

BRANDESTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Council held at the Village Hall on Tuesday, 27 January 2015

Present

Councillors D Risk (Chairman), J Fielder (JF), W Elson (WE), P Summers (PS), S Thurlow (ST) and H Saxton (HS)

Cty Cllr P Bellfield

Dist Cllr R Snell

PCSO C Hassler

Parish Clerk and RFO, A M Hounsell (AMH)

Parishioner Mr N Hayward

1-1415/6 – Open Discussion with Members of the Public

There was no discussion under this heading

2-1415/6 – Reports from Cty Cllr P Bellfield, Dist Cllr B Snell and PCSO C Hassler

Cty Cllr Bellfield reported as follows :-

Again this year, the council tax levied by SCC will not be increased and SCC is required to save a further £30M in the coming year. For the first time for many years expenditure will be under £500M

Additional salt gritters (9 in number) are being purchased to bring the total up to 39. They will be deployed for gritting if the forecast temperature is zero (or below) at 9 o'clock

Road maintenance in the county is now carried out by contract with Kier-MG and this has been causing considerable problems. The Cabinet Member for highways is continuing to address these.

The county is working on a proposal for a blanket speed limit of 40 mph (or less where posted at present) in a suggested area bound by A12 on south and east, A14 on west and A1120 on the north

Dist Cllr Snell reported as follows :-

1. Planning – Site specific allocations consultation update

As forecast in my report to the PC on 2 December, SCDC launched on 15 December its consultation 'Issues and Options' on two key Local Plan documents – the Site Allocations and Area Specific Policies Development Plan, and Felixstowe Peninsula Area Action Plan. Letters have been sent out to encourage responses from town and parish councils, residents associations, businesses, land owners, service providers and other stakeholders.

The Site Allocations and Area Specific Policies document covers the whole of Suffolk Coastal, except for communities within the Felixstowe Peninsula which will be covered by the Area Action Plan. Comments on the Issues and Options documents can be made during the eleven weeks' consultation – which ends on Friday, 27 February 2015. Drop in sessions to discuss the plans will be held as follows:

Location	Date	Time	Address
Walton Community Hall	Thu 29 Jan	10am - 1pm	High Street, Walton, IP11 9DS
Saxmundham Market Hall	Thu 29 Jan	2pm - 5pm	Station Approach, Saxmundham, IP17 1AF
Felixstowe Town Hall	Tue 3 Feb	5.30pm - 8.30pm	Town Hall, Undercliff Road West, Felixstowe, IP11 2AG
Riverside Centre	Thu 5 Feb	5pm - 8pm	Great Glemham Road, Stratford St Andrew, IP17 1LL
Council Chamber	Mon 9 Feb	10am - 1pm	Council Offices, Melton Hill, Woodbridge, IP12 1AU

2. DCLG measures to unlock smaller development sites

Changes in legislation have been promoted by the DCLG in relation to section 106 agreements and smaller scale sites i.e. 10 dwellings or less and development of less than 1000 square metres.

It sets out new measures to support small-scale developers by changing the circumstances when planning obligations can be sought. These measures came immediately into force for any development proposals determined on or after 25 November 2014. The written statement confirms that *'for sites of 10 units or less, and which have a maximum combined gross floor space of 1,000 square metres, affordable housing and tariff system contributions should not be sought'*.

There is a lower threshold of 5 units or less on designated rural areas (such as Rural Exception Sites and AONB) if authorities choose to implement it. In these circumstances, affordable housing or tariff contributions can still be sought on developments below 5 units, in which case payment of affordable housing and tariff contributions on should be commuted until completion of the units. The statement also

includes the provision of a financial credit for vacant buildings brought back into lawful use or demolished for re-development. This credit should be deducted the calculation of affordable housing contributions, but will not apply to vacant buildings which have been abandoned.

The provisions will need to be applied to any decision which were issued after 28th November 2014 and any appeals lodged which could be determined after this date. This may have twin effects of refunding and not pursuing or in some cases refunding play space or education contributions on smaller sites and not being able to pursue affordable housing on the smaller schemes, including those which have already been determined since that date.

