

Rocklands Parish Council (RPC)
Minutes of Parish Council Meeting held in Rocklands Village Hall
7.00pm on Monday 19 February 2018

Present:	David Howie	Chair
	Nicola Southgate	Vice-chair
	David Roberts	
	Cath Jones	
	Ian Scholes	
	Shirley Colenutt	
	Kim Austin	Clerk
	Cliff Jordan	County Councillor

Also present: 63 members of the public.
The meeting started at 7:00.

1. To consider accepting apologies for absence

RESOLVED to accept apologies from Cllr. David Roberts.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

3. To approve the minutes of the last council meeting on Monday 8 January 2018

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

4. To discuss any matters arising from the minutes (8 Jan 2018) not on the agenda.

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

5. To adjourn the meeting for public participation

Meeting adjourned at 19.02pm and opened to the public.
The meeting re-opened at 19.03pm.

6. To receive Hastoe presentation re housing needs

John Lefever (JL), Land & New Business Manager from Hastoe Housing Association (HHA) travelled from Saffron Walden to give a presentation on rural housing. HHA has 7000 homes in stock in Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Cambridgeshire and half of Hertfordshire. Hastoe is fully charitable. Councils used to build houses. Margaret Thatcher stopped this and now houses are built by Housing Associations. They build houses in **rural exception sites**. Sites are chosen that are just outside the settlement boundary (or on the boundary) where development would not normally be approved. HHA can probably get applications through planning that private developers could not. They build low numbers of houses on these sites, so NO large developments. Minimum number is 4 (less would not be viable) and typically is 10-12 dwellings. Not 'crammed in' and all will have front and substantial back gardens. Typically, a build of 10-12 dwellings would consist of 1 bed houses, some 2-3 bed houses, a couple of bungalows for elderly/disabled. HHA are a non-profit taking organisation. If they were to go out of business another HA would take over. PC can decide to hold the freehold and HHA holds the leasehold.

The process. HHA has a proven track record and is very good at what it does. They do not impose themselves but **work with the Parish Council (PC)**. The PC will consider having a survey done and only then instruct HHA if in agreement. All decisions lie with the PC. The survey is carried out by **Community Action Norfolk**. The PC vets the questionnaire and finalises before it is commissioned at no cost to the

Signed

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PC. The results of the survey belong to the PC. Even if a housing need is found the PC can of course decide against building. If a need is identified, then an investigation will start into potential building sites. HHA would walk around the village with PC who have local knowledge. Intention to buy at 10K per plot not 120K per plot. Landowner sells at below market price to give something back to their community. HHA would then design a scheme and hire the village hall to show the design to the Parish. The Parish Councillors are the 'heroes' in these projects.

Houses are **built to a high specification** against code for building quality (1-6). Developers normally build level 3. HHA always builds to level 4 and above adopting the AECB Building Standard (Formerly Silver Standard). Houses are NOT boxes, built to the vernacular, sustainable and comfortable. Private developers allow £1400 per sq. metre and HHA allows £1900 per sq. metre to build. A 3-bedroom house, heating bill is only ~£120. Very well built. No fuel poverty. HHA has the largest installation of Ground Source heat pumps. In Burnham Overby Staithe, the houses have been built in flint. Other materials have been used: straw bales and lime render, and brick and stone to remain in keeping with existing buildings. HHA has won lots of awards for their designs. The development is truly inclusive regards services. Some people worry about the impact of more dwellings/residents on current services. (water, electricity and sewerage etc.). HHA works with doctor's surgeries, schools etc. and there may actually be benefits for current residents, including traffic calming if needed. If development is outside the village boundary then in most cases a footpath will be laid to join it to the village. Local labour and local contractors are used and encouraged to take on apprentices.

Young people may move away from their village because there are no houses they can afford and no work. Therefore HHA aims to **build affordable houses only for local people** (Can define what local means and can include other villages). These houses are for renting from HHA as the owner/landlord. There is **no right to buy** so they will always stay as affordable housing. Community led way of providing affordable housing. Affordable rents will enable young people to save in order to buy a house rather than renting. HHA is a strict landlord. Tenants are on a year's probation, therefore can legally evict after a year. Two visits annually by the landlord's representative, one announced and one unannounced. 1-2 houses in a 10-12 house development could be placed on the open market. Some villages do ask for open market houses.

