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Minutes of a meeting of **Blakeney Parish Council** which was held on **Tuesday 1st December 2015**, commencing at 7.00pm in the Parish Office.

Present:- Tony Faulkner (Chairman), Jenny Girling (Vice Chairman), Glenn Aikens, Samantha Arlow, Margaret Benson, Alban Donohoe, Barry Girling, Edward Hackford, Roger Hall, Rosemary Thew & Neil Thompson.

Clerk:- Tracey Bayfield.

Public:- 5.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** – None received.
2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** from members – There were none.
3. It was ***proposed & agreed*** that the **MINUTES** of the FULL COUNCIL meeting held on Tuesday 3rd November 2015 are signed as a true record.
4. **Wells Police (Safer Neighbourhood Team)** not present.
5. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS** – The Chairman had attended the North Norfolk Coast Forum last week, although there was nothing specifically related to Blakeney.
6. **COUNCILLOR REPORTS** –
 - 6.1. **District Councillor** - Andrew Wells.

Shared services arrangement with Great Yarmouth

I know how many people have been concerned about plans at NNDC to introduce a “shared services arrangement” with Great Yarmouth Borough Council, starting with a shared Chief Executive and Finance Officer. The plans were brought to a rather premature decision point a couple of months ago when GYBC suddenly terminated the employment of their two senior officers, asking NNDC to agree a part-time loan of our senior staff on an interim basis while a long-term arrangement was explored. Councillors were forced to make a decision with next to no information about how this short-term arrangement would work and approved it on the condition that more information would be forthcoming in the near future so a more informed decision could be made.

However, the administration has still not shared any meaningful information about how the proposals would work -either financially, administratively, or in terms of how officers will continue to be held to account for the performance of our Council. The potential benefits of shared management are clear - significant financial savings as well as the ability to secure more expertise from our senior officers - but without greater accountability it is simply not clear that any of these benefits will actually be achieved. My colleagues on the Council have been promised a full report at a

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meeting next week - and if this is not received, we will withdraw our support for the proposals.

Blakeney mobile phone mast

Many local residents, not just around Blakeney but from across our area were pleased to hear that Blakeney stood to benefit from the last government's Mobile Infrastructure Project, with a new 4G phone mast proposed between Blakeney and Wiveton. It was therefore incredibly disappointing that the Government cancelled the plans a couple of weeks ago. Marie Strong and I are trying to arrange a meeting with the Minister at present to see if the funding can be restored, giving us more time to find the best possible site for the proposed mast, and will report back in due course.

Investment in mobile phone services and broadband up to 2020

You may well already have seen this a fortnight ago, but just in case you missed it, here is my brief summary of the likely sources of funding for internet and mobile phone signal over the coming years:

The government's key investment priority for mobile phone signal will be the long-planned roll-out of a national 4G network for the emergency services. This will be based on expanding infrastructure for just one of the big four existing network operators, to be decided after a competitive process. This means there is a chance that our area will be getting 4G from one of the four operators during the course of the Parliament (although no date has been set for completing the network).

Norman Lamb is currently trying to arrange for Marie S and I to meet with the minister in the near future to discuss the urgent need for improved signal in this area, and we will be pushing to make sure that we are a high priority for this new project.

The government will explore the possibility of forming a new fund (relying predominantly on private sector investment) to support alternative broadband technologies like Wi-Spire and mobile broadband in areas where fibre broadband may not be viable; but there is no firm commitment on this or an indication of the size of the fund.

The government has already committed to set up a voucher scheme to help those who will not receive fibre broadband to access satellite hi-speed broadband instead, but no further information was announced about this today

A target has been set for 95% of properties across the country to receive fibre broadband by the end of this Parliament

A more detailed "digital transformation" plan will be published early next year, which will hopefully give us more idea of what precisely is planned

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Overall capital funding for DCMS (the department responsible for broadband and phone signal) is projected to be cut by 50% by the end of the Parliament, so money is going to be tighter than ever.

'Big Society' Grants

The next round of applications for NNDC's "Big Society" community grants closes on 8th February. The scheme can support a range of community projects from sports facilities and museums to defibrillators and musical equipment. More information is available at www.northnorfolk.org/big society fund - and please give me a call if you have a project in mind.

