

East Donyland Parish Council
Full Parish Council Meeting – 11th August 2016
St Lawrence's School, Rectory Road, Rowhedge starting 7.00pm.
MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Phil George, Anna Appleyard, Doug Clay, Nina Crouchman, Richard Helliwell, Tony Pullon, John Rowland; CBC Ward Cllrs Mike Lilley & Lee Scordis; Clerk – Nicki Matthews and 11 members of the public.

The Chairman, Cllr Phil George, opened the meeting at 7pm.

83/16 To receive and accept apologies and to note absences: Apologies received from Cllr Case and Ward Cllr Fox.

84/16 To minute pecuniary & non-pecuniary interests of members relating to items on the agenda: DC – non-pecuniary 95/16; RH – non-pecuniary 92/16

85/16 To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 11th August 2016:
The minutes were proposed as correct by PG, 2nd JR – all agreed; minutes approved.

86/16 Have your say! The Chairman will close the meeting for a max.15 minutes to ask members of the public to speak on any matters relevant to parish business:

The following points and questions were raised:

- Item 88/16 – development of a brownfield site would be preferable to an agricultural site, but Rowhedge Business Park is identified in the draft Local Plan as an important source of employment in Rowhedge, which conflicts with a proposal for its development.
- Item 95/16 – was there insurance for the stolen items?
- Item 96/16 – will the energy source for the lighting be renewable?
- BT phone box – there has still been no repair. NM reported that BT have advised that the parts are on order, but this was some time ago. NM to follow up; *Action – the Clerk*
- Towpath – when will the final section be upgraded? PG advised that this will be funded by S106 contributions from the Bloor development, so work should go ahead as soon as funds are released.

87/16 To receive and note reports from:

- i) County Councillor, Kevin Bentley: absent, no report received.
- ii) CBC Councillors Mike Lilley & Lee Scordis:
 - Towpath – release of S106 funds to CBC will be triggered when 25 homes are complete; ML has asked CBC whether this is completion of build, sale or occupation of 25 homes – to be confirmed.
 - Middlewick Ranges – there has been a public announcement that this land will be sold for potential development. The land belongs to the Ministry of Defence who are subject to different planning laws. Nothing has yet been submitted, but the site is 85 hectares so it could be a very large proposal. CBC have been asked if the site could be incorporated into the new Local Plan, and have indicated that it is possible, and if included could reduce the need for some of the other proposed sites. ML has already formed an action group, and this issue will impact on Rowhedge, e.g. Cadman who own the allotment site and lease it to EDPC may wish to sell land to the developer. EDPC will need to look at their lease terms.
 - Battleswick – petition forms have been delivered to all residents in Rowhedge and 100+ have already been completed and returned. Online responses have also now increased.
 - 20mph limits – ward cllrs may need to reprioritise workload in light of the news re Middlewick.
- iii) The Clerk: noted.
- iv) Village Bus Representative – Elizabeth Trellis:
 - Many local services have had timetable revisions, but the 66 service is unaltered.
- v) Rowhedge Residents' Association – Trisha Curran:
 - RRA have a volunteer to help produce signs for a 20s Plenty campaign.

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88/16 To receive a presentation from S. Brice regarding a proposal she is submitting to CBC for the use of Rowhedge Business Park and adjacent land as an alternative option to the Battleswick development site and to consider whether the parish council wishes to support this proposal:

SB explained that they submitted the site in the call for land, but it was rejected at the draft stage as it was classified as a local centre for employment. However, over the past 8 yrs they have struggled to develop the site; historically it has been used for heavy vehicles, and there is currently very low level employment (approx. 8). Any losses to employment could potentially be replaced by ancillary development on the site alongside residential development. There have been issues in the past with some tenants, e.g. Ramplings. Part of the site is currently not in use, although it is still marked on the Local Plan map as part of the Business Park, which is misleading.

