



Melksham Neighbourhood Plan

Steering Group Meeting

Crown Chambers, 1st Floor, 7a Market Place, Melksham, Wiltshire
SN12 6ES

Date: **Wednesday 30th September 2015**

Start: **6pm**

Present:

Richard Wood (Chairman) (MWPC)
Teresa Strange (Clerk, MWPC)
Steve Gray (Clerk, Melksham Town Council)
Cllr Terri Welch (MTC)
Cllr. Richard Wiltshire (MTC)
Lorraine McRandle (MTC)
Shirley McCarthy (Environment)
Cllr. Rolf Brindle (MWPC) (Transport lead)
Colin Goodhind (Delivery task group)
Mark Ashkowski (Housing lead)
Bruce Sanders (Business lead)
David Way (Wiltshire Council)

Notes: Phil McMullen, MCAP

Agenda

1. **Welcome & apologies**
2. **Declaration of Interests**
3. **Public Participation**
4. **Minutes of the last meeting** (held 30 August 2015)

[Link to August draft minutes](#)

5. Matters Arising

6. Finance Report

6.1. Payments for Approval

6.11 To consider the invoice for banners provided by Sign Marketing [download here](#)

6.12 To consider the August 2015 invoice from MCAP reference 15/P/008 sum: £304.50
[August 2015 Timesheet](#)

6.2 Current Budget

7. Public Participation Sub-Group report

[Written report for September 2015](#)

7.1 Recruiting additional help for Public Participation Group

8. Reports from Task Groups

8.1 Health and Wellbeing (lead: Nick Westbrook)

[September Health group report](#)

8.2 Transport (lead: Rolf Brindle)

[23rd September Transport Group meeting notes](#)

8.3 Business (lead: Bruce Sanders)

8.4 Housing (lead: Mark Ashkowski)

[24th September Housing Group meeting notes](#)

[10th September Housing Group meeting notes](#)

Paper: [SHLAA Sites](#)

Map: [Melksham Geology](#)

8.5 Education (lead: Richard Wood)

9. Environmental section

9.1 Update on Draft Sustainability Scoping Report

[9.11 Response from Historic England](#)

[9.12 Response from the Environment Agency](#)

[9.13 Response from Natural England](#)

10. Grant Funding

11. Any Other Business

12. **Date of Next Meeting:** Wednesday 28th October 2015

1. Welcome and apologies

Phil reported that apologies had been received from Cllr David Pollitt and Nick Westbrook. Paul Walsh had written to say that as he was attending housing group meetings, he didn't feel it to be necessary to attend Steering group meetings.

Apologies were received from John Glover.

Introductions were taken from around the table for the benefit of Mark Ashkowski (Housing lead), who was attending his first Steering Group meeting.

2. Declaration of Interests

There is a standing declaration of interest in MCAP from Colin Goodhind, Nick Westbrook Shirley McCarthy and Phil McMullen. Paul Walsh has an interest in Selwood Housing. Nick Westbrook also has a standing interest in the company My Community <https://www.mycommunity.net> – not to be confused with <http://mycommunity.org.uk>, which is the Department for Communities and Local Government's Neighbourhood Planning portal.

3. Public Participation

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

4. Minutes of previous meeting

[Link to August draft minutes](#)

Terri proposed that the Minutes of the August meeting were accepted. All were in favour. The minutes were signed off by Richard Wood.

5. Matters Arising

Rolf asked if we'd had a look at the responses from the Bowerhill consultation. Phil reported that he had them to hand.

6. Finance report

6.1. Payments for Approval

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Terri Proposed, Rolf seconded, all were in favour that they be agreed.

6.2 Current Budget

Teresa reported £3089.10 allocated of which £2,414.11 was for MCAP, £275 for the Assembly Hall and £399.99 for MyCommunity

7. Public Participation Sub-Group.

Teresa passed Phil public comments collected at Bowerhill.

Nick Westbrook provided a written report.

