

## **BRANDESTON PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes of a Meeting of the Council held at the Village Hall on Tuesday, 30 November 2010

### **Present**

Councillors D Risk (Chairman) (DR), H Saxton (HR), W Elson (WE), K Churchill (KC) and P Summers (PS)

Parish Clerk and RFO A M Hounsell

Parishioner Mr N Hayward

### **1-1011/5 – Open discussion with members of the public who may be present**

There was no discussion under this item.

### **2-1011/5 – Reports from Cty Cllr Bellfield, Dist Cllr Snell and PCSO Hassler**

Cty Cllr Bellfield had advised the Clerk of his apologies.

Dist Cllr Snell had advised the Clerk of his apologies but reported as follows :-

#### **1. Comprehensive Spending Review**

Suffolk Coastal's Cabinet was warned at the beginning of November that the Council faces having to make much higher than hoped for savings in the next two years, but that steps are already underway to meet the challenge. The Government's Comprehensive Spending Review announced that there would be average cuts in real terms of 7.25 per cent a year for the next four years in the funding it gives local councils.

It will be December before we know the actual grant will be for 2011/12 but the cuts will be front-loaded (14% in year 1), which means the reduction will be much larger in the first year. This could mean a drop in our Government funding of up to 23 per cent by 2012/13, or the equivalent of £1.8 million less to pay for services.

By March 2011, the Council will have saved over £10 million since 2001 by its commitment to constantly review the ways to provide its services more efficiently and effectively. This is a very impressive achievement given that its income from Council Taxpayers is only £7 million a year and £8 million from Government Formula Grant.

Continuing our efforts to save money by working with Waveney District, the two councils agreed in September to move to one senior management team, with nearly 30 per cent fewer posts than before and on-going savings of around £400,000 p.a. The two Councils already share a Chief Executive and Heads of Planning and Finance, as part of an initiative that has helped both councils save more than £200,000 in the last two years. This continues the shared services arrangement which we have operated for many years and which has been held up in parliament as an exemplar by the Communities Secretary, for whom the government has set aside a £200 million pot specifically for those councils who seek to restructure their services by merging teams. We do not know whether councils like ours that have led the way in delivering efficiencies and new ways of working will get a better deal than those who have failed to modernise, but we hope to benefit from this fund in some way.

#### **2. LDF status**

Core Strategy published in June as interim planning policy; Regional Spatial strategies abandoned by government; housing numbers have been re-examined in bottom-up approach based on demographic and other evidence and forecasts; the number of new homes planned for the district could be reduced to an annual rate of 446, over 60 homes a year fewer than the old regional targets – this is now subject to 8 weeks' public consultation (ending 23 Jan 2011), as parishes were advised in a letter on 19 November. New draft Core Strategy published 29 Nov; site specific allocations exercise delayed till later in 2011. We still wait to see what the new Localism Bill will really mean to local councils.

#### **3. Planning Scrutiny**

The SCDC Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee met in September to hear from six town/parish councils and six district councillors in its continuing review of the Council's Planning service. Its recommendations were put to two further meetings in October and on 2 Nov the Cabinet received its report and is presently considering the recommended actions, many of which related to improving communications with parish councils.

#### **4. Sizewell**

On 1 Nov the Government confirmed Sizewell as a suitable site for the building of a new nuclear power station and on the same day Suffolk Coastal's new Sizewell task group met for the first time.

We don't know who will make the decision on any planning application. The previous Government created an Infrastructure Planning Commission to consider and decide such matters but the coalition Government apparently intends to deal with it through the Planning Inspectorate, with a final decision by the Energy Secretary, Chris Huhne.

Suffolk Coastal is determined to ensure that local issues are properly considered – such as the AONB; the Heritage Coast and the overall effect on the landscape and wildlife; possible effects on coastal erosion; the need to minimise disruption; appropriate compensation for the local community; the design and location of housing and facilities for the 5000-strong workforce and 900 potential new employees; transport on and off site; and construction noise.

