

6th Meeting of Sunningwell Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

7:30 pm, 31 March 2026, Sunningwell Village Hall

Minutes - DRAFT

Contributors:

Liz Browne, Robert Chorley, Bob Evans, Duncan Graham, Lindsay Judson, Karen Laister, Debbie Neal, Mike Osborne, James Weeks, Richard Youdale

By Phone: Liz Delacave, Bruno Delacave

Apologies: Judy Aspinall, Andrew Hoare

1. The Chair welcomed the new members of the Steering Group (the membership of six of these (Liz Browne, Robert Chorley, Bob Evans, Andrew Hoare, James Weeks, and Richard Youdale) had been ratified at the March Parish Council Meeting, leaving the membership of three (Duncan Graham, Liz Delacave, and Bruno Delacave) to be ratified at the April meeting). He reported that recent decisions on unitary authorities favoured smaller population units/areas, and that this should be borne in mind in the drafting of the Neighbourhood Plan. The decision would now be taken in July, with implementation expected in 2028.
2. The Minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2026 were approved.
3. The Chair spoke to the summary of activities since the last meeting which had been circulated in advance. There was a general discussion, in which it was noted that while the response rate for the questionnaire was good, no one who lived outside the Parish had submitted a questionnaire. Members of the SG suggested the possibility of contacting parents of children at the school or who had signed up to use the cricket pitch this year, and this was discussed. It was agreed that it might be desirable that each group be asked what they valued about that amenity, though it was noted that any results would need to be incorporated into the NP by the time of the next SG meeting (23 April). It was agreed that a final decision would be made by the SG by e-mail.
4. The Chair reported on progress with the Consultation Statement which had been circulated in advance on the shared drive. He said that the Statement was essentially up to date, with only some minor revisions and additions required.
5. The Chair introduced discussion of next steps in the drafting of the Neighbourhood Plan. He said that the two main issues were compiling the list of the Policies which the Plan should contain and determining who would volunteer to be involved in the drafting. There was a lengthy discussion by the Group of various matters:

- Suggestions for our Vision and possible top-level policies/principles (the Chair had circulated a short paper on the latter). Vision statements in a number of other NPs were noted for comparison and contrast. It was agreed that Sunningwell's should be positive in stressing the rural rather than suburban character of the Parish and the need to preserve this, especially in the face of the pressure of external developments. It was agreed that the Chair would send members of the SG links to some other NPs' Vision Statements and that they were invited to submit suggestions for our Statement to the Chair.
 - The question of Non-Designated Heritage Assets (James Weeks had circulated a short paper on this). It was agreed that this was a complex matter which could be taken up in due course.
 - Topic-specific policies (the current Working Group drafts had been circulated ahead of the meeting). It was noted that these were in various stages of completion. Policy statements in related topics in a number of other local NPs were noted for comparison and contrast. There was agreement among the members of the SG on the importance of preserving the distinctive nature of the Parish – its landscape, buildings, history, culture, and amenities, and the positive contributions made to this by landowners, residents and visitors was emphasised. There was also discussion of the importance of the Green Belt, and of terminology such as 'green spaces', 'green gaps', and 'the sense of openness'. The SG agreed that, for each Working Group topic, one member of the SG who could represent the WG in question would take the lead in coordinating the work needed to refine the current drafts, aiming for two or three Policies per WG; these would need to be edited for consistency in style and terminology (the Chair undertook to oversee this latter task). It was agreed that the Chair would send these members of the SG links to some other local NPs' Policies as appropriate.
6. Timetable: the SG agreed that suggestions for the Vision Statement and the draft Policies should be submitted to the Chair by the WG representatives by 14 April, with the aim that the draft Plan and Consultation Statement could be largely complete in time for the next SG meeting (23 April); they would then be submitted to the Parish Council for its next meeting on 30 April. The drafts would then be put on the NP website and feedback from residents and other stakeholders before and at the Annual Parish Meeting on 28 May. The Annual Parish Meeting would be the cut-off for feedback prior to the Reg 14 submission of the Plan.
7. Date of the next meeting of the Steering Group. It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on 23 April 2026 at 7.30pm in the Sunningwell Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 9.25pm.

Lindsay Judson