

Terms of Reference for the Burwash Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (BNPSG)

Purpose

The key purpose of the BNPSG is to manage, facilitate and support the co-creation of a Neighbourhood Plan and the ongoing activity required to make the plan happen, for the 3 connected villages of Burwash. The BNPSG will ensure that all relevant issues are identified and addressed; and involve, engage and enable the whole community's participation through-out.

Context

Neighbourhood planning is the right for communities to shape development in their areas. Neighbourhood Plans become part of the Local Plan and the policies contained within them are then used in the determination of planning applications. A small group of motivated residents from our Burwash villages are working alongside the Parish and District Council to co-create our Neighbourhood Plan.

Our NP will be used to identify:

- A shared vision for our villages.
- Key areas of our countryside that must be protected.
- The locations for new homes, shops, education, health, leisure, parking and other facilities.
- What new developments should look like.
- What type of housing there should be (e.g. sheltered homes, low cost home ownership, social rented etc)

Relationship between the BNPSG and Parish Council

The accountable body for the purpose of producing a Neighbourhood Plan will be the Parish Council. Burwash Parish Council is the qualifying body for the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish. The BNPSG is a Working Group of the Parish Council and will share responsibility for the progress of the Neighbourhood Plan. The BNPSG will report regularly to the Parish Council.

The Parish Council will be accountable for the NP budget which will be managed as follows:

1. The Parish Clerk will provide the BNPSG with monthly budget statements to enable proposals and decisions about spending on the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan to be dealt with in a timely, open and transparent manner.
2. Each working group will estimate any required spending and report this in advance to the BNPSG on a quarterly basis.
3. All receipts and payments associated with the production of the Plan will be processed through the Parish Council's accounting system.
4. Invoices will be addressed to the parish council who will pay in accordance with their Financial Regulations.
5. All grants and other funding will be held by the Parish Council, who will ring-fence money for Neighbourhood Plan purposes only.

Roles and Responsibilities

The BNPSG will:

- Shape the overall scope and objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan
- Provide strategic direction for the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, ensuring that key milestones are reached, and that an achievable delivery process and timetable to implement the Neighbourhood Plan is taken forward.

- Design and facilitate a conversation based communication and engagement strategy so that as many members of the community as possible contribute their wisdom, views and ideas.
- Create links with Rother District Council and all other relevant authorities and organisations to maximise their assistance, and ongoing support.
- Harvest required evidence, including commissioning others, to populate the evidence base for the Neighbourhood Plan.
- Manage and control expenditure of the NP budget on behalf of the Parish Council, necessitated by the preparation and delivery of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- Co-ordinate the activity of each of the working groups to prevent, avoid and reduce any duplication.
- Work closely with the NP Consultant in the co-authoring of the draft and final plan. Sign off a final submission version of the Neighbourhood Plan for subsequent approval by the Parish Council and NP examiner.
- Review any legislative changes on Neighbourhood Planning to ensure the plan meets emerging and new requirements.

Membership

In the spirit of maximising community involvement BNPSG has an inclusive approach, and welcomes new members who wish to contribute, as well as the attendance of residents at it's meetings. Membership is made up of no fewer than 10 volunteers who will undertake the work required to produce the Neighbourhood Plan and take forward the consequent activities to make it happen. Membership includes four members of the Parish Council. Other members include motivated residents and people who are able to represent the views of significant local organisations e.g. Burwash Community Action Group.

Attendance at Steering Group meetings for members of the working groups [see below] is optional. Attendance by a minimum of one representative from each working group will enable regular and up to date information sharing and communication.

Members of the BNPSG must recognise that their role is to move forward the Neighbourhood Plan in a way that benefits the whole community.

Members must declare any conflicts of interest; in situations where interests and roles may be in conflict they must be declared before the business is discussed and the member will leave the room for that item.

Working groups

- Environment:
 - Farmland, Open Spaces, Footpaths, Biodiversity.
- Leisure, Economy and Tourism:
 - Tourism, Business, Employment, Marketing, IT.
- Infrastructure:
 - Education, Health, Utilities, Sustainable Travel.
- Housing and Development:
 - Housing that meets the needs of our community.

Meetings

- The Chair and two Deputy Chair(s) of the BNPSG are drawn from the community and supported by members of the Parish Council.

- Agenda planning will take place prior to each meeting. Items from BNPSG members should be sent to the chair prior to the meeting. Minutes of each meeting will be made by each member in turn, be approved at subsequent meetings, and signed off by the chair/deputy chair.
- All data will be collated and stored, including progress update formats from each work group, agreed meeting minutes, key communications, draft plans etc.
- The BNPSG will meet fortnightly at the Internet Cafe. Meeting dates will be published on the Burwash NP website, on the Burwash Facebook site, in the Broadsheets and on the Dr's notice board.
- A minimum of 2 BNPSG members must be present for the BNPSG to meet and make decisions. The chair will decide how to deal with any issues effecting absent members as they arise. Where there is dissent, the chair will decide how to proceed and whether absent members should be contacted subsequently for their views. The BNPSG aims to make decisions by consensus. Where a vote is required, each member will have one vote. The Chair /deputising chair has a casting vote.
- The processes for collecting and reviewing working group activity is that each group co-ordinator records progress on the update format. These are circulated to BNPSG members prior to their meetings. At the meeting the agenda will include the opportunity to ask questions, add ideas and identify duplications or economies of scale.
- Our way of working is collaborative. We value everyone's views and embrace differences. While we seek consensus we also hold divergent opinions as information about the challenges and issues we need to resolve.
- Our preferred communications style is conversational. We aim to capitalise on the numerous and effective relationships within our connected community networks, and our publicity will seek to invite everyone to add their wisdom to this important process of determining our own future.

Key documents

- Steering Group Membership List
- Terms of Reference
- Phased Project Timetable
- Budget
- Drafts of the Plan and the final submission version.

LM
27.12.17

