



WROUGHTON & WICHELSTOWE PARISH COUNCIL

MEETING NOTES

Neighbourhood Plan (NHP) Working Party

Monday 19th January 2026 10.30am

Present: Cllr H Woodward (HW)
Cllr D Archer (DA)
Cllr J Hewer (JH)
Steve Harcourt (SH)
Pete Wilcox (PW)
Brian Phillips (BP)
Clerk, Emma Freemantle (EF)

Clerk to Chiseldon Parish Council, Clair Wilkinson.

1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies.

Cllr H Woodward carried out introductions and apologies.

Apologies from Chris Kennedy and Cllr Matthew Smith (VC to P&H Committee)

2. Review the notes from the previous meeting – 13th October 2025

All present reviewed the minutes from the previous meeting.

Ashen Copse / Surrounding Fields

PW update:

- Field behind Ashen Copse has potential development interest.
- The far end of the field is unlikely to be developed, but the section adjacent to the copse may be.

HW update:

- The Chair the Clerk and HW met with Richard Codrington previously to discuss his planning application process for the farm land behind Ashen Copse.
- Codrington intends to seek planning permission to develop land behind Ashen Copse it is currently underway as they have appointed a land agent, Ainscough and carried out the relevant drainage surveys.

- He is prepared for the application to be refused and expects to win on appeal if needed.
- A development of 300 homes is being put forward for the land in question.
- Application expected to be submitted to SBC soon.
- SH noted the woodland would not be touched, with mitigation expected through planning.
- A permissive path was discussed; Codrington wants it routed through the middle of the wood.

Parish Councils position with new developers:

- At the December full Parish meeting, councillors agreed not to engage with future developers on site proposals unless the public are going to be engaged at the same time. The parish council wishes to remain transparent and not take on individual meetings with various land agents.

SBC (Swindon Borough Council) Discussions

- JH and HW visited SBC a month ago - SBC stated no plans exist for development at Wharf Road or Ashen Copse.
- Employment development is already allocated at the Panattoni site.
- Wroughton was previously told that Wharf Road and Ashen Copse were safe from development.
- If a planning application is submitted: SH asked whether it would end up in the Local Plan.
- EF reported Codrington does not care whether the site sits within the local plan.
- BP raised concern that the site is too small for 300 homes, which would likely become high-value housing.

Road Infrastructure / Bypass Discussion

- BP noted that previous NHP work suggested a bypass might be required to preserve village quality.
- SH expressed concern that a bypass could encourage more housing, not less.
- HW said it could be an option, though SBC currently have no plans for a bypass.

Health & Medical Facility Wichelstowe

- HW stated that the ICB sees no current need.
- Despite 4,000 additional houses planned, the ICB position has not changed.
- Medical facility – petition from ward Cllrs, HW advised that at the current time there is no need for new medical facility. There has been a petition raised by ward councillors for a new medical facility.

Other Development Sites - Sites expected to come through the planning process:

- Balmoral Land
- Wharf Road Farm Land
- Akers Land
- All are in the draft local plan, but not wanted by the Parish.
- The area's coalescence policy must be preserved.
- Hills site continues as an existing development.
- EF to compile a complete list of known sites and active discussions.
- BP mentioned the potential development of **Elcomb**.

Balmoral Land, Wharf Road Farm Land, Akers Land, will all be discussed via the planning application process in the future under a public setting.

Akers Land (P&C)

- HW – Akers Land the parish council have been discussing this land for 4 years now and the access issues the Charities would have restrict them from selling the land. The charities are in financial difficulties and need to sell the land to fund further services as the Prospect Hospice.
- JH referenced that a new road into the site could go down Wood Farm Lane but this would require coordination with the Goslings who own the road and farm land.

Clair Wilkinson arrived 10.45.

3. To note the agreed way forward for the parish councils revised NHP has been decided as a POLICY BASED approach.

As a recap the Clerk confirmed the previous notes and agreed way forward by the parish council that the NHP will move forward as a Policy based plan.

4. To note that the parish council has agreed up to £15,000 for the provision of its NHP review 2026 onwards.

Clerk confirmed that the parish council has allocated this sum within the 26/27 parish council budget setting process.

5. 10.45am – 11.15am – Introduction from Clair Wilkinson, Clerk to Chiseldon Parish Council (CPC). Clair is attending to share information and experience on creating the CPC NHP.

HTC and CPC appear to have used the same consultant; their plan formats are similar.

Positive experience noted from Chiseldon Parish Council (CPC) – consultant was helpful.

Andrea Pellegram (now operates with her son and husband) is one consultant option; council should obtain at least two quotes.

CPC began with a public working party (6–7 initial volunteers), which helped shape early work.

AI tools were used to help formulate explanations of certain questions. A public meeting at the beginning was used to set objectives; the consultant refined/expanded these.