Activities since last MNPSG Meeting

1. Produced press releases for publication in Melksham News / Wiltshire Times;, and copy for local community newsletters
2. As agreed at August 2015 SG meeting, produced an article and response vehicle about the future of Melksham Hospital for publication in the 10th September issue of Melksham News; but editor decided to reschedule it for the following issue on 24th September
3. Agreed the design for the MNP banner / flag from Sound Marketing for use at community events. There was a small additional charge of £48 for artwork carried out. Invoice given to Melksham Town Council – it needs to be included in report to the September SG.
4. Due to problems with ‘looping’ the MNP film, obtained at very short notice a ‘looped’ DVD copy to show at community events. Likely cost being around £30.
5. The banner, flag and DVD plus a loaned ‘made up’ display board set have been given to Melksham Without Parish council for storage.
6. Participation in community Engagement events:
 - (a) Stall at Food and River Festival 5th September
 - (b) Presentation to Melksham Health Forum 8th September
 - (c) Stall at Bowerhill Community event 19th September
7. These were used at the well attended Food and River Festival on 5th September. The MNPSG stand was extremely busy all day – it was difficult to talk to them all. What was particularly pleasing was that many of the visitors were relatively new residents of the area. Further ‘post it’ note comments and sign-ups to the Melksham 2026 community were received. Very positive feedback and interest received, but other noise from the event and sun made it difficult to view the film - lesson for the future.
8. A short presentation about the Neighbourhood Plan process and some key issues was made to participants at the Melksham Health Forum.
9. A stall was planned for 19th September at the Bowerhill community event – other will need to report on outcomes.
10. No comments have been received at the time of writing about the framework Neighbourhood Plan document
 - (a) Continuing to contact people who might be interested in the Task Groups;
 - (b) Held meeting with Wiltshire Air Ambulance

‘Next Steps’ Activity

- A. Identify dates for training to access the website and Melksham 2026 participant system
- B. Upload text, minutes etc to Neighbourhood Plan website as required.

7.1 Recruiting additional help for Public Participation Group.

Colin reiterated that it’s wrong to have it dependent on one person, as good a job as Nick has been doing to date. Colin felt we urgently needed to be extending that group, potentially by reaching out to others. Colin felt we should target some help. There would be people out there who would be keen to get involved. Richard agreed we can make appeals, but targeting individuals would be beneficial.

Mark agreed that people already involved in community groups would be the right people to approach, but

we need a clear indication of what would be involved. A job description should be prepared and circulated amongst CAWS, BASRAG, etc.

Colin and Nick would start that moving. Terri agreed she would help. Colin to arrange a one-hour meeting.

8. Task Groups

8.1 Reports from Task Groups

8.11 Health and Wellbeing (lead: Nick Westbrook)

Nick Westbrook reported via email:

1. Following MNPSG member attendance at the 12th August Wiltshire Air Ambulance presentation in Hilperton, members of the Health Task Group met with a senior officer of the Trust to explore some of the land-use / planning issues raised.
2. A separate report is attached.
3. The meeting resulted in the Trust taking a large stand at the Food and River Festival, which led to the discussion with the Canal Trust to ensure compatibility of the respective proposals.
4. The Festival was also an opportunity to facilitate a brief but productive meeting between the Wiltshire Air Ambulance Trust and Wilts and Berks Canal Trust to better understand their respective proposals and ensure that they were compatible. This resulted in the Canal Trust issuing a letter of support for the Ambulance Trust proposals.
5. We also discussed the idea of both Trusts presenting their respective to a further event at the Assembly Hall in October – perhaps in the form of an Open House event for the public lasting an hour or so; followed by an Q&A session on land-use and planning issues for invited local Councillors and MNPSG members

SUGGESTED ACTION:

A: Given the urgency to progress this project to completion, the MNPSG may also wish to consider if it is appropriate to adopt policies to:

- (a) support the Wiltshire Air Ambulance Trust proposal to relocate to the Melksham site;
- (b) safeguard the remainder of the 40 acre field and surrounding areas to protect air ambulance operations and flight paths in the event that planning approval is granted for the relocation of the Wiltshire Air Ambulance charity to the Melksham site.