The proposal is to potentially offer a new site for the GP surgery – they have been in discussion with NHS England for a number of years and are currently working with an agency to develop a proposal. Also, there could be some assisted housing units on the site if there is local need for this, which could free up existing housing stock in the village currently occupied by elderly residents. The percentage of the site used for this would need to be agreed with CBC, and considered alongside requirements for affordable housing on site. An existing area of woodland, including a pond, could be retained as an open space area supporting local wildlife, possibly managed by Essex Wildlife Trust. With regard to residential development, the rules on brownfield sites are changing, and development of the site outside of the Local Plan may be possible. SB has initially discussed this proposal with CBC and they seem very interested; SB wants to know what else could be incorporated to meet the needs of the village, and is seeking the parish council’s support in their response to the consultation.

There is a mains water pipe running across the part of the site currently not in use - SB advised that a solution may be to place the GP surgery and assisted housing units on that field, working around the pipe, as it wouldn’t be possible to build directly over it. Their agency is working on a proposed site plan.

The site is 8 acres, with possible developable land of approx. 5 acres (the Battleswick site is 8 acres). Cllrs asked ML if CBC might consider the proposal and choose to accept both sites rather viewing it as an alternative to Battleswick. ML advised that if any sites are discounted from the Local Plan, alternatives will have to be found, and these can be from anywhere in the borough.

Cllrs noted that the site was proposed for the GP surgery previously but discounted because it was too far out from the centre of the village. SB advised that the bus service runs close to the site, and the entrance from Rectory Road would be staggered to the entrance to the new haul road, to prevent safety issues. It could also reduce traffic into the village accessing the surgery.

PG asked cllrs to bear in mind item 92/16. RH noted that a key part of the argument against the development of the Battleswick site is that the village lacks the infrastructure to support any further development, and supporting this proposal could undermine that line of defence. SB responded that CBC are aware of the weaknesses in the Battleswick site and the opposition to its development, and hopes that they may be minded to accept this proposal as a preferable alternative, and the surgery would improve the infrastructure. There could also be a potential commercial unit e.g. a small shop on the site.

PG noted that within the Village Plan survey, 92% of respondents were opposed to any further development within the village. No proposal was made by cllrs to support SB’s representation to CBC.

89/16 To agree the payments list already checked by Cllrs Pullon & Clay: PG proposed the payments to be correct, 2nd TP all agreed. *Action – the Clerk.*

90/16 To note that the Maintenance Committee scheduled for 17th August was not held as it was inquorate, and that the next meeting of the committee will be the 19th October: noted.

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91/16 To consider a nomination for Cllr Appleyard to join the Finance & Personnel Committee: PG proposed this be agreed; RH 2nd – all agreed.

92/16 To consider the draft statement received from GovResources, prepared as response to the Local Plan consultation, and agree the parish council's final response to the consultation:

Some minor typographical corrections to be made. Other amendments proposed as follows:

Pg 4 paragraph 3 – the number of public responses to be updated

Pg 1 paragraph 3 – develop historical information about the farm

Pg 7 paragraph 6 – buildings are a range of outbuildings, not all barns

Incorrect reference to Colchester as county town.

TP suggested that the response also be sent to all members of the Local Plan Committee, and offered to contact them all to recommend they read it, and ask for their comments which could be appended to the document and published on the EDPC website.

PG proposed that the document be approved with the above amendments, and be submitted to CBC before the 16th September. Also that the council takes up TP's suggestion and offer regarding the committee. TP 2nd – all agreed. *Action – the Clerk & TP*

93/16 To consider whether the council wishes to submit an application for a 20mph speed limit within Rowhedge, including the proposed scope of any speed limit requested, and agree a course of action:

Ward Cllr Scordis has advised that support from County Cllr Bentley and evidence of majority public support in the form of a petition is sufficient to successfully support an application for a 20mph zone. PG suggested that EDPC obtain a petition template from CBC and progress this; LS offered to produce petitions for the GP surgery etc, and that ward cllrs would be able to go door to door to deliver petitions, and collect signatures from parents outside the school. The petition should also be put online to maximise the number of respondents.

