

**Proposed Neighbourhood Plan (NP)  
for  
Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath**

**Minutes of Meeting Held at Knowle Village Hall on 30.04.2015**

**Present:** Jane Aykroyd (Interim Chair); Karen Allen; Geoff Evans; Ian Fisher; Dave Fraley; David Gentle; Gill Griggs; Lis Hedley; Bryan Hunt; Bill Lally; Steve Lyle; Martin Murphy; Richard Newton; David Pinwell (Colebridge Trust); David Wallis.

**Apologies:** John Frazier; Louisa Jakeman; Ian Kay (confirmed OK for May dates); Robert Keenan; David Roberts (confirmed will be at next meeting).

**1. Agenda Item 1 - Welcome and Aims of Meeting:**

Jane welcomed attendees to the new venue, with many thanks to Martin Murphy who arranged for, and prepared, the facilities (the tea and coffee being particularly welcome!). Jane briefly recapitulated outcomes from the last meeting as context to now developing our thinking on agreed first priorities: 'Why are we here?'; Articles of Association; and roles and responsibilities. The aim is to get our own thoughts together as a Group, before meeting with Council and other external representatives in later meetings.

**2. Agenda Item 2 – Why Are We Here?** Led by David Wallis (DW) and Bryan Hunt (BH)  
From his analysis of all resident feedback to date, DW identified four key areas of focus / concern:

1. Housing development;
2. Other developments, including eg. commercial;
3. Parking;
4. Greenbelt.

DW summarised feedback on each of these aspects, which BH then set in the context of the current Solihull Local Plan. This information was considerably enhanced by knowledge provided by Group members - in particular Gill's experience from many years working in Planning. A summary of resident feedback and Group discussions is at **Appendix 1**.

Beyond the immediate needs and concerns, as a Neighbourhood Forum (NF) we will also need to consider some medium to longer term aspects of planning, within the context of the Solihull strategic plan. Relevant factors here include:

- overall, there is a shortfall of around 2,000 houses in Solihull;
- the next three years could see around 100,000 jobs coming to this region, due to a number of major developments, eg: Jaguar LandRover (JLR), HS2 rail, M42 corridor development. We need to be mindful of the likely 'ripple effect' of eg. commuting;
- one important planning consideration in assessing viability of new development is capacity at Arden school. (The current new building works provide for an additional 60 places, estimated to meet forecast pupil numbers for the next 5 years);
- the Solihull Plan mentions no further development in our communities on completion of the current 'Phase 1' developments already in progress. However, we should at least consider potential options in the event that, at some stage in the future, there is a need to identify preferred area(s) for new development;
- there is always a risk that decisions made nationally could override Solihull's, and our Neighbourhood, plan – as has happened before.

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Finally, the Group discussed whether the summary resident feedback and planning information shared during the session justified formation of a NF - and, if so, how best to organise ourselves to address the matters raised.

**DECISION:** There was unanimous agreement to form a NF.

**DECISION:** Initially, we will create three Focus Groups, each tasked with owning and driving development of one key aspect. Initial suggestions (to be reviewed / confirmed at the next meeting) are:

	Focus Group	Lead	Team
1	HOUSING	TBC	Steve Lyle, David Wallis, Gill Griggs
2	LEARNING AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES	MARTIN MURPHY	Dave Fraley, David Gentle, Bill Lally, Jane Aykroyd
3	ROADS & INFRASTRUCTURE (inc PARKING)	BILL LALLY	Ian Fisher, David Gentle

**DECISION:** Green Spaces / the Environment. Policy and planning decisions made by the three Focus Groups are likely to have consequences for Green Spaces and environmental sustainability. It was also noted that we will only be able to influence the Solihull Plan in this regard in very specific circumstances – eg. ‘Rural exceptions’. We will therefore review whether a separate Focus Group is required for Green Spaces at a later stage.