These measures will not affect those sites which make their infrastructure contributions via Community infrastructure Levy (CIL) expected in SCDC from 1 April 2015. The S016 announcement can be seen at the following link:

<http://www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-vote-office/November%202014/28%20Nov%202014/2.%20DCLG-SupportForSmallScaleDevelopersCustomAndSelf-Builders.pdf>

3. NANT legal action

The appeal by NANT was finally heard in the Court of Appeal in London on 22 Jan and judgement is awaited.

4. Half-a-million for Suffolk Coast tourism

The DCLG announced today that Suffolk Coastal and Waveney Councils have been awarded £490,000 from the Coastal Communities Fund to help boost tourism in the area.

The funding is to support 'Developing prospects on the Suffolk Coast: Economy, People, Environment', which aims to reinforce and expand the tourism economy along the Suffolk Coast. It will focus on developing key assets, delivering events and expanding activities to attract visitors, especially during the 'shoulder' and off-season periods.

Its aim is to create and safeguard jobs by enhancing the tourism offer in East Suffolk, encouraging more tourists to visit, to stay for longer and to keep visiting all year round.

The project will be delivered by members of commercially-led Suffolk Coast Ltd Destination Management Organisation (DMO) and Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB, working alongside Suffolk Coastal and Waveney Councils.

Tourism is worth in excess of £500m per annum along the Suffolk Coast and provides approx. 1 in every nine jobs in the area.

5. Quality of Place Awards

Launched in 2010, the Quality of Place Award scheme spotlights efforts being made across Suffolk Coastal to add to the district's quality through new projects that have helped conserve historic buildings, create new designs, or benefit the local landscape, nature, local community or community spirit.

The awards aim to recognise and encourage an interest in the quality of the built and natural environment in Suffolk Coastal, while promoting an awareness of the need for high standards in all forms of design. Entries are invited in two categories, Design and Building Conservation. All nominations will be judged by a panel on quality of design and detailing, quality of workmanship, materials and sustainability.

New buildings or extensions nominated in terms will be judged on the originality of design, overall architectural effect and relationship to context. Nominations in the Building Conservation category will be considered for their inventiveness and how the works have provided a new lease of life into a previously redundant or neglected building.

To qualify, an entry must be within the Suffolk Coastal area and have been completed between 1 January and 31 December 2014 and have all the necessary planning and building regulations approvals.

Entry is free and nominations should be submitted by **Friday 29 May 2015**. Details at

<http://www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourdistrict/planning/designandconservation/qualityofplace/>

6. Community Grants – only two weeks left

Grants are still available from my Communities Enabling Budget – applications are urgently needed from any qualifying local organisations for eligible projects (see SCDC web site for conditions and forms) so that grants can be agreed before 31 January 2015.

7. SCDC accommodation review - update

Suffolk Coastal announced in May 2013 that, as part of its wider review of accommodation, it intended to sell Cedar House, which has now been put on the market as a residential property. The house with substantial grounds, opposite Suffolk Coastal's headquarters at the junction of Pytches Road and Melton Hill, is a short distance from Woodbridge town centre.

PCSO Hassler reported that there has been no reported crime in Brandeston for the period 01 December to 31 December 2014

He also reminded the meeting of Police Connect which is replacing Police Direct. The service is free, easy to use and is proving to be a very valuable policing tool.

Leaflets are available at all police stations or visit our website.

suffolk.police.uk/policeconnect

3-1415/6 - Chairman's Welcome, Formal Meeting Opening and Acceptance of Apologies for Absence

The Chairman formally opened the meeting and welcomed Councillors and others.

4-1414/6 - To Receive Councillors' Declaration of Interest in Agenda Items

ST declared interest in agenda item 9 (i)

5-1415/6 - Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 02 December 2014 were signed as a true record.

