

# Blofield Parish Council

Minutes of the Blofield Parish Council Planning Meeting held at Blofield Courthouse on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> July 2018 at 7.30pm – 9.40pm.

## PRESENT

Rob Christie, Stella Shackle, Paul Culley-Barber, Joseph Scholes, Pat Wilson, Paul Baverstock, Mary Moxon, Stuart Smith, Sarah Dhesi and Melanie Eversfield (assistant clerk).

1. Welcome and Introduction to the meeting by the Chair, Rob Christie.
2. **TO CONSIDER APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**  
Apologies were received from Yvonne Burton. No apologies were received from David Ward.
3. **TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST ON ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**
  - 3.1. Councillor Dhesi declared a personal interest in agenda item 8.1.

*Suspend standing orders*

4. **OPEN FORUM - FOR PARISHIONERS TO RAISE QUESTIONS ON AND/OR MAKE STATEMENTS ABOUT MATTERS ON THE AGENDA**
  - 4.1. 7 parishioners were present.
  - 4.2. There were no comments/questions raised from parishioners.

*Resume standing orders*

5. **TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PLANNING PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 2<sup>nd</sup> JULY 2018.**  
The parish council unanimously approved the minutes of the planning parish meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2018 and they were duly signed by the chair.

6. **TO CONSIDER COUNCIL FEEDBACK ON PLANNING APPLICATIONS RECEIVED FROM BROADLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL**

6.1. **Application: 20172131**

Application for reserved matters approval for 163 dwellings and associated open space following outline planning permission ref: 20160488.

Location: Land to the North of Yarmouth Road, Blofield.

*It was AGREED to arrange a meeting with, at least, the Planning Officer and S106 Officer to discuss the Parish Council's concerns. It is hoped that Hopkin Homes will also attend the meeting. In the meantime, the Assistant Clerk is to send a response stating that the Council's previous comments still stand, and they are unhappy that Hopkin Homes have failed to answer any of our concerns.*

6.2. **Application: 20181043**

Residential development of up to 4 dwellings (Outline)

Location: Land off Yarmouth Road, Blofield, NR13 4LQ.

*The council heard from four local residents and discussed the application at length. The council voted unanimously to object to the application and the council's concerns and comments are below.*

**Location – Status of site**

1. *Outside settlement limit.*
2. *Not identified/allocated site.*
3. *Predatory application.*

## **Access**

- *Via private drive already serving 4 properties.*
- *The length and the narrow width, with passing impossible, make it unsuitable for further development.*
- *Health & Safety: the width required for a fire tender to access a site is 20' and the drive will not permit this.*
- *There can be no pavement so safety issues for pedestrians encountering a vehicle.*
- *The large properties proposed will bring a disproportionate increase in traffic movements – cars plus delivery vans etc.*
- *The drive is unlit, and will remain so in view of the parish 'dark skies' policy, adding to pedestrian safety issues after dark.*
- *Rubbish disposal: this is a private drive so bins have to be left at the kerb. Currently only 4 bins are left at the roadside; where would a minimum of 8 bins go without blocking the pavement? On whose land?*
- *The drive joins Yarmouth Road which has a 30mph limit; however the data from a SAM2 sign deployed nearby on a regular basis shows that vehicles are generally travelling significantly above the limit, encouraged by the width of the road (built to trunk-road standards as old A47) so although visibility is good any vehicle having to reverse out, for example because it meets an exiting vehicle on the narrow drive, is at risk.*

## **The site**

- *A local resident [40+ years knowledge] reports that since construction of the by-pass the site has suffered from flooding at the north end and the line of mature willow trees, identified for removal, suggests a moist ground.*
- *Another local resident challenges the characterisation in the Design & Access Statement of the site as low-value ecologically; he has supplied details of flora and fauna to BDC.*
- *The proximity to the A47 means noise and air pollution issues. The D&A Statement admits the noise problem and says it can be addressed at design stage; it indicatively shows 3m and 4m high fencing in places. The suggested mitigation measures require windows to be closed to meet the minimum noise standards which seems to require mechanical ventilation to the properties, with all that implies in terms of energy use, and casts serious doubt about the amenity value of the gardens. The house on the adjoining plot to the east enjoys a substantial earth bund and a planned development at the west end of the village and which also abuts the A47, proposes significant bunds in order to manage the noise issue. Given the current land-supply why persist in trying to make an unsuitable site useable?*
- *Safety – will there be a hydrant installed to ensure an adequate water supply? There has been a fire in recent years at a property in the village where the lack of water pressure required fire tenders to cycle between the nearest hydrant and the fire.*

