

Page 121 (2014/15)

Minutes of an extraordinary meeting of '**Blakeney Parish Council**' which was held on **Monday 18th May 2015** in the Parish Office with invited representatives from the neighbouring Parish Councils and Blakeney Neighbourhood Housing Society.

Present:- Tony Faulkner (Chairman), Samantha Arlow, Margaret Benson, Alban Donohoe, Barry Girling, Edward Hackford (for part), Roger Hall, Rosemary Thew & Neil Thompson (BPC).

Simon Read & Elaine Warren (Cley PC), Carol Bean (Morston PC), Patrick Allen & Dave Curtis (Langham PC), Roy Findlater (Field Dalling PC) & John Seymour (Chairman Blakeney Neighbourhood Housing Society).

Clerk:- Tracey Bayfield.

Public:- 0.

*The Chairman began by welcoming those present and thanking them for coming along to discuss '**Affordable Housing for Local People and Exceptions Sites**'.*

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – Were received & ***accepted*** from; Glennes Aikens (*away*), Jenny Girling (*away*) and John Hope (*Langham; unwell*). Wiveton PC were also invited to attend.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST from members. None declared.

ADJOURNMENT for OPEN PUBLIC SESSION was not required.

3. HOUSING NEED FIGURES – for the villages had been obtained from NNDC which show the number of applicant households on the Housing Waiting List who hold a local connection to the parish/villages and the adjoining parish/village and read as follows; (note that this list changes on a daily basis and that there may be between 2,000 – 3,000 applicant households on the NNDC list at any one time.

<u>Parish</u>	<u>Local Connection 'A'</u>	<u>Total inc. other Bands</u>
Blakeney	18	78
Cley	13	65
Field Dalling	16	104
Langham	14	74
Morston	15	74
Stiffkey	7	30
Wiveton	12	64

It was appreciated that the numbers were not solely for those from the named village, but included those who were eligible from the surrounding/neighbouring villages. The Clerk was asked to obtain figures for each village based on the number of people on this list from their own village.

- **Suitable Exceptions Sites** – NNDC are actively encouraging many villages to identify a piece of land suitable for an exceptions site.

Each Parish gave examples of how exceptions schemes had or hadn't worked in their village and their experience of general housing schemes. There was a lot of dissatisfaction overall with the number of properties being available to local people and a general feeling that the outcome never matched what was promised at the outset.

There was a general understanding of Exceptions Sites worked, and the differences between how they worked in the different parishes, based on how the village is defined by NNDC, such as a Service Village for example.

Cley were currently working to find such a site, but 4 sites had been rejected. From the information shared, it was felt that it was a general housing scheme, as opposed to an exceptions site, as they said that out of the 19 properties to be built, just 4 would be for local people. They will continue their discussions and search.

Blakeney are actively looking to find such a site and will look to move forward with this search. Dependent upon where enquiries take us, we have agreed to build 2 (subject to planning permission and funding) properties on the Memorial Cottages site on New Road.

Langham and Field Dalling had both recently had affordable social housing developments and are considering any such similar future developments. Both seemed to be left with more questions than answers from their experiences. Dismay at the number of people from their own villages who were not allocated properties, but again, they have to be exceptions sites as opposed to general housing sites in order to guarantee this.

Morston are not seeking to do anything as they do not feel there is a need.

Blakeney Neighbourhood Housing Society – has 43 properties in which to home local people. 2 are in Wiveton, 7 in Cley and the remainder are in Blakeney.

Edgefield PC (John Seymour is Chairman) – Currently working with Broadland Housing on a scheme for 22 properties as an exceptions site. 10 would be sold at market price, whilst 12 would be affordable homes. Of these 2 will be shared ownership and 6 will for sold as starter homes. NNDC purchased the land from Stody Estate. Of course the Local Lettings policy will come into effect and it may let us down.

- **Current Housing Provision** – All agreed that there was a lack of Affordable Housing for Local People and that pressure needs to be put on the recently appointed District Councillors, Andrew Wells, David Young, Simon Hester & Vincent Fitzpatrick to ensure that they are fully aware of the depth of concern

that there is over this subject in the small villages. District Councillors should be asked to justify their decisions when they go against the wishes of the parishes when it comes to affordable housing for local people. We would be interested to know just how much detail the District Councillors know before they make the allocation decisions.

Extremely concerned that Victory Housing continues to sell of the older social housing stock in the villages on the open market, when there is such a huge demand for these properties to remain for those they were built to assist. More so, that the proceeds from such sales, are not then used to build new properties in the same parish, but instead put into a general house building pot. When sold, these properties are still invariably priced out of the reach of local people and hence lost forever.

- **New Builds** – All agreed that the criteria set by NNDC is not cast in stone and that developers could seek to amend the number of market verses affordable on any site, based on financial viability, which does not help the scenario we are trying to address. It was noted that there is a complete lack of start up homes locally, whereby allowing and encouraging people to get on the property ladder.

The Avocet View development in Blakeney was not an exceptions site, and it comprised a total of 24 mixed dwellings. 12 market and 12 social, including one bedroom properties, flats, bungalows, houses and shared ownership as well as rentable. The 12 social were like the others mentioned not all allocated to immediate local people.

- **Funding** – Whilst funds are not so easy to come by, Broadland Housing are actively searching for sites in this area to provide affordable housing and would be happy to discuss this further.

John Seymour confirmed that there was some funding still out there, so long as BNHS for example were to meet various criteria, and in order to do this, (if they wanted to), then they may have to consider other actions, something the committee were considering. The Homes for Communities Agency may be able to help with up to no more than 25%.

As a guide say £15k per plot and say £75k a house. Parish Councils can group together, they can take out loans, and they can obtain the power needed.

Langham – Avada, who are developing the old Langham Glass site are giving £500k to NNDC to be used for affordable homes as part of a Section 106 Agreement. Langham has been offered this for further affordable housing development in the village, and the Parish Council are to discuss this shortly. If Langham PC decides that it does not wish to take this offer up, then NNDC are able to use it anywhere within the district.

Page 124 (2014/15)

If Langham PC declines this offer for their parish, then it was **agreed** that we lobby NNDC and our District Councillors, and ask they allocate this money to The Blakeney Neighbourhood Housing Society to allow them to provide additional affordable housing for local people. BNHS would be prepared to set up an amended scheme to do this.)

- **Working Together and the Way Forward** – Whilst there is much apathy, doing nothing will help no one and solve no problems. It was **agreed** that we ask for a meeting with our newly elected District Councillors, and possible one Officer from NNDC and that we invite our MP Norman Lamb along and that we use this opportunity to collectively voice our concerns and ask that NNDC change their Local Lettings Policy, in order to achieve the outcome the villages are seeking when it comes to Affordable Housing for Local People.

Meeting closed at 8.30pm.

Chairman _____