**ACTIONS:**

- **BH and DW** to create a summary of discussions and forward to Jane for distribution with the minutes (*incorporated as the Appendix to these minutes*).
- **BH** to liaise with our Local Council contact, Emma Tinsley-Evans (Places Directorate, Solihull MBC), to request input / guidance at our next meeting to:
  - clarify the policy on affordable housing in relation to current market values in our villages;
  - provide a copy of the ‘Strategic Housing Market Assessment’ (thought to guide council planning policy and could affect our area);
  - provide a copy of the ‘Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment’ document (believed to show up to nine sites in our area that have previously been considered for housing development);
  - provide a copy of the large scale (AO) map that clearly defines the green belt around our villages (created as part of the last Solihull Plan – UDP?);
  - provide a copy of a short council presentation on planned strategic developments around our assumed NF boundary - and, ideally, talk us through on 14 May;

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- advise on Council support available to help us with aspects of planning for assessment / maintenance of a 'sustainable environment' - and in particular, Council policy in regard to our rural setting;
  - advise on Council requirements, and any assistance available, to prepare and submit our application for formal recognition as a NF;
  - advise how we confirm, and gain official recognition of, our NP boundary.
  - **Martin** to send a copy of the short slideset he has re. Solihull Strategic Developments to BH and JA (for distribution to the Group).
  - **Jane** to include review / confirmation of Focus Group Leadership and Team Members as part of organisational discussions at the next meeting.
3. **Agenda Item 3 – How to Best Use Our Collective Skills & Capabilities:** Led by Jane Aykroyd (JA)

JA has now received 16 completed forms (+6 since the last meeting. Robert Keenan has confirmed he will complete his on return from travels in Italy). The average length of residency is 24-25 years.

JA provided an updated Member spreadsheet to support discussions, and highlighted a number of considerations used in assessing this information for organisational purposes:

- 11 people have so far offered to serve on a Steering Group - 5 from Dorridge; 6 from Knowle;
- 9 respondees are willing to support communications and resident engagement;
- 8/9 are willing to support Focus Group activities;
- the time Members have indicated they have available to support the NF is a key factor - particularly for Steering Group roles, which will typically require more time on a regular basis;
- ideally, we should seek to identify deputies for lead roles so as to keep things moving in the event of holidays, illness etc;
- note that, in terms of report writing, we will need owner(s) for a number of documents:
  - the Neighbourhood Plan itself
  - the Consultation Statement
  - the Basic Conditions Statement
  - the Environmental Report, inc. policy compliance with, or affect on, sustainability. (Given its specialist nature, this is likely to be something that the Council will lead on with input from us);
- as a Group generally, we will need to build stronger connections into our communities. The two boxes in red highlight individuals that currently appear to have most connections (one in Knowle, one in Dorridge - still to need to recruit Members from Bentley Heath). Potentially, these individuals could work together to lead a consistent approach to engagement and communication across our communities. (Building a map of community connections, and identifying key groups we need to reach out to, will be an Agenda item for one of our next planned meetings);

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- based on the information provided, JA highlighted in red on the spreadsheet what seems an appropriate 'first stab' at allocating roles.

Given time constraints at this meeting, JA requested that Members review the information and provide feedback to support further discussions at the next meeting.

**ACTIONS:**

- **JA** to e-mail a soft copy of the spreadsheet to attendees.
- **All** to review, and provide feedback on, suggested roles - either directly to Jane or as part of our discussions on 14 May.
- **All** to consider community groups or key individuals that we should be aiming to engage with as input to future discussions on communications and engagement.

**4. Agenda Item 4 - Draft Articles of Association** Led by David Pinwell (DP)

DP explained that the Articles are one of a pair of documents forming the legal constitution of the Company. The other is the 'Memorandum of Association', which is a short notice of intention to form the Company signed by the founding Members.

DP then summarised the Articles, explaining his suggested variations from the standard template published by the Government. Specifically:

- **the 'Objects' section** has been added, as some Funders look for this. It provides assurance that the activities (and therefore expenditure) of the NF will be limited to the specific areas stated;
- **Conflicts of Interest:** All attendees agreed the need for transparency from the outset regarding any potential conflicts of Member interests;
- **AGM's:** can be open to all Membership, with, for example, a Directors' meeting being held beforehand to address any legal matters such as the Annual Accounts;
- **Appointment of Directors:** The proposed amendment means that the Membership can appoint Directors;
- **Insurance** – to be discussed at the next meeting;
- **Winding up the Company:** "Asset Lock". This effectively locks use of any residual funds on winding up the NF to similar purposes (ie. same aim as first bullet above).

