

GREAT WITCHINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting held at 7.45 p.m. at The Memorial Hall, Great Witchingham on Thursday 25th September 2003

Present: Ron Cornell, Pauline Brown, Kevin Francis & John Willmore. Roy Church in the chair.

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

(583). Apologies. Stephen Williams & Brenda Ravencroft (County Councillor)

Minutes of the meeting held 24/7/03 were amended at 572 to read Broadland rather than Breckland and thereafter agreed to be a true record and duly signed by the Chairman.

(584). Matters Arising:

- (i). At 575(ii) The council had agreed to send a donation of £20 as on a previous occasion. The clerk advised the meeting that no donation had ever been made to this cause and asked for verification of the sum to be donated. In view of the recent sad and untimely death of Councillor Trevor Wright from cancer, the meeting felt it appropriate to make a donation of £100.
- (ii). Further to minute 581(i) the best value salt bin is available from Glasdon UK at a cost of £143.17+VAT. Members had previously approved the purchase of this item and the clerk was instructed to proceed.

(585). Land adjacent Hall Walk/Housing needs survey

For the benefit of those not present at the last meeting; the Chairman gave a brief update of 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, 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, 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. As a result of the representations from the public at the last council meeting the Parish Council's objection to the Local Plan has been withdrawn.

Margaret. Kinsley asked if the ownership of the Hall Walk roadway by New College Oxford was affected by the discussions taking place. The Chairman replied that the ownership remains unchanged. Until the future use of the land becomes clear, then ownership would be a matter for negotiation if necessary.

The Chairman explained the meeting that there appeared to be two options open to the parish:

Firstly to allow Broadland District Council to undertake their own decisions as to the future use of the land without parish involvement.

Secondly to initiate a housing needs survey within the parish, in partnership with the Rural Housing Enabler and the District Council to identify a need for social/affordable housing from within the village.

Simon Woodbridge advised that the cost of such a survey would be borne by the District Council rather than the parish.

The question was asked if this parish is low down on the housing needs priority list, why is the District Council considering a housing development scheme now? Simon Woodbridge answered the point by saying that government grants for housing were being directed towards inner city housing where the need is perceived to be greater, and away from rural areas such as ours. This has resulted in the need for councils to look at their land assets with a view to creating their own funding for social needs/affordable housing. The only other way of obtaining funding was by council tax increases, which are a politically sensitive issue at present and not a route, which Broadland wish to tread. Broadland Council own few suitable plots of land and it is looking with an open mind at this site, along with several others. With the present housing deficit, Broadland needs to carefully consider developing or disposing of its land assets to help redress the situation

Anna Sutton asked how big the development would be, as there have been a number of rumours circulating throughout the village.

The Chairman answered that, at the moment there are no definitive plans existing, to develop the site for any purpose. The general view of the parish, particularly those neighbouring the site, is that they do not wish the site to be filled with houses. If however, housing must be built, it should be done in a manner to benefit and enhance the village and in accordance with the needs defined by a survey.

There are concerns that if a social/affordable housing development took place, what controls would be put in place to control the tenancy criteria. Simon Woodbridge stated that the Housing Associations would be given strict guidelines for the eligibility of occupation.

The Chairman asked Councillors to consider the options and it was decided to initiate a social and affordable housing needs survey for the parish, as without this, there could be no informed decision upon the future use of the site. A survey should also include questions relating to other important issues within the village, such as the future of the village hall and St. Faith's Church.

The parish Council resolved to write to the Rural Housing Enabler and set in motion a housing needs survey (Proposed by Ron Cornell. Seconded by Kevin Francis). Members will consider what other questions specific to Great Witchingham, should or can be included.

Members were not satisfied with the fact that the Parish Council would not be party to analysing the results and drawing conclusions of the survey. This will be done by the Housing Enabler to maintain confidentiality of answers given by the public. Simon Woodbridge advised that District Councils do not have any input to the survey either and that it was a matter of trust between the councils and the analysis team to produce the right answers impartially. The Chairman expressed doubts about third parties identifying 'local' needs, as the term 'local' had any number of meanings, dependant upon the viewpoint of the person making the assessment. The point will be clarified with the Housing Enabler.

The Chairman invited further comment or questions before closing this item.

John Willmore asked what would happen if the survey identified that no need for social/affordable in the Village. Simon Woodbridge answered the point by saying that he felt a need would be identified as current information from the Wherry Housing association housing list shows a significant number of people wishing to live in the village as a primary choice, although whether this was for family or employment reasons he was unable to determine from the data.

Jack Hilling asked why the council were proceeding with a survey at all, if the information from a district survey put us so low down on the housing priority list. Simon Woodbridge explained that this data was now known to be inaccurate and that a parish survey would provide firm evidence from which to make the correct decision. Present housing needs in the district exceed those extrapolated from the survey.

