

PEASENHALL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Peasehall Parish Council virtual meeting
held via Zoom on Thursday 25th June 2020 at 7:00 pm.

2020/26 Attendance and Apologies

Attendees:

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

Apologies for absence:

Cllr. Norman Ball - accepted

In attendance:

Sharon Smith - Clerk/RFO
2 members of the public

2020/27 Declarations of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

Cllr. Chris Norrington, Cllr. Nick Levett-Scrivener, Cllr. Peter Dance and Cllr. Kenneth Parry-Brown declared an interest in items 2020/29 and 2020/30. The Councillors participated in the discussion but did not vote. As Cllr. Chris Norrington had declared an interest it was agreed that the Vice-Chairman, Cllr. Frank Potter, should chair the meeting.

2020/28 Public Forum

Three members of the public voiced their opposition to the proposed development of the land adjacent to Farthings, Sibton Road.

The first resident had concerns that the capacity of the foul sewerage network is inadequate and would require a major upgrade to meet the national requirement. If this upgrade is not possible then any development on the proposed site would overload the system. The resident said there were no identified housing needs in the village and that the proposed site should be made over to allotments for the use of the residents. The resident advocated that the Parish Council would be better served by promoting the old primary school site for development as there is plenty of frontage to the road.

The second resident reminded the Parish Council of their obligation to put aside their personal views and to represent the views of the village. The resident opined that the District Council had not adequately responded to the Planning Inspectorate's question over the adequacy of the sequential test and that some processes and procedures appear flawed. The resident said that national planning policy advocates developing brownfield sites first. He said the primary school site is a brownfield site but it has not been included in the Local Plan and this was the last chance for the Parish Council to say it is not against building in the village - just bad building. The resident urged the Parish Council to respond outwith the scope of the consultation and to state again that it is opposed to development on the proposed site.

2020/29 ESC Suffolk Coastal Local Plan Consultation on Main Modifications

The Chair opened the discussion on the consultation to the Council.

Cllr. Frank Potter reminded the members of the Council and the public that at every opportunity the Parish Council has had, it has opposed the inclusion of the land adjacent to Farthings, Sibton Road in the Local Plan (under SCP 12.60). The Planning Inspectorate held hearings and as a result the main modifications have been proposed. For the proposed site, a clause was added regarding the adequacy of the capacity of the foul sewerage network and this is the only matter to be considered in this consultation. It is not an opportunity to restate responses to previous consultations or to raise new issues.

Cllr. Peter Dance said that the site was a green space wanted by the residents and that, by including it in the Local Plan, the District Council has been undemocratic. He proposed a vote of no confidence in the planning authority and said this was not a consultation but a declaration.

Cllr. Kenneth Parry-Brown informed the Council that the site was first proposed for development by the District Council in a Policy Statement dated 1976. Cllr. Chris Norrington added that in 1982 planning permission was granted for three dwellings at the Sibton end of the site and discussions were held with developers for a much larger allocation but the planning permission lapsed. The site was within the settlement boundary but removed by the District Council in 1990. Cllr. Peter Dance said the District Council had refused to identify who put forward the site for inclusion in the Local Plan.

Referring to the scope of the consultation, Cllr. Ric Earle informed the Council that he had spoken to Hilary Slater, the District Council's Head of Legal and Democratic Services and then to the planning department who had agreed that the Parish Council could reasonably link the flood risk, poor drainage and the sequential test to the foul sewerage main modification. Cllr. Earle said that the District Council made four attempts at replying to the question over the adequacy of the sequential test which the Planning Inspectorate demanded should be clear and transparent. Cllr. Earle said the planners had a rethink about the sewerage network after consulting with Anglian Water and this was nothing to do with the Inspector. Cllr. Earle further said that in the context of when the opportunity would arise to reply to the District Council's responses to the sequential test, Annette Feeney had replied to him by email to say that the main modification consultation was the opportunity to reply to the District Council's responses over the test. Cllr. Earle reminded the Parish Council that 12 sites were originally put forward in the District Council's 'Call For Sites'. The Parish Council opposed 8 of these sites, which included the land adjacent to Farthings, and approved 4 sites, including The Causeway site where, of course, planning permission has since been granted. This was a mistake by the District Council and showed that they had not carried out the site properly. The District Council ignored these recommendations and included the land adjacent to Farthings and added a new site of their own choosing which has subsequently received planning permission. Cllr. Earle opined that the District Council should have conducted a proper site assessment on the land adjacent to Farthings which would have identified the problems with the foul sewerage network. This is why Cllr. Earle suggests that this is an artificial, if not, disingenuous, late attempt by the District Council to comply with the test. Cllr Earle read out an extract from his notes along the lines of a proposed response to the consultation.

Cllr. Chris Norrington repeated that the Parish Council has consistently been against the allocation. The capacity of the foul sewerage network, the flood risk, the sequential test and all of the other issues raised are all planning conditions and given these concerns he will be surprised if any developers are interested in the site. The Planning Inspectorate has not removed these restrictions from the planning policy for this site as has been done for other sites. It does not matter if it was the Inspector or the District Council that made the amendment over sewerage. Cllr. Norrington reminded the Council that this consultation refers to the main modification relating to the capacity of the foul sewerage network and he proposed that the Parish Council thanks the District Council for raising it. The sequential test may not have been carried out in a timely or proper manner by the District Council but it is for the Planning Inspectorate to satisfy his questions over it. Cllr. Norrington reminded the members of the Council and the public that the old primary school site is owned by the County Council who did not put it forward in the 'Call for Sites'. The County Council do not intend to develop it and there is no vehicular access to the site.

