**

**Present:** John Baker, Rodney Cuff, Sandie Stout, John Nell, Maree Pollard, Chris Osmond, Jo Witherden, Nicki Barker, Lin Townsend, Steve White and Penny Horn

**Apologies:** Jane Willis, Jane Collins, Nick Baker, Andy Foot

## **Declaration of Interests:**

John Baker declared an interest in Site J.

**The Purpose** of this Meeting was to consider comments received on the draft neighbourhood plan from the public consultation May – July 2015, and put forward appropriate responses and changes to the draft plan for the Parish Council to consider before plan submission.

It was explained that John Baker, Lin Townsend and Jo Witherden had been through the comments received, identified main issues, and made suggestions of changes to the draft plan, these having been circulated before the meeting to members of the working group in the document “Responses to comments from Public Consultation on draft plan May – July 2015: Draft for consideration October 2015 v3”. This was purely to save time at the meeting, most of the suggested changes being minor and uncontroversial, mainly clarifying points.

The Working Group discussed the proposed changes, making further changes, amendments and suggestions. These will be included in the updated “Responses to comments from Public Consultation on draft plan May – July 2015: Draft for consideration October 2015 v4”, and this document will be circulated and made public in due course.

JB noted that the Parish Council had decided to hold a supplementary public consultation on the major issues that had arisen, namely the change of the allotments from green space to community facility, and the issues around affordable housing contributions. This public consultation was still running until the end of October. There were still issues concerning affordable housing in relation to recent changes in government policy, and it was left for Jo Witherden to consider these, liaising with West Dorset planners.

The next steps in the neighbourhood plan process were discussed, namely the Parish Council would agree final changes to the plan, which would then be submitted to West Dorset District Council. The following stages, including further consultation by WDDC, independent examination, the referendum and finally adoption of the plan, could take up to another 8 to 10 months.

Stephen White raised the question of whether we could have housing ‘foisted’ upon us in Buckland Newton if we do not have neighbourhood plan. Jo Witherden explained that the new Local Plan did define the development boundaries but the Inspector had made clear

that whilst there was only just a 5 year housing land supply, proposals for development outside of the boundary could be favourably considered. In other parishes developers were already taking advantage of this opportunity to put forward planning applications on sites that were outside the development boundary. Had those parishes prepared a neighbourhood plan and looked at evidence of local housing need (and allocated land to meet this need), they would be in a much stronger position to fight off such speculative applications.

**Date of Next Meeting**

To be advised.

The meeting closed at 9.50pm.

JB 16/10/15