B: Host October event in the Assembly Hall specifically about the Wiltshire Air Ambulance and Wilts and Berks Canal Trust proposal to expedite likely planning applications.

6. The presentation to the Melksham Health Forum described how issues now being considered by the Task Groups are inter-related and impact on each other, specifically the impact of health services. A further update on progress will be provided to the next meeting of the Forum early in 2016.

Attachment: [report on meeting with Wiltshire Air Ambulance](#)

Teresa questioned why the Neighbourhood Plan would be hosting an event in the Assembly Hall. Steve Gray agreed that there might be a danger that the Steering group might be seen as a lobby group if we were to host this. David Way agreed that we could allocate the site in our Neighbourhood Plan to safeguard it and protect it from other use, but it was not up to us to host the event.

Bruce agreed that we don't need to do a public consultation. It's up to the Air Ambulance and the Wilts and Berks to do this themselves.

It was decided not to take up option B.

It was decided that it's not for the Neighbourhood Plan to protect air ambulance flight paths, item A (b) above

The Steering group does however support the Air Ambulance, A (a).

8.12 Transport (lead: Rolf Brindle)

Rolf reported that a task group had been identified and approached. The transport group had held a meeting 23rd September at 6pm at the MWPC offices.

[23rd September Transport Group meeting notes](#)

They covered rail travel, the potential for extending the platform, the through route to Foundry Close, services down to Portsmouth, and recognized that buses which linked better with trains were important. There wasn't a lot of comment on footpaths. People were keen on having more cycleways. Consideration was given to A350 improvements northwards from New Road. The canal would of course provide walking and cycling links. Bridlepaths also needed to be incorporated. There is a general recommendation for a lorry park at Bowerhill.

Bruce said that the public footpath from Melksham to Bowerhill would presumably become residential or industrial land. A cycleway should be planned into it.

David confirmed that you can specify amounts of parking for houses in new developments. You would be looking at the effect on town centre car parks and roadside parking etc. Urchfont Neighbourhood Plan have actually specified the number of parking spaces allocated per dwelling.

Bruce also said that the commercial group may well put more importance into available parking. David said there are standards for car parking on industrial sites.

Teresa asked that adequate pedestrian access to schools needed to be included in the Neighbourhood Plan. This was agreed to.

David pointed out that Core Policy 61 in the Core Strategy covers the requirement for sustainable transport developments. All of our policies should be in accordance with the [Core Strategy](#). There is a copy in the MWPC offices.

Colin said with regard to cycleways, should there be some provision made for cycleways within the town. David Way confirmed that land could be safeguarded for cycleways, and cycleways could be specified within sites.

Teresa said that it's also important to protect cycleways – they are no longer safe if new houses have their driveways emptying out onto them, for example.

8.13 Business (lead: Bruce Sanders)

Bruce said that there would be a paper on the Air Ambulance and the Wilts and Berks Canal in the final Business presentation to the Steering Group as these were recognised as commercial enterprises. Bruce has spoken to several people about joining the group.

At the last meeting he had presented two consultative letters to the group which he wanted to distribute to people. There were two letters asking business people specific questions. Teresa said that all the heads of the task groups should be asked to consolidate their questions before these were sent out. It was agreed that Bruce should initially contact estate agents. The second letter was about future land use needs for businesses. It was agreed, but with the caveat that we also approach other towns to see if anyone is thinking of relocating to Melksham.

David asked if we were aware of the 6 hectares of saved employment site in Hampton Park. It was agreed that we were aware. There is a team at Wiltshire Council who are looking at inward investment

opportunities.

Bruce to contact the chairs of each group to see if there's anything they wish to add to the letter. Then to get the letters off to the estate agents.

