

MINUTES OF BEACHAMWELL PARISH COUNCIL EXTRAORDINARY MEETING

Monday 8th February 2016 at 7.00pm in the Memorial Hall.

Present:

Councillors: Julie Ive; Diana Lambert (Vice Chair), Mark Powell, Tom Sanderson, Philip Spencer and Darren Wakelen

District Councillor: Peter Wilkinson

Parish Clerk: Eileen Powell

Members of the Public: 7 members of the public

Apologies:

John Adcock (Chair)

Declarations of interest in items on the agenda:

Cllr Adcock (Chair): he had declared an interest in the Local Plan

Public Participation

To consider a motion to suspend the meeting to allow members of the public and the District/County Councillor opportunity to inform the meeting

At the commencement of each meeting, the Chair advises any public present to raise their hand to indicate their wish to comment on any item. The Chair, upon seeing a raised hand, will suspend the meeting to allow for public participation.

Cllr Lambert asked that a motion to suspend the meeting to allow members of the public an opportunity to inform the meeting be considered.

The meeting was suspended at 7.10 pm as requested, proposed by Cllr Spencer, seconded by Cllr. Ive and agreed nem con.

Matters Arising

1. Breckland Local Plan

Cllr Lambert welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave a short history/background of the area [see below]. There had been a 'Drop In' session earlier during the day from 2pm until 7pm. This proved to be a success and had been well attended on the whole. Cllrs Ive, Lambert, Powell, Sanderson and Spencer had been on duty for an hour each. The display, co-ordinated by Cllr Spencer was very informative and useful.

The issue of the Settlement Boundary was raised. Cllr Wilkinson explained that we can apply to have returned if we wish to do so.

The public raised the following questions:-

- If we have a boundary where would it be?
- Is it easy to reinstate it?
- Linear Development?
- What would the people like the Village to be like in the future?
- What is classed as a large, medium or small settlement?

After much discussion it was generally felt that we would not apply to have it reinstated.

General feeling was that people didn't want to see large scale development but didn't mind the odd building. It was essential to keep the character of the Village and Hamlets therefore there must only be limited development. No infill in Drymere or building in Chestnut Walk or The Street

Cllr Sanderson proposed that Mrs Powell drafts a statement as to how we want to see the village develop, seconded by Cllr Powell passed nem con

The meeting was re-opened at 8.35 pm proposed by Cllr Powell, seconded by Cllr. Sanderson and agreed nem con

Mr Peter Garner thanked and congratulated the Parish Council on the display.

The members of the public left the meeting at this point.

2. Transparency Code Funding

Mrs Powell requested that the Council confirmed the application for this funding from Government, to include the purchase of a lap top, goes ahead. Cllr Ive proposed that it was confirmed, seconded by Cllr Spencer and agreed nem con

Dates of forthcoming meetings:

2016: March 14th, May 9th

Meeting closed at 8.45pm

Cllr D. Lambert signed as correct 14th March 2016

Beachamwell Village.

Beachamwell Village has around 220 houses in the parish - this includes Drymere & Shingham. There are 270 electors on the register.

There is NO SHOP, NO SCHOOL, A MOBILE POST OFFICE 4 TIMES A WEEK. 1 BUS Per Week to KINGS LYNN. 1 Bus per week to SWAFFHAM.

The sewerage system is only just coping with the quantity of houses using it now - there are several houses in the village with their own cess pits, septic tanks etc. In times of overload lorries collect the solids & excess water is pumped to Barton Bendish (not a popular move). The roads to & from the village from all directions are narrow - not fit to take more cars, lorries, tractors or farm machinery. The latter are necessary for the local farms & there are large horseboxes to the equestrian centre in Drymere. These do cause trouble at times. Damage to the sides of our roads is considerable due to these large vehicles. The village is also close to the conservation area for birds such as curlew.

The likelihood of more jobs being created is small as most of the surrounding land is agricultural & these days worked by few men & large machines.

The village does not have the infrastructure, amenities or support from the community to be greatly enlarged, 10% of the existing size is the recommended amount - approx 2-5 houses. Any infill - if indeed there is any - would have to be very carefully considered. With or without a Settlement boundary the plan by Breckland seems to mean there should be no large development for Beachamwell.

Breckland Local Plan Consultation

Response from Beachamwell Parish Council - Do you agree with the preferred policy and approach to rural settlement boundaries - PD 05?

Beachamwell Parish Council organised a 'Drop In' session, displays and an extraordinary Parish Council meeting to allow the public access to information and to air their views. A good number of parishioners took advantage of this, found it helpful and informative – the event was very successful.

The Parish Council value the identity and character of our village and want to conserve this. Even quite small scale growth could threaten this character. On the other hand, we accept that limited and occasional development might occur during the next 20 years, particularly if this is restricted to infill and rounding off within the existing built area of the village. In as much as Preferred Policy Direction PD05, and the settlement hierarchy approach of the Local Plan in general, envisages very limited growth in rural areas, we support Preferred Policy Direction PD05. We agree that one of the criteria for allowing appropriate development should be the demonstrable support of the local community. We also support the other criteria which would have to be met before development can be considered for approval.

We accept the notion of infill as a potentially appropriate form of development in our village. However we are concerned that the definition of infill in the policy and elsewhere in the Local Plan document is not sufficiently clear. The suggested definition of 'a vacant plot in an otherwise built-up street frontage' could allow for quite large plots to be developed. We would be opposed to this, and we expect any infill to be small-scale which in Beachamwell would probably comprise one or perhaps two houses.

The question of infill has particular consequences in Drymere, which is a hamlet in the parish of Beachamwell. The historic nature of the Forestry Commission housing here results in a settlement with houses widely separated on large plots of land. This affords the potential of infill development. However Beachamwell Parish Council is strongly opposed to infill in Drymere where it would lead to the loss of the special character of the existing settlement.

In conclusion, the overriding view of the Parish Council and the Public is there should be no more development on the sites (LP(005)001, LP(005)002, LP(005)003, LP(005)004 and LP(005)005) listed in The Emerging Sites Document.