

Constitution of the Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall Planning Group

Name and Area

The name of the group shall be “Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall Planning Group”, henceforth referred to as “The Planning Group” in this document.

2. The Neighbourhood Plan will cover the area shown on the map in Appendix 1. Henceforth referred to as “The Planning Area”.

Purpose

3. The Planning Group shall produce a Neighbourhood Plan for The Planning Area.

4. The Neighbourhood Plan will be produced with due consideration for the needs of all residents and businesses in the area, now and in the future.

5. The Neighbourhood Plan will seek to improve the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the area and those living and working within it.

6. The Planning Group shall achieve the following goals in partnership with North Hertfordshire District Council, Bygrave Parish Council, Clothall with Luffenhall Parish Meeting and The Baldock Society:

- i. Manage and co-ordinate the production of a Neighbourhood Plan that is representative of local views.
- ii. Co-ordinate effective engagement with members of the community, including open meetings and an interactive website
- iii. Effectively communicate findings, ideas and approaches for the Neighbourhood Plan to the Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall (and Luffenhall) communities through as many local organisations as possible and the website
- iv. Identify and manage all support, resources and funding needed for stages of the process.
- v. Manage the process in an open, transparent and accessible way.
- vi. Ensure all planning aspects that are identified as important to the community are considered through the plan
- vii. Plan appropriately for all parts of the area as well as maintaining an overall balanced plan.
- viii. Produce appropriate timescales and delivery mechanisms for the Neighbourhood Plan.
- ix. Work with the North Hertfordshire District Council throughout the process to ensure successful delivery of the Neighbourhood plan alongside the Local plan.

Planning Group Membership

7. Membership of the Planning Group is open to all individuals who live, work or have an interest in the Planning Area.

8. Registration is by email to info@bbplan.co.uk or if that is not possible by letter to the Chairman of the Planning Group.

9. It is the member's responsibility to ensure that the Planning Group is kept informed of any changes to email or postal addresses as this will be the primary way that information and voting opportunities will be relayed.

10. Notifications and minutes of all meetings including those of the Steering Committee, will be posted on the website www.bbplan.co.uk. Members meetings and Public meetings will be notified by email to all members.

11. Members will have the opportunity to nominate and vote in elections for Steering Committee posts.

12. Names and Addresses of Planning Group members may need to be passed on to relevant parties such as NHDC from time to time. This will only be done if the Steering Committee deems it necessary to achieve the aims of the Planning Group.

Steering Committee

13. The Steering committee shall consist of no less than 5 and no more than 20 individuals who live, work or have an interest in the planning area, to include one individual representing each of the Baldock Society, Bygrave Parish Council and Clothall with Luffenhall Parish Meeting. The remaining membership will reflect the character and diversity of the local population and business community, as far as possible. This includes age, ethnic group, residents of different economic means and small business owners. Profiles of the members of the Steering Group shall be made publicly available.

14. The Steering Committee shall be elected by members of the Planning Group, on the basis of one member one vote.

15. Elections took place in October 2016 and will be annual hereafter. There will be an Annual General Meeting of the Group in October to facilitate the elections.

16. The Steering Committee may appoint Sub Groups to operate on its behalf. Involvement in the Sub Groups shall be open to all people that live, operate a business, or hold a specific interest in the area, and will be expected to exercise balanced consideration for the needs of all aspects of the local community. The chair of each sub-group shall be drawn from members of the Steering Committee.

17. Should a member of the Steering Committee not attend two consecutive Steering Committee meetings without acceptable apologies, the Steering Committee has the right to seek to replace that member by a majority vote.

18. Should a member of the Steering Committee resign or be subject to exclusion the Steering Committee must within one month, ensure a suitable replacement is appointed if this is necessary to comply with the number of representatives required in this Constitution. All Planning Group members will be notified of the vacancy and invited to make nominations. All members will then be able to vote for the replacement.

19. The Steering Committee may invite any person to attend meetings and contribute to the business being transacted but that person will have NO voting rights. These may include officers of the District Council, Interest Groups, other statutory organisations, agencies or any individual who has information or skills that will contribute to achieving the aims and objectives of the Steering Committee.

20. Voting will be by a simple majority of the Steering Committee with the Chairperson of the Steering Committee having a casting vote.

Exclusion from Steering Committee

21. Members may be excluded from the Steering Committee for conduct and behaviour that is disruptive and does not promote the aims and objectives of the Steering committee. Exclusion of members will be by a majority vote of the Steering Committee.

Affiliations, Interests and Contributions

22. The Planning Group shall not be affiliated to any political party, but will welcome the involvement of district and county councillors as community representatives.

