



**ALCESTER NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REVIEW STEERING GROUP MEETING
WAS HELD ON 29 APRIL 2024 AT 10.30AM
AT GLOBE HOUSE, PRIORY ROAD, ALCESTER**

Present

Andrew Matheson (Chair) Cllr Wendy Mills (Vice Chair), Ian Greig, Colleen Chester, Kevin Bell, Cllr Kathryn Cargill, Carl Buxton, Ben Jones and Town Clerk, Vanessa Lowe

1. Apologies

Dave Wall, Andy Mann, Cllr Vaughan Blake, Deputy Town Clerk, Sarah Duran.

2. Declarations of Interest

None.

DPI forms have been received from Carl Buxton and Ben Jones.

3. Minutes of last meeting

Approved and signed by the Chair.

4. Review of the scope of current NDP policies

The meeting focussed on the section of the NDP relating to the Economy.

The Working Group was pleased to welcome new members – Ben Jones of Camilla Jones, the jewellers and Carl Buxton from The Turks Head.

It was agreed that the introductory paragraph to the Economy section needed updating.

There was a general discussion about how the NDP could be used to support businesses in the town.

The following issues were discussed:

- Use Classes used for planning applications did not generally distinguish between different types of retail, therefore the NDP could not specify one retail user over another.
- It was agreed that variety in High Street businesses was important for the vitality of the town.
- Empty shops such as the takeaway at 25 High Street are not good for vitality – Vanessa to identify the owners and write to them about the impact of this empty unit on the High Street.
- The Three Tuns – a blight on the High Street. Could this be masked with some sort of screening to improve the appearance? Vanessa to contact Susan Juned.
- Would sub-division of some larger units be appropriate? This would generally only need planning consent/listed building consent if there were external alterations.
- Support for maintaining retail on the ground floor on the High Street. This was felt to be essential to the economic vitality of the town – policy to cover this agreed.
- Concern about continued loss of pubs in the town. Retention of pubs was seen as essential to the High Street. Agreed that the reinstatement of The Three Tuns was very important.
- Further sit-down restaurants would improve the overall offer – along with the re-opening of the existing one, previously Amore, in Bull's Head Yard.
- Free parking is very important.
- Agreed that additional parking sites would support local businesses.
- Alcester is known for its independent shops and a policy/statement supporting a variety of independent businesses was supported.

- Agreed that signage in the town could be improved. Both the brown tourist signs on the outskirts of the town and directional signs within the High Street.
- Agreed that the gateways to the town were very important and needed to give a good impression to visitors.
- Moorfields school site is an eyesore and needs action. Working Group to look at options for this site – suggested parking, sports, town-centre related.
- Agreed that a register of brownfield sites would be useful.
- Agreed to consider redrawing of the Town Centre map in the NDP.
- Vanessa to contact WCC to obtain current figures for need for school places.

5. Next steps

Continue with Economy policies at the next meeting.

6. Date of next meeting

Monday 3rd June 2024 at 10.30am in Globe House.