

Semington Neighbourhood Planning  
Steering Group Meeting 15 Tuesday January 17<sup>th</sup> 2023  
1930 to 2130 Village Hall Social Club and on-line



## AGENDA

- 1 Welcome and apologies
- 2 Recording any declarations of interest in relation to the agenda
- 3 Approving the minutes of meeting 14 on December 13<sup>th</sup> – Paper 15.1
- 4 Matters arising from the minutes and update on activities – Paper 15.1
- 5 Noting the progress with the AECOM report and deciding when to make it public – Paper 15.2a/b (separately circulated)
- 6 Considering / approving the revised the Landscape Assessment report (Paper 15.3 separately circulated)
- 7 Updating the parish businesses survey
- 8 Updating the Green Space provision: reporting back from landowners – Paper 15.4 (with these papers)
- 9 Considering the revised opening section of the report (23.01.04 draft) – Paper 15.5 (separately circulated)
- 10 Updating Groundwork reports and grant applications to Locality, and considering whether additional technical support is needed.
- 11 Noting that the Parish Character statement will be considered in SG Meeting 16 (February)
- 12 Agreeing the date of the next steering three group meetings and identifying business for February

## 14.1

Those steering group members present: Vicky Bodman VB (Chair), Bill Scott BS, and Katie Lea (Place Studios). Apologies were received from Emma Day, Sheralyn Milburn, Peter Smith and Hugh Turnbull.

## 14.2

There were no declarations of interest in relation to the agenda.

## 14.3/4

The minutes of steering group meeting 13 on November 8<sup>th</sup> were approved, and the updated information set out in the minutes was noted.

Suggestions for revisions to the Introduction to the neighbourhood plan will be sent to KL prior to circulation to critical friends for comment. Action BS / KL – **comments forwarded to KL; on agenda**

The government's latest proposed planning reforms were noted. As the final nature of these remains opaque, and the timescale of any implementation equally so, it is not clear whether or how they will affect either the Semington plan or the Wiltshire Local Plan review. It was clear, however, that the proposals strengthen the role of neighbourhood planning within the local planning process.

## 14.5

The draft AECOM report was discussed and a number of points were agreed for feedback to the authors for their consideration prior to the report's finalization. These pointed to a number of factual inaccuracies related to planning applications and the designation of local PRoWs.

They also pointed to a need for text to be added to explain that site constraints are likely to result in lower maximum numbers for housing development than initially anticipated by developers because of the need to be sensitive to issues such as heritage assets and wider landscape considerations. Finally, the comments queried whether the evaluation of constraints had been carried out consistently across sites.

The comments will be forwarded to AECOM and their final report considered at SG meeting 15 on January 15<sup>th</sup>. Action BS – **comments / changes forwarded to AECOM; AECOM accepted all of these except one. AECOM's preferences were then accepted (by BS / VB following advice from KL). The revised report has been forwarded by AECOM to Locality for approval.**

## 14.6

The draft Landscape Assessment report was welcomed as a valuable professionally-articulated perspective on landscape sensitivities within the parish. It was noted that the draft conclusions broadly agreed with the views of the parish council and neighbourhood planning steering group in relation to landscape and green space, and also with the key views documentation already produced. There was also good agreement with the draft AECOM report. It was agreed to contact the author to discuss what was now needed to produce the final report. Action KL – **completed; final report submitted and on the agenda.**

## 14.7

The progress made in surveying parish businesses was noted and it was decided to continue this into the new year Action All with a deadline for reporting in time for the next SG meeting on January 17<sup>th</sup>. Action HT – **on the agenda.**

It was decided not to continue the working from home survey but to accept the existing results and any more that are submitted.

## 14.8

BS and KL reported on communications with landowners about Green Space provision. All the owners of the significant parcels of land had been identified and written to apart from the Wessex Close play area whose ownership remains unclear. The ownership and status of the small pieces of land in the village remains unclear but are likely to be 'adopted highways'. As such, these are not normally available for designation as green

space, but it was thought important to continue to include the Ragged Smock and the triangle in the plan as these are key pieces of village land. KL will discuss this with DW. BS will continue to track down the owners of the Wessex Close play area. – with no luck so far.

14.9

The updates to the draft Parish Character statement by Place Studios were accepted. One picture is missing. Action BS – completed

Place Studios will now work on the Conclusion (p. 18) and present it for the SG meeting in February. Action KL / VT – in hand

14.10

VB updated our position with Locality grants and it was agreed to forward a report to Locality and a further application before Christmas. Actions VB – report has been accepted by Groundwork, and the subsequent grant application has been approved by Locality.

14.11

The date of the next steering group meeting was confirmed as January 17<sup>th</sup>. Business to include:

- the final AECOM report
- the final landscape report
- green space update
- business survey update
- a final review of the Plan Introduction

END of SNPSG Paper 15.1
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From Mrs Giles [ Mill Field]

Good morning Bill

Thank you for the information on Green Spaces and in relation to the field at Seend Park Farm WT311404.

