

HOE & WORTHING CIVIL PARISH MEETING

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL, HOE ON THURSDAY 30TH MAY 2024 AT 6.00 P.M

Present: - Celia Daniel - Chairman and Councillors
Cllr Sam Chapman-Allen, Leader of Breckland District Council & Executive Member of Corporate Strategy, Mr Simon Wood, Breckland District Council, Director of Planning & Building Control, Dist.Cllr Roger Atterwill, also Chairman of Swanton Morley Parish Council, Dist.Cllr Richard Duffield, and Norfolk County Councillor Cllr Bill Borrett, Mr George Freeman, Conservative M.P. for Mid Norfolk (informal visit)

Also in attendance: Griselda Hubbard - Parish Clerk

Mrs Anna Cooper, Mr Ian Cooper, Mr Richard Crisp, Mr Alec Crisp, Mr Danny Danson, Mr Andrew Davies, Mrs Elaine Davies, Ms Tracey Green, Mr Graham Lewis, Mrs Johanna Lewis, Mrs Margaret Barrett, Mr James Keith, Mr Richard Malt, Mrs Susan Malt, Mr Phillip Stroulger, Mrs Jenny Tuckwell, Mr John Tuckwell, Mr Carl Watling and Mrs Glenys Watling.

Others Present:- Mrs Karen Clare and Mr Michael Clare

1. Welcome and to receive apologies for absence.

The Chairman welcomed all those present as minuted above, and also to receive apologies. She explained to those present why Breckland District Council members had been invited, which was to talk through the closure of Robertson Barracks and how this may affect the Parish.

Apologies received from:- Mr Clive Hough, Mrs Wendy Hough, Mick Dunn, Mr Ivan Mayes, Ms Katie Mayes, Mrs Pamela Mayes, Mr Philip Barrett, Mr Peter Fishwick, Mr John Hardiment, Mrs Lorna Hardiment, Mrs Krystyna Stroulger and Mrs Jane Witcher, Rev'd Rachael Dines.

Appendix 1 - Parish Chairman & Planning Report

Confirmation that Celia Daniel is willing to continue as Chairman, there were no other nominations for this post.

2. To confirm & accept minutes of the parish meeting held on 26th October 2023

Those present agreed the minutes be accepted and were signed by the Chairman.

3. URGENT BUSINESS - Breckland Draft Local Plan

Repurposing Robertson Barracks 6-week public consultation period with Open Session for Q & A's / Responses

Dist. Cllr Atterwill explained that he has known since 2016 that the Barracks will close and circulated a document of information to those present. It was called for as a site in 2022. In January 2024 he was contacted by the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) dealing with the disposal of the site. DIO will provide a website with information for all to view. Cllr advised that a site visit to the Barracks took place on the 30th April. A 6-week consultation period will commence beginning of June till 15th July. This is an opportunity for individuals to record their views on the BDC website. A map was presented illustrating the location and other information.

Mr Wood explained that the Draft Local Plan Update June 2024 of Preferred Options is for consultation. It's not a final document, and nothing is set in stone. New sites across Breckland are needed for between 4,500 to 5,000 new dwellings and one option being reviewed is the Robertson Barracks site. There are other strategic sites and options. The Barracks will close at the end of this decade so a decision needs to be made as to what will happen with that site. Breckland Council is working with other organisations and the D.I.O and their advisers, gathering necessary evidence base. At present, there is no detailed planning however, it will be necessary to establish some broad principles. This is at a very early stage and BDC are aware of the concerns of local people, in particular, Highways and Infrastructure. It will be some time before a planning application goes forward and at the moment, it is a fact-finding exercise so people should make their concerns known. The call for sites needs to be very open and the Barracks site will most likely be released for housing and employment. There are 3 strategic main sites. 1 - Robertson Barracks, 2 - Dereham and 3 - Barkers Farm, Larling.

Cllr Chapman-Allen reiterated that by working with communities, reviewing the local plan and call for sites to find appropriate growth is a big challenge, particularly to address many homeless people currently.

Q - Mr Keith asked whether other stakeholders and developers of the other 2 sites were being consulted with.

A – Mr Wood confirmed they were being consulted; the exact same process is being applied there. Cllr Atterwill stated he has an open mind about the Barracks. He thought Highways and Water could be an issue. Mr Wood's Team has not finished its work on these issues, there are more questions than answers.

Cllr Chapman-Allen said 10,000 houses are currently needed across Norfolk. Breckland's master plan needs to build and deliver 661 each year, to address housing need and shortage. Mr Keith raised his concern building on the airfield as a brown field site where in fact it is a green field site and should remain as such.

Cllr Borrett thanked Cllr Chapman-Allen and Mr Wood for attending the meeting and to hear our views. He understands what is required when choosing sites but believes only a third of the site is built up and when the M.O.D. leave, there will need to be a plan not to build on the part that is already built on. He would like to see the base developed but feels it is a false choice to say there needs to be 2,000. He does not think the infrastructure for the base needs to happen and not everyone wants 2,000 on the site. Cllr Duffield considered the plan was produced in good faith.

