



Ruishton and Thornfalcon Neighbourhood Plan

Project Team

Guidance Notes

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Purpose

Ruishton and Thornfalcon Parish Council has delegated the day to day tasks of organising events, undertaking all consultation and editing drafts and producing the final plan to a Steering Group. For the Steering Group to achieve this, it is desirable to have a Project Team to work alongside the Steering Group to consider the overall aims of the Neighbourhood Plan, work on particular aspects within the development of the plan and ensure that the community is properly represented, consulted and communicated with.

A successful Project Team should question, provide ideas, have a useful distance, contribute their expertise and add a contrasting perspective to the Neighbourhood Plan. The more diverse the representatives on the Project Team, the greater the success of the Neighbourhood Plan process. It could also be a long process (maybe up to two years), so it is vital that the commitment and momentum of the Project Team members are maintained.

Project Team representation

Members of the Project Team will be volunteers from within the local community and will include members of Ruishton and Thornfalcon Parish Council and local people with particular knowledge of the issues likely to be raised such as representatives of community organisations, local landowners/developers (input during the process as opposed to formally being on the Project Team due to vested interests), and other stakeholders (amenity/environmental groups).

It is essential that a diverse range of skills are involved, therefore the group should provide a diversity of skills and backgrounds, and must try to incorporate members from as wide a representation from the community as possible. The Project Team will be open to everyone with a local interest who might have skills, knowledge and experience which could be helpful in the development of the plan and with the process.

The Project Team members will need to:

- be active in getting community support, maintaining this communication and organising consultation events
- work within the budget
- be able to identify those within the local community who can offer useful skills in producing the plan and assist with the running of the Project Team
- consider members who can access groups of volunteers to organise meetings, leaflet drops, collating material and putting the plan together
- be able to send an alternative representative (if representing a particular group) to meetings to provide continuity of knowledge within the group

Project Team Meetings

The Chair of the Project Team will be the Chair of the Steering Group through which all discussion should be directed.

Meetings will be held as needed in order for the work to be completed on the Neighbourhood Plan. These meetings will be open to the local community so that anyone with a particular interest, at any point in the development of the plan, can have an easy way of having an input and putting thoughts and ideas forward. It is important that the Project Team ensures that discussions are for the benefit of the whole community.

Agendas will be produced and notes will be taken of the meetings. Clear recommendations at the end of each meeting with action points for members of the Project Team will be published and circulated.

Project Team Objectives

The Project Team, acting as a focal point for people living or working in the Neighbourhood Area, should:

- Provide a forum for discussion and debate. Members should be able to take an active part in the meeting
- Ask questions and offer alternatives to enable effective and sound decisions to be made
- Make positive proposals and build on others' proposals to support the development of a sound Neighbourhood Plan
- Help to see more effective ways of getting things done by using their own knowledge, skills and experiences
- Set up Project Groups to focus on particular themes that arise through the consultation process. Project Team members will lead each of the Project Groups
- Contribute to the determination of the types of survey and information gathering to be used
- Support the collation and analysis of the consultation feedback in accordance with the Data Protection Act, as advised by the Steering Group, obtaining advice and information about relevant matters and policies
- Prioritise actions, using the findings from the consultation process and information from other sources
- Identify ways of involving and motivating the whole community throughout the plan, and gather the views and opinions of as many individuals, groups and organisations in the community as possible, including hard to reach groups and younger people
- Assist the plan to achieve a high profile within the local area and wider community
- Support the production of material such as marketing material, consultation reports and environmental assessments
- Report back to, and receive, endorsement from the Parish Council through the Steering Group, on progress, issues arising and outcomes throughout the process
- Working as a team, members need to be able to test ideas and help others in areas of the plan they might find more challenging.

Conduct and Interests

Care is needed to avoid matters of vested interests such as individuals with substantial land interests that could otherwise disrupt the progress of the Project Team. Therefore, at all times, members of the Project Team should exercise objectivity and impartiality and ensure that the probity of the group and the plan is open and transparent.

All members of the Project Team must declare any personal interest that may be perceived as being relevant to any decisions or recommendations made by the group. This may include membership of an organisation, ownership of interest in land (directly or indirectly) or a business or indeed any other matter likely to be relevant to the work undertaken by the group.

They must ensure that there is no discrimination in the plan making process and that it is an inclusive open and transparent process to all groups in the local community and those wishing to undertake development or be involved in the process.

Members of the Project Team must be willing to work together for the benefit of their communities.

All members of the team should be treated with respect and dignity, allowing members to air their views without prejudice and interruption.

In situations where interests and roles are in conflict they must be declared before the business is discussed and the Project Team member may be required to leave that part of the meeting.