

BRANDESTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Brandeston Parish Meeting held at the village hall on 11 February 2009

Present :

Parish Council Chairman D Risk, Parish Councillors H Saxton, P Summers, S Thurlow, J Fielder and K Churchill.

Parish Clerk A M Hounsell

Mr S Brown and Ms Eleanor Keating (Suffolk Coastal District Council)

21 Parishioners

1-0809/2 - Chairman's Welcome and Introduction

The Chairman welcomed those present to the meeting and explained that this was a Parish Meeting for the Parish Council to hear the views from Brandeston residents about the Suffolk Coastal District Council Local Development Framework (LDF) documents and their potential effect upon Brandeston. The Parish Council would shortly be responding to the consultation process for the LDF and were especially anxious to fully understand and incorporate the views of parishioners.

2-0809/2 - Apologies for Absence

The Chairman accepted apologies for absence from John and Ruth Garratt, Sue Etheridge, Karren Piper, Peter Rainbird, Eileen Leach, Lord Cunliffe, Jackie Hounsell and Parish Councillor Will Elson.

3-0809/1 – Introduction to the LDF and Definitions

Mr. Brown commenced by explaining that Suffolk Coastal District Council (SCDC) is preparing a new type of plan that will replace the adopted Suffolk Coastal Local Plan (including First and Second Alterations). This will be called a Local Development Framework (LDF) and will set out the way in which the district can be developed and protected over the coming 15 years. The present Local Plan has been in existence since 1990 and shows village envelopes. It is used in responding to planning applications. LDF is the new requirement of the government to simplify the document. Consultation with the public (of which this meeting, initiated by the Parish Council, was an example) was presently underway but would close on 20 February 2009.

Ms Keating explained that the consultation process is to ensure the best possible sustainability (key word) and to establish a settlement hierarchy of six settlement classifications – ranging from “major centre” (such as Felixstowe) to “countryside” (such as Letheringham). Brandeston has been classified as a “local service centre” because it contains four of the services (pub, meeting place (village hall), employment opportunity (Brandeston Hall School) and public transport) required for such classification.

4-0809/1 – Practical Effect of Definitions.

Mr. Brown explained that retention of a village envelope is implicit in a “local service centre” and only in very exceptional circumstances would development be permitted outside this envelope. However, the categorization will be reviewed (at least) at 5 years hence – and if necessary changed. The plan for Brandeston shows possible extension of the existing envelope (proposed by others) to the north in Mutton Lane.

Mr. Brown explained that if the village envelope was extended then any further development would be considered in context taking account of factors such as drainage, width of road etc. and he suggested that development would have to be housing were an extension in Mutton Lane to be agreed.

5-0809/1 – Question and Answer

Parish Councillor Summers asked whether there were any specific targets for new housing in local service centres? Mr. Brown confirmed that there were no targets set. The government's target is to use land “efficiently” at a level of 50-60 units per hectare but other criteria apply including consultation of the need with the Parish Council.

Parishioner Mr. Hutson asked if the parish opposes development can SCDC override this opposition? Mr. Brown emphasized that the district council will fully consult.

Mr. Hutson repeated the question and Mr. Brown reiterated that SCDC will fully consider the parish views and if a valid argument was put forward, this would be agreed. Mr. Brown suggested that it could be reasonable for 3-4 houses to be built on the proposed addition to the Brandeston envelope in Mutton Lane but Mr. Hutson stated that if 20 units were built this would change the character of the village and would not be acceptable to the village.

Mr. Hutson pointed out that the site of the suggested envelope extension is deteriorating and the buildings are part-made of toxic materials. Mr. Brown said that the parish council could bring this to the attention of Environmental Services at SCDC. Parish Council Chairman, D Risk agreed to add this subject to the agenda for the next Council meeting.

Parishioner Mr. Smyth asked what is the timescale for implementation of the new LDF? Mr. Brown indicated that after the completion of consultation, the next stage is that an independent person will review the LDF proposals particularly considering the major issues (such as the proposals for Felixstowe) and this review would be complete by the end of this year. SCDC will be considering village envelopes during the coming summer leading to SCDC's proposed final new plan approximately next Spring. Thereafter, following an independent inspection final agreement of the new plan is expected for the end of 2010.

6-0809/1 – Parish Council's View of Parish Plan

Councillor Summers said that the Parish Council take the conclusions of the newly created Brandeston Parish Plan very seriously. The Parish Plan sets out the residents' wishes to retain the village in its current way with "no change". But, he asked, what does this really mean? The LDF suggest that the current envelope be retained and the Parish Council agrees with this.

Therefore, he proposed that the meeting support Brandeston being classified as a local service centre, that the existing village envelope be retained and that the proposed incorporation of land in Mutton Lane into the envelope be vigorously opposed.

This was agreed unanimously.

7-0809/1 – Open Forum

The Chairman suggested that this agenda item had already been covered and the meeting agreed.

8-0809/1 – Meeting Closure

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked all present for their attendance and confirmed that the Parish Clerk would convey the views of the Parish - so clearly expressed by the meeting - to SCDC. The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.10 pm