

Minutes of the North Muskham Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday, 30th November 2016 at the Muskham Rural Community Centre commencing at 7pm

Present: Councillor I Harrison in the Chair
Councillor N Hutchings
Councillor Mrs J Hurry
Councillor D Saxton

Also in attendance: 8 members of the public and Councillor Mrs Saddington

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P Beddoe, S Dolby and P Morris

2. Declarations of interest

It was AGREED that any declarations of interest would be stated by Members as required during the meeting.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 14th November 2016, were accepted as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4. Public 10 minute session

The Chair suspended the meeting at 7.01pm to allow questions from members of the public present.

The Chair advised that he would provide an opportunity for members of the public to speak on the affordable housing scheme item.

There were no questions and the meeting was reconvened at 7.03pm.

5. District & County Councillor Session

The Chair suspended the meeting at 7.04pm to allow Councillor Mrs Saddington to present her report.

Councillor Mrs Saddington commented that the meeting held at the proposed affordable scheme site with the Highways Department had been very useful.

Proposals had been put out for consultation for a 50mph speed limit on the A616 Debdale Hill through Little Carlton. The Parish Council had also requested the 40mph speed limit through South Muskham to be reduced to 30mph. Councillor Mrs Saddington to check whether street lights were a requirement for a 30mph zone.

Comments needed to be submitted by 12th December 2016.

Councillor Mrs Saddington referred to the Christmas Tree Lights Switch-On scheduled for Sunday, 4th December and offered a sum of £100 towards the event. This was gratefully accepted by the Chair.

The Chair thanked Councillor Mrs Saddington for her report and reconvened the meeting at 7.10pm.

6. Planning

(a) Affordable Housing Scheme

The Chair referred to an email received from Nottingham Community Housing Association regarding proposals for the Section 106 Agreement for the scheme.

A motion had been prepared by the Chair and this was read out to Members as follows:

“The Parish Council remain supportive of the principle of affordable housing to meet the nationally recognised need for low cost housing and for young adults to get on the housing ladder. It also considers that there is a risk of the village becoming a retirement community where a large proportion of the housing is occupied by aged persons if the village is unable to provide sufficient affordable housing for young couples and families. Further it accepts that there is a potential need to provide such smaller housing for mature residents who need to downsize but who wish to remain in the village. It recognises also that once the school at Fernwood is built, the take up of places at North Muskham school will fall and may fall to a level in the future that puts at risk its future viability and closure may follow, especially given that the building structure has limitations and there is an acute need for further efficiencies to be found in public service. Well over 50% of the school register are currently from out of the catchment villages and many are from Fernwood.

Thus the Parish Council, following two surveys which identified need, have continued to support the consideration of an affordable housing scheme albeit that there have been severely limited options for siting such, due to landowners not being prepared to release land, accepted as potentially suitable by the Planners, for less than market value. Only one thus suitable site has been made available.

The Parish Council, aware of the need to consult, requested the NCHA and the District Council to have a presentation day. The Parish Council also has requested that further information and clarity be provided to residents and that has been done.

The Council recognise that there has been significant opposition to the site and that unfortunately a perception prevails with some people that the scheme is likely to attract undesirable residents with an associated stigma to the location and a reduction in property values. It has been stated by those in support of the scheme that a somewhat Nimby atmosphere has been apparent at times and I would unfortunately have to agree with that albeit that I think such is common with most new development in villages generally.

The Parish Council has confirmed to NCHA and NSDC that it essentially needs confirmation that a need currently exists for the affordable housing WITHIN the village

and has warned that it would find it hard to support the scheme without such evidence. Notwithstanding the acceptance of the Parish Council to all of the reasons for affordable housing, already stated, a scenario, whereby a large proportion of the first occupancies were from people from outside the village with no village connection, would be wholly unacceptable to the Council and possibly to many of the villagers. No adequate response has been made to our requests.

The duty of the Parish Council is to act in the interests of all of its parishioners and indeed at times make difficult decisions where it considers that such will provide for betterment and for the future viability of the village community. Affordable housing is one such issue.

The Parish Council however is also required to represent the views, the concerns and interests of its parishioners, possibly including at times when it considers those views may be unreasonable. Whilst many people at the presentation agreed with the need for affordable housing and stated their support for the scheme the Parish Council is sadly disappointed that only a small number of villagers have, despite several requests, confirmed that support.

