

Rocklands Parish Council (RPC)  
Minutes of Parish Council Meeting held in Rocklands Village Hall  
7.00pm on Monday 7 January 2019

Present: David Howie                      Chair  
          Nicola Southgate                Vice-chair  
          Shirley Colenutt  
          Richard Harrison  
          Cath Jones  
          Ian Scholes  
          David Witt  
          Kim Austin                      Clerk  
          William Smith                 District Councillor

Also present: 26 members of the public.

The meeting opened at 19:00.

**1.To consider accepting apologies for absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

**2.To record declarations of interest from members in any items on the agenda**

Cllr. Richard Harrison expressed a prejudicial interest in planning application 3PL/2018/1449/HOU being the immediate neighbour of the applicants.

**3.To approve the minutes of the last council meeting on Monday 12 November 2018**

The minutes that had been circulated to all councillors prior to the meeting were duly signed by the Chair, Cllr. David Howie.

**4.To discuss any matters arising from the minutes (12 November 2018) not on the agenda.**

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

**5.To adjourn the meeting for public participation**

The meeting adjourned at 19.01.

David Jones mentioned a recent article in the Rocklander asking for volunteers to run a film club in Rocklands Village Hall. Already have all the equipment. Use as a fundraiser for the Village Hall which is on a diminishing budget.

The meeting re-opened at 19.02.

**6.To report on finance**

**6.1 Financial position**

**The bank account balances as at Monday 7 January 2019**

Barclays Community Account	£	2691.15
Barclays Saver (Reserve) Account	£	2331.29
<b>TOTAL as per bank</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>5022.44</b>

**Summary**

RPC Rocklands Parish Council	£	3044.84
RNP Rocklands Neighbourhood Plan (RG)	£	200.60
Rocklands Play Park (KR)	£	1777.00
<b>TOTAL as per bank</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>5022.44</b>

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<b>6.2 Money in since last meeting (12 November 2018)</b>			
3/12/2018	Barclays Bank - Interest on savings A/C	£	1.16
	<b>TOTAL IN</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>1.16</b>

**6.3 Money out since last meeting (12 November 2018)**

**6.3.1 Standing Orders/Direct Debits**

16/11/2018	Eon -Electricity (DD)	£	28.84
3/12/2018	Clerk's wages (SO)	£	235.54
17/12/2018	Eon -Electricity (DD)	£	27.92
2/1/2019	Clerk's wages (SO)	£	235.54
	<b>TOTAL OUT</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>527.84</b>

**6.3.2 Cheques out (to sign)**

CHQ 645	Rocklands Village Hall - Hall hire for meetings	£	84.00
CHQ 646	Sam Mariner - Fit dog bins and bench	£	387.00
CHQ 647	K&M Lighting 2 months maint. (Dec 18 & Jan 19)	£	27.56
	<b>TOTAL OUT</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>498.56</b>

**6.4 Precept setting 2019/2020**

The precept amount needed to be agreed at this PC meeting and Form B signed to be submitted before 31 January 2019. The Clerk had **been** sent information to the councillors for them to consider before the meeting. The Parish Council has a fairly healthy amount in the bank and Vat is still to be reclaimed of £3851.33 giving a total of £6896.17. The council hasn't identified any extra items of expenditure for the coming year. Do however need to consider the cost to the PC of the May elections and the loss of the grant element this year.

**Election costs.** The cost of the parish election is to be a shared cost on an equitable basis where the elections are held on the same day as District Council Election. It is estimated that the cost of a contested election for the parish of Parish of Rocklands is in the region of £721.00 (where the cost shared with the District Council election) and £1289.00 (where the cost is not shared with the District Council election). Uncontested Elections will be charged at a flat rate of £75 to cover administration costs.