Suffolk Coastal and Suffolk County Councils plan to appoint two officers specifically to concentrate on assessing the potential impacts of the development and using whatever legal and technical advice is necessary to ensure that the two councils can address any adverse impacts of the proposals.

PCSO Hassler had advised the Clerk of his apologies but advised that there had been no reported crime in Brandeston since his previous report of 26 September 2010.

#### **3-1011/5 - Chairman's Welcome and Apologies for Absence**

The Chairman welcomed Councillors and Parishioners and advised receipt of apologies for absence from Cllrs. J Fielder and S Thurlow, from Cty Cllr Bellfield, Dist Cllr Snell and PCSO Hassler and from Parish Historical Recorder W Woodland

#### **4-1011/5 - To Receive Councillors' Declaration of Interest in Agenda Items**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **5-1011/5 - Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meetings of 28 September 2010 and 19 October 2010 were signed as true records.

#### **6-1011/5 - Matters arising from previous minutes**

- (i) Settlement boundaries under LDF (previous minute 6-1011/3 (iv))  
The clerk advised that he had confirmed to SCDC that the council supported the boundaries shown on the plans provided.
- (ii) Dog litter (previous minute 1-1011/3 (i))  
The clerk confirmed that he had advised Mr Porter (of SCDC) and Lord and Lady Cunliffe of the council's decision not to accept the SCDC offer to install dog litter bins.  
The clerk also confirmed that the notes prepared by WE and the poem by KC had been forwarded for publication in "the Brandeston", the website and the Parish Magazine.
- (iii) Road names in Brandeston (previous minute 12-1011/3)  
The clerk confirmed that SCDC had agreed to an extension of time to permit the council to consider this matter.  
In the absence of the requisite plan, the meeting agreed to delegate this matter to the chairman.
- (iv) Planning application C10/2526 (8 Pond Piece – retention of fencing) (previous minute 3-1011/4)  
The clerk advised that he had informed SCDC of the councils opposition to this proposal and he had in turn, been advised of their refusal of consent.
- (v) Planning application C10/2597 (The Old Vicarage – extension to garden room) (previous minute 6-1011/4)  
The clerk confirmed he had advised SCDC of the council's support for this application. A decision is awaited.

## 7-1011/5 - Planning

### 1. The clerk advised of submission to SCDC of planning application C10/2699 (outline application for 9 new houses in Mutton Lane).

The council noted that the application was contrary to the local plan and that the land lies outside the Brandeston village envelope.

After considerable discussion, the council agreed to strongly oppose the application making the following points :-

(a) The conclusion to the applicant's Design and Access Statement seeks to justify the application by the provision of affordable housing and states:

*"There is a contingent under 25 years old but they represent only around 15% of the population of the village. Whilst this does not immediately support the idea that there is a great demand for affordable housing from young families within Brandeston it does show that the village is predominantly either retired or preparing for retirement. So the equilibrium of the village is unbalanced now and is therefore likely to be worse in the long term. The availability of affordable housing in the village would mostly attract younger families, whether they are currently living in the village or not. This would provide housing for local farm and industry workers and would counter the imbalance of the village for the next generations."*

However, the council point out that the applicant has failed to take into account the very clear statement set-out within the Brandeston Parish Plan which was published in October 2008. The Parish Plan states as a High Priority "**residents of Brandeston are emphatically opposed to further development of the village**" and the Parish Plan resolved that the Parish Council be tasked with "investigating all ways of protecting the environment in and around the village and protecting the village against further development." Further, the Parish Plan identifies local support for the provision of craft workshops to help support the employment of young families within the village.

(b) The Parish Council are strongly opposed to the suggestion by the applicant that the development should be allowed to change the current equilibrium of the village and that the creation of 3 affordable housing units alongside 6 open market dwellings be advantageous in attracting young families to the village without in any way addressing the question of additional employment or support for these families in this location.

