

4th Meeting of Sunningwell Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

7:30 to 9:00pm, Thursday 5th February 2026, Sunningwell Village Hall

Contributors

Lindsay Judson, Karen Laister, Debbie Neal, Mike Osborne, representatives of the Working Groups, and other residents of the Parish.

Apologies – Judy Aspinall

Minutes - DRAFT

1. The Chair (Mike Osborne) welcomed residents of the Parish and the representatives of the Working Groups.
2. The Minutes of the previous meeting (22 January 2026) were approved. The Chair reported that Sunningwell Parish Council had unanimously approved Lindsay Judson's appointment as Secretary of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. Lindsay had previously informed that his travel plans had changed, meaning that unexpectedly he was able to attend this meeting, but he would not be in a position to prepare the minutes. It was agreed that Mike Osborne would draft the minutes, for approval by Debbie Neal.
3. The joint South Oxfordshire & Vale of White Horse Neighbourhood Plan Template Launch was attended in-person by Mike in Didcot on 28 January and by Karen online on 2 February. Mike reported that the meeting reemphasised the increasing importance of Neighbourhood Plans given the changes to the planning approval system which are being developed.

He also reported that the newly-launched Templates and Guidance Notes aimed at streamlining the Neighbourhood Plan process are both timely and helpful for Sunningwell. He also noted that the new Template did not change the process steps, and everything that we had done, or were planning to do, remain valid.

Karen reported that over 100 people had attended, and that, depending on timing, our Neighbourhood Plan might be reviewed against either the old or the new versions of the National Planning Policy Framework and the South & Vale Joint Local Plan as both are proceeding through their respective approval processes.

4. Mike summarised that at the previous Steering Group Meeting the Working Group Reports were considered close to being acceptable for publication on the SPC website, and that each of these had since made revisions in light of the comments received. Mike did not propose to re-circulate all of these documents but would make (near-final) versions of all of them available on a shared drive so that they could be inspected and/or downloaded by the members of the Steering Group and other interested parties.

Karen suggested that, given the work that had gone into producing the Working Group Reports, that professional proof-reading might be appropriate, and had obtained a quote of 12-14 hours at £20/hr to do this. She reported that she thought it could be done without affecting the timescale. There was discussion about whether this should be reserved for the final official Plan, and around the need to provide any proof-reader with some form of style guide in advance (e.g. does Parish have u/c P or not?). The consensus was that the expense was justified – Karen to organise.

It was agreed that all Working Group Reports would be in the same “folder” on the SPC website, and hence that the QR codes on the WG pages would be identical. Karen & Debbie to agree and implement the location and provide URL to Mike. Mike to suggest brief introductory words.

The need for printed copies of the WG reports for distribution to BHA, BRA, SVH, Cricket Club, School, Beaumont, 3x landowners etc., and to have available at Drop-in meetings was discussed. No formal decision on number of copies was made, but the above list suggests ~15 copies.

The format/quality of these was discussed, and it was agreed that the 2-up, double-sided ink-jet printed on plain paper and stapled in the corner that had previously been circulated was adequate, and that something like A4 ring-bound was not necessary. Mike commented that in this case he would likely be submitting an expense claim for printer ink and paper.

5. A mock-up of the proposed leaflet was circulated. The overall layout was approved, and no changes to the words on the Working Group pages were suggested. Mike expressed dissatisfaction with the image used on the Planning WG page but did not have a better alternative.

As all Working Group Reports would be in the same “folder” on the SPC website the QR codes on the WG pages would be identical. Bob Evans suggested the inclusion of a web address in addition to the QR code, and this was considered a good idea by all.

Michael Dearnaley suggested that the QR code and web-address could appear on alternate pages. Karen will provide Mike with the web-link to the page.

On the cover page, the timings of the meetings were confirmed as 7:30pm, 3:30pm and 10:30am on the 5th, 7th and 8th of March respectively. The description of the 5th March event to be changed to Drop-in format – see item 7-8 in these minutes. It was agreed that refreshments should be offered, and that this should be made clear on the cover.

On the Survey pages, it was agreed that the titles would be changed to match the Working Group titles. It was also agreed that an additional, positive, question be added to the final “Community & Local Life” section, along the lines of “What do you most appreciate or value about the parish?”

It was also agreed that a version of the instructions on how to return the survey, which appear on the cover page, should also appear on the back page.

All other aspects of the survey pages were approved. It was agreed that Mike would circulate a final version of the survey prior to sending to the printers.

Karen/Debbie to provide Mike with URL for the survey page.

Debbie suggested that 500 copies was more realistic than the previously suggested 400. All agreed, and Mike estimated the additional cost of ~£10.

6. Duncan Graham had offered to distribute leaflets in Bayworth. John Whittle had offered to distribute in Long Furlong. Judy and Debbie volunteered for Sunningwell. Lindsay had volunteered for Boars Hill, although he will be unavailable until 19th February. Karen volunteered for certain addresses in Boars Hill, and Mike volunteered for Boars Hill generally. Others had also previously volunteered in advance of the meeting, and so it is thought that we will have sufficient numbers.

- 7-8. There was discussion of the format of the events on 5th, 7th and 8th March, and the consensus was that all events should be “Drop-in”. The view was that the Working Group Tables had worked well, and an arrangement similar to this should be repeated.

There was some concern over how the more “logistical” aspects of actually developing the Plan would be covered in this format, and one suggestion was that

this could have its own “table”, and/or that a short presentation be made every 30-minutes. More thought needs to go into this, but it was agreed that the events should be publicised as “drop-ins” on the leaflets, and subsequent newsletters and posters.

Debbie highlighted the need for the parish to own a laminator. No one disagreed. Debbie to specify, price and suggest?

It was agreed that maps had been good “props”. If updated maps, or other props, are required there may be a leadtime involved.

9. Mike commented that the intention was that the Working Group members would be allowed to retire with honour after a job well done at the 8th March meeting. However, volunteers would then be needed to complete the next stage of the Neighbourhood Plan process and Mike expressed the hope that some existing WG members would volunteer. He also said that he hoped that the distribution of the WG reports may entice others to join the process, and that the door should always remain open to this. It was agreed that a more precise description of the next steps (and a “job description”) would be required in advance of asking for volunteers.

Next Meetings

Neighbourhood Plan Drop-in Events in Sunningwell Village Hall

7:30-9pm, Thursday 5 March

3:30-5pm, Saturday 7 March

10:30-noon, Sunday 8 March

Working Group reports will be available for viewing and Working Group representatives will be on hand to listen to feedback, answer questions and to describe the next steps in the Neighbourhood Plan process.

2 April – Date reserved at Sunningwell Village Hall for the next Steering Group meeting.

Debbie Neal