(586). Correspondence:

- (i). Most correspondence had been circulated prior to the meeting.
- (ii). Letter from The Local Channel offering free web space to the Parish. Stephen Williams had intimated that he felt this was a worthwhile offer and that he was willing to act as contact for such a project.
- (iii). Email From Stephen Williams reporting that a stolen vehicle, which had been used in connection with another crime, had been dumped outside his house in Lady's Row. He wished to raise some support for neighbourhood watch in the area and had heard nothing from the Police. The Clerk will contact the Community Police Officer and ask him to organise something. whilst on the subject of Police matters Mr. Hilling asked why there had been no speed traps in the village for a couple of months as some motorists appear to ignore the limit. The clerk was asked to arrange for the police to attend to this.
- (iv). Letter from Broadland District Council acknowledging receipt of the withdrawal of objection to the Local Plan amendment, by the Parish Council.
- (v). Letter from Mr. Patrick (Great Witchingham Post Office) requesting Parish Council's support in obtaining a grant for renovation from the Countryside Agency.
- (vi). Letter to Mr. Patrick (Great Witchingham Post Office) in support of (v) above.
- (vii). Letter from Mrs. Cushing, Lenwade Street, in respect of parking and traffic problems in The Street. The subject has been raised with Norfolk County Council on a number of occasions and the Clerk was asked to send a reminder to the effect that the matter remains both unsatisfactory and unresolved.
- (viii). Letter and maps from The Countryside Agency inviting comment on the open or common land in each the parish. Having viewed the details shown on the map, members were satisfied that the information shown was currently accurate. The Clerk will respond to that effect.

(587). Planning Applications:

- (i). Planning applications received since the last meeting had been circulated and responded to.
- (ii). Barn conversion, Porters Lane, Lenwade, for H. Jones. Application refused.

(588). Payments/Financial Matters:

- (i). Expertise Information Systems. Supply of computer monitor. Chq no.100347 £182.13 (retrospective)
- (ii). Payment of clerk's 2nd ½ year salary & expenses to date. Chq No. 100348 - £442.34
- (iii). R. Cornell for litter clearance (£45), War memorial upkeep (£30), Playing field work (£17.20). Chq No.100349 £92.20

(589). Macmillan Cancer Relief. Donation to funds. Chq No.100350 £100
all payments approved by unanimous consent.

(590). The Smell:

There had been a particular instance during September, which gave rise to the worst occurrences of odour in many years resulting in a number of complaints to both the parish co-ordinator, Ron Cornell, and direct to the Environmental Health Department. The cause was reported to be due to spreading the contents of an old slurry pit and turkey litter combined with an equipment breakdown that prevented these being ploughed into the ground straight away. Complaints were received from as far away as Taverham and North Tuddenham. The Clerk was instructed to write and endorse the complaints to Broadland District Council.

(591). Playground equipment: Major work is required to comply with regulations due to come into force in October 2004. Feedback from parents and children as to the future of this area are awaited.

Any Other Business:

- (i). Ron Cornell has obtained replacement football nets and awaits the availability of equipment to remove and replace the posts, it was agreed to employ J & M Builders as necessary.
- (ii). Rubbish around the car park at Marriots way/Porters Lane still remains. The clerk will remind NCC to provide bins.
- (iii). The Millennium seat is ready for installation. The siting has been agreed with the landlord of The Bridge PH and it will be installed once some tree stumps have been removed. It was further suggested that an appropriate tree be planted nearby in

memory of Councillor Trevor Wright. Members agreed that this gesture was appropriate subject to the agreement of Mrs Wright.

- (iv). Stephen Williams advised (by email) that telephone line broadband connection (ASDL) would be available from 26th November. Unfortunately this precludes most of Great Witchingham. Trials of extended range ASDL are being carried out from October and if successful will be available to homes within 8km of the Reepham exchange next March. The government has pledged broadband connection to all schools and the possibility of connecting to this has been investigated. Unfortunately bureaucracy is likely to put this idea beyond reach.
- (v). The returning Officer has given permission for the council to co-opt a new member to replace Trevor Wright. Several people have expressed a willingness to be considered and the council will make a decision at the next meeting.
- (vi). John Willmore had found a mattress dumped and had over a number of weeks made repeated calls to NCC to remove the item. He had been assured that collection would take place in the next week or so.
- (vii). Norfolk County Highways will be erecting weight limit signs at Blackwater bridge during October
- (viii). John Willmore said that there had been two instances of a male 'flasher' exposing himself in Blackwater Lane. The public should inform the police if they see anyone acting suspiciously.
- (ix). The chairman advised those present that the Trustees of the Fuel allotment Charity had approached the Surgery and Project Switch to discuss the possibility of jointly funding a community car scheme, particularly for visits to the new N & N hospital, which is more difficult to reach for those without their own transport. This may run in tandem with or instead of the Christmas fuel payment. Discussions will take place the organisers of other local schemes to see if their volunteer drivers have any spare capacity. Anyone wishing to volunteer should contact either the Chairman or the Clerk.

(592). Date and time of next meeting:

It was agreed to set meeting dates annually from hereon and subject to the availability of the Memorial hall, the dates set so far are:

- (i). 27th November 2003 at 7.45 p.m.
- (ii). 26th February 2004 at 7.45 p.m.
- (iii). 27th May 2004 at 7.30 p.m. (Council meeting followed by the Annual Parish Meeting at 8.00 p.m.)
- (iv). 26th August 2004 at 7.45 p.m.

AGENDA GWPC – 27th November 2003 at 7.45 p.m.

- (593). Apologies
- (594). Minutes of meeting 25/9/03
- (595). Matters Arising
- (596). Hall Walk
- (597). Rural Housing Project
- (598). Independent village hall committee
- (599). Correspondence:
- (600). Planning Applications:
- (601). Payments/Financial Matters)
- (602). The smell
- (603). Playground equipment.
- (604). Any other Business
- (605). Date & time of next meeting