

Rocklands Parish Council (RPC)
Minutes of Parish Council Meeting held in Rocklands Village Hall
7.00pm on Monday 13th April 2015

Present:	David Howie	Chair
	David Witt	
	Shirley Colenutt	
	Cath Jones	
	Roger Steel	
	Kim Austin	Clerk
	Bill Smith	District Councillor
	Cliff Jordan	County Councillor

Also present: **70** members of the public.

Note: The PC meeting started later than normal as villagers had been invited to look at the defibrillator that was now installed on the outside wall of the village hall. A brief introduction was given and any questions answered re its use.

1. To consider accepting apologies for absence

RESOLVED to accept apologies from Nicola Southgate who had other commitments.

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

Cllr. Roger Steel declared an interest in planning application 3PL/2015/0384/F as he lived in Chapel Street where the building was proposed. Roger would not comment on this application at this meeting.

3. To approve the minutes of the last council meeting on Monday 2nd March 2015

RESOLVED to approve the minutes that had been circulated prior to the meeting as a true and accurate record of the meeting. The minutes were duly signed by the Chair, Cllr. David Howie.

4. To discuss any matters arising from the minutes (2/3/15), not on the agenda

Item 5. Fencing at junction of Thieves Lane with Attleborough Road. Cllr. Howie has written to both Ridgeons and Highways to suggest a meeting to take the matter forward.

Item 6. Dog Poo problems. Cllr. Howie reported that the dog poo bins are in good order and are emptied regularly. Dog warden has put the signs up.

Item 12. Cllr Howie said he would speak to Jim at Walnut Tree Nursery re tree warden role.

Item 17. Break-ins. Cllr. Howie had discussed with the local police officer and mentioned re-introducing the old 'Neighbourhood Watch' scheme.

5. To adjourn the meeting for public participation

Meeting adjourned at 7.37pm and opened to the public.

The Chairman decided to move straight to item 7.3 on the agenda which was to discuss planning application 3PL/2015/0384/F as most of the 70 members of the public attending this meeting were here for this purpose. This application is for 17 new dwellings to be built in Chapel Street.

Signed

Date

The Chairman asked that people wishing to speak, should introduce themselves before speaking with their name and where they lived in the village.

Public participation. Concerns were raised about the increased footfall along Chapel Street and the safety aspects as no provision had been made for footpaths. Estimated there would be an extra 33 cars and that parking on the plans was inadequate. A transportation survey had been carried out but somehow concluded there would not be much traffic. Another speaker agreed with the increased traffic causing problems and said the development was not appropriate. Another speaker agrees the point re safety issues due to access, increased footfall and traffic and lack of pathways but also has concerns over loss of privacy for the existing bungalows that will now be overlooked.

Concerns were raised over the planned building being outside the settlement boundary and on agricultural land. The proposal was for a city/urban style development which was thought would seriously affect the look and feel of the village. The speaker asked if anybody could explain why here ? choosing land that is not suitable and in a village that is not priority. Broadband was already an issue and with more users may be even slower. Not against growth but should be appropriate.

The next speaker said it was difficult to keep small schools open and viable, but was easier for larger schools. Rocklands, a small school (70 pupils maxm.) was largely safeguarded by it federating with Great Ellingham Primary School. Rocklands school does attract children from outside the village and some Rocklands children don't get places. Need to look at it from another angle: are we large enough to be sustainable ? Important to retain the school, shop, pub and the community.

Built on clay. Rocklands village is mainly built on clay and the new developments would also be on clay which doesn't absorb water, hence why flooding in Rocklands has always been a serious problem. Flooding can be frightening and destructive. ~14 properties are already susceptible to flooding. Peter Smith (Previous chair of RPC) did a great deal of work on flooding in the village and Mr. Reynolds had fully understood how all the ditches and drains worked - and this had helped to keep the village safe. There was a round of applause. A speaker noted that the new houses would be built lower than the fields. An attendee from Chapel Street announced that their house has been flooded twice. The storm water drains can't cope with heavy downpours and excessive rainwater. Also raised a concern about Doctors surgeries already struggling and then having to cope with extra patients. Another speaker raised concerns about water supply and water pressure. 17 new dwellings all with modern appliances is a large increase in usage. This was endorsed by the previous speaker who had experienced flooding as well as air locks in their water supply. Fire service would need to use mains water.

Of the four drainage tests carried out, only 2 passed, the other 2 failed ! Cannot drain anymore water away than it currently copes with. One of the plans shows water draining into the Mere. Just to note that this ditch already floods. A builder himself, said he puts soakaways in and treatment plants that go into the ditches. Septic tanks get full of rainwater and run off. So whatever the system, there is excess water.

County Councillor Cliff Jordan. Had been involved in the past with helping to solve flooding issues and had walked around the periphery of the village with drainage engineers. It was confirmed that all water from the vicinity ends up here in the village and causes flooding. Has to be managed carefully. 17 new dwellings will certainly cause flooding as they are in the wrong place. There was a round of applause.