CPC issued a survey and later a referendum, though some residents remained unclear about what they were voting on.

Need for clearer layout and clearer policy focus in future plans.

Timeframes & Costs

CPC's NHP: 4 years from start to completion

Cost: £4,500 parish funding

Grants: £13,000 from Locality (total £18,000)

Wroughton (WPC) took about 3.5 years; a 9-month delay occurred due to SBC not confirming the required Environmental Assessment.

Highworth Town Council undertook more of the work internally.

Both HTC and CPC emphasised that some level of housing development is inevitable and it's better to have policy-based guidance than rely on site allocation alone.

CPC expects developers to refer back to the NHP (e.g., with the current 42-house application).
Recommendation: present the NHP to developers early to ensure alignment.

Issues with Previous Plans

SH highlighted concerns that some WPC policies were ignored, with developments approved on appeal regardless. This contributes to resident perception that the NHP is “just paperwork” since development proceeds anyway. However, CPC noted their previous NHP was well-received locally.

Key Considerations for Upcoming NHP Work

Compare the existing NHP against a policy-based approach, potentially using AI as suggested.
Ensure alignment with SBC’s Local Plan—AI comparison recommended.

Parish Council should define:

- What they want from the consultant.
- The scope/specification of the new NHP before quotes are obtained.
- Clearer structure, clearer policies, protection of small green spaces, and stronger resident engagement.
- Begin with a vision statement which reflects what the parish council wants to achieve and what the new NHP should include.

DA stressed importance of not overlooking the NHP’s role in enabling CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) funds. NHP can influence how CIL funds are allocated within the parish.

The working party reviewed the following docs supplied by the Clerk at CPC:

- **Attached budget summary which explains the costs involved for the CPC NHP.**
 - Localities grants received, and portions sent back that were not used (no longer available)
 - Expenditure from the grant funds
 - Expenditure from own funds CPC had set aside as backup.

6. Review of other parish council NHP documentation – to be taken away for reading:

- a. Chiseldon Parish Council
- b. Broad Hinton
- c. Highworth Town Council

7. To discuss next steps for the Wroughton & Wichelstowe Parish Council NHP.

When should WPC hold a public meeting?

HW raised the question; historically SH noted that display boards were installed for public engagement. SH advised that the past approach involved public displays rather than a single large meeting.

Proposed approach:

- Consultant-led public meeting at the start.
- Obtain two consultant quotes before deciding.
- Residents to comment on
 - What future developments should look like.
 - What priorities they want included.
- WPC should prepare a list of items/questions for residents before the meeting.

Ambition and Timing

- This NHP will run for 10 years, meaning the council can afford to be more ambitious.
- Objectives need to be time sensitive and include a sense of urgency, as PW highlighted.

Infrastructure Requests / Opportunities

- Previously requested a cycle path and footpath down Wharf Road.
- Potential for footpath on Mill Lane, which would bring safety and accessibility benefits.
- Possible re-routing of the footpath through their field, making crossing Wharf Road safer.

Development design considerations:

- Variety and density of houses.
- Proximity to bus stops.
- Connectivity via footpaths and cycle paths

Biodiversity Net Gain (BDNG)

- Highworth has a designated BDNG area approved by SBC.
- Developers can buy credits (10% BDNG requirement) to offset impact.
- Wroughton could request a similar dedicated BDNG site, which may bring investment or ecological benefits.
- WWT (Wildlife Trust): Not yet registered for BDNG but may be considering it.
- Costo Farm currently serves as a BDNG site for Wichelstowe. Question raised: Is Wichelstowe allocating BDNG requirements to off-site locations elsewhere?

Wichelstowe Sports Hub

- Parish Council may be asked for involvement and possibly funding.
- NHP may need to reference:
 - Expected sports/community infrastructure
 - Potential contributions or partnership roles

Vision Statement

- Discussion on whether to include a vision statement.
- Proposal to retain the strapline from the previous NHP.
- Review the existing seven NHP headings and decide which to keep, update, or reorganise.

Comparison: WPC vs HTC (Highworth Town Council)

- Wroughton has a larger population than Highworth.
- Key questions:
 - How can Wroughton increase its importance in the area?
 - Explore potential for commercial and industrial development.
 - Identify achievable economic growth prospects.

8. Date and time of the next meeting

- **23rd February at 1:00pm**

Vision Statement

A vision statement will be required for the initial consultant brief / call-out. This needs to be suitable for the public domain so that one vision statement is suitable for all platforms of communication.

This will help define:

- The direction of the new NHP.
- The tone and priorities for consultation.
- The consultant's understanding of WPC's ambitions.
- Clarification needed on how the timing works with the 2026 deadline:
- When does the current NHP officially end?
- When does the new NHP need to be adopted?
- Is there a required overlap or a formal "handover" period?