

BENHALL & STERNFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Draft minutes of the Benhall & Sternfield Parish Council, held on Thursday, 14 September 2017,
7.00pm in Benhall ex Service Men's Club.

Present:– Cllr Hilary Graham – Chairman, Cllr Chris Durrant, Cllr Donald McGregor, Cllr Mark Jefferies, Cllr Kevin Marsh,
& Cllr David Secret.

In Attendance: 24 members of the public, SCC Andrew Reid, SCDC John Fisher and the Clerk.

The Chairman informed that he would bring forward item 7 to start the meeting.

7. PLANNING APPLICATIONS a. Update on applications to include Saxmundham developments.

The Chairman read out the report on behalf of Cllr Nicholson as follows; Benhall, no planning applications since 13 July. The following have been granted permission by SCDC, Whitearch, Friday Cottage, The Hawthorns, 28 Aldecar Lane. The following have been refused; The Barn Silverlace Green and land off Aldecar Lane. No new applications for Sternfield.

He informed that the Parish Council are in receipt of the SCDC Issues and Options for the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan Review document

Across the country, there is a serious shortage of decent, affordable housing and the average cost of housing is rising all the time. It is important that delivery of housing across this district matches the need of communities by building more homes that people want to live in, in places people want to live. To help communities, a Local Plan needs to provide housing opportunities for younger people, families and older people as well as encouraging a range of employment opportunities alongside the delivery of infrastructure at the right time.

A Local Plan can help deliver the vision for each community across the district by setting out the level of growth which needs to be planned for and identifies where that growth should go. This consultation is the first stage in the process and the first opportunity for members of the public, partners and interested parties to have their say.

As the Local Plan moves forward, Suffolk Coastal will be working closely with neighbouring authorities, Babergh, Ipswich and Mid Suffolk, to identify the most sustainable locations for future growth and development as well as balancing the need for infrastructure and economic growth.

The Issues and Options consultation document:

- considers the need for further growth in the area and where it should take place*
- poses questions on a variety of topics such as Community Facilities, Heritage, Tourism and Landscape*
- includes a large number of sites which have been put forward to the Council as "potential land for development" including housing, employment and other uses*
- These sites have been submitted by landowners, developers and other interested stakeholders*
- At this early stage all the sites received have been published as part of this consultation, regardless of known constraints, for transparency and openness*
- Far more sites have been put forward than we actually need*
- These sites currently have no formal planning status*
- SCDC will thoroughly assess all sites and reduce the number down as the Local Plan progresses through future rounds of public consultation.*

A number of sites for Benhall are highlighted within the document. Hopkins Homes has put forward a proposal to build on sites between Benhall and Saxmundham. Both Benhall & Sternfield and Saxmundham councils have stated there should be an environmental impact assessment undertaken first as has SCDC. The same site has also been identified as a possible location for the Sizewell Campus.-. The Parish Council wants to protect the open space between Saxmundham & Benhall and protect the distinct character of the village. Until the Parish Council receives a formal planning application for the sites, there is nothing more that the PC can do at this stage. 2 or 3 members of the PC have been invited to a one to one meeting at SCDC on Friday 29 September, 4-5pm regarding the Local Plan. A "leave the Layers alone" partition has been produced by Saxmundham residents, can be found on the Saxmundham website and comments need to be in by the end of October.

Suffolk's Energy Gateway consultation has opened, specifying the proposed new road to by-pass the villages of Farnham, Stratford St Andrew, Little Glemham and Marlesford on the A12. The proposed scheme is designed to provide a modern high quality road to enable, support and deliver economic growth in East Suffolk and enhance the quality of life for local people. Should the scheme be delivered, the existing road will remain open for local traffic, providing access to the four villages and local businesses. It is very important that local residents, businesses and community groups, gets involved in this consultation to ensure that all local views and opinions are represented in a business case that Suffolk County Council must submit to Government before the end of 2017. Two public exhibitions have been organised to give local communities an opportunity to see the proposals in detail and find out more about the benefits of the scheme. Members of the project team will be on hand to answer questions. The exhibitions will be held at the Riverside Centre in Stratford St Andrew on Wednesday 20 September 2017 - 10am to 6pm and Saturday 23 September 2017 - 10am to 6pm.

The consultation document and information on how to give your views is available from: www.suffolk.gov.uk/consultations. The consultation closes on 25 October 2017 at 23.59.

OPEN FORUM

Cllr Andrew Reid SCC reported that Sizewell C has helped to provoke a further need for a bypass and EDF appreciates the need.

Chairmans initials

Encourage everyone to complete the Suffolk Energy Gateway questionnaire and to attend the exhibition at the riverside centre. A business plan will be put together and presented to the Government. Cost of a road build expected to be £100 million, Sizewell would possibly pay £25/35 million towards the build.

Member of the public asked that if Sizewell C evaporates, how would it effect the funding for a bypass, Cllr Reid informed that it would still go ahead.