## **Planning issues**

- *The land-supply is calculated at < 5years on JCS criteria but at >8 years on the most-recent and more relevant criteria (SHMA) - so it is no longer possible to maintain there is not an adequate land supply. The SHMA is a material consideration in the determination of applications and as there is an abundant housing land supply this should be given weight in the decision making process*
- *We will refer to the NPPF principles of sustainable development but remember the context: under the JCS Blofield village was to receive '50 or a few more' houses. Currently >400 have been approved for the settlement (and more for the parish as a whole) so how can there be any need for more from a speculative application?*
- *The D&A Statement ignores Blofield parish Neighbourhood Plan. In particular policies HOU1, which addresses the specific needs of the local population; HOU4 which respects the settlement limit and the Site Allocations DPD; and ENV3, which covers drainage issues, appear to be relevant and to have been ignored.*

## **NPPF and Sustainable development**

### **Economic role:**

- *Short-term benefits from construction – but unlikely to be enjoyed by the parish/parishioners unless contractors live here.*
- *Limited longer-term benefits at best. Are occupiers of 4 (large executive-style dwellings) likely to be a significant benefit to the local economy?*

*A small level of economic benefit at best.*

**Social role:**

- *The site is outside the settlement limit; a 10 -15 minute walk to village shops, school, surgery and library and east-bound buses. West-bound buses are 5 -10 minutes walk away. The service is limited. This is an unsustainable location in transport terms with poor accessibility to services and facilities on foot or by public transport. The development will encourage more short car-journeys and add to the problems of the long driveway.*
- *The proposal is for 4 properties and <1000 sq.m so no affordable housing is offered per Ministerial Statement of 28.11.2014. No social benefit.*
- *Similarly as 4 properties no recreational space or contribution in lieu is provided per Policies EN3 and RL1 of the Development Management DPD. No social benefit.*
- *The proposal is for large dwellings. There is no shortage of these: look at the proportion of the approved houses that are 4 or 4+ bedrooms. The local need is for 2 and 3 bed properties and bungalows. BpNP Policy HOU1 refers.*
- *Look at the evidence of the SHMA – there is no 'need' for these houses.*

*No social benefit whatsoever given the contribution to the supply of homes is not required per SHMA.*

**Environmental role:**

- *The proposal is to build on open land that is a buffer between the settlement limit and the dual-carriageway A47.*
- *The proposal will lead to further applications for land adjoining to the west, see the latest GNLP proposed sites, further eroding the buffer and reducing open space on the edge of a village.*
- *The land is of greater ecological value than suggested in the D&A Statement*
- *The loss of trees will have an urbanising effect.*
- *The land is subject to some surface water drainage issues.*
- *The measures that will be required to mitigate the noise will not be to the benefit of the environment and may well be visually intrusive e.g 3m and 4m fencing.*

*No environmental benefits at all.*

**Parish Council's conclusions:**

*The Parish Council believes that the very modest economic, and virtually non-existent social and environmental, benefits would not outweigh the loss of open land. The site is unsuitable for housing by virtue of its limited access and the proximity to the A47. The site is located outside the settlement limit of Blofield, is distanced from the services and facilities of the village and will generate additional journeys by car. There are nearby properties within the settlement limit and observation supports the contention that private cars are used rather than public transport or pedestrian modes, including short journeys such as the school run. Policies 1 and 2 of the JCS and GC2 and GC4 of the DM DPD all support minimising the need to travel and the use of sustainable transport modes; the site's location is likely to mean its occupants would be heavily reliant on the private car, contrary to these policies. We believe the development would conflict with environmental objectives of the NPPF and the adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly – and demonstrably - outweigh the benefits and that the application is contrary to Policy GC1 of the DM DPD and Paragraph 14 of the NPPF.*

*For the above reasons we object to the application and ask that it be refused.*

*If despite this the planning authority is minded to approve the Parish Council would seek some conditions:*

- *Improved noise abatement to eliminate the need for closed windows and mechanical ventilation,*

and to improve the usability of the gardens.

- Some community benefit. The land to the west is in common ownership and an agreement to make it available as community land for leisure and recreation would provide genuine social benefit.
- Create a 'waiting' space at the entry to the site to allow exiting vehicles to wait with a clear view down the drive before attempting to exit, and for oncoming vehicles to pass safely.
- Provide a proper solution to the collection of bins at the roadside that avoids blocking the pavement.
- Require development to commence within 2 years.

These requested conditions are damage-limitation and the Parish Council is firmly opposed to this application.

### 6.3 Application 20181183

Private Motor Cross Track & Change of Use of Agricultural Land to Residential Curtilage.

