

Meeting Minutes

Date: 13 October 2026

Purpose: Community group meeting concerning the Local Plan & Bellway Planning Application.

Chair: Peter

Secretary: Joseph

Treasurer: Nick

1. Local Plan and Council Matters

- The Local Plan process remains stalled pending government intervention and clarification. The start date for consultation is still unknown.
- The group noted that the parish council's proposed scrutiny of the evidence is also likely to remain on hold until the government provides direction.
- Outstanding questions submitted to the council have not yet received substantive answers. Follow-up correspondence has been sent.
- The group will continue monitoring developments and maintain a clear paper trail of enquiries and responses.

2. Planning Consultant and Application Timetable

- A planning consultant has been appointed at a cost of £1,200 plus VAT.
- Relevant objections and supporting material are to be sent to the consultant by 14 October 2026.
- The consultant is aiming to complete the report by 31 October 2026, ahead of the anticipated Bellway Planning Application decision date of 10 November 2026.
- The group discussed attending the Wellington and Nelson planning application meeting under the old Planning Committee process, currently scheduled on 20 October 2026, as an opportunity to observe how the committee operates. The venue and final date are to be confirmed.

3. Delegation Gateway Meeting

- The council meeting concerning the delegation gateway is scheduled for Wednesday, 21 October 2026 at 7:30 pm.
- The group requested that the meeting be held at Mill Hall to allow a larger public audience; confirmation is awaited.
- Members agreed that a visible public presence would be helpful. Posters will be prepared using short, legible wording focused on protecting local democracy.
- A further email will be sent to supporters once the venue is confirmed.

4. Highways, Water and Environmental Enquiries

- Essex Highways has not yet responded; a response is expected in the first week of November under its 20-working-day timeframe.

- Anglian Water has indicated that responsibility for the bank is outside its remit, but further clarification is being pursued regarding drains and sewage discharges during heavy rain.
- A Freedom of Information request has been submitted to the Environment Agency seeking information on drainage and sewage infrastructure around the affected area. A response is expected in early to mid-November.
- A detailed transport query is being expanded and will be submitted to the relevant bodies.
- The group will continue to collect evidence and send questions to Rochford District Council, Essex Highways, Essex County Council, the Environment Agency and Anglian Water.

5. Ecology, Trees and Heritage

- The group discussed the need to check the timing and status of outstanding ecological surveys, including surveys for protected species.
- Evidence concerning hedgerows, wildlife corridors, slow worms, grass snakes, kingfishers, and other local wildlife will be collated where relevant.
- A submission containing mapped tree locations and photographs has been sent to the Woodland Trust.
- Historic England has been contacted regarding possible archaeological and historic significance. Further information and photographs will be supplied.
- Members noted possible links between the site, Tile Wood and known historic remains in the wider area.
- The Hadleigh and Thundersley Community Archive visited the site and expressed interest in future trial excavations. Material recovered from a small test area included pottery or tile fragments, bone-like material and a lead object that may be a fishing weight. Specialist identification and dating will be pursued.
- The Portable Antiquities Scheme Finds Liaison Officer is to be contacted again after 19 October 2026.

6. Constitution, Officers and Governance

- The group agreed to use a single-tier committee structure rather than a wider formal membership structure.
- People on the mailing list and in the wider community will be described as supporters rather than formal members.
- The purpose statement will refer to representing residents of the “Lower Wyburns Farm area”.
- Annual general meeting provisions will be removed for the time being.
- The following officer appointments were approved unanimously: Peter as Chair, Jo as Secretary, and Nick as Treasurer as previously nominated.
- A quorum of six committee members was agreed.
- Bank account arrangements should require two of the three officers to authorise transactions, subject to confirmation of the bank’s online procedures.
- Proposed spending controls: expenditure up to £100 may be handled under delegated authority; expenditure from £100 to £250 requires committee approval; expenditure above £500 requires a committee majority plus approval from two of the three officers. The final wording is to be checked for consistency.

- Declarations of interest will be requested at the start of each meeting and recorded in the minutes; anyone with a relevant conflict will not vote on that matter.
- On dissolution, remaining funds will be transferred to a similar community organisation or charity and will not be distributed to committee members.
- A reserve of £50 was proposed.
- Accounts will be reported at meetings and reviewed annually by an independent non-committee person.

7. Funding and Communications

- Crowdfunding and banking arrangements cannot be finalised until the constitution and bank account are in place.
- The group favoured voluntary donations rather than a fixed annual membership fee.
- Future public updates may include examples of actual costs, such as the planning consultant, venue hire and printing, so supporters understand how contributions will be used.
- A newsletter or periodic public update meeting will be considered to keep supporters informed without creating an additional formal membership structure.

8. Next Meetings

- **Tuesday, 20 October 2026 at 7:30 pm: MEETING CANCELLED** - Proposed attendance at the Wellington and Nelson Planning Committee meeting instead, subject to confirmation.
- **Wednesday, 21 October 2026 at 7:30 pm:** Delegation gateway meeting; venue to be confirmed.
- The group's usual meeting will be replaced by attendance at these council meetings.