

WARE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN FORUM

A meeting of the **Ware Neighbourhood Plan Forum** will take place at 7 p.m. on **Monday 25 February at The Priory, Ware** when the following business will be transacted:

AGENDA

1. **Introductions and Apologies for Absence**
2. **Introduction to Neighbourhood Planning** - to receive a Presentation by George Pavey, Neighbourhood Planning Officer, East Herts Council
3. **Vice Chair** – to elect a Vice Chair
4. **Area Designation** – to receive an update (attached)
5. **Terms of Reference** – to note the agreed Terms of Reference for the Neighbourhood Plan Forum (attached)
6. **Aims and Objectives** – to note the aims and objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan Forum (attached)
7. **Membership** – to consider the mix of skills in the group and whether additional members with specific skills should be sought (attached)
8. **Secretariat** – to consider who will act a secretary to the Neighbourhood Plan Forum (attached)
9. **External Assistance** – to consider what professional assistance will be required (attached)
10. **Budget** – to note the budget available (attached)
11. **Previous Neighbourhood Plan Outcomes** – to review the outcomes of the previous Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (attached)
12. **Masterplanning** - to consider one member to represent the Neighbourhood Plan Forum at the Masterplanning Process for the strategic growth site.



Jill Rowlinson, Town Clerk
18 February 2019

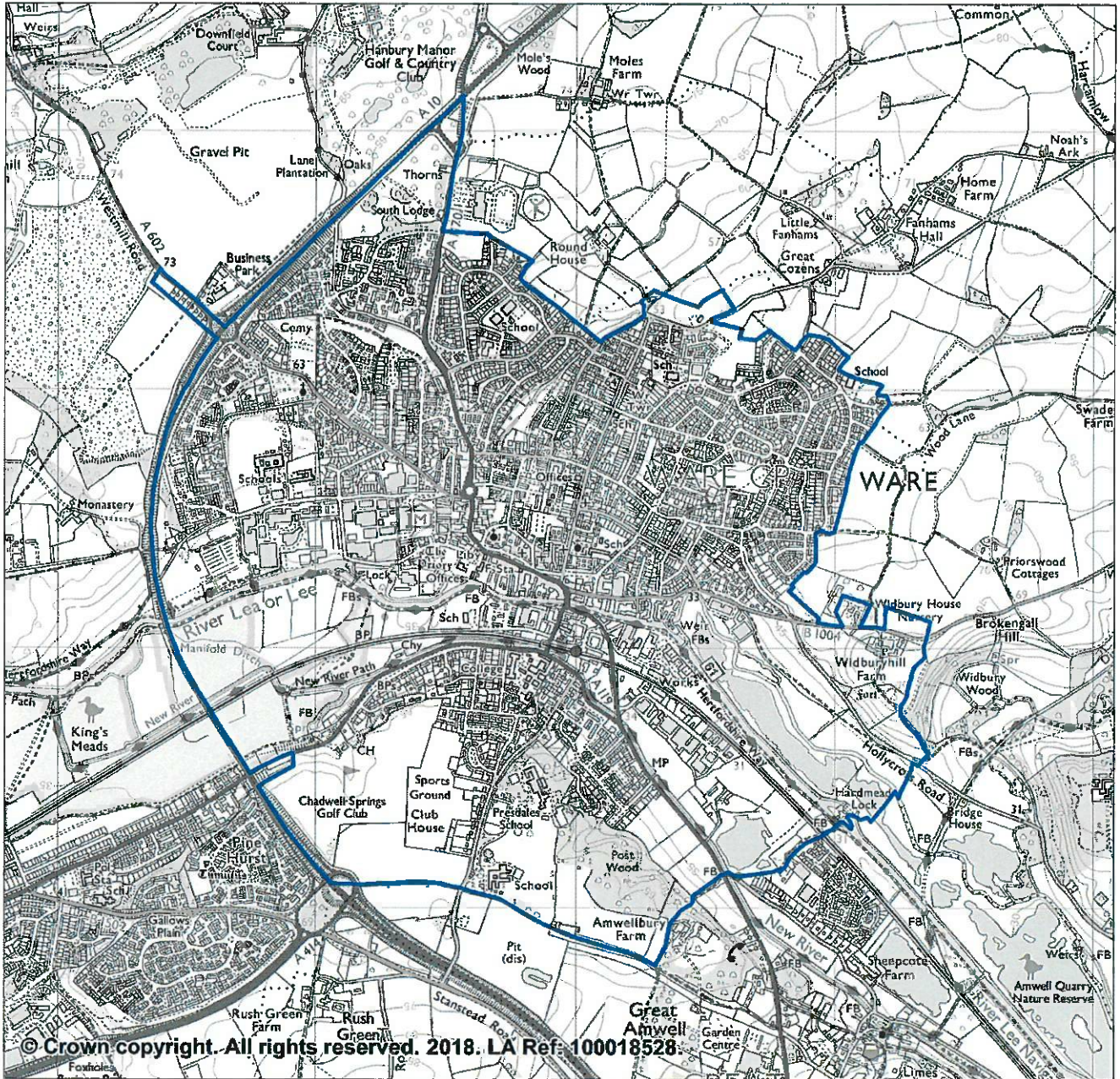
Ware Priory, High Street,
Ware SG12 9AL
www.waretowncouncil.gov.uk
01920 460316