(c) The reviewed core strategy and development management policies set out within the Development Plan document published by SCDC in November this year identify Brandeston as a local service centre wherein the policy relating to housing would generally support small scale developments within or abutting existing villages **where such development is in line with the Village Plan or other clearly locally defined needs with local support**. The application is wholly contrary to the published Parish Plan, there is no identified local need and there is no identified local support.

(d) Brandeston Parish Council would also vigorously oppose development of this site as an exception site.

(e) The Parish have vigorously opposed any alteration to the existing village Settlement Boundary. The application would involve linear development between the northern edge of the village to connect through to the buildings clustered around Rose Farm. The "Rose Farm cluster" comprises a Suffolk farmhouse, converted timber frame barn (which would formerly have served Rose Farm) and an adjacent former farm worker's cottage. The proposed application would be damaging to the character of the village and the setting of Rose Farm which would be severely damaged by allowing development within otherwise open ground separating the village and the Rose Farm cluster.

(f) The buildings contained within the application site were originally constructed as agricultural buildings and although their form and construction makes little or no positive contribution to the countryside, they are neither out of character or obtrusive within an area that is predominantly in agricultural use.

The clerk was instructed to advise SCDC of all these details.

### 2. Application C10/2526 (Retention of fencing, 8 Pond Piece)

As noted above, the clerk confirmed refusal of permission for application C10/2526.

There were no other planning matters to consider.

### **8-1011/5 – Speed Prevention Measures and Parking in The Street**

The clerk advised that he had been informed that a pony rider in The Street, near the village hall, had been struck by a “speeding motorist”. The claimant had suggested that the council consider speed restriction measures such as “road narrowing”. The clerk stated that he had consulted SCC, Highways who had advised that this - or the alternative of a “chicane” - was likely to cost in excess of £10,000 including the required street lighting and that there is no funding available in the SCC budget. Thus, the parish council would be responsible for this cost together with the ongoing costs. Whilst expressing their sympathy for the pony rider involved in the accident, the council agreed that it was not feasible for the council to bear such costs and measures.

The clerk stated that the police (attending at the village hall with their mobile office) had again raised the matter of an “H” white line opposite the hall. After some exchange of correspondence between the clerk, the police and SCC, it has been agreed by SCC that they will include an “H” line in the re-marking of narrowing lines etc. which is now required following the recent road resurfacing in The Street. The council are optimistic that this will reduce the risks for motorists, pedestrians, children and horse riders at this particularly dangerous section of The Street.

### **9-1011/5 - Report from Responsible Financial Officer (The Clerk)**

The RFO confirmed receipt of recycling credit of £12.96 and then presented the current cashbook position showing the community account with a current balance of £5,764.26 and the 100+ account a balance of £2,239.14 both after accruals and allowance for future approved expenditures.

### **10-1011/5 – Precept Budget for 2011-2012**

The RFO presented a draft budget showing total projected expenditure of £1,800 with £800 being used from reserves and a precept requirement reduced substantially to £1,000. The RFO reminded the council that the external auditor when approving the accounts for 2009-2010 had pointed out that the council's reserves were considered too high and that this proposed budget would substantially address that issue. The council agreed the proposed budget.

### **11-1011/5 - Financial Matters**

The Council agreed payments as follows :-

- (i) The clerk presented two quotations for the supply and delivery of a new notice board to be erected at the village hall entrance. After discussion, the council requested that the clerk pursue alternative options from suppliers more local to Brandeston.
- (ii) £9.00 to Brandeston VH&RG for room hire for the next council meeting on date to be agreed (see agenda item 15).

### **12-1011/5 – Review of Financial Risk Assessment**

The council then considered the Financial Risk Assessment and agreed that all was in order and the financial position of the council is satisfactory.

### **13-1011/5 - Correspondence**

There was no further correspondence to consider

### **14-1011/5 - Any other business as may be raised and accepted as appropriate by the Chairman under Standing Order 16**

### **15-1011/5- Date of Next Meeting**

Date of the next meeting was confirmed as Tuesday, 25 January 2011 at 8.00 pm and provisionally 22 March 2011

The meeting closed at 9.30 pm