East Dean & Friston Parish Council

Minutes of a Meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group held at the Village Hall on 24th September 2025 at 7.30 pm.

NPSG Members Present: Cllr Paul Seeley (Chair), Tim Pontin, Lesley Durso & Jonathan Timberlake

In attendance: Alison Eardley (Planning Consultant by Zoom link) & Phil Burgess (Clerk)
No members of the public were present.

1.	**Apologies for absence:** Cllr Baker & Cllr Fowler.
2.	**Approval of the Minutes 27th August 2025** The minutes were approved and signed as a correct record of the meeting.
3.	**Communications Plan.** The key audience is voters within the parish. The group is looking for broad participation across all groups. An amendment is required to Roles and responsibilities. SDNPA should read Wealden District council as they administer the referendum.
4.	**Examiner Queries.** EDF4 (Conserving Heritage Assets) should be amended to "All development proposals should demonstrate that they have considered the potential impact on above and below ground archaeological deposits." This should not be restricted to Designated Heritage Asset developments. Key worker definition as suggested by John Slater to be accepted *Action: Clerk to advise Examiner and SDNPA by e-mail on the 25th*
5.	**Referendum Publicity and restrictions on campaigning.** Guidance had been received from Wealden regarding restrictions on campaigning which will come into effect once the referendum is officially announced by Electoral Services. Paragraphs 12 and 13 of the referendum instructions refer. These instructions often seem ambiguous, but for compliance purposes the following should apply: • Any press notices and publicity from the Parish Council should be factual and not seek to influence the public vote. • An overview of the NDP & its benefits should be permitted. • The intended process and draft publicity materials should be submitted to Electoral Services at Wealden for approval. At the same time, a request should be submitted to hold the referendum in March as the weather improves. *Clerk to circulate material to group prior to submission to WDC.* • Non-councillor members of the group are not restricted in their campaigning activities

	• Campaign organisers should not be councillors and should ideally be registered with Electoral Services. The group was seeking a strong mandate from residents (i.e. a high turnout and a democratic result rather than encouraging a Yes vote). Delaying the referendum until March would allow more publicity time as well as encouraging a higher turnout than Jan/Feb.
6.	**Next Steps & timescales.** 1. The timeline as defined in paragraph 10 of the referendum instructions would be incorporated into the Communications Plan & delivery strategy by Tim and submitted to Electoral Services. 2. Poster Campaign to start November- December 3. Door-to-door leafletting in January. Leaflets to include an offer of transport to the polling station and details of access to a copy of the final plan. 4. Referendum to be publicised on local radio and at village events such as the February WI meeting. 5. Following the referendum and adoption of the NDP (assuming a positive result!) a group member should be invited to planning committee to ensure the plan is enshrined in future planning decisions. Alison expected the next stage examiner's report as early next week. The "fact check" post-examination version would be referred for check and amendment of maps by Alison & would be circulated to the group with tracked changes. The final version should be available by the end of October.
7..	**Budget.** Post-referendum expenses will remain, so the group should consult the council to ensure adequate funds in the 2026-27 budget. Funding requirements will also exist for subsequent years and an annual review will be carried out. Paul would flag the issue up at Parish Council on 2nd October to ensure the matter would be considered at the November 6th meeting which would be attended by NPSG members.
8.	**Any other outstanding items.** None
9.	**Date of Next Meeting:** Mid-late October to decide budgetary submission to council and agree publicity format

The meeting closed at 20.30 pm

Signed:……

Date:……