

Old Buckenham Parish Council

**MINUTES of the Parish of Old Buckenham Annual Parish Meeting
held on Friday 31st May 2019 at 7pm in the Village Hall,
Old Buckenham**

Present: Councillors J Hicks (Chair)(JH), S Milner (SM), D Oakley (DO), A Joel (AJ), B Devlin (BD)
In Attendance: R Noyes (Clerk), District and County Cllr S Askew, Sue Heinrich (Breckland Council Neighbourhood Planning Co-Ordinator), Sarah Dye (Green Working Party)
Also present: 16 members of the public

Minute	
01/2019	<p>Welcome JH welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologised for A Nicholls absence.</p>
02/2019	<p>To agree the minutes of the Annual Parish meeting on 13th April 2018 After an extensive search the minutes cannot be found. They were taken by a stand in Clerk and councillors can not remember who it was and no one has any copies of minutes.</p>
03/2019	<p>Matters arising from the minutes Unable to complete due to missing minutes.</p>
04/2019	<p>Sue Heinrich, Breckland Council Neighbourhood Planning Co-Ordinator Sue manages the Neighbourhood Planning (NP) in Breckland but has previously worked in both private and public sector. Sue explained that the Planning System covers development and use of land using a large Guidance Policy, with the aim of achieving sustainable development. The assumption is in favour unless there are significant reasons why not. Breckland Council has a Local Plan and Local Authorities can produce their own. NP is completed by the PC if they wish to have one.</p> <p>Q: When will Breckland Council’s Local Plan be approved, rather than postponed? A: There is a draft that should be approved by the end of the year, but hopefully by September.</p> <p>The Process can be broken down into the following steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designated Area would be required. OB has already got this and the Castle would be excluded due to its location being nearer NB. • Prepare a plan • Pre-submission publicity and consultation • Submission of a Plan • Independent Examination • Referendum • Making of a Plan <p>Who and Why: The Town/Parish Council is the “qualifying” body. It is for each Parish to initiate the process to produce a Development Plan.</p> <p>Q: Is there any point in doing a NP? A: The Local Plan (LP) and NP have some power and could give you strength to your arguments for/against development applications. It is a flexible document so can be adapted as things change. However it does take a long time to produce. If you do not have a NP you have no guidance if a development happens.</p> <p>Q: Councils can change plans easily, how does this affect NP? E.g. NCC changing plans causes</p>

problems for LA and PC.

A: District Plan is the top level plan, not always County. The flexibility of the NP reduces impact of changes.

What: In Breckland it can take 2-4 years to complete the process and is useful for 10-15 years. There is no specific list of policies to include. It can have general guidance but can also have specific guidance which can focus on issues in your area. The only thing you can't have is to support less development.

How: Different authorities provide different types of support. Breckland provide lots of information on NP through website, consultation events, technical support, advice on national and LP Policies and advice on drafting the planning policy.

Q: Is it worth getting a consultant in to complete it for us due to large volume of work required?

A: If you do have a consultant, you need a very clear brief about how you want it to work for your village and what their role will be. It is worth looking at what skills you have as a community – do you have a planner who could be part of your group? There is funding available: Breckland will match half of the cost.

Q: Why should we bother producing a NP? Could we just wait till issues arise?

A: Planning ahead will give you guidance about both known and unknown development. It can protect vulnerable areas that you wish to protect. However not meeting housing quota could make it weaker.

Q: Can there be a financial benefit and would it help protect our heritage?

A: There is no guidance on what to include. Some have 4 policies that particularly matter to them. You can adapt policies to suit your area and do something different, as long as you have evidence to justify it. Bunn's Bank is an English Heritage Site so provides some protection of Green space between OB and Attleborough expansion.

Q: There has been lots of discussion by the PC over the last few years. Are we going to have one? We need clarity over who/when etc.

A (JH): PC have twice voted in favour of having one. Village survey was completed, which was very useful. However we often end up losing people due to other commitments, which might be a reason to get a consultant.

