

MINUTES OF THE BROMPTON REGIS PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT BROMPTON REGIS VILLAGE HALL ON WEDNESDAY 7th AUGUST 2019

333 PRESENT

Miss S. Newton (Chairman), Mr. I. Abel, Mr. J. Andrews, Mr. S. Coates, Mr. M. Headley, Miss L. Luxton, Cllr. F. Nicholson, Mr. P. Page (Vice Chairman), Cllr. N. Thwaites, and in attendance Mr. D. Kinsella, ENPA Planning Officer and Mrs. S. Buchanan (Clerk). Two members of the public were present (Mr. R. Cowling and Mrs. M. Nicholson).

334 APOLOGIES

None.

335 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

336 Mr. Dean Kinsella, ENPA Planning Officer

The Chairman welcomed Mr. Kinsella to the meeting to discuss with Parish Councillors the planning policy and procedures in Exmoor National Park. Mr. Kinsella invited the meeting to raise questions and comments and the following points were discussed.

- Quality of planning application documents: parish councillors expressed concern at the poor quality of drawings and scanned documents and highlighted the difficulty of interpreting site maps of poor quality. Mr. Kinsella advised that the ENPA checklist used to assess documentation before defining an eligible planning application is to be updated.
- Amended plans: parish councillors noted lack of clarity on what has been amended. Mr. Kinsella advised that the ENPA cannot insist that amendments are clearly shown and that in the short term ENPA officers will advise consultees on the nature of amendments.
- Enforcement: parish councillors asked for clarity on the limits and restrictions on enforcement action and the timetable for action. Mr. Kinsella advised that enforcement is addressed on a case by case basis and that it is recognised that frustration may occur where conclusions differ between cases. The ENPA believes that a strong enforcement process is important and will issue enforcement notices and as necessary will take landowners to court and that the enforcement policy depends on the criteria of expediency and cost.
- Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act: Mr. Kinsella advised that this may be used if there is a significant detrimental effect on amenity.
- Retrospective applications: parish councillors asked if action on the ground prior to an application being submitted affects the decision making process regarding planning permission. Mr. Kinsella advised that it did not and noted

that the requirement for retrospective applications to be submitted indicated relatively efficient enforcement.

- Rural housing: parish councillors questioned the focus of recent guidance on national standards of size and design vis a vis local circumstances and traditions of 'long and low' buildings. Mr. Kinsella advised that it is not the ENPA's intention to encourage standard design but to identify a variety of ways of developing housing in the national park.
- Solar panels: parish councillors expressed concern at apparent lack of clarity within the ENPA in the context of advice to property owners re past and current additions of solar panels to houses. Mr. Kinsella said the policy is set out in the local plan and includes permitted development rights and conditions.
- Rural businesses: parish councillors expressed concern that the ENPA apparent lack of recognition of the contribution of non agricultural businesses in sustaining the area. Mr. Kinsella advised that home based businesses are mentioned in policy and that policies allow for diversification in the context of appropriate settings. In this context he highlighted the conversion and use of old farm buildings.
- Landownership: parish councillors asked if the ENPA could make clear in its policy and practice that planning applications and permissions are not related to land ownership. Mr. Kinsella confirmed that ownership of land is not a material planning consideration and that processes are in place for an applicant to provide certificates related to landownership and that provided these are served correctly the planning system and ENPA does not address landownership. He endorsed that the BRPC should make decisions based on an application not the ownership of the land to which it relates.
- Permitted development rights: Mr. Kinsella advised that these are defined in planning legislation and, if removed within the national park or for particular properties a planning application must be submitted.
- Veracity of applications: Cllr Thwaites asked what checks ENPA make on applications. Mr. Kinsella advised that the ENPA relies on good faith and welcomes comments from consultees as to the veracity of applications, when it will then seek information. He added that if certificates are incorrect and found to be so the application process begins again.
- BRPC comments: the Clerk asked for clarification on the phrasing of BRPC comments on planning applications. Mr. Kinsella advised that if the BRPC raises concerns about an application this is interpreted as an objection unless it is made clear that if the BRPC concerns are addressed it would have no objection to the application. He advised that the BRPC may submit the comment that it has no objections rather than it has no comments.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Kinsella for his contribution and he left the meeting at 8.10pm.

337 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 3RD JULY 2019

Councillors were invited to comment on the draft minutes, which had been circulated prior to the meeting. There were no amendments and the minutes were unanimously **APPROVED** and signed as a correct record.

338 MATTERS ARISING

338.1 Post Office temporary closure

Mr Page expressed continuing concern at the PO temporary closure (minute 325.4). The meeting noted that the Post Office is a commercial business, that there is not a required standard for universal provision of the service and that the loss of post offices in rural areas is a significant concern.