8.14 Housing

Mark thanked everyone for the opportunity to get the Housing group up and running. Richard Wood congratulated him for the fact that it had been moving along extremely well.

[24th September Housing Group meeting notes](#)

[10th September Housing Group meeting notes](#)

Paper: [SHLAA Sites](#)

Map: [Melksham Geology](#)

Mark said that the enquiry had had a fairly narrow focus to date, looking at the 63 or so SCHLAA sites. The focus would have to expand to look at CIL etc at a later date. Of the 63 SHLAA sites, ten have been scored, 6 they have been unable to score. Some they have no information on. Some have been excluded by prior strategic assessment. He assumes they should be considering all of the listed SHLAA sites, even those who have had planning permission refused to date. The wording on the criteria scoring has been tightened up and made more appropriate to Melksham. Mark outlined the reasoning behind the amendments.

Mark had been struck by the evidence-based exercises which had been undertaken in Malmesbury. He asked if it was this group's request that the Housing Group go into that level of detail. If so, there could potentially be a financial impact, and he would appreciate some guidance.

Another point to consider is the extent to which the group should be consulting with other organisations once the 63 sites had been considered. Should they be undertaking mini-consultations for example?

David said that the Strategic Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal scoping report has an agreed set of environmental objectives. The range of alternatives would need to be included in any public consultation.

Wiltshire Council can provide more information on any SHLAA sites, but they need to get landowners' permission. Some information they have provided to Wiltshire Council is confidential.

Wiltshire Council's site allocation plan has also developed a set of criteria. They are using those to consider SHLAA sites in Melksham. Ideally the Site Allocation Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan should inform one another. This is not yet available externally.

Mark would question the usefulness of our group undertaking any assessment until WC have completed theirs as otherwise it could potentially give potential developers an opening if either group came to different conclusions.

Teresa asked whether speculative developer sites should be passed to the housing group to consider. David Way agreed this was perfectly acceptable and not pre-determining any potential outcome.

David said that sites should be deliverable. Talking to potential developers should be a part of the Neighbourhood Plan process.

Richard Wood asked if an initial sieving of sites to omit those which would never feasibly be delivered was acceptable. David agreed that yes, this was a perfectly acceptable way forward.

Richard noted that once we have a list of, say, 10 sites, that's when we can consult with the public.

The S.E.A. is the audit trail of how we got there – the story of the Neighbourhood Plan.

David noted that Calne have consultants who are doing site assessments and producing the SEA report.

Richard Wiltshire asked if the group could look at live-work schemes and self-build. Rolf noted that we haven't yet looked at mobile home parks either. David Way said that Warminster were looking at a self-build site in their Neighbourhood Plan.

8.15 Education (lead: Richard Wood)

Richard said he now has a team together, which includes the head teacher of Melksham Oak. There are five people altogether. Richard read from the school places strategy which suggests Melksham Oak will run out of places in 2019/20, 31% short in 2025. There are already plans to extend the school. The question really is about location of the primary schools. The group will be meeting soon and will report to the next meeting.

9. Environmental Report

9.1 Update on Draft Sustainability Scoping Report

An action was placed on Phil to revise the draft, taking into the account the comments, include an appendix showing that, that report should then be issued. No need to send it to them again. As these policies come together we will produce the SEA report. The Scoping report is the first part of it. When we come to consult on our draft Neighbourhood Plan we would ensure that the sustainability report is included in that. This SEA report will be an audit trail showing how we got to our final report. It's a technical process so it might be sensible to look at grant funding.

Phil to provide David Way with copies of the responses (*NB these are either copied or linked below*)

[Updated Scoping Report taking into account David Way's corrections and recommendations](#)

Phil reported that formal responses to the Sustainability appraisal(SA) / Strategic Environmental Assessment(SEA) had been received from Natural England and the Environment Agency.

[Response from the Environment Agency](#) (who are in favour of the report)

[Response from Natural England](#) (who are in favour, but would like Spye Park SSSI added)

[Historic England responded](#) on September 9th with a particularly encouraging and comprehensive response, as follows:

There are a few comments we would make which might be helpful to your activities.