Q - Mr Lewis questioned why the consultation period was only 6 weeks and what is it for?

A – Mr Wood mentioned this is the statutory process and procedure to follow. 6 weeks is the time given to hear views. Breckland Council are engaging with their stake holders and a wide range of people. The process may change next year. If Breckland Council put forward a site and felt it was justified, it would go out for consultation followed by an examining process provided by an Independent Examiner. Mr Lewis also thinks there is a genuine concern around flooding, He stated that where the site is situated, a huge area of water is close by. Breckland Council stated they were conscious of those issues. The figure of 2,000 homes needs to be considered but it is not necessarily the exact final figure, a smaller figure possibly. The Barracks would be decommissioned and redeveloped. Some houses are already in place, others may be new builds.

Mr Malt queried the development of the airfield as Hoe and Worthing do not have a settlement boundary, are the controls of the boundary relaxed? Cllr Chapman-Allen confirmed there was no boundary settlement or a neighbourhood plan in place however, we do need to meet housing needs.

Q - Mrs Daniel mentioned, during war time, some land had been compulsory purchased. Will the land return to the original owners?

A - Cllr Atterwill explained the rules regarding the Critical D Principal would apply. The Secretary of State would make that decision. Mr Keith felt the land should return to those families. Cllr Chapman-Allen advised it was a matter for The Crown.

Q - Mr Cooper asked how many of the 2,000 properties will be 2nd homes? No one actually had numbers but considered there are few second homes in the County.

A – Cllr Chapman-Allen mentioned that if we move forward with the site, through negotiations, placing conditions should control 2nd homes. Mr Wood considered reforming housing policy may be necessary.

Q – Mr Tuckwell thought 350 houses would be a reasonable number to build for this site. The next Parish Meeting due is after the consultation period has expired. He thought that if the views of those present tonight were to be gathered, it needed to happen now.

A - Mrs Daniel explained that we need to encourage the whole parish to give their views. We shall be setting up a Working Party Group and process to collect all views.

Q - Mr Watling asked the Breckland representatives that if Plan A is for the housing, is there a Plan B. He was aware other RAF closed sites provided Prison and business park facilities. There was also potential for other things such as accommodating asylum seekers. He asked if there was any other purpose for the site, apart from housing?

A – Cllr Chapman-Allen If the scheme does not move forward, Breckland Council will have to work out what is the best use for the site. The Home Office and the Ministry of Justice could suggest it be used for something else. It might be considered not viable.

Q – Mr Danson asked Breckland Council if they would consider the views of the residents present.

A – Mr Wood confirmed Breckland needs to receive all views from across the community. Breckland Council must evidence this to the Independent Examiner therefore everyone is encouraged to do this.

Cllr Atterwill added the road through Swanton Morley could manage traffic from 2,000 houses. Mr Wood has done a good piece of work on the delivery plan of the site, Dereham Town needs improvements with regard to connectivity from Dereham onto the A47. He believes part of the road connectivity could be improved and give access to the Robertson Barracks site. He also thought a Northern Bypass would be useful. Employment opportunities need to be created and this plan should not be dismissed, people should let Breckland Council do their work, there will be a few consultation periods. As already said, nothing is set in stone, and nothing has been promised. Breckland Council needs resident's opinions to shape the proposals.

Cllr Borrett stated he thought the residents would engage and say what they feel about the scale, the number of properties and what affect the situation will have. Mr Lewis pointed out that residents live in Hoe and Worthing because they want to live there, and they enjoy the quietness. Filling the area with a housing criteria does not respect those living in the parish.

Q - Mr Keith asked Cllr Duffield what his opinions were.

A – Cllr Duffield wanted to hear the opinions of the residents and look at what is available on the site.

Q - Mr Keith asked why the DIO was receiving preferential treatment and landowners had not been contacted in the past regarding building houses. He does not believe Breckland Council have engaged with landowners who have put forward several acres to build houses. There are areas in some other villages suitable for house building.

A – Mr Wood stressed this was a call for sites across the market town and to receive submissions for housing.

Q - Mr Davies considered this development on 700 acres of land was more of a sales pitch presented by the DIO. Why was Shipdham Airfield not put for houses?

A – Mr Wood mentioned Breckland cannot approach people directly for housing. Shipdham was for employment not houses. Cllr Chapman-Allen said Breckland Council want to build houses in correct places and if all the sites fail, they will have to start again. On BDC website there are explanations as to why some sites were not put forward and the Council stressed the housing situation has to be correct, there are National Government Guidelines. The DIO could in effect submit their own planning application.

Q – Mrs Cooper said from what has already been discussed, there appears no mention of people on low income or the elderly population.

A – Mr Wood mentioned Breckland had carried out an independent viability assessment showing not enough affordable houses being built and also those for independent living. If the DIO project were to go ahead, this would be addressed including social housing and on other sites. The Council is dealing with this now in a better way.