6-1415/6 - Matters arising from previous minutes

(i) Update on Anglian Water Sewage Works Enhancement (previous minute 6-1415/5 (i))

The clerk advised that he had visited the site on 26 Jan and met the site manager. He had confirmed road closure dates of :-

1. Low Street, Brandeston to Kettleburgh – 09 February, 2015 to 22 February, 2015
2. The Street, Kettleburgh – 23 February, 2015 to 09 March, 2015
3. Framlingham and Kettleburgh Road – 02 March 2015 to 20 March 2015.

Works had started on site on 12 Jan with completion anticipated for spring 2015. The clerk also confirmed that the first of these diversions would be signed through Earl Soham.

(ii) Local Plan Consultations (previous minute 6-1415/5 (ii)) Note: Consultation closes 27 Feb 2015

The meeting agreed to reinforce its previous statements in response to this consultation that they support the listing in the current draft Local Plan that the sites in Mill Lane are unsuitable for development. They also requested that the clerk advise SCDC that further housing in Brandeston would be unsustainable.

(iii) Planning – DC14/2214 Red House Farm (Removal of condition 3 of previously approved application C12/1626) (previous minute 7-1415/5 (i))

The clerk advised that he had checked the SCDC planning website on 03 December (the day following the last council meeting) and this had indicated that this application was "pending decision". Accordingly he had requested the current status from SCDC. Their reply indicated that the application had been approved at the Development Control Sub-committee meeting on 15 October but that the decision notice had been delayed but would be despatched "tomorrow". Further correspondence elicited the information that it had "been agreed earlier in the year that as the new Public Access System on the Council's website now makes much more information available to customers the postal notification are a duplication of this service" and that "..... copies of decision notices are no longer dispatched to Town & Parish councils."

The consent includes the condition that "The granary/annexe/holiday accommodation shall be reinstated to the layout and form detailed on drawing 1585/6 received 10/4/12 under C12/0736 within 3 months of the temporary occupancy of the building as permanent accommodation coming to an end or within 3 months of 9th January 2016, whichever is sooner. Following this the two garage bays shall be used as garaging/storage only and shall not be used as living accommodation."

(iv) Environment Agency proposal to remove weir boards on the River Deben (previous minute 12-1415/5)

JF reported that SCC and members of the Wildlife Trust and residents Mr Charles Crole, Mr Steve Western, Mr Graham Edhouse, Lord and Lady Cunliffe and himself met with the Environment Agency (apologies received from Mr Daniel Norman). A worthwhile discussion had taken place from which it emerged that workers at the school and the late Mr Basil Norman used to move the boards until EA told them they couldn't. Then, having been told there was no money, EA revealed that now there was to be £30,000 made available to put 'Riffles' in the river bed as discussed at parish council meetings. These would probably be in the straight stretch by the college. Events and money are now awaited.

(v) Broadband Speed in Brandeston (previous minute 14-1415/5 (i))

JF advised that he and Mr Terry Robinson had met regarding this matter and they have sent a request to residents to measure their speeds. These are to be collated whereupon appropriate further action will be considered.

(vi) Planning Issues – Boyton Parish (previous minute 14-1415/5 (ii))

The chairman advised that he had written to Boyton Council supporting their comments upon the inadequacy of the SCDC planning system

(vii) Conditions of roads (previous minute 14-1415 (iii))

The clerk advised that he had written to SCC, Highways advising the sections of poor highway condition. No response had been received.

7-1415/6 –To receive advice from the Clerk of current planning matters and to consider the performance of SCDC planning and enforcement processes

(i) The council reaffirmed its support for applications DC14/3709 (Tennis court at the Recreation Ground) and C13/0174 (Replacement windows, 8 Pond Piece). The former has been approved.

(ii) The council considered application DC14/4201 (Erection (retention) of 4 residential dwellings (without planning obligations), Mutton Lane) and decided to oppose the application especially the removal of the requirement for affordable housing.

(iii) SCDC planning and enforcement processes

The Chairman adjourned the meeting in order to allow full discussions with all present

Notes of these discussions are appended at the end of these minutes

The Chairman then reconvened the meeting

JF then proposed (but subsequently withdrew) a motion that Brandeston Parish Council carry out the possible actions of parish councils in respect of posters etc for the forthcoming elections of May, 2015 (refer to sentences 3 and 4 of the notes of open discussions on this item as appended below)

The council requested that Dist Cllr Snell convey their strong dissatisfaction at the operation of the planning and enforcement actions of SCDC to the Officers of the District Council

There were no other planning matters to consider.