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AREA DESIGNATION – AGENDA ITEM 4

An application was submitted to East Herts Council requesting that the entirety of the Town Council's boundary, excluding those areas included in the North and East of Ware Site Allocation, be designated as a Neighbourhood Area. The reason for this is that the strategic growth sites to the North and East of Ware will be covered by the Masterplanning process led by East Herts Council. The area designation has been agreed by East Herts Council. A map showing the area to be covered by the Neighbourhood Plan is attached.

Ware Neighbourhood Plan Area



NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN FORUM

The Neighbourhood Plan Forum (NPF) comprises a maximum of 3 Ware Town Councillors and up to 9 representatives of interested parties or individuals who provide a skill/ability to further the production of the Neighbourhood Plan. In addition to the nominated individuals, the NPF will have the power to co-opt additional members to make up the maximum number.

The NPF will be disbanded on completion of the production of the Neighbourhood Plan, i.e. following the Referendum.

Mission Statement:

To produce the Neighbourhood Plan and endeavour to complete by April 2021.

The NPF will be responsible for the drafting of the Neighbourhood Plan and signing off the document before it is presented to the Town Council.

Terms of Reference:

1. Ware Town Council will appoint a Chairman and Secretariat for the NPF. It will be the arbiter in any disputes by the Forum members
2. The Forum recognises that WTC is the principal instigator and funder of this project and will need to authorise the finalised plan before it goes forward for referendum.
3. There will be a maximum of 24 members on the Forum
4. The Chairman/Secretariat will be responsible for calling Meetings and setting the Agenda. The Agenda will be published in printed form for public display and, if appropriate, on website(s)
5. To work within the bounds of the Local District Plan
6. To call, prepare and present Public Meetings and Consultations
7. To consult with external agencies and the wider community.
8. To, if appropriate, form sub-groups to facilitate specific tasks. Such sub-groups may contain specialist non-Forum members in order to achieve the task(s)
9. To act as lead in evidence gathering
10. To formulate questionnaires and assist in their deployment and collection
11. To agree the analysis of the evidence gathered
12. To formulate the Plan together with its aspirations and an Action Plan as appropriate
13. To take the Plan through examination and referendum
14. To form a representative sub-group, to be known as the Neighbourhood Plan Review Forum (NPRF) to review the published Plan on a regular basis during its life
15. Information produced, gathered or disseminated by the Forum will be available within the Public Domain. This may be defined as Town Council, websites, noticeboards, newsletters or other publications.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REVIEW FORUM

The Neighbourhood Plan Review Forum (NPRF) will be formed by the Neighbourhood Plan Forum (NPF) at the completion of the Neighbourhood Plan (NP).

Mission Statement:

To formally review the published Neighbourhood Plan on a half yearly basis and suggest any amendments that may be appropriate. The purpose is to attempt to keep the NP current and relevant to any changes that may have occurred in the defined Neighbourhood.

Terms of Reference:

1. The NPF will put forward names for membership
2. There will be a maximum of 5 members
3. Ware Town Council (WTC) will be responsible for facilitating the meeting of the NPRF
4. The NPRF will appoint a Chairman and Minute Taker for the meeting
5. The NPRF will report directly to WTC's Planning Committee
6. The NPRF may propose specific actions to meet the Mission Statement
7. Where appropriate, the NPRF will produce a budget for consideration by Ware Town Council

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AIMS AND OBJECTIVES – AGENDA ITEM 6

Ware Town Council considered the motivation for preparing a Neighbourhood Plan and its aims and objectives. These are:

A Neighbourhood Plan for Ware would not deal with the strategic site. However:-

A Neighbourhood Plan is a legally binding document that governs new development and supplements the East Hertfordshire District Plan.