As you may know my late husband Freddie and myself have always been strong advocates of maintaining the status quo in the countryside and of sharing what we have with the community as far as practical. Giles Wood which I think Seend has designated as a Green Space is a 14 acre woodland planted in 1993 with 5000 British trees and open to the public by way of permissive paths as well as a bridleway.

Land to the east of the farm and south of the canal including fields on both sides of Semington brook is crossed with both ROW and permissive paths and is enjoyed by the community for dog walking all year and swimming in summer.

The land south of the house with the small lake has no public access but the hedges are kept sufficiently low that the abundant wildlife can be seen when walking on the bridleway adjacent viz down the drive from the house and over both bridges.

The land in Semington parish WT311404 has no ROW or public access. It is bordered to the north by the brook and to the south by the mill race and once again is maintained by us as an attractive vista viewed from the bridleway walk. It is also part of the flood plain and has flooded several times in winter months so would be really unsuitable for any building.

We use this field specifically to host Baden Powell scouting events and we have several camps over the summer months with both local troops such as Hilperton or Broughton Gifford as well as troops further away. Bowerhill uses the facility frequently for training evenings. During Covid restrictions it was invaluable as an open space for our young people to continue their activities as we also had the advantage of the barn for really wet weather and for some time we had beavers, cubs and scouts meeting here.

However it is not a recreational field nor a play area open to the public and we do not permit dogs in the field for obvious reasons with young people meeting there. We only accept scouts from approved groups which are run on BP guidelines and which are booked in advance. We make no charge for the use of the field, nor facilities including water. I do not want to get into the position whereby the field acquires green space status which then prohibits 60 scouts from camping for a week and enjoying group games and camp fires.

We receive many comments on how beautiful the walks are around the farm and I have no intention of changing that and nor will my son who may be living here after me and who is himself a keen scouter. We have been fighting WC with the proposed bypass to the existing bypass on A350 and will continue with the help of CPRE to help maintain the green space whether designated or not for the enjoyment of the community.

So in summary I don't think the field warrants green space status but would have no objection if the existing use for scouting activities were not prohibited by said status.

Kind regards  
Jan Giles

From Mr Willis (Land adjacent to Wharf Cottage)

*Willis & Co.*

**Our ref.:** MW/Willis

11<sup>th</sup> January 2023

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Dear Sir,

**Semington Neighbourhood Plan: Local Green Spaces  
Land adjacent to Wharf Cottage, Semington, Wiltshire, BA14 6JT**

1. We refer to your letter of 5<sup>th</sup> December 2022 with reference to the above. I can confirm that the owner of the above site is opposed to the designation of his land as Local Green Space.

2. We do not believe that this land fits the criteria as being 'demonstrably special to the local community'. The site is not eligible for designation because;

- it is not beautiful

- has no historical significance in terms of recreational value

- is not particularly tranquil or rich in wildlife

(We do not understand what 'beauty' and 'local in character' is supposed to mean. It is impossible to say if this land is objectively 'beautiful' or 'local in character'.)

3. The landowner fully intends to pursue residential development on this site.

4. It may be that parts of the site, for example, close to the brook and within the flood plain, may well be suitable for use as public open space (in the context of residential development on other parts of the site). However, as most development within Flood Zones 2 and 3 is already strictly prohibited, a further layer of protection as a 'Local Green Space' would be entirely superfluous.

5. There is no discussion as to how Local Green Spaces are to be delivered and maintained. Landowners cannot be expected to provide Local Green Spaces and to maintain them at their own expense. If such spaces are to be funded from the public purse, this needs to be made clear so that when parishioners are asked to vote on the Neighbourhood Plan they are fully aware of what they are voting for - presumably an increase in Council Tax to pay for the provision and management of the Local Green Spaces.

Contd.../

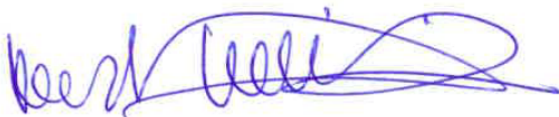
**Land adjacent to Wharf Cottage, Semington, Wiltshire, BA14 6JT**

6. We previously put forward a scheme for residential development on part of this land which could deliver enhanced access to the canal bank and the creation of an area of public open space alongside the brook at no cost to the public purse. By the use of a S106 agreement, the public open space could be delivered and provided to the community and the ownership thereafter passed (if the Parish Council was so minded) to the Parish Council, together with a sum of money to provide a fund for its on-going maintenance.

7. The suggestion that this site be allocated as Local Green Space will achieve nothing in itself. The landowner is opposed the designation of the land and will oppose public access to the land. However, if the Neighbourhood Plan was to support a modest amount of residential development here, the community can achieve a fully landscaped area of public open space alongside the brook, access to the canal side and funding for the on-going maintenance of the public open space (in addition to the 25% of the CIL payment which will also be made available to the Parish Council).

8. I trust the position is clear. The landowner is willing to discuss residential development with an element of public open space on part of the land, but is strongly opposed to the allocation of the either the whole or part of his land as a Local Green Space in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Yours faithfully,



Marc D. Willis BTP MRTPI FBIAC