In the absence of a response to our request to NCHA and NSDC for confirmation of need and also clarification of the provision in the scheme for a large percentage of rented properties and in consideration of the scenario mentioned earlier, it regretfully feels it necessary to withdraw its support for the scheme at this time. It also now feels that it is important to confirm this before a planning application with further use of public resource is made.

Should any relevant planning application come forward, the Parish Council however will, as it is duty bound to do so, consider that application without bias and without pre determination."

Prior to any vote being taken on this motion, the Chair suspended the meeting at 7.14pm to allow for questions from the floor.

A resident referred to the Section 106 Agreement in place for the Caunton scheme which stated that the houses could be offered out for occupation to anyone in the District.

Members could not support the Section 106 on that basis.

A resident asked about the planning portal reference number that had been referred to at the 14th November meeting. The Clerk confirmed that this meant that a planning application had been submitted but the contents of that application had not been verified. It was confirmed that no planning application had been received.

A resident referred to the Autumn Statement by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and asked whether this might have an effect on the application. The Chair advised that the District Council's policy will have to be amended to incorporate any changes in Government policy.

The Chair expressed his disappointment that the Parish Council and village appeared to have been discarded and left alone during the last two months. The village had been going through the process with no support and little response from requests made for assistance.

Members were not happy that the scheme could come to fruition with minimal occupation by people from the village and with no connection to the village either.

The Chair thanked everyone for their comments and reconvened the meeting at 7.35pm.

The Chair referred to the motion before Council and proposed that it be accepted and submitted to Newark & Sherwood District Council and Nottingham Community Housing Association. This was seconded by Councillor Mrs Hurry and AGREED unanimously.

Additionally, the Parish Council were being asked to consider, as part of the planning application, Section 106 Heads of Terms for North Muskham which Nottingham Community Housing Association must submit. These would be based on the Caunton S106 Agreement which was available at the consultation event and proposed:

1. South Muskham
2. Bathley
3. Little Carlton
4. Kelham
5. Cromwell
6. Holme

Members considered that the inclusion of Holme was not relevant as there was no geographical relationship. Further, it was Members understanding that the Caunton Section 106 Agreement contains a paragraph at 1.8 which allows occupancy of the properties by anyone within the District who may or may not meet the village assessment criteria.

Members unanimously agreed that they did not agree with the inclusion of this paragraph.

Councillor Saxton commented that the key criteria was need and asked whether the village took any responsibility for that need. In the last financial year to March 2016, according to the Government's website new build of affordable housing had fallen by 50%. Councillor Saxton advised that he would like to better understand the situation and the level of need within the village and wider community. There was a need for the village not to be too insular as the village community relied on the wider community; there had to be a balance.

The Chair referred to the fact that if there was more development in the village then that would contain affordable housing.

- (b) Decision Notice – Lawful Development Certification – Kean Construction Ltd, Edgefield House, Vicarage Lane, North Muskham
Members received and noted the decision notice granting a Lawful Development Certification for the

7. Parish Council Matters

(a) Skate Park Inspection

The Clerk confirmed that the inspection had now been received. It would be reviewed with the Village Handyman and a report made back to Council as required.

(b) Transparency Fund – Website Update

The Clerk advised that the laptop and printer/scanner were in the process of being purchased.

There was a technical difficulty with the transfer of the www.northmuskhams.com domain name that was currently in the process of being rectified.

8. Environmental & Community Issues

(a) Footpath Update – Riverside Footpath and Section 30

The Chair advised that Councillor Dolby had requested to be present when the Inspector visits from the Environment Agency.

It was AGREED that the Clerk would chase for a definite date and report back to Council.

(b) Correspondence from Nottinghamshire County Council re Footpath No 1

The Chair advised that a request for a meeting had been received from the Liability Negotiations Adviser. The Clerk was asked to liaise with the Chair and Councillor Mrs Saddington on mutually convenient dates.

(c) Christmas Tree Lights Switch On

The Chair confirmed that the lights would be switched on at 4pm on Sunday, 4th December 2016.

9. Highways

(a) Highways Log

Members received and noted the highways log.

Councillor Hutchings confirmed that the street lamp on Waltons Lane had been repaired and could be removed from the log.

The meeting closed at 7.50pm.