

# Minutes of the Arden Neighbourhood Forum AGM

Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2026 - 6pm – Online.

Present:

John Fannon (JF), Steve Jones (SJ), Sarah Sharland (SS), Penny Fannon (PF), Pippa Underwood (PU)

## 1. Apologies for absence

No apologies were received.

## 2. Chair's Report

It has been a challenging year for the Neighbourhood Forums (NHF) after withdrawal of funding for Neighbourhood Planning by the government. This led to considerable uncertainty and a delay of approximately 6 months in the production of Neighbourhood Plans (NPs). Whilst we now have some assurances and limited funding from Harborough District Council (HDC) that should ensure completion of the NHPs, more volunteer input is required than was originally envisaged and the timescales have therefore increased somewhat. However, despite having limited funds, progress is being made and Arden still intends to progress the NHP to submission within the next 12 months.

Focus on the NHPs was also affected by other priorities, especially the petition in November 2025 for a Community Governance Review (CGR) into whether a Town Council should be formed in Market Harborough, and the subsequent consultation and poll. The outcomes of these have been overwhelmingly positive, with over 80% in favour of forming a Town Council. The consultation is ongoing and will conclude later this year, but it looks increasingly likely that a new Town Council will be formed, which would be a great success.

We have recently passed the latest full draft of our Neighbourhood Plan to our consultants for review, and the feedback so far is that it is very close to being ready for formal submission. This is the result of considerable effort from forum members, who are all volunteers.

Arden has quite a small group of people attending forum meetings and willing to get more involved. I'd would again like to personally thank all those individuals that have given their time to help us in the past year or so by attending meetings, volunteering at events, delivering leaflets, reviewing and writing documents and generally getting involved in what we are doing. We could not have made this progress without you.

## 3. Financial Report

Due to withdrawal of government funding, the NHF did not have any income or outgoings during this financial year.

HDC has now made limited funds (approx. £8k) to cover some consultancy from Your Locale to assist all four NHFs in submission of the NHPs. This will be paid by HDC directly to the consultant and is therefore not part of Arden's financial accounts.

Some costs shared with other forums, such as for public liability insurance and website hosting have recently been met by contributions from forum members (or their businesses).

#### 4. Proposed revision of constitution (4 members required to be quorate)

Due to the low numbers attending recent meetings it was proposed that the following change to the Arden Neighbourhood Forum constitution be made that was voted on by a simple majority at the AGM (as allowed by the existing constitution). This change ensures we are still able to make important decisions at forum meetings going forwards, even if there are low numbers attending.

Existing wording:

The Neighbourhood Forum Meeting shall:

i. Be chaired by the Management Committee Chairperson or by the Vice Chairperson in the Chairperson's absence.

i. Be quorate when called to vote on a formal decision when **at least 6 members** of the Forum, including members who are also members of the Management Committee are in attendance.

To be changed to:

The Neighbourhood Forum Meeting shall:

i. Be chaired by the Management Committee Chairperson or by the Vice Chairperson in the Chairperson's absence.

ii. Be quorate when called to vote on a formal decision when **at least 4 members** of the Forum, including members who are also members of the Management Committee are in attendance.

The proposed change to the constitution was agreed (6 votes in favour 0 votes against).

#### Actions:

- JF to amend constitution and send update to HDC.

#### 5. Election of Committee Roles

There were three official committee roles considered for election as follows:

##### 5.1. Chair

John Fannon was happy to continue as chair. Nominated by SJ and seconded by PU.

John Fannon was elected as chair.

##### 5.2. Vice Chair

Sarah Sharland was happy to continue as vice chair for one more year. Nominated by JF and seconded by PF.

Sarah Sharland was elected as vice chair.

##### 5.3. Secretary

Penny Fannon is currently secretary but has not had much involvement due to other commitments. Penny is willing to carry on in this role if there are no other volunteers. Nominated by JF and seconded by SS.

Penny Fannon was elected as Secretary.

#### **5.4. Confirmation of sub-group leads and other committee members**

Non-official roles currently include sub-group leads and other committee members. These were confirmed as follows:

- Transport – Steve Jones was happy to continue as transport sub-group lead.

The following existing sub-group leads were not present at the AGM, but it is assumed they are happy to continue as they have not advised otherwise.

- Environment & Green Spaces – Sarah Nimmo
- Built Environment & Planning – Don West
- Social & Community – Lynn Thacker

#### **Actions:**

- JF to confirm sub-group leads are happy to continue following the AGM.

#### **5.5. AOB**

- SJ mentioned that he had been sent the Logan NHP policy relating to the “green wheel”. SJ will forward this to JF for review, who will compare with the Arden policies.

#### **Actions:**

- SJ to forward Logan “green wheel” policy.
- JF to review and compare with Arden policies.