Housing Association 'Right to Buy'

A few weeks ago The Housing and Planning Bill was published by the Government in draft form. The bill provides, amongst other things, for a "voluntary" Right to Buy scheme for housing associations. Part 4, Chapter 1, S58 contains incredibly vague provisions for a Regulator of Social Housing having powers to "monitor compliance with the home ownership criteria", later specifying the "criteria" to be "expressed by reference to other documents". In essence, the Bill (if passed in its current form) seems to give complete freedom to the Secretary of State to decide which organisations will be bound by the new scheme without any further debate or vote in Parliament - and would therefore offer no protection to small local housing organisations like those in our part of North Norfolk.

I have been trying to get an answer from the Housing Minister, Brandon Lewis, at least clarifying the government's current intention as to which organisations will be covered by the new proposals. I have still received no reply at all, but am persevering - and Norman Lamb is also chasing the minister for a reply. It is clearly unacceptable for the government to proceed in such an unaccountable way given local concern.

6.2. County Councillor - Dr. Marie Strong.

Norfolk County Council Budget Consultation - You should all have received a copy of Norfolk County Council's magazine 'Your Norfolk' and on pages 4 and 5 are details of how to respond to the budget consultation. The green box shows how to access the website but if you prefer you can email, 'twitter' or simply write. **Please do respond because your views are taken into account. Closing date Thursday 14 January 2016**

Wells Library and Friends Group - Be assured that at all county council meetings I reiterate strongly my support for Norfolk's library service and in particular Wells Library and our valuable mobile library service. (My support also goes to Holt Library which is used by residents in the easterly section of our division.) This leads me on to a recently formed group with its aim of keeping and developing our library as the community focussed place it has become. Wells Library Friends Group next meets on **Friday 22nd January 9.30am**. The group are looking for others to join them in

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supporting activities held within the library by offering time to help run author events, book speakers, or help plan and promote library events. Come along on the 22nd or contact Jan Campbell – Library Manager 01328 710467/862715.

Wells Dementia Friendly Committee - This is a most worthy committee which I am honoured to have joined with representatives from a wide range of businesses and organisations, including Pauline Catton representing Wells Town Council. A number of activities are to be held such as North Norfolk's first Dementia Information Day which, with the continued support of Age UK, will be held on Tuesday 12 April 10.30-3.00. This will be jointly hosted by Heritage House and Wells Community Hospital. 2016 sees North Norfolk's first Memory Walk which will be held in the grounds of Holkham Hall on Sunday, September 18th. For more information about dementia friendly Wells go to www.dementiafriendlynorfolk.com

Helping people regain independence - Norfolk County Council is investing an additional £1.1 million a year in Norfolk First Support (NFS) which will see forty eight additional permanent jobs created in a 're-ablement' service. This service is provided free of charge for up to six weeks for adults assessed as being eligible for support. It is intended to help adults regain independence, for example, after a stay in hospital, ill health or injury. Recruitment for 're-ablement' support workers is underway and once the positions are filled, the service should be able to support an additional 1,500 people a year.

7. OPEN PUBLIC SESSION –

- Dementia training was already taking place in some groups in the village, ie. Glaven Caring Centre and The Methodist Chapel, and it is simply a matter of contacting Age Concern and they will give advice on additional training.
- Could BPC look into the possibility of displaying a map on say the Carnser and noticeboards in the village which shows where there is good mobile phone coverage, specifically for in the event of an emergency, given that the telephone mast application has been withdrawn?
- Dinghy Park Charges – Advised that this was dealt with by the Joint Management Group Committee of the Dinghy Park as opposed to the Full Council and that the committee met last week. Minutes out in due course.
- Bliss – owner present and happy to answer any questions.

8. PLANNING APPLICATIONS -

PF = Full Planning Permission

PM = Planning Permission – Reserved Matters

LA = Alteration to Listed Building

- i) Members were extremely dismayed and disappointed to learn that the applicants, 'Arqiva', were instructed by the Department for Media, Culture & Sport to officially **withdraw** Application No. **PF/15/1208** – *Proposal; Installation of 30 metre high shared telecommunications base station tower with six antennas and associated ground based equipment cabinets at, Friary Farm Caravan Park, Cley Road, Blakeney*, hence this application has now been withdrawn.