Member of the public asked if the PC has responded to the planning application to the proposed 9 dwellings on the land south of Corner Cottages and Forge Close, Main Road, Benhall, (which is on one of the sites which had been put forward and could well have more houses added at a later date). The PC has not yet received the plans. Resident of Forge Close is concerned at the limited parking in the Close and may mean that vehicles will park alongside the road. Could the garages be removed, as only 2 are let, this would free up off road parking spaces. The Chairman asked that the residents put together a case and pass onto the PC, which will then be put forward to SCDC.

Cllr Reid is happy to help fund the SID and has offered £1500. Clerk to contact Highways Safety team – David Chenery to inform him of the funding. He is also happy to help fund a defibrillator.

Cllr Philip Dunnett SCDC has informed that he will also give funding towards the SID from his Enabling Communities Budget.

Cllr John Fisher SCDC informed that he will give £250 towards the SID.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.** Cllr Riven Brace – Vice Chairman, Cllr Sue Nicholson, Cllr Jo Pemberton, Cllr Katie Carr-Tansley & SCDC Philip Dunnett.

2. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS.** None.

3. **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 13 JULY 2017 - To consider the approval.**

These were approved by all, proposed Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr McGregor, signed by the Chairman.

4. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES AND ACTION POINTS.**

a. **To consider purchasing a defibrillator for the village.**

Cllr Marsh reported that he has contacted BT regarding installing a defibrillator in the empty phone box in Benhall. They are happy for this to go ahead, however the Parish Council must purchase the phone box for £1.00. BT will fund the lighting and electricity for the defibrillator for 7 years. Community Heart Beat works alongside BT and will supply all of the equipment & signage and will convert the phone box for defibrillator storage. The cost for a defibrillator, lockable cabinet, signage and awareness session is £1750 plus VAT. An electrician will be needed to wire in the equipment. It was agreed that Cllr Marsh will send back the signed contract and £1.00 fee to BT ASAP, this means that the PC will take over the responsibility for the phone box. Proposed Cllr Secret seconded Cllr McGregor. He will also explore further funding.

b. **Vehicle Activated Signs.**

Cllr Secret has prepared the application for the location sites for the 2 posts in Sternfield. One SID will be used between the 2 posts, he will obtain further quotes for the SID. There is also an option to purchase with a data recording unit inside. Volunteers will be needed to help change and charge batteries for the SID device. He has also prepared a proposal to Highways for a 2nd site at Benhall Green.

The meeting was closed and opened to the public.

Resident requested that it could be changed to 20mph along Benhall Green or could a “20s plenty” advisory sign be used. Cllr Secret informed that SID cannot be used in a less than 30mph location, however there is the option to use a data recording unit at the location.

Closed the meeting to the public.

It was agreed by all that the Parish Council will take forward the applications for SID, proposed Cllr Jefferies seconded Cllr Durrant.

c. **Village newsletter.**

The Chairman informed that Cllr Nicholson has produced a newsletter and that she has proposed continuing doing the newsletter monthly, but if no-one else comes forward, it would need to go to bimonthly when she is away. It doesn't necessarily need to be a Parish Councillor to be the editor, anyone in the village might like to help Cllr Nicholson.

The meeting was closed and opened to the public.

Resident suggests that the Parish Council should commit to monthly to see if a newsletter is of value to the village, bi monthly news would be out of date. Put an advert in the Eb N Flow that volunteers are needed to help with a village newsletter.

Closed the meeting to the public.

The Chairman suggests that Cllr Nicholson is asked to go ahead with a further issue if she is able to and to put in a request for volunteers, this was agreed by all.

5. **Relationship with Benhall Estate (Emily Swift).**

The Clerk had invited Emily Swift to the meeting tonight in the hope to help build a relationship for the future with the Parish Council and Benhall Club. No response has been received from her. The Clerk to contact her again and ask her if she would like a meeting.

6. **MINUTES OF THE FINANCE SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 24 AUGUST 2017 – To consider the approval of the Review the Clerks salary.**

These were agreed by all, proposed Cllr Jefferies seconded Cllr McGregor.

7. **PLANNING APPLICATIONS *Dealt with at the start of the meeting.***

8. **FINANCE a. Statement of Accounts.**

Cllr McGregor reported the bank balances as at 14 September 2017, HSBC £1,628.02, Ipswich Building Society £16,746.80.

Chairmans initials

He informed that a 6 monthly internal audit is now due to be carried out by a Parish Councillor, Cllr Marsh volunteered to do so. The PC has £3083 to be spent before 2022 from the Community Infrastructure Levy. This will be used towards the defibrillator and the SID. A new notice board is also needed for Benhall Low Street as the current one is too small and will only hold 2 or 3 pieces of A4 paper. The insurance renewal from Zurich has been received, £683.23, the Parish Council has signed into an agreement with Zurich until 2020, at which time competitive tenders will be sought. Cllr McGregor gave out copies of the expenditure budget sheet, it is noted that there is £300 in the budget for training, Cllrs Marsh & Pemberton, may wish to participate in new councillor training. Cllr McGregor is the only councillor who has done a cemetery training course, encouraged another council member to consider training. Cllr Durrant informed that he has invited 3 contractors to quote for village grass cutting and handyman jobs, £3000, £2160 and £1500. He suggests going for the middle quote, he would be concerned that the lowest quote may not do the job properly. It was agreed by all that the Parish Council trusts Cllr Durrant's judgment and that a contract should run for a year, proposed Cllr Jefferies, seconded Cllr McGregor. He will get the quote/contract written up for the record. The RFO recommends that the asset register is updated, Cllr Durrant will look at this. The Clerk distributed copies of the current register to all.

b. Issues Arising from the External Auditors Report, to include Asset Register and Invoice to pay.