The Ware Area Neighbourhood Plan aims to:

- Improve the quality of new homes
- Protect the town's open spaces
- Reduce traffic congestion
- Ensure that the town has an appropriate level of infrastructure (including Schools, GP and dental practices)
- Increase opportunities for sport and the arts
- Support the town's high street and local businesses
- The Neighbourhood Plan gives you a say on building in your whole community and has been created for Ware by Ware people.

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MEMBERSHIP – AGENDA ITEM 7

As set out in the Terms of Reference, the Neighbourhood Plan Forum (NPF) comprises a maximum of 3 Ware Town Councillors and up to 9 representatives of interested parties or individuals who provide a skill/ability to further the production of the Neighbourhood Plan. In addition to the nominated individuals, the NPF will have the power to co-opt additional members to make up the maximum number (ie 24).

Current membership is:

Member	Representing
Cllr Alexander Curtis	Ware Town Council
Cllr Mark Pope	Ware Town Council
Cllr Stephen Reed	Ware Town Council
Caroline Crook	The Ware Society
Jan Wing	Ware Town Partnership/ CVS
Keith Batchelor	Raynet/ Town Watch
Julian Bond	Save Our Green Spaces
Jan Stock	Wodson Park
Mark Montgomery	Herts Police (CPDA)
	Ware Museum
Richard Munn	Widbury Hill Residents

Members were invited to complete a form indicating relevant skills and particular interests relating to the Neighbourhood Plan. Thank you to the 6 members who returned these. The collated results are attached.

From this it can be seen that the are where we have skills gaps are:

Knowledge of Planning Policy
Preparing comments on consultation documents
Policy development and writing

These are all specialist areas and are all related and suggests that these are the areas where external professional assistance will be required (see item 9).

On the interests section, the areas where we have gaps are:

Housing
Health
Education
Sustainability and the Environment

The group may wish to consider seeking additional members who have knowledge in these areas.

WARE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN FORUM MEMBER SKILLS AND INTERESTS

Name.....Collated results.....

SKILLS

Listed below are some of the skills we will need to produce a Neighbourhood Plan. Please tick the relevant column to indicate your level of experience and use the comments column to explain your skills level.

Skill	A lot of experience	Some experience	No Experience	Comments
Chairing Meetings	2	4		
Taking minutes	1	3	1	
Project Management	2	4		
Knowledge of Planning Policy		3	3	
Preparing comments on consultation documents		5	1	
Policy development and writing		4	2	
Data analysis	2	2	2	
Community Engagement/ Consultation	2	2	2	
Facilitation	3	1	2	
Communications/ public relations	2	4		

INTERESTS

As the Neighbourhood Plan process develops, we may need group members to work on particular subjects, for example:-

	No. interested
Housing	
Health	
Education	
Sustainability and the Environment	
Historic Character	2
Community and Voluntary Sector	3
Transport	2
Infrastructure	2
Sport	1
Arts and Culture	1
Retail and Employment	2

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SECRETARIAT – AGENDA ITEM 8

The work involved in acting as secretary to the group is likely to be:

Maintaining a record of group members
Communication with group members and the Town Council
Receiving and recording apologies for absence
Issuing agendas and reports in advance of meetings
Taking minutes at the meeting and issuing these to members
Updating a Neighbourhood Plan website or social media (if these are established)
Organising consultation meetings
Replying to consultation documents

The options for this are:

- There may be a group member who is willing to do all or part of this.
- Employing a dedicated member of staff to do this, to be employed by Ware Town Council
- Identifying a member of Ware Town Council staff with the capacity to do this – please note, there is a new Town Clerk starting work on 18 March. He will need time to assess the current staffing within the Town Council before being able to answer this.

EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE – AGENDA ITEM 9

The skills audit, see item 7, identified that the group is likely to need professional assistance with:

Knowledge of Planning Policy
Preparing comments on consultation documents
Policy development and writing

This suggests that a planning consultant should be engaged to assist with the production of the Neighbourhood Plan. Several neighbouring towns and parishes, eg Buntingford, Hertford, Thundridge, Bishops Stortford, have used planning consultants when producing their Neighbourhood Plans. If the group is in favour of this, then the Town Clerk will seek information and quotes from suitably qualified planning consultants.

BUDGET – AGENDA ITEM 10

The budget which was previously set aside by the Town Council and still available is £9,438.

Grant funding up to £9,000 is available from Locality.
Technical Support is also available from Locality.