**Previous precept amounts.**

	PRECEPT	GRANT	TOTAL
2014/2015	4800	£335.90	£5,135.90
2015/2016	5000	£335.90	£5,335.90
2016/2017	5000	£245.00	£5,245.00
2017/2018	5000	£168.00	£5,168.00
2018/2019	5500	£84.00	£5,584.00
2019/2020	6200	£0	<b>£6200.00</b>

All councillors agreed to **increase the precept by £700 to £6200** to cover the possible cost of the May election (Shared cost of £721 with District Council) and the loss of the grant element. Cllr. Howie signed Form B. The clerk will post the completed Form B to Breckland Council.

**7. To consider planning applications**

**7.1 Planning outcomes since last meeting**

3PL/2018/0740/F DUNNING/Model Farm, Chapel Street /1 new dwelling & upgrade access (144)  
APPROVED

3PL/2018/1202/F WOODROFFE/Allisons Farm/Demolish farmhouse/build 2 dwellings (149)  
WITHDRAWN

3PL/2018/1239/HOU ALDERSON/Bay House, 94 The Street/Det double garage (150) APPROVED

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## 7.2 Applications pending outcome

3PL/218/1223/F IRWIN/Farm site, Mill Farm, Scoulton Road/Barn conversion to single dwelling (151)

## 7.3 New applications since last meeting

APPF2605/W/18/3206577 (3PL/2018/0088/F) HIRD/Model Farm/2 dwellings (138/152) 19/12 deadline. Mrs Hird has appealed against a previous application to build two dwellings. The Parish Council still objects to this application for the original reasons and has REPLIED to the Planning Inspectorate.

3PL/2018/1414/VAR UPSTONE/Foxhill/Variation of blockwork (153). A variation to the conditions was sought as it appeared that the foundations of the existing structure were insufficient and would require substantial underpinning. This process would require more materials and expense than the new proposal to demolish the existing barn and re-build from the foundations up, within the existing footprint of the current building. The Parish Council agreed that a more satisfactory job could be done, using fewer materials and more economically, thus the PC were happy to support the variations. The application has since been APPROVED.

3PL/2018/1459/F NIXON/Land adjacent Laurel Bungalow/Single storey dwelling and garage (156). The Parish Council had considered this application and as neighbouring properties would not be overlooked, they agreed they had NO OBJECTION.

3PL/2018/0038/AG HOWLETT/Kirk Hall Farm/Agri vehicle shed and store (159). The Parish Councillors all agreed that they had NO OBJECTION to this agricultural application.

3PL/2018/1500/HOU DOUGLAS/Magna Farm/Rear and side 2 storey extension (155). This application was considered and as it appeared to have no impact on anybody else, the Parish Councillors all agreed that they had NO OBJECTION to this application.

3PL/2018/1567/HOU SHARPE/April Cottage/2 storey rear extension (158). The applicant is looking to demolish a single storey building and replace with a two-storey extension. It was understood that neither Breckland nor the applicant had contacted the immediate neighbour who would be most affected by the extension. The neighbour will object due to the extension overlooking their house and garden. It was mentioned that the overlooking landing window could be fitted with frosted glass, for example. There are some comments of support from those living opposite on the planning website. The Parish Council considered the application and decided they didn't have grounds to object and would therefore register a vote of NO OBJECTION.

3PL/2018/1533/O CORCORAN/Land south of the street/2 dwellings, parking, turning/access (157). Outline plans only for 2 dwellings and parking for 8 cars on wooded land adjacent Rookery Farm.

There were **objections** raised to this application which included the following:

It is an area of flooding which would be made worse by removal of trees which can help take excess water away. The integrity of the ditch needs to be maintained.

There were concerns about the trees being cut down, but it was thought there were only 3 with a preservation order. It was thought between 7-9 more trees would need to be cut down to build as planned.

This area is viewed as the only green sanctuary in Rocklands, inhabited by owls, bats and other wildlife, potentially water voles and great crested newts. It is an important part of the village and should not be developed. It is also visited by school children to take part in 'forest activities' as part of their school curriculum. The school headmistress **teacher** said they wanted the children to grow up in a rural environment.