The Parish expressed their thanks to our Councillors for attending this part of the meeting before they departed. 7.30pm

Hoe & Worthing Working Party Group

Group Members – Celia Daniel, Bill Borrett, Graham Lewis, Alec Crisp, Peter Fishwick and James Keith.

The group will collate all the views of the residents and a report will be presented to BDC for their review. A questionnaire will be delivered to all households and collected when completed. It will include land and business residents. The objective of the Working Group will be to look at concerns and then have another Parish Meeting to look at the draft response. Breckland Council wish to hear the views of the residents. Mr Borrett made a proposal that the Hoe and Worthing Meeting support the idea of the brown field site being developed for residential and employment, it does not want to see any development on the green field site beyond the Control tower. There were 10 votes in favour, 2 abstained, proposal carried.

4. URGENT BUSINESS - Breckland Electoral Review – public consultation period, closing date 15th July 2024.

This was last carried out in 2015. Breckland Council reduced its councillors from 54 to 49 and 36 wards were reduced to 27 wards. Regarding the Local Government Boundary Commission Electoral review, the boundary line for Hoe and Worthing Parish stretches across Hoe village and Worthing village. The review may change numbers i.e. increase members from 49 to 51 and increase the number of wards, or no change to the boundary line. Currently, there are many Councillors representing a few wards. Eventually there may be one Councillor representing one ward. **PLEASE VISIT BDC**

WEBSITE AND ACCESS BRECKLAND'S ELECTORAL REVIEW DOCUMENTS. I WOULD ENCOURAGE EVERYONE PLEASE TO "HAVE YOUR SAY." Open session for Q & A's

Q - Mr Lewis asked what could happen in the future regarding the boundaries.

A - Cllr Atterwill suggested that residents go onto the website and give their views **before the deadline of the 15th July, when the consultation period ends.**

5. Any other URGENT business:- BRING & SHARE LUNCHEON

"Big Help Out" over 3 days 7th – 9th June 2024 / D-Day 6th June (1944) – 80th Anniversary 2024

It was felt there was not enough time to prepare for this, so it will probably take place sometime in July/August. Date and details to follow.

6. Matters arising from the minutes of the 26th October 2023 meeting - There were no matters raised.

7. To receive reports from: (copies will be available to read/take away)

- Appendix 2 District Councillor report
- Appendix 3 Treasurers & Internal Audit Reports 2023/24 and to review and approve insurance provision. Cllr Borrett proposed the accounts be adopted, seconded by Mrs Lewis and carried as all were in favour. Two financial invoices need to be authorised for payment, one for £28.60 which Mrs Hubbard presented to the Chairman for preparing the Parish Meeting accounts and one for £74.36 for preparing the Village Hall accounts. They were authorised for payment. Mr Lewis will continue to be the internal auditor and Mrs Hubbard will continue to maintain the accounts.
The insurance is due on 18th August and the premium cost is quite high. Mr Borrett proposed that the Chairman and Mrs Hubbard be allowed to investigate other insurance companies with a view to obtaining a lower premium price. Mr Watling seconded the proposal, and it was carried.
- Appendix 4 Worthing Flood December 2020 update. Mr Graham Lewis will continue to be the representative for Flooding.
- Appendix 5 Hoe & Worthing Highways representatives – Mr Carl Watling (Hoe) and Mr Mick Dunn (Worthing)
- Appendix 6 Hoe Common representative – Mr Dick Malt
- St. Andrews Church P.C.C. & Village Hall. Mr James Keith – Church Warden and Mrs Malt will continue to be responsible for hall bookings. Report not available
- Appendix 7 St. Margaret's Church P.C.C. Mrs Celia Daniel & Mrs Miranda Smith – Church Wardens

8. Planning Applications as notified recently via Breckland District Council

There were no outstanding applications to discuss.

9. To note, next set of Parish Meetings starting with:

- 24th October 2024 FINANCE, Worthing Church, 7.00 p.m.
- 15th May 2025 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, Hoe Village Hall, 7.00 p.m.
- 23rd October 2025, FINANCE, Worthing Church, 7.00 p.m.
- 14th May 2026, ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, Hoe Village Hall, 7.00 p.m.

10. Agenda items for the next meeting on 24th October 2024

Finance -half yearly review and Budget Setting for 2025/2026

Review requests received from charities for financial support – to be submitted **NO LATER THAN 1ST OCTOBER 2024 IN WRITING TO CHAIRMAN PLEASE.**

Update on new and/or outstanding Planning Applications, Breckland Local Plan & Electoral Review

There being no further business to discuss, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and declared the meeting closed at 8.55 p.m. She asked those present to take away with them copies of the reports, and thanked Parish representatives for drafting their reports. The Chairman also thanked Mrs Hubbard for preparing the accounts.

Signed

Celia Daniel (Hoe & Worthing Parish Chairman)

Date