

WARE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN FORUM

Minutes of a Meeting of the **WARE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN FORUM** held in Ware Priory, Ware on Monday 25 February at 7 p.m.

PRESENT: Cllr Alex Curtis (in the Chair) – Ware Town Council
Cllr Mark Pope – Ware Town Council
Cllr Stephen Reed – Ware Town Council
Keith Batchelor - Town Watch, Raynet
Jan Stock – Wodson Park
Julian Bond – Save Ware’s Greenbelt
Caroline Crook – Ware Society
Richard Munn – Widbury Hill Residents
Jan Wing – Ware Town Partnership, CVS
John Wing (Ware Museum)

ATTENDING J Rowlinson, Town Clerk: George Pavey, Senior Planning Officer and Maya Cullen, Planning Officer (East Herts Council)

1. APOLOGIES

Group members introduced themselves. Apologies for absence were received from Mark Montgomery of Herts Police.

2. INTRODUCTION TO NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

A presentation was given by George Pavey, Senior Planning Officer at East Herts Council. George agreed to share the presentation and his contact details with the group.

3. VICE CHAIR

It was **agreed** to elect Jan Stock as Vice Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Forum.

4. AREA DESIGNATION

An application had been 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 was that the strategic growth sites to the North and East of Ware would be covered by the Masterplanning process led by East Herts Council. The area designation had been agreed by East Herts Council. A map showing the area to be covered by the Neighbourhood Plan had been circulated. The report was noted.

5. TERMS OF REFERENCE

Terms of Reference for the Neighbourhood Plan Forum had been agreed by Ware Town Council in June 2018 so that the group could be re-established. The Terms of Reference had been circulated. Group members considered that the group itself should have a role in agreeing the Terms of Reference. It was **agreed** that any suggested amendments to the Terms of Reference would be considered at the next meeting.

It was questioned whether the forum should be established as a separate corporate body as some other Neighbourhood Plan Forums had done this. It was considered

likely that these were in areas where there was no town or parish council. In areas where there is a town or parish council, then the town or parish council has to act as the accountable body and so the Neighbourhood Plan Forum come under the umbrella of the Council and all income and expenditure would be dealt with by the Council. It was **agreed** that the Town Clerk would find out whether there was any liability to members of the forum.

6. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

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

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.

It was noted that the Town Council had agreed to include an additional aim, ie to identify preferred areas for development.

It was **agreed** to ask Forum members to submit any comments on the aims and objectives for the next meeting.

7. MEMBERSHIP

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. This showed up skills gaps in the areas of:

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

On the interests section, the areas with gaps were:

Housing
 Health
 Education
 Sustainability and the Environment

It was noted that some group members had experience in these areas, although they were not their main interests. It was discussed identifying further people to invite as members, eg Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust, Estate Agents, KB to consider High Street Businesses, Jan W to approach Hertford Regional College, JR to approach the Careers adviser at Chauncy School and the Practice Manager of Dolphin House Surgery. However, it was **agreed** to invite these representatives to attend relevant sessions rather than requiring them to attend every Forum meeting as members.

8. **SECRETARIAT**

It was **agreed** that this would be discussed with the new Town Clerk once he had had the opportunity to review Town Council staffing levels and requirements.

9. **EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE**

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

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

It was **agreed** to seek a planning consultant to assist with the production of the Neighbourhood Plan subject to securing Locality funding.

10. **BUDGET**

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

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

It was **agreed** to apply for Locality grant funding and technical support.

11. **PREVIOUS NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN OUTCOMES**

Outcomes from the Neighbourhood Plan Workshop Session held on 16 January 2013 had been circulated for information. It was noted that some of these were still relevant, whilst some had happened in the town and others were now more joined

up. It was **agreed** that JS and Jan W would review these, update them and bring them to the next meeting.

12. MASTERPLANNING

East Herts Council had advised that there were already 3 members of the Neighbourhood Plan Forum represented on the Masterplanning Steering Group for the North and East of Ware and that there was no capacity for additional members. The Forum members on the Masterplanning group were Julian Bond, Jan Stock, Stephen Reed. It was agreed that Jan Stock, as Vice Chair would represent the Neighbourhood Plan Forum on the Masterplanning Group.

13. NEXT MEETING

It was **agreed** that the next meeting would take place on Monday 8 April at 7pm at Ware Priory.

It was also **agreed** that the group would share email addresses so they could communicate between meetings.

Meeting closed at 9 pm

Chair of Neighbourhood Plan Forum