This is the worst position in the village for a new access point (pinch point), being close to the school and opposite the school warning road sign. It is a dangerous area for children and cars already and gets very congested at school drop off and pick up times. School staff also have to park along this

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stretch of road. This would impact the safety of the children and the school. Cllr. Howie had tried to get the Highways report in time for this meeting but was unable to do so.

The Rookery itself is visible to neighbours for 6 months of the year when the trees do not provide full cover. Two new dwellings would be clearly visible.

There were strong objections to this application, however there were currently only 2 letters of objection on the planning website which did not reflect the strength of feeling at this meeting. People were asked to comment on the planning website if they wanted to make their feelings known. A vote was held. There were **no votes in favour** of this application. There were **31 votes AGAINST** and 2 abstainers. The Clerk would submit these comments on the Breckland Planning website.

3PL/2018/1449/HOU SPRATT/The Cottage/First floor extension (154)

The applicant was not able to attend the meeting but had emailed their comments to the Parish Council. Cllr. Southgate read out the following on behalf of the applicant.

In relation to our proposed extension, our reason for doing so is to create a family home for our three children. We currently have three bedrooms, the extension would mean we would have four. We understand that our extension would have an impact on our neighbouring property however, this additional bedroom means we can future proof our home.

With regards to our neighbours' objections:

1. Reference is made to the 2m wide passage between the 2 properties, however the 6ft fence which divides this passage way is not shown on their plan, which we feel is significant as all of their ground floor windows look out at it directly.

2. We note the concern for light affecting the rooms, however, the dining room window faces directly onto the existing 2 storey section of The Cottage, their Living Room also has a south easterly front window which will benefit from plenty of light and the other 2 rooms are not main habitable rooms. The Conservatory projects well past the proposed extension and has a high level wall with foliage above, between the two properties.

3. The first floor windows on the north east elevation of Thornbury House also look out onto the existing 2 storey section of The Cottage. The main front bedroom which is least affected by the rear extension is also served by a south easterly facing front window, whilst the bathroom, which is not considered a main habitable room and often doesn't utilise an external view due to obscure glazing, has a minimal view over a flat roof and a section of our garden.

4. Please bear in mind the orientation and sun path to these properties, both properties face South East.

5. There is mention of the approved extension to their neighbours' property on the other side. We would urge you to consider our application on its own merit, as I am sure will be the case, as that extension has no bearing on our proposal. As is the case with the owners of Thornbury House feeling 'boxed in'. When you consider the height of the ridges of the two properties together, The Cottage is not the more dominant one and this isn't a particularly large extension, although we do appreciate that it is at first floor level. We would also note that the size of their garden has no bearing on this proposal either.

6. The render will match the existing and in being light in colour will be beneficial in reflecting light, whilst the roof takes on the same form as the existing rear extension and we think is substantially more attractive than the existing flat roofs.

Cllr. Harrison had declared a prejudicial interest in this application at Item 2 and left the room before the discussions started. Those present agreed they could sympathise with both the applicants and the neighbours. They understood the applicants need to add a further bedroom to give them more space for their growing family. They also understood the closeness and overbearing nature of the extension on their immediate neighbour. Cllr. Smith had visited and was aghast at the

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proposed extension being so close and having a 'boxing in' effect. Aerial photos had shown the extension to dwarf the neighbours' house.

It was wondered if the applicants could build on the other side of their house, on the drive side, so that it wouldn't adversely affect/overbear their neighbours. Maybe they had already considered this. Or maybe combine 2 large bedrooms to give 3 good size bedrooms instead.

The 6 councillors in the room were asked to vote. 4 councillors voted to object to the application and 2 councillors abstained. With a majority vote to OBJECT the Clerk was instructed to submit this decision on the Breckland Planning website.

#### **7.4 Planning enforcement issues**

**Annison**, Mill Lane. The enforcement is still in abeyance awaiting the outcome of the appeal against refusal of application 3PL/2017/1225/F.