339. Safer Together (fire service consultation)

The meeting noted that this consultation ends on 22nd September 2019. The meeting expressed concern at the quality of the consultation document. While noting the evidence of a falling number of fires the meeting noted the potentially significant negative impacts of proposed closures in terms of availability of first responders, equipment and personnel, and speed of access to rural areas.

Parish councillors asked if the ENPA had made public comments on the consultation.

Cllr Nicholson advised that there is a facility at the end of the online form to comment that no closures are acceptable.

ACTION: CLERK write to the Parish Council member of the ENPA to ask if the ENPA has made comments on the consultation and to advise that the BRPC feels an ENPA response to the consultation may reflect the concerns of moorland parishes and the wider national park.

340. CORRESPONDENCE

340.1 Bryants Bridge path

The meeting noted receipt of correspondence from the County Council regarding the review of the status of this path. Correspondence from the landowners having been circulated to parish councillors was noted. Cllr Nicholson commented that while the report showed that the SCC decision in the past to define the path as a bridleway did not have supporting evidence it is assumed that the SCC took this decision on the basis of evidence and reason.

It was agreed that the landowners be advised to submit any evidence they have as to the status of the path.

Mr. Andrews asked what would be the cost of making the path suitable as a bridleway and if this cost offered value for money to the public purse.

Mr. Coates left the meeting at 8.20pm.

ACTION: CLERK advise the landowners to submit evidence; request information from SCC on the costs of making the path suitable as a bridleway.

340.2 Public conveniences

The Chairman advised the meeting that Williton PC had raised concerns at differentials between West Somerset and Taunton areas in the district council's funding for public conveniences. The meeting agreed that the Somerset West and Taunton Council should fairly and equitably distribute funds for this vital services, and other services, and the BRPC response to Williton PC to this effect was noted.

341. COUNCILLOR UPDATES

Cllr. Nicholson encouraged the BRPC to ensure attendance at the Highway Wardens meeting on Tuesday 3rd September which will look at the map of salt bin provision and gritting routes. She advised that the snow warden scheme will be introduced in West Somerset and is likely to be linked to the role of Highway Warden.

Cllr. Nicholson encourage the BRPC to submit comments and any concerns on planning applications and in doing so to advise, as appropriate, if and when these are addressed that the PC has no objections. She clarified that permitted development rights for solar panels on houses are the same inside and outside the national park.

Cllr. Thwaites advised the meeting that the new district council is settling into place and that actions are being taken to address inconsistencies between practices and policies between the West Somerset and Taunton areas.

Cllr. Thwaites advised that he referred concerns about the reason for charges made at the ATM at Wheddon Cross to the councillor for that area.

Cllr. Nicholson and Cllr. Thwaites left the meeting at 8.45pm.

342 PLANNING

342.1 Application 6/3/19/112 Skilgate

The meeting discussed the application and agreed no objection.

342.2 Application 6/3/19/104 Armoor Lane (adjacent parish)

The meeting discussed the application and agreed no objection.

342.3 Application 6/20/19/102 Luxborough (adjacent parish)

The meeting discussed the application and agreed no objection.

ACTION: CLERK submit the responses.

343 HIGHWAYS

Mr. Headley noted that the resurfacing of Sanctuary Lane had not removed washed out materials and had created a significant 'lump' in the road surface.

Mr. Page asked for an update on progress to address the erosion on the road edge near Woolcotts.

The Chairman noted the need for action on Storridge Lane.

ACTION: CLERK to report items as above.

344 FINANCES

344.1 Village Hall rent

Mr. Andrews proposed and Mr. Abell seconded payment of £48.75 and this was unanimously APPROVED.

344.2 Millennium Green grant

Mr. Andrews proposed and Mr. Abell seconded payment of £82.20 and this was unanimously APPROVED.

345. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

345.1 Village hall grass cutting costs

Mr. Headley advised that the village hall committee had questioned why the BRPC was not meeting these costs. The Chairman reminded the meeting of previous discussion of this matter (minute 319.1).

345.2 Hedge cutting

Mrs M. Nicholson asked when the hedge alongside the Millennium Green would be cut.

345.3 Mobile phone coverage

The Chairman drew attention to the email from the PCC which had been circulated to all parish councillors regarding proposals for the church tower to be used as a telecommunications 'mast' with equipment located inside the tower and in the basement, with antennae in the form of one small exterior panel on each side of the parapet. The meeting welcomed this news.

346. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

WEDNESDAY 4th September 2019, 7.30pm, at Brompton Regis Village Hall.

The meeting ended at 9pm.

Signed:.....Chairman, Brompton Regis Parish Council.

Date:.....