There are some matters, covering eg. operational ways of working, that could be considered constitutional (in terms of the NF), but are outside the scope of the Articles. These additional aspects form part of a wider Forum Constitution, and could include, for example: defining how the NF is answerable to its Members; the role of the Steering Group; how decisions are taken etc. The powers given to the Directors under Part 3 of the Articles enable the NF to agree and set down any such additional details to be formally approved and then maintained by the Directors.

**DECISION:** All proposed variations were agreed, along with the following updates:

- references to the NF area to include Bentley Heath as well as Knowle and Dorridge;
- the quorum for a Director's Meeting will be 'a majority of the appointed Directors';

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- the quorum for general meetings, and the name of the Company, needs further consideration.

**ACTION:**

- **DP** to update the draft Articles, and amend for the proof reading corrections noted by the Group. Forward a revised version to Jane for distribution (*now attached to these minutes*).
- **DP** to forward an example 'Conflict of Interest Declaration Form' (*now attached to these minutes*).

**5. Agenda Item 5 - Minutes and actions from last meeting**

The minutes were agreed. Updates on Actions from the last meeting are below (where not referenced, actions have been completed).

**ITEM 8:** Jane to make contact with Probate Solicitors (PSL).

- Jane has contacted Caroline Wilden of PSL. Representatives from a number of local businesses are meeting in the Greswolde from 5:30-7pm on 14 May - although not specifically regarding the NP;
- Jane has been invited to attend to meet business contacts informally and talk to them about NF developments, with a view to seeking their involvement;
- **Note:** Caroline's mother sits on Bickenhill Parish Council, and so could potentially provide some insight on development of their plans, if appropriate.

**ACTION:** **Jane** to attend Business meeting on 14 May and update the next meeting.

**ITEM 8:** **All** - Identify someone to attend the NF from Bentley Heath. **CARRIED FORWARD**

**ITEM 9:** Potential support from Arup.

- Martin confirmed that Arup have previous experience in helping communities to develop Neighbourhood Plans. They are keen to help us, and have offered pro bono support to eg. facilitate definition of our vision / plans.

**ACTION:** **Martin and Jane** to discuss potential support from Arup.

**ITEM 10:** David Pinwell to advise of any NF Groups of a similar nature to ours

- David has forwarded links to a couple of other plans. There was some debate as to the relevance of these to our particular circumstances.

**ITEM 12:** Jane and Karen to use Dave Wallis's consolidated contact list to identify any residents we need to follow up with. David has completed the list.

**ACTION:** **Jane and Karen** to meet to review and agree how best to follow up and update the next meeting.

**ITEM 12:** Ian Fisher to consider possible options for IT support. Ian has created a trial solution to create and manage a master NF document library, as outlined in **Appendix 2**.

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Martin also confirmed that work had begun on creating a NF web site being created by the school. The immediate need was to agree a suitable domain name, with 2 suggested options. The Group confirmed that BH (Bentley Heath) needed to be included in this name.

**ACTION:**

- **All** to review and feedback any ideas / comments on the document library proposals at next meeting.
- **Ian** to act as Group Librarian (we will need to identify a couple of other people who can update the central library)
- **All**. If you have any documents that you would like to add, please send them to Ian directly or via the KDBH.librarian@gmail.com link. Ian will then organise them into a folder structure.
- **All**. If you have any paper documents you would like scanned and uploaded, please bring them along to the next meeting. Ian has access to good colour and black and white scanners, so can get that done quite easily.
- **Ian and Martin** to consider how best to integrate the document store within the web site and update at next meeting.
- **Jane** – schedule further discussion on the web site.

**6. Agenda Item 6 – AOB**

No other items of business.

**7. Agenda Item 7 - Agree Focus and Agenda for Next Meeting (14 May)**

- a. The top Agenda item is a session led by Emma Tinsley-Evans, from Solihull Council (cf. Actions under 2. above).
- b. We will continue more detailed discussions on how best to organise ourselves, reviewing feedback on the spreadsheet provided at today's meeting with a view to confirming roles and responsibilities within the Group.
- c. We will also need to start considering our application to formally register our NF. This is necessary for us to be able to apply for the available grant funding.