1. **Generally the Scoping Report is comprehensive and the Steering Group is to be congratulated.** These are technically demanding exercises which try even those of us who deal with such matters on a day to day basis! Further information on accommodating the historic environment in the SA/SEA process can be found on our website <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/strategic-environ-assessment-sustainability-appraisal-historic-environment/>.
2. In specific terms I have the following observations:
 - a) It would be helpful if the baseline information on the historic environment set out the number and type of designated heritage assets (4.3.6, P24). For example, our records indicate that the area has 2 Grade II* and 149 Grade II Listed Buildings and 1 Conservation Area.
 - b) It is perhaps surprising that there is not reference to other heritage issues in the area other than just Archaeology and Local History and the need to identify where sites need to be better investigated and

understood. Our records indicate that the Grade II Listed Church of St Andrew in Church Lane is on the national Heritage At Risk Register, for example, and in the past the community has been in touch with us from time to time expressing concern about aspects of the public realm. Issues associated with the Conservation Area should be picked up in its Conservation Area Appraisal and an issue might be that this needs to be updated or if one doesn't exist then perhaps the completion of one together with a Management Plan!

c) An issue will certainly be the ability of the area to accommodate the levels of new development proposed while protecting and enhancing the area's historic environment. The setting of the town is picked up under 5.2, P37 and we would emphasise that the strategic setting of the town from a heritage perspective as well as the individual and collective settings of those historic features which comprise it will need to be understood and responded to sensitively.

d) We are pleased to see the Historic Environment as a Sustainability Theme (6.2, P41). The generic SA objective is fine but emphasising listed buildings in particular suggests that other heritage assets may be less important and there is a need to be consistent across the board in accordance with planning legislation.

e) The provision for the historic environment in Appendix C – Sustainability Appraisal Framework looks pretty comprehensive. It is then a question of whether point c) above would benefit from more specific emphasis, in this section or under Landscapes.

f) Appendix D - Criteria Scoring. It is understandable that some form of matrix should be developed to assist in the suitability evaluation of possible development sites. This can be helpful in dismissing sites but may not be sophisticated enough to justify those which remain, especially if some aspect of harm to heritage assets is identified as the protect and enhance imperatives of the NPPF and primary legislation still apply. Care will need to be taken in the judgement of impacts as this is a specialised task requiring relevant skill and experience.

10. Grant Funding.

We need a clear strategy for when we need to spend considerable amounts and establish a timeline so we can apply for grants at the appropriate time. We are potentially looking at next 1st April to be employing someone.

11. Any Other Business

Colin briefly mentioned the RSA Common Knowledge initiative, initially to create a platform for COBs to exchange ideas and information. Then the camous programme imploded, and it was decided that this platform lent itself to Neighbourhood Planning in a similar way. There is a meeting in Trowbridge Town Hall on November 10th. Colin felt it would be very valuable to get involved and to share experiences.

12. Date of Next Meeting

Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 28th October 2015

Terri gave her apologies for the meeting.

Signed:

Chairman of MNPSG

Date:

Links to supporting documentation and relevant sites of interest

<http://www.ourneighbourhoodplanning.org.uk/resources/documents>

<http://mycommunityrights.org.uk/neighbourhood-planning/>

[Draft Scoping Report](#)

[Wiltshire Council Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal Report Addendum](#)

Common Abbreviations: MNPSG = Melksham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group; MCAP = Melksham Community Area Partnership; CAP = Community Area Partnership; AB = Area Board; SCOB = Shadow Community [campus] Operations Board; SG = Steering Group; TC = Town Council; MTC = Melksham Town Council; MWPC = Melksham Without Parish Council; PC = Parish Council; WC = Wiltshire Council; JSA = Joint Strategic Assessment; JSNA = Joint Strategic Needs Assessment; MIN = Melksham Independent News; DPD = Development Plan Document