Outcomes from the Neighbourhood Plan Workshop Session held on 16 January 2013

Health and Community

Statement:

"Ware feels like a small Market Town; it's a safe place to live and boasts a thriving range of community groups. Many of these groups help to orchestrate the annual calendar of events which brings the town together. Events such as The Ware Festival, Dickensian Evening, Rock in the Priory and Fireworks appeal across the generations and are well attended.

Ware boasts a wide range of facilities for sport, fitness and recreation. It also has the advantage of good transport links, which makes it popular with commuters.

The challenge looking forward is to manage the growth of the Ware to ensure it retains the market town feeling and continues to be a nice place to live."

Some ideas to improve the Health and Community of Ware:

- To retain existing green spaces for sports and recreation and develop new sites
- Bring together communities - e.g. tidy up an area
- Tie the various small communities within Ware together
- Encourage better links between young and older age groups – speed dating for volunteers
- A community bus service
- Engage the Housing Association
- Secure by design to be incorporated into all new builds and refurbishments – reduces police requirements, encourages community and improves health standards
- Encourage Town activities
- More for young people to do; would like a cinema scheme, youth club, drop-in centre
- More live entertainment in the town
- A new community shop window
- Make more use of the river – boat trips and events
- Make the Police station accessible for the general public – enable the public to report issues and engage with the police more

Question:

- a. *Do you agree that Ware should try and retain the feeling of a small market town?*
- b. *What other ideas do you have for improving the Health and Community of Ware*

Impact on services

Statement:

"The population of Ware is increasing and there are a high proportion of older people. This places considerable pressure on services, particularly those serving the higher age groups. Although NHS Direct has helped to fulfil some of the increased demand elderly isolation is becoming a problem. There is evidence of people suffering from chronic pain, grief and poor nutrition. In the past Herts Regional College students have helped to fill the gap but pressure on funding has reduced the support the college is able to provide for community projects."

Some ideas to improve the impact on services

- More support for elderly people; physical help, assistance to move, nurturing
- Better affordable transport links to hospitals providing specialist services e.g. Lister, Luton & Dunstable
- Support infrastructure to be in place and sustainable prior to any new development
- Befriending programme (youth and older people)
- Include more safe homes for the elderly

Question:

- a. *How much of an issue is access to services in Ware?*

b. What else could be done to improve services at minimal cost?

Sustainability and Environment

Statement:

"Ware is well located; its proximity to open countryside, nature reserves and the river Lea is regarded as one the town's key attributes. There is good community support for sustainability and environmental projects such as Ware in Bloom and furniture re-use, and strong opposition to any schemes which may impact on the green spaces in and around Ware.

As the population of Ware increases retention of recognisable town boundaries and strategic gaps should be regarded as a priority. In particular The Meads must be protected as a flood plain. Careful consideration must be given to the location of waste dumps to ensure they are not near or close to housing, schools or sports environment."

Some ideas to improve the environment and sustainability of Ware

- Enhancement of places of natural beauty, e.g. Presdales Pit
- Improvement to town beautification; more flowerbeds and better anti-litter schemes
- More community gardens and wildlife areas, more allotments, more trees on council estate
- More schemes to protect local wildlife
- Enhance recreational facilities
- Support for additional warehousing and accessible storage for furniture re-use scheme in non-residential area.
- More walks
- Maximise Ware in Bloom as a focus for garden projects and volunteering
- Support the campaign against expansion of Stanstead Airport

Question:

- a. **Do you agree that retention of recognisable town boundaries and strategic gaps should be regarded as a priority?**
- b. **What other ideas do you have for improving the environment and sustainability of Ware?**

Transport

Statement:

"Ware is centrally sited to East Herts and Broxbourne with good major road links and a rail service into London. There is an integrated public transport system but it needs improvement, particularly outside of peak periods. Like many other areas of the country the increase in car ownership has impacted on road capacity and residential parking, even in new developments is at a premium. The off-road path along the River between Hertford and Ware is well used but more needs to be done to improve other roads to encourage cycling and walking."

Some ideas to improve transport in and around Ware

- Improve the bus service; particularly poor after 6pm
- Make better use of HRC minibuses; look at using them for a community bus service to reduce elderly isolation
- Implement a 20mph speed limit.
- Give more consideration to parking and road layout when designing new developments - huge cul-de-sacs are not desirable
-

Question:

- a. **What else could be done to improve transport in and around Ware?**

Housing

Statement:

"Riversmead Housing Association provides good quality affordable housing, but the cost of renting privately is very high. There is a perception that Ware has more flats than small family homes and there is a lack of large 4/5 bedroom houses. The majority of new developments are aesthetically pleasing and good character"