8-1415/6 - Report from Responsible Finance Officer (The Clerk)

The RFO presented the current financial position with the main account holding £3,583.51 and the 100+ account £127.11 (both after accruals for future income and approved expenditure).

9-1415/6 - Financial Matters

The council agreed payments as follows :-

- (i) £10.50 to Brandeston VH&RG for room hire for the next council meeting on date to be agreed (see agenda item 13).
- (ii) £272 to the clerk for office expenses for 2014-15

10-1415/6 - Review of the Council's Financial Risk Assessment in Respect of the Current Financial Position of the Council

The council agreed that the current financial position was satisfactory

11-1415/6 - To review any matters arising from currently circulated correspondence

There was no discussion under this heading

12-1415/6 - To consider whether to vary the business of the meeting under Standing Order 16 of the Council

The Chairman agreed consideration of the following item :-

The clerk confirmed his wish (as advised informally to the council prior to the previous meeting) to resign as both Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer to the council with effect from 31 March, 2015.

The chairman then advised of an application for the position from Mrs Mary Mitson Woods. She had agreed a salary of 2 hrs average per week at the national guideline of £10 per hour (to be reviewed after 6 months).

The council agreed to appoint Mrs Mitson Woods to the position on these terms with effect from 01 April 2015.

13-1415/6 – Date of Next Meeting

Date for the next council meetings was agreed as Tuesday, 24 March 2015 at 8.00 pm

The meeting closed at 10.00 pm

NOTES OF OPEN DISCUSSION OF AGENDA ITEM 7

The clerk stated that he had only become aware of the decision by SCDC to not advise planning decision notices because he had sought information from SCDC as to the status of application DC14/2214 (agenda item 6 (iii)). He stated that, in his view, this decision and especially the decision not to so notify town and parish councils showed gross contempt by SCDC. He suggested that if town and parish councils were to act in the same way towards SCDC, then they might refuse to print posters or to erect them for the forthcoming elections in May, 2015. Further they might refuse to allow parish council notice boards to be used or to permit village halls or their car parks to be used for polling stations for these elections. These activities are all the responsibility of the Returning Officer (in this case; Stephen Baker, Chief Executive of SCDC.)

Dist Cllr Snell advised of notes he had from the last report of the SCDC Cabinet Member for Planning which stated

- The new Planning Development Manager is in post which will provide increased capacity and support for the Development Management Team.

- Planning performance on minor and other applications has temporarily reduced this quarter due to some vacancies in the Support Team and the planned migration to the new IT system. The recruitment process has been completed and service delivery improvement will be seen during the rest of the year.
- The planning teams provided another series of World of Planning events for Town and Parish Councils. Feedback was generally positive and included areas to be addressed and actions have been put in place including undertaking some direct support with Town and Parishes to help them use the Public Access system more effectively.
- The Public Access system is being used by a considerable number of customers to enable them to directly view/interact with the planning application process remotely.
- There is a system of daily checks to ensure that documents on Public Access are up-to-date and correctly published.
- Officers are working to ensure public and consultee feedback on applications is consistently uploaded on to the system in a timely fashion.

The meeting rejected the last two of these statements as being entirely inconsistent with their own experiences and several councillors remarked that the SCDC planning website was frequently out-of-date and often showed incorrect information. ST advised that she had attempted to add a response to an application (for the tennis court at the Brandeston Recreation Ground) which the website claims to be possible – but it was not. It was generally agreed that the website is not fit for purpose and could not be relied upon to provide accurate and timely information.

It was noted that the enforcement performance continues at the dismal level that now appears to be considered (by SCDC) to be an acceptable norm. The clerk confirmed that he was aware of a significant number of other parish councils who are very dissatisfied with the performance of the Planning Department at SCDC. Overall, councillors agreed with this sentiment.