

**WELLS CITY COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, WELLS TOWN HALL, ON THURSDAY 15TH OCTOBER 2015 AT 7.00PM**

**PRESENT:** Cllrs: D Baker(Vice-Chairman); M Brandon; C Briton;  
N Kennedy (Chairman); G Wilson (Mayor); C Wride

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Town Clerk: F White  
Civic Society members of Wells Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group:  
A l'Anson, G Barrow, P Welch  
2 members of the public

**15/172P APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**  
C Cox; A Gibson (Deputy Mayor)

**15/173P DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS** None declared

**15/174P MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 1ST OCTOBER 2015**  
Minutes of the previous meeting were proposed, seconded, approved and signed.

**15/175P MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**  
Members of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and members of the public came to the table and joined in the discussion at 15/180P.

**15/176P PRESENTATION - Somerset Community Council:**  
Housing Needs Survey  
Postponed.

**15/177P PLANNING APPLICATIONS RECEIVED FOR CONSIDERATION:**

**1** 2015/2104/HSE  
Extension and alterations to existing garage to add on car port.  
47 Ash Lane Wells Somerset BA5 2LW  
**RECOMMEND APPROVAL**

**2** 2015/2181/HSE  
Replacement of front windows.  
84 Southover Wells Somerset BA5 1UH  
**RECOMMEND APPROVAL**

**3** 2015/2129/HSE  
Demolition of existing single storey side extension, erection of two storey side extension and creation of two off road parking bays.  
8 Sealey Crescent Wells Somerset BA5 3JF  
**RECOMMEND APPROVAL**

**TREES:**

**4 2015/2151/TCA**

Proposed felling of a Robinia pseudoacacia  
The Bishops Palace Market Place Wells Somerset BA5 2PD

**RECOMMEND APPROVAL**

**5 2015/1923/TPO**

Proposed pruning of a Lime tree subject to TPO M1277 - crown reduction to just behind previous reduction points by removal of approx. 3.5 - 4.0 metres from the tree's peripheral canopy, final pruning cuts to be up to 180mm diameter; thin remaining crown by 20-25% including reduction in length of selected ascending lateral branches by approx. 3 - 3.5m, remove basal / sucker growth, raise canopy / lower branches to approx 6m from ground level.

47 Drake Road Wells Somerset BA5 3LE

**RECOMMEND APPROVAL**

**15/178P TO RECEIVE NOTIFICATION OF DECISIONS FROM MENDIP DISTRICT COUNCIL: NOTED**

**15/179P MENDIP AREA PARKING AMENDMENT ORDER 2015 – NEW PROPOSALS DECISION: NO OBJECTIONS**

**15/180P WELLS NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

To receive a report from the Wells Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group:

Mr l'Anson presented his report; copies had been circulated. Cllrs Briton and Wilson (The Mayor) wished to make additional comments;

Cllr Briton felt that the report was accurate as far as it went but did not sufficiently reflect the lack of progress and the damaging comments, particularly from their own paid consultant. He felt there had been a crucial time of review when he had doubted whether it was worth continuing. However, the recent Mendip District Council Forum on Neighbourhood Planning had been inspirational about what is achievable. He felt the Group should lower its expectations and re-focus on specific achievable aims.

The Mayor

1. The Mayor wished first to record appreciation of the hard work done by Chris Winter and by Adrian l'Anson.
2. Secondly, to say that he had never felt that it was not worth continuing.
3. However, the Neighbourhood Plan is mostly to do with land use; this work is now in collision with the Mendip Local Plan Part II consultation.
4. On 21<sup>st</sup> September, a meeting of the Wells Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group discussed preparation of the report to the Planning Committee. The Mayor felt that the following points had been agreed and should be the focus of the report:
  - i. The Neighbourhood Plan Group would not try to progress the same issues of land use as the Mendip Local Plan consultation, at the same time. The Neighbourhood Plan Group would look at the land use proposals in the Mendip Local Plan and comment

- on it; the valuable information acquired so far could be of use.
- ii. The Neighbourhood Plan Group could continue looking at the 'non-land use' matters in the draft Neighbourhood Plan and consider these.

The Chairman then opened up the meeting for all to take part and there was a constructive general discussion which included the following matters:

- i. Lessons from Neighbourhood Planning Forum for parishes, held at MDC:
  - It may take longer than you think
  - Don't try to go too fast
  - Expect to re-evaluate and adjust
  - Much can be achieved
- ii. Expert Advice:
  - is available free from MDC Planning Policy Team; it is they who have to give initial approval to the next draft Plan.
  - can be paid for from a private consultant, grant funding is available; the application has to be made by the council. The Planning Committee felt that there was no evidence to put before the City Council to show that public money should be used on purchased advice at this stage; (project aims need to be clarified, a detailed plan and budget provided).
- iii. Evidence:
  - Evidence is essential at every stage
  - The Committee again requested sight of the evidence collected to date.
  - Housing Needs Survey. A presentation on this subject will be arranged as soon as possible. Members of the Steering Group indicated this to be an urgent matter.  
Grant funding would be required, application by the council.
- iv. The Need to focus:
  - Delete policies from the draft Plan, as agreed
  - Provide linked evidence where available
  - Identify Aims
- v. Roles and Responsibilities
  - All present welcomed the opportunity to sit round the table together
  - there had sometimes been a lack of clarity and this had led to some misunderstandings
  - The Steering Group is currently in need of administrative support

## **CONCLUSIONS**

**The Chairman invited the Mayor to sum up the discussion; the following conclusions were agreed:**

- 1. The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group will concentrate on the Mendip Local Plan Part II.**
- 2. Concurrent Activities: at the same time, they will -**
  - i. Look at the criticisms received in response to the consultation.**

- ii. **Separate elements of the Neighbourhood Plan relevant to the Mendip Local Plan from those *not* in the Local Plan. Consider these elements *not* involved in the Local Plan and-**
  - **Select the Aims to be retained**
  - **Identify how the Aims can be achieved**
  - **Prioritise the Aims and select the key issues**
  - **State how the evidence will be obtained to support each of the Key Aims**
3. **It was agreed the Steering Group will give regular up-dates to the Planning Committee**
4. **A Housing Needs Survey may be considered as part of the evidence.**

There was further discussion around the role of the professional consultant and about working with St Cuthbert Out PC.

There was discussion about drafting documents. The Mayor explained the nature of a successful 'first draft' document and the level of expertise to be sought for passing examination.

The Chairman drew the meeting to a close referring the discussion back to the Steering Group and inviting them to return when they have decided how to proceed.

#### **15/181P DELEGATED RESPONSIBILITIES**

To delegate authority to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, to decide any urgent matters arising before the next meeting.  
RESOLVED

#### **15/182P ANY OTHER MATTERS OF URGENT REPORT**

##### Mendip Local Plan consultation

Paper copies of the 16 questions on the Mendip Local Plan consultation to be provided to all members of the Committee and the Steering Group.

Mendip Local Plan consultation response will be on the agenda for the next meeting.

#### **15/183P DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> November 2015 at 7.00pm**