

Minutes of a Meeting of Bergh Apton Parish Council On Wednesday, 20th November 2013 at 7.30pm At The Village Hall Members Present

Parish Members Present Derek Blake (Chair), Richard Herring, Bob Kerry, Jacqueline Byford
In attendance: Clerk, District Councillor John Fuller, and 10 members of the public
Apologies There were 2 apologies for absence – Karen Myhill, Adrian Gunson

1 Apologies For Absence and Declarations of Interest

There were 2 apologies for absence.

2 Minutes of Meeting Held on 11th September 2013

The minutes of the last meeting on 11th September were approved.

3 Matters Arising

4 Public Consultation

The public consultation focused on the development boundary and conservation area status – see below.

4.1 District Councillor's Report

John Fuller reported about the plans for new housing that could be built in Bergh Apton over the next 15 years-or-so.

South Norfolk has to meet some challenging targets for new homes that were laid-down by the last Government in 2008 and the District Council has chosen to concentrate most of these in the largest towns and villages closest to Norwich. Wymondham will have 2200 new homes in the next 15 years, Long Stratton 1800, Hethersett 1200 and Easton 900, for example.

But smaller villages across South Norfolk with easy access schools, shops, buses, village halls will have to make room for 10-20 homes and it's proposed that Bergh Apton's share will be 12 or 13 – just under a house per year on average for the next 15 years. Neighbouring Brooke will have 20 and Seething 10, for instance over the same period.

The district council has reviewed a number of sites put forward by landowners in Bergh Apton but its hands have been somewhat tied by the requirement to find sites that can take at least 5 homes in one place. Unless a site can take 5 homes, it doesn't count against the Government's targets.

The two sites that have scored the highest have been opposite the village hall, where proposals for 10 homes were trimmed-back to seven following local representations about surface water flooding and also along the Street where it meets Dodgers Lane, which is earmarked for about five homes.

Separately, in response to a site proposed by a landowner alongside the village hall towards Washingford Barn on Cookes Road, the council has proposed to square-off 'the development boundary', which could see a single home built there by a former resident of the village.

Some residents have queried why the former brickworks site hasn't been chosen for building but this has started to be used again commercially and it was scored relatively poorly by the County Council's highways assessors and so it failed to make the grade.

Ultimately the final decision of which sites will be built on will be for an independent inspector from The Planning Inspectorate, who is expected to come to determine all the plans in the 119 villages in South Norfolk in the late spring. His decisions will last between now and 2026 at the earliest.

It's worth mentioning that across South Norfolk about 1500 landowners proposed their land for building over 50,000 homes but only about 200 were selected representing about 10,000 houses in total, some of which have already been granted planning permission as the 'clock started ticking' in 2008.

The benefit of having a local plan is that development pressures can be controlled otherwise builders could build on any sites they choose and, whilst it's been sometimes controversial in the village, the District Council feels that limiting Bergh Apton to about a dozen homes out of the 10000 allocated within South Norfolk will be seen to be proportionate - Nearly all villages will have to share the burden of providing a few new homes as people live longer and are more likely to live single lives and a few new homes will help keep our villages alive.

The Chairman re-opened the Parish Council Meeting.

5 Finance

5.1 Clerk's Salary from 1st April – 30th November £885.04 plus expenses mileage 4 miles/week @ 40 pence per mile £42.28 Total £927.32

5.2 Audit Commission – The audit has been approved by Mazars

6 Precept

The precept will be discussed at the January meeting. Deadline 20th January

7 Proposed re-siting of phone box – Mill Road

Ms Vivien Castleton who owns the land between Bilcar and Millers Cottage on Mill Road reported her concern that the phone box represents a visibility hazard for her. The Parish Council rejected the idea that the phone box be relocated to Green Pastures Farm Shop. The Chairman requested that a written proposal with other options should be submitted and it would be discussed at the next meeting.

8 Open Ditches to Tenwinter Pightle

A letter has been received from Saffron Housing Trust following a survey carried out at Tenwinter Pightle it was highlighted that the open ditches are a cause for concern as far as falling between levels. It's an all year round concern as in the winter the ditch may be full of water up to 1100mm deep and in the summer the vegetation will have grown up to hide the ditch. Another area of concern is the lack of street lighting at this junction. South Norfolk Council would not need planning permission for a fence up to 1 metre high, but they would prefer not to see it in situ. Clerk to respond saying the Parish Council would prefer a hedge with an appropriate shrub ie. Hawthorn.

9 Extended development boundary on North Side of Cookes Road and Dodgers Lane

Clerk sent Letter to Adam Nicholls at South Norfolk Council expressing concern regarding the extension to the settlement boundary and asked that this objection be brought to the attention of the inspector. Members of the public who share this concern were also urged to contact the inspector.

10 To explore 'conservation area' status

- For the parkland bordering the northside of Threadneedle Street and Cookes Road and North of Dodgers Lane to Pond Farm – letter sent to David Edleston

11 Scop Hill

Sculpture to be removed in December to carry out refurbishment work approved by council earlier this year. The works to improve the rainwater run-off from HWRC into a holding tank on Scop Hill site has been completed. A total of seven Great Crested Newts were found in the area of the Scop Hill drainage pond – this is the minimum number that require the newt protection works that were initiated in the scheme. An area of wildflowers is to be hopefully established on the hill to the east

of the track leading from the entrance to the gas-extraction plant is, also bluebell planting in the woods. The well-established hedgerow will be cut and laid this winter. All the young ash trees planted about 3 years ago on the conservation area have died from ash die-back, it has not yet been detected in any of the more mature trees in the whole area.

12 Planning Applications

13 Planning Approval

14 Events and Correspondence

15 Items for Future Agendas

Dates of future Meetings: 26th February, 16th April, 14th May AGM/APM, 18th June, 30th July, 3rd September, 26th November, 7/8th January 2015

Meeting closed at 9.50pm