A few years ago, the government paid £40K per house as a subsidy. They pegged the rent so that can't charge more than the housing allowance. The grant was stopped. Now the government has done an about turn and the public subsidy has been re-introduced.

It was asked, what happens if the houses are built and the option to rent them is not taken up? JL said that in 100 schemes, just 2 had been addressed by cascading the rental offer to surrounding villages. RG said that under the new Breckland local plan, as the draft stands, a rural settlement such as Rocklands will be allocated housing. Breckland will expect them to increase housing stock over next 25 years. PC is not looking to go into any scheme but happy to research.

Cllr. Howie thanked John for his comprehensive talk. John said he would be delighted to come back if invited. Cllr. Howie would contact John if Rocklands wanted to go ahead with a housing needs survey.

7. To update on the Rocklands Neighbourhood Plan (RNP) – Richard Golke

RG said the information that Hastoe might collect in a housing survey would be very useful data. His personal feeling was that it would be worthwhile taking it to that stage. Campaign for Protection of Rural England (CPRE) Norfolk request that no new housing allocations are designed as there is already a 20 year land supply. There is an online petition which the Parish Council have already supported.

George Freeman talked about the campaign and questioned development.

1. Government has agreed to replace 5-year plan with 3-year land supply.
2. Stop developers land banking and playing the system.

There is a meeting next month between GE, LE and Rocklands' Parish Councils. Regardless of politics should back Local Plan.

Signed

Date

8. To update on Village Gateways (DH)

Gateways need painting.

9. To update on Chapel Green - Carolyn Emblen (CE)

At the last PC meeting the Parish Council had given their permission for sleepers to be sited. CE reported that the CGM Team had done as promised and laid the sleepers which had been donated by CE. Jim and Clare had donated the ties. A resident of Chapel Street said the sleepers were ugly, black and disgusting. Cllr. Southgate said she had driven past and it looked tidy and showed people where they could park. Cllr. Jones agreed the sleepers looked OK. The PC agreed it was a good job done and thanked the volunteers for taking this responsibility on and for the hard work it entailed. They had the full support of the PC. Carolyn reported that non-native species would need to be removed as many had recently been planted by a resident and they would ultimately crowd out those that were native thus upsetting the ecology of a wildflower meadow. The PC agreed with the experts with this activity being in the best interest of the meadow.

10. To discuss NEW Rocklands Play Park (Kirsty Router and Laura Spratt)

Kirsty was pleased to announce that a grant for **£5834** had been received from Norfolk Community Foundation and there were more applications in the pipeline. The Play Park committee consisted of a group of ~10 people. They were planning some fundraisers: 12/4 Quiz at the pub. Easter Egg Hunt. Cake sale etc. All donations welcome. Thank you to Richard Day for his donation of £100 at this meeting ! Cllr. Colenutt offered her services to help Kirsty with applications etc.

11. To report on finance.

11.1 Financial position

The bank account balances as at Monday 19 Feb 2018

Barclays Community Account	£	9160.06
Barclays Saver (Reserve) Account	£	2326.65
TOTAL as per bank	£	11486.71

Breakdown Summary

RPC Rocklands Parish Council	£	5380.11
RNP Rocklands Neighbourhood Plan	£	272.60
Rocklands Play Park (Kirsty)	£	5834.00
TOTAL as per bank	£	11486.71

11.2 Money in since last meeting (8 Jan 2018)

4/12/2017	Play Park - Norfolk Community Foundation Grant	£	5834.00
	TOTAL IN	£	5834.00

11.3 Cheques out (to sign)

CHQ 617	K&M Lighting 1 month (Feb 2018)	£	13.78
CHQ 618	GDPR Course - The Clerk	£	35.00
CHQ 619	Clerk reimbursements (3 months)	£	20.50
	TOTAL OUT	£	69.28

LED streetlights and electricity costs.

The clerk recently queried the electricity bill that had not reduced as expected with the introduction of the new LED streetlights. This was found to be because the PC was on an **unmetered** supply and this meant updating the inventory. With Cllr. Witt's help the Clerk updated the inventory. The supplier agreed to backdate any credits for 12 months and the PC has now received a **credit of £542.30 ! enough to pay the current monthly bills for 21 months !** The old monthly payment was £72.43. The new monthly payment is £25.38 so a **saving of ~£47 per month !!** The annual electric bill was ~£760 per annum and is now just over £300. The introduction of the new LED streetlights has made a big saving.