**Note:** David Pinwell has advised that the NF application form is included in Appendix 3 of:

[http://www.solihull.gov.uk/Portals/0/StrategiesPlansPolicies/EconomicDevelopment/Neighbourhood\\_Planning\\_Protocol.pdf](http://www.solihull.gov.uk/Portals/0/StrategiesPlansPolicies/EconomicDevelopment/Neighbourhood_Planning_Protocol.pdf)

and information to start planning for a Grant Application can be found at:

[http://mycommunity.org.uk/programme/neighbourhood-planning/?\\_a=funding](http://mycommunity.org.uk/programme/neighbourhood-planning/?_a=funding)

**ACTION: All.** It would be helpful if Members could review these documents in advance of the next meeting.

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- d. Following on from today's discussion on the Articles of Association, David Pinwell to discuss Insurance.
- e. Update on web site and document library.
- f. Given all the above, it is likely we will defer mapping current and new connections into the community until the meeting after next (4 June).

**Next Meeting: 14<sup>th</sup> May, 7pm – 9pm, Arden School**

**NOTE:** The following meeting has been re-scheduled to Thursday 4 June (the previous week being half term / bank holiday)

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- Updated draft Articles of Association
- Example Conflict of Interest Declaration Form
- Quick User Guide - How to access the Google Drive Document Library

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**APPENDIX 1**

**Resident Feedback and in the Context of the Current Solihull Council Plan**

Note that the 'Resident Views' below are almost entirely from people who have not become further involved in the Forum, but wanted to record their views. The dots show the number of residents who have mentioned this item.

DW advised that the four principle areas of concern in the resident feedback are:

1. Housing development
2. Other developments, including eg. commercial
3. Parking
4. Greenbelt

<b>1. HOUSING</b>
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**RESIDENTS VIEWS**

- Create affordable housing (a.h.) in the area for young families / require a.h. in new developments ●●●●●●●●
- Stop/limit houses / flats being built in gardens or other infills ●●●●
- Stop individual houses being knocked down and multiple flats built ●●
- No further increase in housing ●●
- No further increase in population density ●
- Stop apartment blocks / retirement homes ●
- Development needs to comply with local/central government requirements, but should reflect local opinion ●

**CURRENT SOLIHULL PLAN**

BH advised that Council policy on housing is set out under Policy P4 - 'Meeting Housing Needs' -

*"The Council will require developers of allocated and unidentified sites to make a contribution to affordable housing on residential sites of 0.2 hectares or more, or housing developments of 3 or more (net) homes to meet the housing needs of the Borough."*

BH advised that developers would be expected to make 40% affordable dwelling units on each development site, taking into account, site size; availability of local services, public transport; etc. Note that affordable housing also includes rented housing.



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BH advised that proposals for developments in our communities in phase 1 (up to 2018) are:

Site	Area (ha)	Capacity Estimate
Middlefield Site	2.86	115
Four Ashes	3.62	150
Hampton Road	2.55	100

No other development sites are identified in the Solihull plan.

### **NF GROUP INPUT**

GG advised that the housing section of the Solihull Local Plan has been rejected by National Government, with the housing figures now being re-worked.

It was noted that some sites are already in the hands of private property developers – eg. near Arden school.

## **2. OTHER DEVELOPMENTS AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

### **RESIDENTS VIEWS**

- Ensure sufficient infrastructure/ facilities improvement / school places included in any development ••••
- Wish to maintain the 'village' feel •••
- Post Office, Bank for Dorridge ••
- Ensure no loss of rail service to London ••
- More facilities to make it less boring for teenagers ••
- Another supermarket (Waitrose) is not needed •
- Potential future demolition / rebuild of Dorridge Church (when funds become available) – loss of heritage •
- Ensure any development has sufficient off-road parking •
- More facilities enabling elderly to play active and social part in community •
- Improve parks for children •
- Greengrocer for Knowle •
- Improve Public Transport •

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**NF GROUP INPUT**

Discussions are on-going (via the Knowle Society) re. the Knowle “Village Green”. As plans for a Knowle Bypass have now been dropped, this area is no longer protected with regard to future housing development. The land is not owned by the Council, and is not in a stated area of green belt.

Waitrose, Knowle (using Kimberley developers) are applying to the Council to revert the design back to their original plans. As this mainly affects the entrance elevation, the Council has determined that this is a ‘non material amendment’ and agreed the change.

The Group noted the following developments: highway modifications to the M42 junctions to facilitate the casino development; M42 Junction 6 and airport access, UK Central, M42 Corridor developments (with money already released by Government).