Cllr McGregor commended the RFO for the work she carried out on the 2016-2017 accounts. At the July meeting the Parish Council had approved and adopted the recommendations from the external auditor. BDO invoice to pay £120.00, proposed Cllr Jefferies seconded Cllr Durrant.

c. Earth Works – Invoice to pay, £276.00.

d. Renewal of Parish Council Insurance, £683.23.

e. Clerk – Invoice to pay, expenses £21.40.

f. Responsible Finance Officer – Invoice to pay, £169.48.

g. Cllr Nicholson – Invoice to pay, photocopying the village newsletter £58.00.

The above payments were all approved, proposed Cllr Jefferies, seconded Cllr Durrant.

9. REPORTS FROM PARISH REPRESENTATIVES

The Wadd - Cllr Katie Carr-Tansley. The Wadd damp area and Wadd extension were cut by the contractor Stephen Barnes towards the end of July. The Ipswich Probation Service were able to offer two work day sessions with offenders raking and stacking the cuttings onto the compost piles as usual. The service is under pressure now as they are unable to offer as many community pay back sessions as they used to. (Fewer offenders given community service? I'm not sure of the reason). The Probation Office contacted me a few days ago to offer another days work which I accepted. A team will arrive on Saturday morning to cut back hedge growth at the south end of the Wadd and open up access from Aldecar Lane plus extra strimming that they might have time to do round the Wadd boundary posts. Then we can see what is what and replace missing and damaged posts this winter.

Village Green – (Cllr Chris Durrant) will arrange for it to be cut ASAP.

Trees - Cllr Riven Brace. Nothing to report.

Cemetery - Cllr Donald McGregor informed that 2 funerals have taken place since the last report and that they were arranged through funeral directors who came from out of the area. Although the funeral directors had been provided with detailed information about cemetery procedures, there had been some problems. . He has prepared a check list for future use by funeral directors who are not local to the area.

Police Liaison, Neighbourhood Watch, Parish Website - Cllr Chris Durrant. None.

Emergency Scheme - Cllr Jo Pemberton & Cllr Kevin Marsh. Currently updating the list of contacts/volunteers and will include this in the village newsletter.

Benhall Club - Cllr Mark Jeffries. Thanked for the support that the PC has given to the MUGA.

Sizewell Parish Liaison Group (SPLG). Cllr Secret has looked at the minutes of the last SPLG meeting. Out of the 25 member/groups only 5 turned up. It appears that they focus mainly on D2 and the Parish Council does not have a view on this. It was agreed by all not to renew the PC subscription, proposed Cllr Jefferies seconded Cllr McGregor.

SALC – Cllr Secret, meeting to take place on Monday.

Transport - Mrs Angela Nicholls. No report.

10. CORRESPONDENCE a. Reform of Data Protection Legislation. The Clerk informed that the General Data Protection Regulation is to come into force on 25 May 2018. SALC are carrying out training however this is in October and the Clerk is unable to attend. Will wait for further training dates to be published.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS. a. Wells in Benhall Low Street. Cllr McGregor reported that the license granted to Essex & Suffolk Water to abstract water from the bore holes in in Benhall Low Street is due for renewal. There are two households in Low Street who have legally protected rights to their well water granted by the Environment Agency. Mr and Mrs Barker and family rely on their well as their source of drinking water. The second well owned Cllr McGregor has dried up in recent months. The Barkers and the McGregors are in discussion with Essex & Suffolk Water and the Environment Agency about the relationship between the abstraction and reduced groundwater levels in the vicinity of the Low Street boreholes. Cllr McGregor expressed concerns about the potential detrimental effect on the Alde valley of increasing water abstraction especially in view of existing and future new housing developments in the area.

b. History Group. The Chairman informed that the group has come across a deed of trust re Benhall Club, he read out an extract which said that "Benhall Club is to be used as a village hall for the inhabitants of the neighbourhood."

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING. Thursday 9 November 2017, 7.00pm. Meeting ended at 8.55pm

Chairmans initials

List of Action Points:

- a/p 1.4a** Kevin Marsh BT phone box and defibrillator.
- a/p 2.4b** Cllr Secret, application for SIDs
- a/p 3.5** Clerk to contact Emily Swift – Benhall Estate.
- a/p 4.8** Cllr Marsh to carry out a 6 monthly internal audit of PC accounts.
- a/p 5.8** Cllr Durrant to update the asset register.

Signed (Chairman)

Date

Chairmans initials