In Summary:

Outside LDA - This planning application is outside Breckland District Council's Local Development Area.

Agricultural land - New dwellings would be built on agricultural land.

Backfill - A backfill site that is against Breckland's policy for small villages.

Signed

Date

Infrastructure - Can the infrastructure support a new development ? schools, doctors etc.

Access - narrow point of access

Flooding - Will it add to the flooding problems in the village ?

Roads - Can the roads support the additional car movements per day that the proposed site will bring ?

Water pressure - Is the water pressure good enough to support extra development of the area ?

Already have problems with mains fed showers particularly in the summer months.

Foul water - Can the foul water system cope ? - Anglian Water may wish to respond to these points.

Electricity. Already have power cuts once a month

Ecology - Will it upset the ecology of the area ? Hares, skylarks and hedgehog habitats will all be destroyed.

Archeology - Will the development damage an archaeological site ? Roman and Medieval artefacts have been found in this area. A full archaeological survey would need to be done prior to commencement of any building as too much has already been lost in the village already.

Broadband - may be even slower with extra usage

Loss of privacy for existing dwellings.

It was agreed that those present were not against development as such, but new dwellings should be of a correct type and in the correct place to enhance the village, not ruin it.

It was stressed that if people did not wish for 17 new properties to be built on back land in Rocklands, they should write **individual** letters of objection to Breckland Council. Individual letters are better received than 'round robins' where the same letter being reproduced and signed by different people or petitions. A husband and wife can object separately. The number of objection letters the council receives is **IMPORTANT**. The Parish Council can/will object on behalf of the Village but the Parish Council still needs the Village behind it for Breckland to listen.

District Cllr. Bill Smith - Confirmed he was not against development as such, but this is not an appropriate design or size for a development in Rocklands. This is the same format as the 39 houses that have been proposed in Great Ellingham. He agreed there is a shortage of affordable housing and confirmed that an application for 5 houses or more will trigger the incorporation of an affordable housing element. It was not acceptable that people and cars from 17 new dwellings built on a back fill site would access that site from such a narrow access point. Larger vehicles, removal vans, council waste trucks, oil deliveries and emergency vehicles etc. would all struggle. Cllr. Smith confirmed that on behalf of Rocklands Village he would be 'calling in' the application and he would be opposing the application at the next planning committee scheduled for 18th May 2015. Cllr. Smith confirmed that the public are allowed to attend planning meetings but are not allowed to speak unless they have pre-registered to speak.

Cllr. Howie asked for comments from his councillors. Cllr. Jones said that whilst the village shouldn't be allowed to stagnate, future Rocklanders must be allowed to enjoy the village as a village and this application does not enhance the village, one little bit. Cllr. Colenutt said she had moved here 11 years ago and was passionate about this very special village. She hoped it would grow in the same way as it had done before without including a 'town' development. Cllr. Colenutt received a round of applause for concluding that Rocklands Village was not the right place for this sort of 'town' development. Cllr. Witt agreed with all the comments made so far in opposing the application. He is very worried that if such an inappropriate development goes through that others will be allowed to follow. This development is just not right for the village. Cllr. Steel was not allowed to comment at this meeting as he had declared an interest in the application as he lived in Chapel Street. Cllr Howie also agreed with all the comments and the objections raised, especially with the development being completely inappropriate and just too big, causing big problems and a nightmare for those living in Chapel Street. He was very concerned about the

Signed

Date

issue of flooding. Cllr. Howie finished by saying he was not against development, but should be appropriate and limited.

Cllr. Howie asked for a show of hands and there was a unanimous objection to this application. Nobody raised a hand FOR this application. Cllr. Howie confirmed that the Parish Council would be passing on the views of those present as well as their own personal views and would be opposing the application on all points raised at this open forum.

The meeting re-opened at 8.16pm.

6. To report on Finance

The Clerk delivered the financial report.

6.1 Financial position

The bank account balances as at Monday 13th April 2015

Barclays Community Account	£	4556.15
Barclays Saver (Reserve) Account	£	702.27
TOTAL as per bank	£	5258.42

6.2 Money in since last meeting

9/3	Chapel Green - Annual payment	£	1.00
7/4	Dividend from Consolidated Stock	£	0.28
10/4	Breckland Council - Precept	£	2500.09
10/4	Breckland Council - Grant - 1 st Instalment	£	167.94
	TOTAL IN	£	2669.31

6.3 Cheques out (to sign)

CHQ 542	Pearce & Kemp Street lighting underpaid (SIGNED)	£	15.07
CHQ 543	NPTP (NALC) Election training KA & DH (SIGNED)	£	60.00
CHQ 544	Clerk's expenses, postage etc. - 5 months	£	63.22
	TOTAL OUT	£	138.29

6.4 Standing Orders/Direct Debits

Kim Austin	Clerk's wages
Pearce and Kemp	Street lighting
e.On	Electricity

Signatories. There are two signatories on the Parish Council bank account. Only one was present at the meeting. The Clerk would obtain a signature for the outstanding cheque after the meeting. It was agreed that as one of the two current signatories had resigned, that 1 or 2 new signatories should be arranged. The mandate would however remain the same that cheques needed two signatories to sign. David Howie and Shirley Colenutt agreed to be signatories.