**Peels Farm**, Whitings Lane, Pig sheds in wrong place, noise and smell issues. Cllr. Howie has visited Peels Farm 4 times. Cllrs. Howie and Southgate also visited together on a bright sunny day and there was no smell. Cllr. Howie visited with Cllr. Ed Connolly and there was a slight smell. Seems to depend on weather and wind direction etc. One shed has definitely been built in the wrong place, as a result of electricity cables being in the way. Has been built 80m outside the red zone.

Peels Farm owners have explained, the hot 2018 summer meant the fans in the sheds were working overtime to keep the sheds cool and this carried the smells. They are now getting used to how the fans operate best. They are also employing a specialist company to help them deal with the issues and they will keep the public up to date.

#### **8. To update on Chapel Green Meadow**

Nothing new since the last meeting.

#### **9. To update on the Rocklands Neighbourhood Plan (RNP) & Local Plan (LP) - (RG)**

Breckland's draft Local Plan was formally submitted for examination by the Planning Inspectorate on 30/11/2017. The whole review process has taken about a year and in December, RPC was provided with a list of proposed modifications running to over 200 pages. There are some unwelcome changes that could potentially affect Rocklands and other parishes like us and it's probably fair to say that a lot of the safeguards that were originally introduced into the Local Plan to protect small communities from inappropriate development have been taken out.

The good news is that the proposed 5% new housing cap is still applicable to villages with settlement boundaries (which equates to a total of 8 new dwellings from the time the plan is adopted to 2036) although this is not now an absolute figure. The bad news is that developers no longer have to demonstrate that their proposed scheme will provide some sort of a community benefit.

Breckland Council have already voted to accept the draft plan but another six-week public consultation period to discuss the proposed modifications is scheduled to take place early this year. RPC has taken an active part in the consultation process during the last three years or so and I think it is extremely important that we register our objections to those modifications that we disagree with, so I will be drafting something over the next couple of weeks. Dave has already contacted George Freeman to inform him about the situation and hopefully we will be able to enlist his help as we have managed to do in the past.

It would help if as many residents as possible can write to our MP and also Breckland Council to register our specific objections (it's very much down to a single policy - HOU 04) and I can make a suitable template available for anyone wishing to do so.

It's likely now that the Local Plan, in whatever final form, will be adopted around the middle of this year. According to a recent article in the EDP, the Council is expected to have a five-year building land supply by then.

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General feeling in Breckland was one of dismay. Cllr. Howie said there were words used in the document that left it open to interpretation, maybe so that things couldn't be tied down too much. Cllr. Smith confirmed that although the Inspector had made modifications, he hadn't written his report yet.

**10. To update on Neighbourhood Watch (AB)**

Not much to report since last meeting, although scams still happening.

**11. To update on Highways**

Road closed outside Rookery Farm for 5 days for Openreach work. Hopefully to improve broadband. Notice of closure has been placed on noticeboard and website. Suggested not to use Low Lane as a cut through.

**12. Flooding**

Problem with storm drain. Was jet washed the week before Christmas. Their equipment apparently got stuck and then had an email saying it had been resolved when it hadn't. Cllr. Ed Connolly has escalated highlighted the problem. First reported over a year ago and still not sorted. Now quoting 60K and 18 months to sort. Cllr. Howie thinks service has been disgusting.

**13. To discuss any correspondence.**

There was no correspondence.

**14. AOB**

Someone has been dumping bags full of dog poo in and by the dog poo bins. The bins are becoming full as they are not emptied every week. Must be remembered that the dog poo bins are for dog walkers to clear up after their dogs and NOT for dog owners to bring dog poo from home.

Streetlight outside Willow Cottage reported as not working and light outside Cyril's house staying on all day. Clerk will report both to maintenance company.

**15. Date of next Meeting**

Monday 11 February 2019, 7pm, Rocklands Village Hall - Parish Council Meeting

**The meeting closed at 20:28**

Signed .....

Date .....