It was therefore **proposed & agreed** that we write to both our District & County Cllr and give them our full permission and agreement to continue to question the outcomes of this application, its process and the whole way in which it was handled and we would ask that they continue to look into the possibilities of a telephone mast and alternative solutions.

- ii) Application No. **PF/15/1537** - *Proposal; Erection of replacement boathouse with new boathouse and office at, Bliss, Blakeney, Morston Road, Blakeney*. It was **proposed & agreed** (other than 1 against and 1 abstention) that we have **no objection**.
- iii) Application No. **LA/15/1407** – *Proposal; Re-roofing single storey area over staffroom including construction of parapet wall to match existing churchyard wall at, Blakeney C of E Va Primary School, Wiveton Road, Blakeney*. It was **proposed & agreed** that we **support** this application.
- iv) Application No. **PF/15/1596** – *Proposal; Erection of single storey extension to rear of dwelling at, 18 Queens Close, Blakeney*. It was **proposed & agreed** that we have **no objection**.
- v) Application No. **PF/15/1540** – *Proposal; Overflow car parking area for Blakeney Hotel at, Blakeney Hotel, on The Pastures Land*. It was **proposed & agreed** that we **object** to this application for the following reasons.

The site, the subject of this application, is part of The Pastures, and an extremely attractive open grassed area in the middle of the village of Blakeney. It forms a considerable part of this grassed area and has for at least 30 years been enjoyed by locals and visitors alike for walking and other leisure pursuits.

The Pastures is part of a linked area of Open Spaces defined on your Proposals Map as Open Land in the heart of the village and lies within the Blakeney Conservation Area and the Norfolk Coastal Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The use of this part of The Pastures as a car park will seriously detract from the appearance of the conservation area and of this part of the AONB and will

thus be contrary to the environmental policies included in your Local Development Framework Core Strategy.

Policy EN1 – ‘Proposals that have an adverse effect on the AONB will not be permitted unless the benefits clearly outweigh any adverse impacts.’

The overflow parking proposal is not required and has not been needed in the past. There are adequate parking spaces for the occupants of The Blakeney Hotel, and staff cars can be parked in the free car park by the village hall on the opposite side of the road from The Pastures.

This policy goes on to say that ‘development proposals that will be significantly detrimental to the special qualities of the Norfolk Coast AONB and their settings will not be permitted.’

Policy EN2 – ‘Protection and Enhancement of Landscape of Settlement Character’. This proposal goes against policy EN2 as it will not protect, conserve or enhance the special qualities and distinctiveness of the Open Space, nor the setting of and views from the conservation area.

EN4 – Design – This proposal will have a significantly detrimental effect on the residential amenity of nearby occupiers as communicated by a number of them.

Policy EN 8 - This states that ‘ the character and the appearance of conservation areas will be preserved, and where possible enhanced.’ Clearly this proposal does neither.

Policy CT1 – Open Space Designations – States that ‘development will not be permitted in Open Land areas, except where it enhances the open character or recreational use of the land.’ The use of this part of the Pastures as a car park clearly fails this test.

This policy also states that ‘development proposals which result in the whole or partial loss of Open Space will not be permitted unless the space does not contribute to the character of the settlement and is surplus to requirements.’ The proposal goes against this policy in both respects.

The National Planning Policy Framework explicitly states, (para. 115) that ‘great weight must be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which have the highest status of protection.’ It also says (para. 215) that ‘ due weight should be given to relevant policies in existing plans.’

Section 72 of the planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 gives the District Council a statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas. We consider the current proposal to turn this part of The

Pastures into a car park would, in contrast, seriously damage the character and appearance of this part of the Blakeney Conservation Area and the Planning Application should be refused.

vi) Members noted the reply from the Department for Communities & Local Government about the **Enforcement of Planning Permissions** having raised concerns with our MP, which states that whilst Planning Permission is a function of the local authority, (in our case North Norfolk District Council), Building Regulations approval may be carried out either by the local authority or by an approved inspector. Most approved inspectors are private sector companies. It is for the person carrying out the building work to decide whether to use the local authority or an approved inspector as their building control body.

