**HEATHFIELD AND WALDRON PARISH COUNCIL**

**HIGHWAYS, PLANNING AND STREET LIGHTING COMMITTEE**

**Protocol for Planning Site Visits**

The Parish Council should be seen to be open and transparent in its activities and, in respect of planning consultations, each application should be seen to be considered on its own merits. Therefore, the fact that a site visit has taken place should have no bearing on the decision making process. It should simply be regarded as an opportunity to gain a greater understanding of the application site and the proposed development.

It is hoped that site visits may bring positive benefits to the Committee because those who have attended may be able to offer clarification of the application plans.

However, to ensure all Members know what is expected of them and applicants also have a clear knowledge of the process, the following Protocol is proposed:

* Invitations to attend site visits will be directed through the Clerk. Members who are approached directly will advise the applicant to contact the Clerk
* Invitations will be reported to the next meeting of HPS Committee. No more than 5 members of the Committee and no less than 2 should attend a site visit and Members who have a personal or pecuniary interest should not attend
* Members should make no comments to indicate support or otherwise for the application and the Clerk will advise the applicant that Members who attend do so to acquaint themselves with the site and the proposed development and that no comments or opinions will be offered at the time of the site visit
* Members in attendance should be aware of the suitability of accepting any hospitality from the applicant
* If deemed inappropriate by the Committee, an invitation to attend site may be refused and the Clerk will advise the applicant accordingly
* Site visits are informal occasions and are not deemed to be formal meetings of which Minutes are taken

Adopted at HPS Committee on 19 August 2013

DM Francis

June 2013