23. All members of the Planning Group must declare any personal interest that may be perceived as being relevant to a decision of the group. This may include membership of an organisation, ownership of land or a business, or any other matter that may be considered to be relevant. Such declarations shall be recorded and be publicly available

24. Organisations and businesses may assist in the production of the Neighbourhood Plan and may contribute to the cost of producing it. Details of any donations or assistance must be made publicly available and must not influence the content of the plan.

Meetings

25. The Steering Committee shall aim to meet once per calendar month, or as may be required, with a minimum of five clear working days' notice given prior to a meeting taking place. Agenda items should be agreed with the chairperson(s) at least five clear working days and will be circulated at least three clear working days prior to the meeting.

26. A nominated individual shall maintain minutes of each meeting to be made reasonably available to the members of the Steering Committee within seven days of the meeting and to Planning Group members and the public (via the website) within fourteen days of the meeting.

27. Any matters of disagreement at a meeting may be decided upon by majority of votes. A minimum of four voting members or two-thirds of the Steering Committee whichever is the greater, will represent a quorum enabling the aims and objectives of the Group to be considered. Voting will be by way of a simple majority. Votes are only available for members of The Steering Committee.

28. The Sub Groups shall meet as and when necessary for their topic area. At least 5 clear working days' notice shall be provided for each Sub Group meeting and discussion topics circulated with notice.

29. Discussion topics and agendas for any meetings that the public can attend should be made publicly available at least 5 clear days prior to the meeting.

Constitutional Amendments

30. Should any amendments be required to the constitution, this shall require a majority vote within the Steering Committee.

Formal submission of Plan

31. The production of the neighbourhood plan is a joint endeavour between the communities of Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall. Both Bygrave Parish Council and Clothall with Luffenhall Parish Meeting, independently, have the right to include specific proposals for their respective parishes provided this would not compromise other aspects of the plan or make it liable to failure at its examination or referendum. These proposals should be clearly identifiable in the plan.

32. Bygrave Parish Council undertake to submit the agreed plan to NHDC on behalf of the Planning Group.

Freedom of Information

33. The Steering Committee will make available to the public, minutes of meetings, policies and procedures, its organisational structure and information on budget, expenditure and allowances.

Data Protection

34. In accordance with the Data Protection Act (1988), the Steering Committee will assess whether the release of any personal information about individuals would be fair, or whether it is exempt from the requirements of the Freedom of Information requirements.

Editorial Control

35. Retraction by Steering Committee – All editorial material from any part of the Planning Group is to be approved by Chairperson/Deputy Chairperson prior to release in the public domain.

Financial Control

36. A Bank Account will be maintained on behalf of the Planning Group at a bank agreed by the Steering Committee. Three cheque signatories will be nominated by the Steering Committee (one to be the Treasurer). Any two of these must sign every cheque. The signatories must not be related nor members of the same household.

