

# PEASENHALL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Peasehall Parish Council Extraordinary virtual meeting held via Zoom Meetings on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2021 at 7:00 pm.

## 2021/1 Attendance and Apologies

### Attendees:

Cllr. Steve Pewsey - Chair  
Cllr. Frank Potter – Vice-Chair  
Cllr. Ric Earle  
Cllr. Nick Levett-Scrivener  
Cllr. Peter Dance  
Cllr. Roger Benstead  
Cllr. Stephanie Liston

### Apologies for absence:

None

### In attendance:

Sharon Smith - Clerk/RFO  
Two members of the public

## 2021/2 Declarations of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

Cllr. Nick Levett-Scrivener and Cllr. Peter Dance declared an interest in item 2021/4.

## 2021/3 COVID-19

The Chair raised two items, which were not on the agenda, as urgent matters arising from the latest COVID-19 national lockdown:

a) The Chair informed the Council that the voluntary group to help parishioners who are isolating or shielding has been revived. Details have been posted on the noticeboard and the village website.

b) In accordance with the motion agreed by the Council in March 2020 ‘to provide authority to the Chairman or the Vice-Chairman, in conjunction with the Clerk, for expenditure on matters connected to COVID-19 to a pre-agreed maximum amount’ the Chairman asked the Council to consider donating to Yoxford and Peasehall Primary School to assist them to buy computer tablets to loan to low-income families who do not have access to a computer at home.

The Clerk said that Yoxford Parish Council intended to donate £500 and she raised this item with the Chair as she anticipated that Peasehall Parish Council may wish to do the same. The Headteacher informed her that they are trying to deliver a range of online and live teaching but she is aware many families need to share equipment and, in many cases, are prioritising high school pupils. She said they need five tablets costing approximately £200 each. The Chair proposed that the Council donates £500, which together with the Yoxford Parish Council donation, would enable the school to buy five tablets.

Cllr. Nick Levett-Scrivener said that the Council has no evidence that any of the disadvantaged pupils live in the parish and the Council can only authorise expenditure that benefits some or all of the parish residents. The Clerk noted that the school will not be able to share this information due to data protection legislation and, in her opinion, this donation was no different to the Council’s annual donations to charities. Cllr. Levett-Scrivener replied that this was a disingenuous argument as all parishioners have access to these charities. The Chairman noted Cllr. Levett-Scrivener’s point of view, and suggested that perhaps 60 families in the parish have children who attend the school. Cllr. Frank Potter seconded the Chairman’s proposal and said that Yoxford and Peasehall Primary School is the parish school, therefore it is open to all parishioners’ children and that would undoubtedly include children in low-income families.

Votes in favour: Cllr. Stephen Pewsey, Cllr. Frank Potter, Cllr. Roger Benstead and Cllr. Stephanie Liston.  
Votes against: Cllr. Nick Levett-Scrivener and Cllr. Peter Dance. Abstentions: Cllr. Ric Earle.

**ACTION: Clerk to inform Yoxford and Peasehall Primary School and arrange donation.**

## 2021/4 Local Plan

The Council noted East Suffolk Council's response to its Stage 1 – Complaint regarding the inclusion of Site 12.60 in the Local Plan. Cllr. Ric Earle proposed that the Council raises the complaint to a Stage 2 – Internal Review and referred to his previously circulated draft letter.

Cllr. Frank Potter said that the ESC response was reasonable, and confirmed what the Council already knew – that the Inspector had read the letters received after the Main Modifications consultation expiry date and that the uncertainty over whether the site is available does not mean that it is not deliverable. Cllr. Potter also noted that Parish Councils do not have the power to remove sites from the Local Plan. He objected to the draft letter but, if it is agreed to send it, he asked for a sentence to be removed as it was factually incorrect. Cllr. Stephen Pewsey and Cllr. Ric Earle agreed that the sentence should be deleted.

The Chairman then suspended the meeting for public comments and questions. A member of the public said he was grateful for the Council's position over Site 12.60 and commented that the process was there to be challenged. He asked the Council to consider including in its response a reference to the Planning Practice Guidance which states that there must be no legal or ownership impediments to development when considering whether a site is available. He added that the sequential test should have been explicitly carried out and this was not done. He said that although the Church Lands Trust have chosen not to make the site available for development, its inclusion in the Local Plan means it will be harder to lease the land for other uses, leaving the Trust financially disadvantaged.