Signed

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General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

The Clerk is booked onto a GDPR course in March.

12. To consider planning applications

12.1 Planning **outcomes** since last meeting

3PL/2017/0993/F Nixon/Adj. Laurel Bungalow/New bungalow (131) NO OBJ - REFUSED

3PL/2017/1554/F Firman/Old Fish Shop, 68 The Street/New double garage (134) APPROVED

12.2 Applications **pending** outcome

3PL/2017/0899/F Cotes/Green Lane & Mill Lane/7 New dwellings (122) - UNDECIDED

HRN/2017/0003/HRN Howlett/Kirk Hall Farm/Hegde removal (132) NO OBJECTION

3PN/2017/0021/UC Upstone/Foxhill Sandy Lane/CU Agri to House/Garage (113)(133) APPEAL - PRIOR APPROVAL REFUSAL ??

12.3 **New** applications since last meeting

3PL/2018/0017/F Garrod/Two Oaks Sandy Lane/New agri storage (135) NO OBJ/APPROVED

3PL/2018/0022/HOU Douglas/Magna Farm/Rear single & side 2 storey ext. (136) NO OBJ

3PL/2018/0033/F Brady/Honeysuckle Cottage/Residential Annex Change of use (137) NO OBJ

3PL/2018/0088/F Hird/Model Farm/To dwellings and garages (138)

It was agreed that the objections originally raised against this application still stood as nothing has changed. The previous appeal had been refused due to alignment of the access route and this remained the same. Mike (ML) said that it was difficult to see the entrance. The old barn was being demolished and the garage was also coming down. The entrance would be wider than Chapel Street is. Had idea to change road surface to a quieter one.

A resident said we need housing for young families, but it was reiterated that Model Farm development was not for young families as they were 4/5 bedroom dwellings. It was agreed there is a need to keep young people in the village. DH said this is the very reason that Hastoe attended this meeting, to look at housing needs and in particular, housing for young people. A look to the future.

Cllr. Southgate restated that the PC is not against all development and that all applications were judged on their own merits.

There was a concern about sustainability and where we were going if we kept refusing applications. RG said that new housing had increased by 9%. No housing allocation for rural settlements such as Rocklands with their own Local Plan. Target is 5% so ahead of the game with 9%. Said, look at what's happening in Great Ellingham. Certainly don't want that happening in Rocklands. Important that the PC is consistent. Need to uphold the development plan.

RG said the school problem is that it is consistently oversubscribed. Looking for a solution in the RNP. Really need a new and bigger school. Noted that people are coming to Rocklands school from outside the village. Need to consider the problem of traffic as a danger to schoolchildren.

Cllr. Howie asked for a show of hands for the Model Farm application. 14 were for the application. 32 were against. The rest chose not to vote. The PC would produce a balanced letter but it would continue to oppose the application.

13 To update on Neighbourhood Watch

No reports of any recent oil thefts. Halifax is in the news. Reports of fraud looking at pension pots, share buying etc. where fraudsters are making fake websites that look like the real ones to gain personal info.

14 To update on Highways and

15 Flooding

There was flooding in The Street during Christmas and New Year due to a blockage which Highways said they would come and deal with but they haven't. Fortunately, the flood water did not enter any

Signed

Date

properties. There is a gully in Mill Lane with no cover on it. Still need a 'no HGV' sign at the other end of Low Lane.

16 To discuss any correspondence.

No correspondence.

17 AOB

- George Freeman visit to Rocklands is on 27 April 2018. Scheduled to visit the school, shop and the pub etc.
- Rocklands is very pleased with his support. Cllr. Howie will do an agenda.
- There will be a meeting for GE, LE and Rocklands to discuss the future of the parishes.
- Anglian Water Sewerage Scheme. Key date is 1 March 2018. Unfortunately PC contact has now retired. Most of Thieves Lane is affected by sewerage problems.
- A 7 ½ tonne sign has appeared in Chapel Street. Should really be placed at the top of Thieves Lane to stop the Kerry Food lorries.
- Some hedges need trimming in Chapel Street as they are bulging into the road.
- Children waiting for buses appear to have no road sense. Need to tell children how to keep safe.

18. Date of next Meeting

Monday 9 April 2018, 7pm, Rocklands Village Hall

(Annual Assembly - Annual Parish Meeting followed by Parish Council Meeting)

The meeting closed at 8.38pm.

Signed

Date