

GREAT WITCHINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting held at 7.45 p.m. at The Memorial Hall, Great Witchingham on Thursday 24th July 2003

Present: Ron Cornell, Pauline Brown & Stephen Williams. Roy Church in the chair.

Clerk: Peter Dilloway and nine members of the public. (Simon Woodbridge-District Councillor, arrived late).

(569). Apologies. John Willmore, Trevor Wright & Brenda Ravencroft (County Councillor)

(570). Co-option of Councillor. The Chairman advised that Kevin Francis had been approached and was willing to be co-opted onto the Council. The motion to co-opt. Proposed by Ron Cornell seconded by Stephen Williams and carried unanimously.

(571). Land adjacent Hall Walk

The Chairman opened the meeting by explaining the situation. Broadland District Council had purchased the land during the 1960's with a view to developing it for housing. That particular piece of land has always been excluded from the village envelope. The Parish Council had rented the land from the District and had sub-let part as allotments and part for agriculture. The use declined during the 1990's and the Parish council had returned the land back to the District Council and had urged them on several occasions to make better use of the land.

In the 2000 Local Plan (Option A) a rectangular portion of the land (0.4 HA) is allocated for open space at the western side of Hall Walk. Under the District Council's proposed amendment to the Local plan (Option B) a square plot of similar area has been designated at the western side of Hall Walk but leaving access to the remainder of the site. The Parish Council had objected to the Local plan, seeking to include the whole site within the village envelope.

The Chairman opened the meeting to the public and asked John Fitzpatrick a resident of Hall Walk to put forward his objection to the Parish proposals.

Mr. Fitzpatrick said that he represented the views of a number of residents in Hall Walk. Whilst he had only been resident in the village for five years he was disturbed by consideration being given to develop the land for residential purpose and the fact that neither the residents nor the village had been consulted. Having had discussions with the district Council and had the opportunity to read the Parish Council minutes he was disappointed that the Parish had not been in favour of utilising the site for a new village hall and/or other amenities. He also pointed out that Broadland's published housing strategy (2000) indicated that of twenty parishes identified on the list, Great Witchingham appeared second from bottom in terms of requirement. The strategy currently implies that most of the housing requirement will be met by development at Aylsham. He then asked, bearing the strategy in mind, why the Parish Council were pressing the District Council towards developing the site as opposed to utilising it for a new village hall. He was thanked on behalf of the public for his effort and time spent on the matter.

The Chairman asked if anyone wished to comment on Mr. Fitzpatrick's argument or add anything further. One member of the public raised the question of increased traffic activity and the attendant problems in joining traffic on the A1067.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked what the situation with respect to St. Faith's Church and the war memorial was in light of rumours that the site was being deconsecrated. The Chairman advised that whilst the subject was not within the remit of the Parish Council, he understood that an outline application for conversion to a dwelling was being prepared and that the PCC had approached the Parish to take up ownership of the War Memorial. Neither have been formally submitted at this stage and until a planning application is determined, the outcome is only speculation. One idea had been informally considered to convert the church building to a village hall, although the location was considered to be unsuitable. Mr. Fitzpatrick re-iterated that he felt the Hall Walk site to be most suitable to house a new hall and perhaps the War Memorial and possibly even a garden of remembrance. With a new hall in this location the roadway could be made up to county standard.

A member of the Village Hall Committee stressed that presently the school use the memorial hall quite frequently and that to demolish the existing hall which has nearly reached the end of its life and replace it on the other side of the A1067 would make it impractical for the school to use it. A suggestion was made that perhaps consideration should be given to building a new school on the land at Hall Walk. The Chairman pointed out that whatever direction the Parish proceeds in each facet relies strongly upon funding from one quarter or another and that was not easily obtainable. One member of the public pointed out that Thorpe Marriott was a classic case where a vast amount of residential development had taken place but with no increase in infrastructure to support it. The Chairman acknowledged that it was the view of those present that the Council should withdraw its objection to the amendment of Broadland District Council's amendment to the Local Plan and asked for a councillor to propose a second the motion. Proposed Ron Cornell, seconded Stephen Williams. The Clerk was instructed to write to Broadland withdrawing objection as a matter of expediency.

The Chairman then outlined the choices available. (see Option B above). Do nothing and allow the Local Plan to pass as amended or object and request that the plan remain as adopted. July 2000 (see Option A above). At this point Mr. Fitzpatrick kindly provided copies of his notes to those present, in which he suggested that option A was a preferable route providing a sensible shaped plot for hall and memorial. The Chairman pointed out that until discussions with the PCC and The Village Hall Committee and the School Governors had taken place, no option could be sensibly considered.

District Councillor Simon Woodbridge Joined the meeting at this point.

(572). Rural Housing Project

The Project had arisen to consider whether the parish was in need of affordable/social needs housing. Such housing can be built outside the village building envelope and The Hall Walk site is owned by Breckland District Council and large enough to support a small development. Norfolk Rural Community Council had provided the services of a Rural Housing Enabler to identify a need and offer a strategy to service such needs. The Parish Council asked the Housing enabler to look at Great Witchingham and advise on a course of action. Two meetings were held (see Minutes 17/4/03 & 29/4/03) to discuss the matter. Subsequently The Chairman had met with the Clerk and Chairman at whissonset Parish Council to see how a similar had turned out. The Housing comprised 16 dwellings and had been largely successful but had not been wholly filled by people linked to the village. The development comprised of only Wherry Housing Association lets, no sales or co-ownerships. Despite assurances there had been some difficult tenants and the District Council does have a statutory duty to house the homeless.