Some ideas to improve Housing in Ware

- Provide more affordable central housing
- Need more family housing rather than 1 bedroom flats
- Build retirement homes with gardens
- Houses with gardens for families to enjoy private recreation
- Housing should fit with local character
- Design to include for sustainable materials and construction methods

Question:

- a. Does Ware have sufficient, appropriate housing stock to meet the needs of the future?***
- b. What else could be done to improve housing in Ware?***

Infrastructure capacity

Statement:

"The majority of the current services are operating at capacity and will be inadequate to meet the forecast demand. There needs to be a coordinated plan to address all infrastructure services to ensure that they are developed appropriately"

Some issues which need to be reviewed

- Drainage and water supply inadequate to meet forecast growth
- Schools; inadequate for forecast housing growth
- Need new land for cemetery

Question:

- a. Are there other infrastructural issues which need to be considered?***

Heritage and Culture

Statement:

"Ware has a rich, well documented heritage. The historic centre of the town includes significant mediaeval and Tudor buildings and is a designated conservation area. There is also a wealth of other historic buildings such as Place House, Scotts Grotto, Musley School, Independent Chapel, The Priory, The Maltings, St Marys Church, Gazebos and The Lido, but some new buildings are out of keeping with vernacular; for example Oak House and those in Crib Street

Recent events, such as the Great Bed of Ware, have increased publicity for Ware, other aspects of the town which regularly attract visitors include Hanbury Manor spa, River Lea, New River. Looking forward there are a number of potential projects to enhance the heritage of the town. A historian is looking to establish the New River Museum at Broadmeads pumping station and plans are already in place to refurbish the War Memorial and commemorate WW1 with links to local history."

Some ideas to improve the heritage of Ware

- Improvements to specific areas for example Baldock Street, Amwell End, entrance to the town (Viaduct Rd), Tudor Square, Musley School, 60's buildings (Saracens Head)
- Retain areas of archaeological significance
- No more flats, weird designs or multi-coloured houses
- Improve the quality of the street furniture and make sure its consistent
- Better information, education and communication about the heritage of the town; information boards, details of people to bring history to life
- Ware history week; bring heritage into schools
- Consider other cultures heritage; opportunity to engage with migrant community
- Maintain the unique river frontage
- Support The Lido

Question:

- a. Is sufficient being done to protect the heritage and culture of Ware?***
- b. What other improvements could be implemented to improve the heritage of the town?***

Retail Economy

Statement:

"The retail economy in Ware has suffered as a result of the recession and the national trend away from the High Street. We still have a good range of specialists and independent shops, cafes, restaurants and takeaways but there are a significant number of empty units. The limited parking in the High Street and the cost of parking in the designated car parks discourages shoppers to the town.

The High Street should be a lively, dynamic, exciting and social place; we need to create a vibrant retail, cultural and community hub which will act as the focal point and encourage more business into the town. Innovative parking schemes, better use of the High Street environment and more events will bring people back to Ware"

Some ideas to improve the High Street:

- Have more markets; Weekend flea market, farmers or speciality market; regular Saturday market
- Set up enterprise zones; pop-up craft stall and shops
- Encourage shops to amend their opening times to reflect demand, especially from commuters
- Impose stricter planning conditions of hoardings/closed shops
- Encourage a fishmonger to trade in the town
- Develop more pedestrian areas near shopping
- Enforce no-entry for heavy goods vehicles through the High Street
- Make take-away food outlets responsible for litter
- Develop Tudor Square to its full potential
- Improve the management of the Town Centre
- Remove evening parking charges to help to retain and build the night time economy

Question:

- a. Do you agree that the High Street should be retail, cultural and community hub of Ware***
- b. What other ideas do you have for improving the retail economy in Ware***

Employment, SME's and Not for Profit sector

Statement:

"Ware is fortunate to have GSK and other Small to Medium Enterprises providing employment opportunities but there are insufficient to meet demand. It is estimated that 63% of employed people commute out of Ware to work, and the number of commuters is increasing due to migration into the town. HRC is becoming partially redundant; buildings are empty and derelict and workers are being moved to Broxbourne. Rather than allowing the building to fall into disrepair they could be utilised for small business start-up and encourage creativity. Expanding the voluntary sector would also provide more opportunities for experience."

Some ideas to improve employment in Ware::

- Encourage businesses to network; develop Ware Chamber of Commerce, Trade and Business forums
- Increase the amount of premises for small business start-ups;
- Improve signage; planning issues prevent businesses publicising their services
- More showcase events for local businesses – food festival?
- More local businesses to offer apprenticeships

Question:

- a. ***What else could be done to encourage more opportunity for employment in the town***