ACTION Clerk to obtain mandate change forms from Barclays.

Accounts - External Audit (Mazars)

Annual Review template had now been received from Mazars the external auditors.

The Clerk had started to prepare the accounts for 2014/2015 and asked if the councillors were happy for Michaela Canham to carry out the internal audit of the accounts again this year. The councillors agreed to Michaela Canham auditing the accounts. Local councils must approve the Annual Return by 30th June so the Clerk will have the accounts and the return ready to be approved

Signed

Date

at the next Parish Council meeting on 11th May 2015. Whilst preparing the accounts the Clerk will prepare a statement for what is owed to the PC from Playing Fields.

ACTION Clerk to prepare statement for Playing Fields - what is owed to Parish Council re grants/Deed

ACTION Clerk to arrange for Michaels Canham to audit the accounts

7 To consider planning applications.

7.1 Planning outcomes since last meeting

3PL/2014/1050/F **Colchester**/Cottage Farm, Bell Road/Ground solar array (55) PERMISSION

3PL/2014/1225/F **Barham**/17 The Street land - 2 dwellings/garages (60) PERMISSION

7.2 Applications pending outcome

3PL/2012/0654/CU **Breckland Storage**/Swangey/Retail caravans - (15)

3AG/2014/0019/AG **Bidmead**/Tuppins Farm/ Extension to existing agri building - (53)

3PL/2014/0058/UC **Mayes**/Poplar Lane Nursery-Agri to dwelling (57)

3PL/2014/1016/F **Leslie**/Glebe Cottage - New dwelling (58)

7.3 New applications since last meeting

3PL/2015/0287/F **Riddell**/Manor Cottage - Conservatory (61) No objection **posted** by 8/4

3PL/2015/0384/F **Paske**/Land Chapel Street - 17 new dwelling (62) Comments deadline 23/4

In Summary:

(61) The councillors had emailed the clerk with their comments and a 'NO OBJECTION' had been posted before the deadline of the 8th April 2015.

(62) Discussed at length earlier when the meeting was adjourned for public participation.

This meeting - Item 5.

7.4 New applications since agenda issued

NONE

8 To update on the Defibrillator

The Councillors agreed they didn't need any defibrillator training.

9 To update on Village Shop and Post Office

The shop/post office had had its first AGM. The shop was waiting for grants/money to come in to cover wages.

10 To receive update on Trees.

A new tree warden is needed. First option to ask Jim at Walnut Tree Nursery if he would like to take on the role. Cllr. Howie agreed to contact Walnut Tree Nursery.

ACTION Cllr. Howie to approach Jim at Walnut Tree Nursery - re role as tree warden

11 To receive update on Playing Fields and Deed of Dedication

Just remains to let Playing Fields and Cricket Club know what they owe for Accountancy and Solicitors fees.

ACTION Clerk to write to Playing Fields summarising costs incurred.

ACTION Clerk to include future grant payments not going through PC unless prepared to pay fees/costs/additional expenses.

Signed

Date

12 To receive update on Highways

Streetlighting.

20 streetlights at a replacement cost of £220 - reasonable as wiring is already there. To look at adding additional new lights would be very expensive. Grants should be available for funding for replacing old lights where spares were now difficult to source. There was a suggestion that to save money, lights could be switched off between midnight and 5pm.

13 To update on flooding

No issues with flooding since the last meeting. It was noted that Anglian Water had not commented on the 17 new dwellings application.

14 To discuss any correspondence

There was no correspondence to be discussed.

15 AOB - To receive items for next agenda

The application for 17 new dwellings should remain on the agenda, where it will be discussed under 'Applications pending outcome'.

Streetlighting will be discussed under matters arising at the next meeting.

Comments on Breckland Planning website. Cllr. Howie brought to the attention of the Clerk that comments had been posted on the Breckland planning website under the Clerk's name and on behalf of the Parish Council with regards to application 3PL/2015/0384/F 17 new dwellings in Chapel Street. The Clerk confirmed that she hadn't posted these comments and would therefore find out how this could possibly have happened and get the comments removed. The comments were signed off: P Robinson in the body of the text. The press had also printed some wording in the Mercury regards this application and had wrongly stated that the comments had been made by the Clerk & Rocklands Parish Council. The Clerk would contact the Mercury to investigate how this could have happened and to get an apology/correction published.

New Parish Councillors. Cllr. Howie thanked Cllr. Roger Steel who was resigning from the Parish Council after many years, for his time and commitment. Cllr. Howie welcomed two new councillors, Ian Scholes and David Roberts, who would be joining the Parish Council.

16 Date of next Meeting - Monday 11th May 2015, 7pm, Rockland's Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 8.38pm.

Signed

Date