Location: Red House, Shack Lane, Blofield, NR13 4DP

*It was AGREED to send the following comments to Broadland District Council: -*

*Having studied the planning application in great detail it is obvious that the Parish Council's previous comments to related planning applications 20170157, 20171131 and 20180198 have been totally ignored. The Parish Council therefore strongly objects to this planning application on grounds previously stated including concerns over the close proximity to Howes Meadow, the Public Footpath (FP3) being blocked by the landowner, the fact that Shack Lane now floods when it rains due to the drains being blocked up ever since the fence has been erected and also the overall damage to the environment. It should be noted that there are also discrepancies in the hours of use between the Design and Access Statement and the Noise Assessment reports.*

*If the planning authority are minded to approve the application the Parish Council would seek some conditions: -*

- Consider the hours/days of operation;
- All bikes MUST be fitted with sound suppressers.

*Previous comments are as follows: -*

*20170157 - The Parish Council's comments previously submitted appear not to have been taken on board and so they are restated here again for this retrospective planning permission. The application form omits FP3 as identified below and the Council would seek assurances that access to FP3 is maintained. The Council has concerns that the provision of the fence could contribute towards flooding onto Shack Lane-Neighbourhood Plan Policy ENV3: Drainage-states that future development should not cause or contribute to the problem of flooding or drainage issues, or pollution. The Council has concerns about the height of the fence and including visibility splays due to the narrowness of the lane. The Council unanimously supports the comments above and object to this planning application.*

*20171131-Objections. Previous comments submitted by Blofield Parish Council to planning application 20170157 appear not to have been taken on board. The moto cross element of this application appears to be at odds with the Neighbourhood Plan Objective 3: To protect and enhance the countryside, including wildlife habitats and open spaces, of which Howes Meadow is explicitly mentioned in NP ENV1. Therefore, there are concerns that the pollution from the Moto Cross track would have an adverse effect on the ecology of Howes Meadow and the Whitton Run. Section 13 of the application form correctly as the proposal is adjacent to Howes Meadow, a site of Biodiversity and Geological Conservation. If approved a condition should be applied to have the applicant contribute to regular testing (say 6 monthly) of the water quality in Howes Meadow and if any detrimental effect has been identified to cease operations at the Moto Cross Track immediately. Concerns about flooding occurring on Shack Lane that has now become impassable in heavy rainfall-possibly from run off from the site and former drainage ditches being blocked. The Council are also concerned about the noise levels of the Moto Cross Track and would wish to seek measures to control operational hours and restriction to personal use to limit the number of bikes using the track at any one time; and/or monitoring of the noise via decibel metering, similar to the constraints introduced to the High Noon Farm cross track requested by Strumpshaw Parish Council.*

20180198-The Parish Council strongly object to this application and make the following comments: The application form omits reference to footpath FP3 and therefore the Council is seeking assurance that public access will be maintained to this footpath. There are concerns that the provision of the fence could contribute toward flooding on Shack Lane - NP ENV3 Drainage states that future development should not contribute to or cause flooding or drainage issues, or pollution. The Council have concerns about the height of the fence and including visibility splays due to the narrowness of the lane. Recommendation: Object strongly - the fence should come down and the hedging which was in place before the fence was installed should be reinstated.

**6.4 Application 20181205**

1. Raising roof to create Chalet Bungalow. 2. Front and rear extension with additional external alterations including rendering and cladding.

Location: The Haven, 28 Stocks Lane, Blofield, NR13 4JZ

It was AGREED to make no comment on this application however, if additional information or plans come to light the Parish Council would appreciate the chance to look at the additional information.

**7. TO CONSIDER FEEDBACK ON ANY PLANNING APPLICATIONS RECEIVED SUBSEQUENT TO THE PUBLICATION OF THE AGENDA**

7.1. Application: 20180783

Single detached dwelling & detached garage (outline)

Location: The Conifers, Orchard Close, Blofield NR13 4SE.

The Assistant Clerk informed the Council that additional plans had come in with regard to extending the plot size and also an arboricultural report. It was AGREED to make no comment on this application however, if additional information or plans come to light the Parish Council would appreciate the chance to look at the additional information.

**8. TO RECEIVE A PLANNING UPDATE**

8.1. Norfolk County Council re. Greater Norwich Local Plan – Additional Sites. Noted.

8.2. Broadland District Council re. Planning Application 20162199-Land off Blofield Corner Road, Blofield. The Clerk read out a response from the Planning Officers with regard to the Parish Council's concerns at the last Planning Meeting with regard to the Health and Safety Executive and Broadland District Council. This was noted.

8.3. There were no other planning matters.

**9. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE VILLAGE SIGN PROJECT.**

9.1. Councillors Dehsi and Smith gave a presentation on the project so far and their findings along with possible suggestions. It was AGREED that Councillor Dehsi would contact Acle Parish Council regarding their signs that have been installed and seek feedback from them. The Assistant Clerk to contact the Highways Officer for Blofield and request a site meeting with Councillors Dehsi and Smith to discuss locations and possible restrictions regarding the signs.

Signed.....

Dated.....