Cllr. Peter Dance said that ESC seemed to be using double standards and was ignoring the nub of the argument, including the fact that two previous Parish Councillors who were Trustees had wrongly included his name as agreeing to put the site forward for development, so he should have the right to complain about the misuse of his name.

Cllr. Nick Levett-Scrivener said that the Trustees of the Church Lands Trust were misrepresented by its previous Secretary, and noted that ESC has redacted the names of the site's proponents from the Call for Sites papers, making the whole process appear underhanded.

The other member of the public said that the ESC response was overly long, which indicated they were finding difficulties in rejecting the complaint. Because the response mentions positive public feedback for the site's inclusion without providing evidence, the Council should ask for that evidence. The Chairman then resumed the meeting.

Cllr. Frank Potter said that the site was put forward in the second draft of the Local Plan and the Church Lands Trust did not object at that time. The objection was only raised in the Main Modifications consultation following the assessment of sewerage provision/flood risk. The Inspector has viewed all the correspondence and it is likely that he presumes that the Trustees have changed their minds and there is a reasonable prospect that they may change their minds again. The Inspector believes that it is reasonable that the site may be deliverable. Cllr. Roger Benstead said he agreed with Cllr. Potter and that the Council were going round in circles and not getting anywhere.

Cllr. Ric Earle said the reasons for raising the complaint are due to the lack of transparency and that the site was not handled properly. He said there was no explanation in the response as to why the site was chosen out of twelve put forward. He said the site is unsatisfactory due to concerns about flood risk and sewerage provision and the sequential test had not been carried out. The purported test was only carried out on four of the twelve sites, not Site 12:60. The Causeway site had already been granted planning permission 14 months, before the Local Plan's completion, and had no flooding or sewerage issues, yet despite that it was rejected in the Local Plan. There was no comparison between the Causeway site and Site 12:60, and yet the Causeway site was rejected and Site 12:60 included. Cllr. Earle reminded everyone that District Cllr. Stephen Burroughes recommended that the Council raised the complaint, and the Council should represent its parishioners, who do want this matter pursued, as do Sibton Parish Council. Cllr. Earle read out the Leader of District Council's response which stated that the letters received after the expiry of the Main Modifications consultation were not considered by the Inspector and did not form part of the examination. He recommended that the Council pursues the complaint as, if it does not respond, then it will be seen to roll over, which will also negate the letter to the Secretary of State. He exhorted the Council

to keep its options open and to maintain its credibility. This is especially important given potential future issues over planning.

Cllr. Peter Dance said the Councillors are here to serve the parish and that district and county councils are here to support us, and the Council is therefore entitled to respond to them if they play tricks. He asked the Clerk to minute his objection at being made to declare an interest and not vote on this matter as he viewed the decision to escalate the complaint to be separate to his role as a Trustee of the Church Lands Trust.

Cllr. Nick Levett-Scrivener said that the complaint cannot be abandoned and the Council need to carry on with it to the end of the complaints process.

The proposal was seconded by Cllr. Steve Pewsey. Votes in favour: Cllr. Stephen Pewsey, Cllr. Ric Earle, Cllr. Stephanie Liston and Cllr. Roger Benstead. Votes against: Cllr. Frank Potter. Cllr. Nick Levett-Scrivener and Cllr. Peter Dance, who previously declared an interest in this item, took no part in the voting.

**ACTION: Clerk to send a letter to the ESC Planning Policy and Delivery Team, send a copy to Cllr. Stephen Burroughes and upload a copy to the village website.**

## **2021/5 Planning Application**

Cllr. Stephen Pewsey proposed no objection to planning applications DC/20/5097/FUL and DC/20/5098/LBC – internal alterations and single storey extension to provide open plan kitchen/dining and study – Mulberry Cottage, Church Street. Seconded by Cllr. Frank Potter. All in favour.

**ACTION: Clerk to inform the planning department.**

The meeting closed at 9:00 pm.