Knowle shops – there is a desire to conserve a mix of commercial and residential buildings. Recent loss of business office space to flats in Knowle highlights the need for us to consider inclusion of a policy to retain office space in the Neighbourhood Plan.

There is a strong desire to consider improving facilities for our youth and elderly. This could include, eg. park facilities, leisure (walking, cycling, develop BMX track) etc.

The Group also noted a desire to strengthen the links between Arden school and the wider community.

<b>3. PARKING</b>
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**RESIDENTS VIEWS**

- Control parking and ensure sufficient parking off road for station / Build multi-storey car parks behind St Philips Church and on station car park ••••••••••
- General parking concerns in (mainly Dorridge) •••••
- Restrict all-day parking for station (Poplar Road, Granville Road) •••
- Restrict parking near schools (Station Road, Hanbury Road, Mill Lane) •••
- Allow residents only parking along length of Dorridge Road / Grange Road etc •••
- Build multi-storey behind Knowle library •
- Introduce parking controls in phases and assess •
- No more yellow lines which just move problem along •
- Address inconsiderate/ illegal parking •

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**NF GROUP INPUT**

There is a general issue with traffic congestion and capacity. It should be noted, however, that a NF cannot deal with traffic regulation orders - although we could do things eg. traffic counts to support physical alterations to a junction.

Any new development needs to assess and implement any commensurate upgrades in facilities, eg. off road parking, health, school places etc.

It was noted that the recent AGM of the Dorridge & District Residents Association (DDRA) addressed parking issues at length. However, no outcome was reached, as residents were unable to reach a common agreement.

<b>4. GREEN BELT</b>
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**RESIDENTS VIEWS**

- No house building on Green Belt land •••••
- Protection of existing Green Belt ••••

Gill advised that the Green Belt Sections of the Solihull plan were never 'adopted'. Here, too, the Council is having to re-do its plans and figures.

In Ravenshaw, which has only small amounts of housing, appropriate development has been supported despite it being in the Greenbelt. This is an example of a 'Rural Exception' to help employment (see Pg 69 of the Solihull Local Plan – Rural exceptions).

It was noted that the whole of Arden school is in designated Green Belt.

The older Solihull Plan (UDP) has a more detailed and easy to follow map of what exactly is included in designated Green Belt. There is also a map showing where developers have previously proposed to develop (potential sites). We should seek to obtain one of these maps from the Council.

<b>MISCELLANEOUS – RESIDENTS VIEW</b>
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- Knowle and Dorridge should be treated separately / position of boundary between ••
- Improve the appearance of the railway bridge •
- Reinstate island at Avenue/Dorridge Rd junction (outside station) ••
- Address anti-social behaviour •
- Dog poo / litter etc •
- Difficulty in getting Doctors appointments •
- Remove lime trees in Granville Rd/ Gladstone Road as pavement dangerous •
- Reinstate tree provision of Knowle Manor Charter - when one tree is felled 3 more have to replace it •

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**APPENDIX 2**

**CREATION OF NF DOCUMENT LIBRARY**

- We want to create a central Group library that enables easy access to all NF documentation. One master repository provides 'a single version of the truth', avoids endless e-mail trails and means that existing and new team members do not need to worry about storing all documents, pdfs etc themselves.
- g.mail accounts come with a free on-line storage facility. As a trial, Ian has set up two accounts for shared use by the group (the names can be changed, if necessary):

[KDBH.librarian@gmail.com](mailto:KDBH.librarian@gmail.com) and [KDBH.plan@gmail.com](mailto:KDBH.plan@gmail.com)

- The Forum Librarian(s) would use the first account to organise all the documentation that we collectively gather over the duration of the team's work.
- Ian has volunteered for the Librarian role initially - although we will need one or two more when we get up and running.
- The second e-mail address is a shared account to be used by all Members of the Forum (but not the wider public) to access the documentation stored by the Librarian. Ian has uploaded all the documents he has accumulated so far to test this (including a couple he found relating to HS2 and the garden city mentioned in our meeting).
- To access this resource, Members should go to Google, sign in with account [KDBH.plan@gmail.com](mailto:KDBH.plan@gmail.com) and input the password (which Ian has already sent to all Members on the distribution list).
- Attached to these minutes is a quick guide document that Ian has created to help any Members who are not familiar with Google Drive.