Cllrs discussed where the proposed limit should extend to, and there was agreement that the simplest solution would be to replace the existing 30mph limit with a 20mph limit. Concern was raised about the inclusion of the bus route, but the parish council has now been advised that bus routes can be included within 20mph zones.

PG proposed that the council apply for a village wide 20mph speed limit, extending from the 30mph signs on Rowhedge Rd to the junction of Rectory Rd & Fingringhoe Rd. To support the application, the council to carry out an online and door drop petition, with further petitions at the school, surgery etc. If the application is successful, the council to take up the RRA's offer of help to produce supplementary 20's Plenty signs for display within the village. RH 2nd – all agreed. *Action – LS & the Clerk*

DC noted that the new roads within the wharf developments will need to be considered for inclusion when the roads are adopted by Essex Highways.

94/16 To consider a proposal from Cllr Helliwell to authorise the trimming of the avenue of trees in the Recreation Ground at a cost not exceeding £200:

RH noted that a number of complaints have been received regarding these trees; work was previously carried out by volunteers but due to the work now required it is more appropriate for it to be carried out by a contractor. The area falls within the contract with SAM Ltd, who have estimated that it will be one day's work, costing under £200. RH proposed that the council accept this quote; NC 2nd – all agreed.

95/16 To consider a grant application received from Rowhedge FC (*refer attached*) for £500 funding to assist with the replacement of stolen grounds maintenance equipment:

DC explained that the clubhouse and equipment had not been previously insured – due to the high level of risk (timber clubhouse), the quote was not affordable for the club at over £400 per month. New

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security measures have now been put in place, including external CCTV and improved locks. RFC are also now applying for insurance, and are hoping to find a more affordable policy. They have applied for CIF funding to upgrade the clubhouse, including doors etc which should help with this.

Cllr Clay then left the room – PG noted that this was not a requirement as he has declared a non-pecuniary interest only, but was a personal choice.

RH stated that he felt the parish council should insist on the club insuring the equipment as a condition of any grant made. TP raised the possibility of the equipment being transferred to parish council ownership and added to EDPC insurance if the cost was prohibitive for the club. Cllrs expressed the view that the football club contribute a lot to the village, and the parish council should support them in return.

JR noted that the council has a strimmer which could potentially be made available to the club if needed, but usage is shared with the council and P3 footpath group.

RH proposed that the council grant £500 to RFC as requested, subject to insurance being obtained. If the club is unable to obtain insurance for the equipment, the matter to be revisited by council to consider alternative options. TP 2nd – all agreed. *Action – the Clerk.*

96/16 To consider a request from the East Donyland PCC (refer attached) for approval for a scheme to install floodlighting to St Lawrence's Church tower:

PG noted that the PCC would need to consider any potential issues regarding light pollution, but it is a good idea. RH proposed that the council approves this request; JR 2nd – all agreed. *Action – the Clerk*

97/16 To receive an estimate quote from Brightlingsea Harbour Office of £8,000 for maintenance work required to the pontoon, and consider how to progress this:

The initial inspection report estimated that the works required would cost approx. £10,000 and the company who installed the pontoon quoted over £20,000. A significantly lower quote of approx. £2-3,000 was provided originally by the late S Chick, Brightlingsea Harbourmaster, but the Harbour Office has now revised their quote to £8,000. It is an insurance requirement that the council maintains the pontoon, and a full inspection and overhaul should be carried out every 10 years. The pontoon is now in its 10th year, and needs to be removed to Brightlingsea to be lifted out of the water for a full inspection and remedial work. It is best practice to do this during closed season, and also offers an opportunity to review the regulations relating to the pontoon, such as size of boats, and the appropriate signage required. The pontoon is a well-used asset, and if the work is not carried out, the pontoon may have to be removed at a significant cost to the council.