It is not uncommon for different drawings to be given to the planning authority and the building control body as the drawings are for different purposes. Those given to the planning authority would typically show the siting of a building on its site, the footprint of the building, its height, external appearance, etc. Those given to the building control body need to show the construction details to a level that allows the building control body to determine whether the building, if constructed according to the plans, would comply with all the applicable requirements in the Building Regulations.

Building control bodies have no powers to enforce planning conditions or whether a building is built in accordance with a planning permission; this is wholly a matter for the planning authority concerned as it has powers to take enforcement action against unauthorised deviations from the planning permission.

9. FINANCE.

9.1. It was ***proposed & agreed*** that the **Accounts** for November totalling £7,084.89 are paid.

9.2. The **Clerk/RFO Report** –

i) Reported the current balances held, the income of the Carnser and Coronation Car Park, and advised that as per the Councils previous decision, £30k was being transferred to the Bank of Ireland a/c.

ii) Further to questions from members over the delay to the installation of the **BMX track**, D.T. Leisure had confirmed that they now plan to start this work in April/May 2016 having decided that the winter months do not give best ground conditions.

iii) The **Finance Committee** will meet on Wednesday 16th December and all members of the Parish Council have been asked to consider any items and associated costs, which they would like to have taken into consideration,

whether they be related to Full Council or any of the Committees or Charitable Trusts of the Parish Council. They must be fed into the Clerk within the forthcoming week.

9.3. It was ***proposed & agreed*** that we accept the estimate from F. Woodrow & Son to convert the remaining part of the **Brick Bus Shelter** using the same materials and specification as in the first phase.

9.4. It was ***proposed & agreed*** that we do look to purchase a new metal field gate for the **Former School Field** and to consent to it being installed, but that we bring back costs for additional posts and fitting.

9.5. Members noted that the **Annual Return for 2014/15** has been signed off satisfactorily by Mazars, the external auditors with no matters for concern having been raised.

9.6. Members were provided with quotes and additional information with regard fees and options, to undertake new build development on the site of the **Memorial Cottages**, New Road, Blakeney. It was ***proposed & agreed*** that we use the services of SMG Architects as per their letter dated 21st October 2015 and that we apply to build 2 detached bungalows on this land.

10. TRANSPORT ITEMS & REPRESENTATIVES ON OTHER BODIES

10.1. Following the Carnser Car Park end of season meeting with the attendants and a representative of The National Trust, at which the Clerk and Cllr Donohoe was present, members were given information and pictures showing the condition of the entrance to the **Carnser Car Park** in order to determine if any work is to be undertaken ahead of the new season. Those working on site feel that the tarmac entrance needs to be made an additional 2 metres deeper, preferably with concrete and then shingle rolled on the top, so that it blends in with the car park. Members ***proposed & agreed*** that they would like to take the advice of the Highways representative Tony Pointer before making any decision, and wondered if the interlocking grid system filled with material would work.

10.2. Members were in receipt of the minutes of the **North Norfolk Tourism overview & Management Forum** which was held on Monday 23rd November, which Cllr Rosemary Thew attended on our behalf. The group agreed that a meeting would be arranged at Cromer in February to which all the North Norfolk parishes will be invited and they will seek support to canvass for government action regarding second homes council tax and affordable housing (allocation & right to buy) and they will involve NfkALC. They will also arrange a presentation at the meeting from an independent consultant concerning the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan. Cllr Thew, will also attend the next meeting.

10.3. The Annual Return for the year ending 31st March 2015 has been submitted on behalf of the **BLAKENEY WAR MEMORIAL COTTAGES**.

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10.4. It was ***proposed & agreed*** that rather than purchasing our own industrial BBQ which we can use each year at our annual **Bonfire & Fireworks Event** that we look into the costs of hiring an additional one each year from a company.

11. **COUNCILLORS QUESTIONS** – There were none.

12. **CORRESPONDENCE** - None received.

Meeting closed at 9.02pm.

Chairman _____