37. Records of income and expenditure will be maintained by the Treasurer and a financial statement given quarterly.

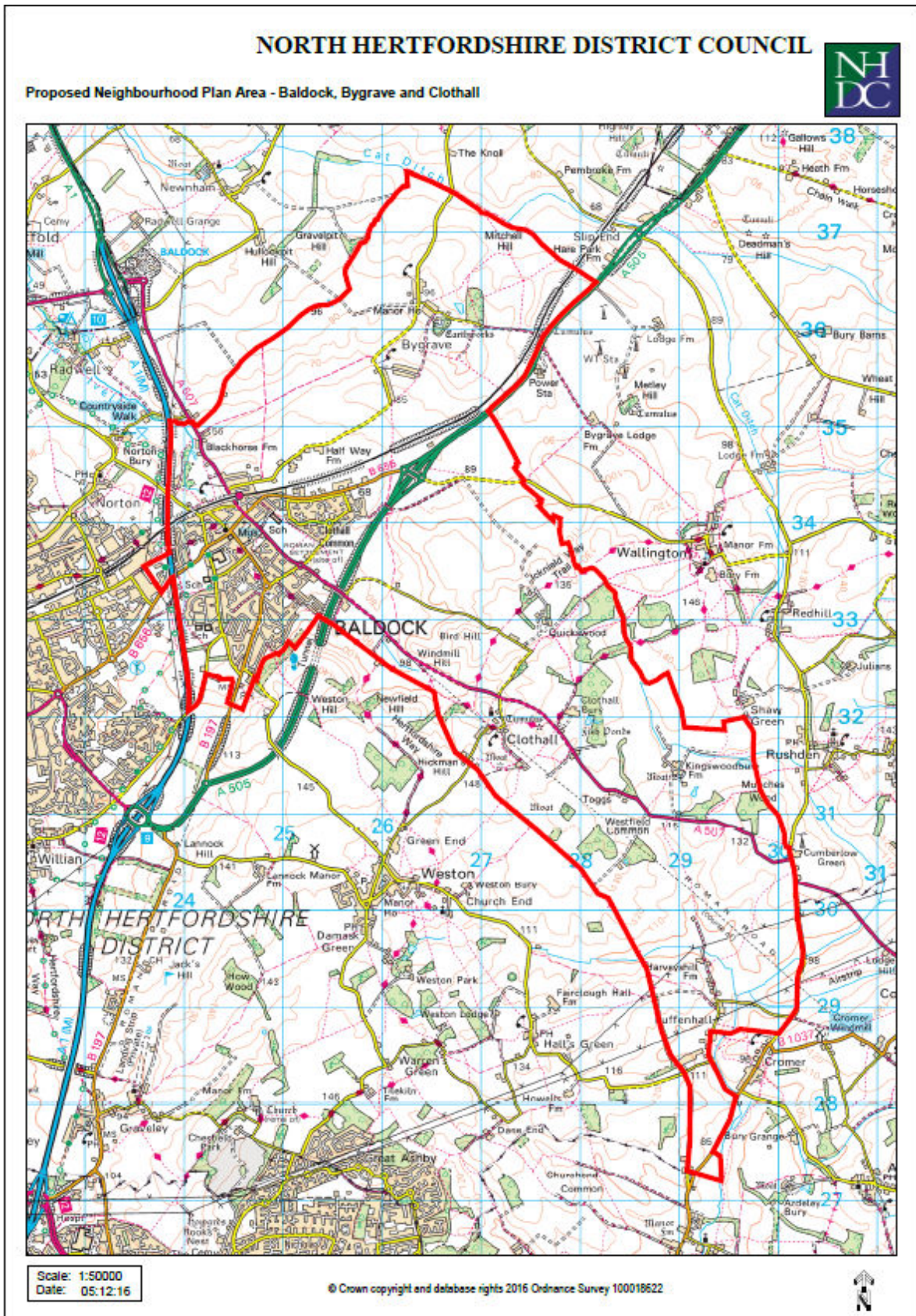
38. All money raised by or on behalf of the Planning Group is only to be used to further the aims of

Dissolution

39. If a meeting of the Steering Committee, by simple majority, decides that it is necessary to close down the Forum it may call a Special General Meeting to do so. The sole business of this meeting will be to dissolve the group.

40. If it is agreed to dissolve the group, all remaining money and other assets, once outstanding debts have been paid, will be donated to a community group or local charitable organization, in order to benefit the Planning Area. The group/organisation to receive the donation will be agreed at the meeting held to agree the dissolution.

Appendix 1 – Map of the Neighbourhood Planning Area



Appendix 2 - Roles and Responsibilities of Committee Members

Chairperson

- Manage monthly meeting of the steering group,
- Hold casting vote
- Network with official bodies, council and local organisations to represent the group

Project Manager / Deputy Chairperson

- Set out stages of work with timetable, dependencies and costs
- Assist in running of meetings and other chairperson's responsibilities
- Assist in website content and design

Secretary

- Arrange and document meetings (Agenda, Minutes etc.)
- Work with Technical Communication Manager to design and maintain website
- Help Community Liaison coordinator to prepare briefing notes and updates for publication (local newspapers, website etc.)

Treasurer

- Maintain group accounts and report to appropriate bodies
- Assess likely costs of running the group, provide information to the project manager
- Assist Funding manager with raising funds if needed

Funding Manager

- Liaise with council and other funding bodies to secure funding
- Prepare any documentation required for submission
- Work with the treasurer to plan financial aspects of the group
- Work with community co-ordinator to raise funding from local businesses and organisations

Technical Communication Manager

- Work with project manager and secretary to design website
- Set-up and maintain website
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- Assist on the development of links with local businesses and organisations

Community Liaison Coordinator

- Responsibility for engagement with all aspects of the local community
- Organising public meetings, visits to community groups and businesses to explain the purpose of the group

- Facilitate the collation of public opinion throughout the development of the plan and help to publicise the final plan prior to submission to the council for the referendum
- Work with communication co-ordinator and secretary to brief local media about progress
- Technical advisor
- Be responsible for advising on all aspects of the plan production
- Ensure policies reflect community views and are technically sound
- Guide the group to ensure adequate recording of community interactions and public opinion
- Ensure sufficient evidence is available/referenced to support policies

- Other tasks

Agree geographical boundary of the neighbourhood area. Arrange site visits.

Meet with NHDC to discuss the intentions of the group.

Prepare documentation to submit to NHDC to designate the area of the neighbourhood plan and the formation of the forum.

Website design and set-up.

Local advertising to tell community what we are doing.

Identify list of all local community groups and businesses that should be kept informed of progress/consulted

Assess adequacy of existing evidence base

Plan initial consultations

Recruitment of more volunteers

Document the details of the areas that have special character – to include photographs, existing local literature.

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