£3,000 is already allocated within the current year budget for this work, so the remaining £5,000 would need to be met from reserves or utilising any areas of underspend. RH proposed that the council accept the quote from the Brightlingsea Harbour Office to carry out the works, prior to the 2017 season, and to additionally review pontoon signage and regulations. TP 2nd – all agreed. *Action – Asst Clerk*

98/16 To deal with matters arising from the previous Council minutes not dealt with elsewhere in this agenda: noted – it is a growing list, now providing more information.

99/16 To discuss planning applications and note decision papers as listed:

- i) **Planning application 162135, 20 Regent St; removal of old fence, gate and shed forming boundary around driveway. Erect timber bi-fold gate to form entrance to the driveway:** PG proposed that council makes no objections to this application; RH 2nd – all agreed.

Part One of the meeting closed at 8.12pm.

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Part 2 - Closed to the press and public due to the commercial sensitivity of the item under discussion

100/16 To discuss progress on resolution 32/16 regarding the potential future use of the Pump House as a community facility;

i) To receive an update from Cllr Pullon following a meeting with the site owner to discuss boundary and access issues relating to the site (*refer attached*) and consider the implications for any potential purchase:

TP met with the owners, who have been seeking advice regarding boundaries, access etc and have now been advised by their agents (Whybrow) that they should sell the two parts of the site as one plot, with a market value of £400,000. They are prepared to offer it to the council at a price of £300,000. TP advised the owners that the council may not be likely to purchase the larger plot, and asked whether they might still consider selling the original Pump House site as previously proposed. TP believes that they are likely to agree to this, as they are being pressured by the developers to sell the land (they have created a ransom strip alongside the larger plot to reduce access), and they are resistant to this.

The owners are seeking to complete the sale by the end of December.

ii) To consider whether the council should additionally explore the option of the revised site now being offered for sale by Northern Wood Terminal, and the purpose of doing so:

There are three options for the council to consider:

1. Purchase the original site at £120,000
2. Purchase the full plot at £300,000
3. Not pursue the purchase of any part of the site

Cllrs discussed the options, raising the following points and questions:

- If the council were to purchase the full plot, they would be able to sell the excess land to the developers themselves, potentially at a profit which could help fund development of the Pump House into a community facility. The sale to developers would need to be agreed prior to the council purchasing the site.
- Is there an alternative option or the plot to be sold to developers, with a condition for the Pump House to be renovated as a community facility (S106) and transferred to EDPC ownership?
- The RHT holds funds of approx. £30-40,000 which they may be prepared to put towards the Pump House if the project meets their charitable aims.
- There is currently no business plan in place for the Pump House, and two coffee shops are being developed in the village at present. There may also be a further commercial development on the Bloor site. Is there demand for another facility?
- TP is aware of an expression of initial interest from a franchise to run the Pump House as a café. Could the council simplify the requirement for the business plan by offering the Pump House as a franchise opportunity? This would require a good document setting out the criteria for the franchise, to ensure it became a community facility, not just a commercial enterprise.

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- Need to ensure the council is acting within its legal powers with regard to the options discussed – also potentially need to consider whether selling land to a developer for additional housing is the right ethical decision given recent discussions on development.
- Allotment site – is there a possible conflict here if the council wants to pursue purchase of this site as previously discussed? TP has spoken to Cadman recently, who have advised that there are developments regarding the land which will be announced shortly, although they are still positive about the potential for EDPC to purchase land. Given the news re Middlewick, this may become a bidding war with developers.

There was a further discussion around the level of commitment which the council should make to the owners at this stage, with a range of views expressed.

PG proposed that the council explore the possibility of purchasing one or both plots, and express keen interest to the vendor, all action to be subject to the council operating in a lawful manner, to be confirmed by the Clerk. RH 2nd – all agreed.

TP proposed that a working group be formed to progress this project. The working group to comprise Cllrs Pullon, Helliwell and George, with additional input from other councillors as required. The working group to have no decision making powers, but to be given the authority to engage with third parties at a commercial level as needed. Terms of reference to be agreed at the first meeting. PG 2nd – all agreed.

Action – the Clerk, PG, RH, TP.

The meeting closed at 9.00pm

Agreed as a true record.

Signed: Date:
Chairman