The Chairman stated that he had met with Norfolk County Council Highways Department to discuss the suitability and cost for making up Hall walk to a suitable standard for adoption and this was expected to be in excess of £50,000. He had also spoken to Bernard Matthews plc who were keen for more local rented housing, as they have difficulty sourcing local staff and need to find local accommodation for employees from outside the area.

the chairman advised the meeting that before any consideration for housing development could take place a housing questionnaire would need to be taken in the village and the cost, he had been informed was to be borne by the parish. Simon Woodbridge stated that he thought the District Council would bear the cost if this were a problem. He admitted that the District undertook a housing needs survey throughout the district but that this had subsequently been found to be flawed. Mr. Fitzpatrick said that there was no guarantee that a parish survey might also be flawed. Simon Woodbridge added that Government directive has given rise to the appointment of an empty housing officer to assist in the reduction of homelessness and that the government's pledge to build affordable housing has taken money away from District Councils which has led to the need to review the use of Council land in the district with a view to realising the value or building on it. The District's approach would be to pass land to housing associations for development, but if such developments were not filled from within communities, inevitably residents would come from outside the community.

The Chairman invited comment on the discussion from the public. One person asked if, that given the nature of some tenants of the type of properties provided by Housing associations, whether anti social behaviour would be dealt with properly. Simon Woodbridge replied that tenancy contract between tenants and Housing associations specifically covered ASB issues. John Fitzpatrick asked why consideration was being given to housing in Great Witchingham specifically. Simon Woodbridge replied that it was because Broadland owned a sizeable piece of land there.

The Chairman summarised the discussion and it was decided that no decision as to whether to conduct a village housing questionnaire could be made at this time. He thanked the public for their attendance and invited them to stay for the rest of the meeting or take the opportunity to leave.

(573). Minutes of the meeting held 17/4/03 were agreed to be a true record and duly signed by the Chairman.

(574). Matters Arising: None

(575). Correspondence:

- (i). Most correspondence had been circulated prior to the meeting.
- (ii). Letter from Macmillan Cancer Relief requesting a donation. The Council resolved to send a donation of £20.

(576). Planning Applications:

- (i). Planning applications received since the last meeting had been circulated and responded to.

(577). Payments/Financial Matters:

- (i). The 2002/3 accounts were formally adopted by the meeting and signed by the Clerk and Chairman.
 - (ii). The statement of assurance was explained to members and approved by all present and signed by the Clerk and Chairman.
 - (iii). Allianz Cornhill. Renewal of insurance premium. Cheque no. 100341 £358.86 (retrospective approval).
 - (iv). Norfolk County Services 1st ½ year grounds maintenance Cheque no.100342 £211.63 (retrospective approval).
 - (v). Collier Sports & Leisure supply of goal nets Cheque no.100343 £67.56 (retrospective approval).
 - (vi). Collier Sports & Leisure supply of peg & ropes Cheque no.100344 £18.80
 - (vii). R. Cornell for litter clearance (£70), War memorial maintenance (£40) & refuse bags (£1.77). Chq No. 100345 £111.77
 - (viii). Payment of clerk's expenses to date. Chq No. 100346 - £42.40
- all payments approved by unanimous consent.

(578). The Smell: The Chairman asked for a volunteer to take over from Pam Thomson as co-ordinator for complaints. Ron Cornell volunteered. A note will be placed in the Wensum Diary.

(579). War Memorial. This item will be deleted from the agenda until the matter of St. Faith's Church has been resolved by the PCC.

(580). Playground equipment: In 2004 new regulations come into force requiring disabled access. As access to the site is not easily adaptable to permit disabled access, this may force closure of the playground. An article will be placed in the Wensum Diary to seek suggestion from parents and children.

(581). Any Other Business:

- (i). Ron Cornell advised asked about the salt bin for the street. The clerk will advised that upon further investigation he had learned that the parish must pay for a bin and the salt will be provided FOC.
- (ii). There is a lot of rubbish around the car park at Marriots way/Porters Lane. The clerk will ask NCC to provide one.
- (iii). The Chairman advised that the Millennium seat was ready for installation by the builders as soon as they do the job.
- (iv). Stephen Williams advised that telephone line broadband connection is not likely to happen in the village. However he had learned that the government had pledged broadband connection to all schools. He will try and establish where GW primary school stands with a connection and the possibility of renting unused time outside of school hours.
- (v). The Clerk advised that approval for replacement of the council computer screen having been given between meetings, a replacement has been obtained at a cost of £150 +VAT. The invoice will be submitted in due course.

(582). Date and time of next meeting Thursday 25th September 2003 at 7.45 p.m.

AGENDA GWPC – 25th September 2003 at 7.45 p.m.

- (583). Apologies
- (584). Minutes of meeting 24/7/03
- (585). Matters Arising
- (586). Hall Walk
- (587). Rural Housing Project
- (588). Correspondence:
- (589). Planning Applications:
- (590). Payments/Financial Matters)
 - (i). Expertise Information Systems – supply of replacement monitor. Chq no. 100347 £182.13
 - (ii). Clerk's Salary (2nd ½ payment) & expenses to 25/9/03
 - (iii). Macmillan Cancer research size of donation
- (591). The smell.
- (592). Playground equipment.
- (593). Any other Business
- (594). Date & time of next meeting