Cllr. Ric Earle replied that he agreed that ultimately the decision was for the Inspector but reminding he had spoken to the Planners who had a rethink over the sewerage and the adequacy of the sequential test. It was nothing to do with the Inspector. He had been pressing solely over the sequential test. Had it been the Inspector then he would have put it in writing. The Inspector will not know this area or these sites. This is why this Council needs to provide the Planning Inspectorate with this information as he does not know the site.

Cllr. Stephanie Liston said that it was obvious that the proposed site was not the best site to be developed for many reasons and the old school was a good site for development. Cllr. Liston was concerned that the Parish Council was too caught up in the detail of the proposed site and she recommended that the Parish Council should look at what development would be appropriate for the village overall. Cllr. Frank Potter replied that there were difficulties with the timing. He informed Cllr. Liston that the Parish Council did this at

the beginning of the process during the District Council's 'Call for Sites'. Cllr. Liston said that she did not think the Parish Council needed to adhere to the District Council's parameters in this consultation and that the village residents do not understand the parameters. Cllr. Potter replied that the scope may be widened to include the other concerns about the proposed site but it was not an opportunity to put forward the other potential sites.

Cllr. Nick Levett-Scrivener informed the Council that the Church Lands Trust were meeting next week and that he intended to put forward a suggestion about the proposed site which would be of benefit to the village in perpetuity. Cllr. Levett-Scrivener will report back after the meeting.

Cllr. Frank Potter noted that the consultation on the main modifications had been made available to the residents of the village and that two responses had been received. These responses were circulated to the members of the Parish Council. Both responses were opposed to the proposed site due to the flooding and sewerage concerns and one alluded to the adequacy of the sequential test.

Cllr. Potter summarised the Parish Council's consensus of opinion that it responds to the consultation by again objecting to the proposed site and to widen the scope of the consultation's narrow definition of the main modification. The response will thank the District Council for raising the concern about the adequacy of the foul sewerage network and then widen out to flooding issues and the sequential test. Following a suggestion from Cllr. Nick Levett-Scrivener, Cllr. Steve Pewsey proposed that Cllr. Ric Earle drafted a concise response. Cllr. Earle accepting the invitation and saying the response would be less than one page, and would be circulated to the Council for comments and final approval by email. Cllr. Stephanie Liston seconded. All were in favour.

ACTION: Cllr. Ric Earle to progress.

2020/30 ESC Consultation on a Draft Template for Residential Development Briefs

The Council considered the consultation. The District Council's intention is to produce a general template brief for the residential development of the sites in the Local Plan and it is presumed this template will be integrated into and supplement its planning policy.

Cllr. Frank Potter suggested that it would be beneficial for the Parish Council to be involved early in the process. Cllr. Nick Levett-Scrivener and Cllr. Chris Norrington agreed.

Cllr. Norrington informed the Council that this consultation provides the Parish Council and the community with an opportunity to be fully involved, in partnership with the Church Lands Trust, for a development brief to be prepared should the proposed site be developed.

The Council briefly discussed the merits of producing a Neighbourhood Plan, in conjunction with the community. Cllr. Steve Pewsey informed the Council that all Neighbourhood Plans need to be approved by the District Council in accordance with its Local Plan.

Cllr. Ric Earle suggested given the nature of the response to the consultation which had just been agreed that we could not possibly enter into such an arrangement with the Church Lands Trust about the development of the proposed site. It was premature and we had to be seen to be independent. Cllr. Chris Norrington replied that the two bodies can work together, with the community, if all their views are the same.

It was then agreed to keep the consideration of this consultation general as the scope is to agree the process. At this time it is unknown whether the proposed site will be developed, what the outcome of the next Church Lands Trust meeting will be, whether the site will receive planning permission, whether the concerns about the foul sewerage network can be addressed and whether any developer will be willing to build on it given the constraints.

Cllr. Steve Pewsey noted that the draft template for a residential development brief does not clearly refer to the carbon neutral strategy to produce eco-friendly housing. Cllr. Pewsey said that the current planning policy allows important issues, such as dementia friendly housing and green corridors, to fall through the cracks and they are suggested as nice to have but they are not essential requirements. Cllr. Pewsey suggested that these requirements are important to the village.

Cllr. Frank Potter proposed that the Council involves itself in the process at this early stage and that its general response should be to approve the use of a template but to bring sustainability to the forefront. Cllr. Steve Pewsey seconded. All were in favour. The Clerk agreed to draft a response and circulate it to the Council for comments and final approval by email.

ACTION: Clerk to progress.

2020/31 Date and Time of Next Meeting

The Council confirmed the date and time of the next virtual meeting of the Council which is scheduled for 29th July 2020 at 7:00 pm.

The meeting closed at 8:30 pm.