Q: NP asks for sustainable development – this can mean different things to different people. What is your definition?

A: To protect and develop the land for future generations benefit. This can be a bit subjective and can support or go against development. 5 Year Housing Quota issue doesn't help as it sometimes forces more housing on an area, even if it's not needed or called for. It becomes an excuse to pass big developments.

Q: Is there anyone who can estimate costs?

A: No. Can't use just one person/consultant. Currently 5 NP have been completed now, which provides some comparisons and guidance. Kenninghall are currently completing theirs.

Q: If the PC are struggling to get Parishioners to support and attend meetings, how will you get people to contribute and complete a NP?

A (JH): A PC member would lead it. But that is a major problem: people aren't interested in it due to the level of detail and work involved. It's difficult to find people willing and having

	<p>time to do it.</p> <p>A Parishioner suggested that the PC needed to pitch it to the village correctly by asking if they care about key issues. Need public opinion and facts and figures to support issues. Another Parishioner suggested that once the Breckland LP is approved we can go through the policies to see if/how they would affect us, thereby allowing us to decide if we need a NP at all/what the focus of the NP should be. BD explained that we need to find someone to lead that research as it is quite a time demanding task. He also was worried that as a village, we are vulnerable due to our location near A11, near Attleborough etc.</p> <p>Q: Is there a draft Breckland LP we could use? A: Yes, the final document is out for consultation and available to the public.</p>
05/2019	<p>Chairman’s Report</p> <p>Opened up Chairman’s Report to the public: what do you want as a village? When asked what the Council are doing to encourage new members, JH explained that it is difficult to get new members due to the time commitment around work and families, but that a lot of people are put off due to the abuse and confrontation received. The Councillors, their families and the Clerk have all been on the receiving end to various degrees. Gemma Frost explained that she had resigned due to constant and persistent abuse and harassment she received from a few individuals. An ex-Councillor in the public explained he resigned due to frustration at lack of progress. BD highlighted the positives that the PC had achieved in the last year: Green looks great, Rod Alley Pond and Ottomer Ponds have both received a lot of needed attention. A Parishioner who had only recently moved to the village said that she thought the PC were doing a great job and had a very good impression of the PC and its members. JH explained that in the past, the PC had been a bit closed off to the public. Since becoming Chairman, he has opened up meetings more to the public to allow greater participation and discussion, an Action Log is used to keep track of work and allows accountability for failure to complete work which has resulted in greater progress in the last year and the village has never looked better. Parishioners are encouraged to get involved and join the PC and help spread the load, as people need to remember that the Councillors are all volunteers who have jobs and families too. It is very easy to get Co-opted on to the Council. Unfortunately it is only a minority that are causing issues for the Councillors. Some people felt that most of the village don’t know what is happening or about the PC involvement in improvements. JH explained that the minutes are published in the Parish magazine every month by Ron Brewer, are posted on the OB Blog and PC website and key events are also published on the village Facebook group. In the past, there has been great Village spirit at big events organised by the PC: street party for the Golden Jubilee, Cycling event with Diss Cycle Club. But when organised again, they failed to get enough interest. Several parishioners explained that the village needed something to stir interest – 10k event? A parishioner explained that OB is loved and highly thought of by people in the village and those living outside of it too but that its only a few people who cause issues. If the Council can keep their enthusiasm for the village strong, it will spread to all the Parishioners. JH explained he had been tempted to walk out due to the recent stresses for him and his family. Gemma Frost explained that while she is a very enthusiastic person who is always keen to get involved and help, the problems she faced recently had driven it out of her causing her to resign. It was suggested that the PC should stop responding to those individuals and simply get on with the good work they are doing i.e. “cease and desist” and if they continue to cause issues then maybe seek legal advice.</p> <p>Adrian Joel stepped down as District Councillor after 24 years. On behalf of Old Buckenham Residents and Councillors, JH presented AJ with a bottle of whiskey as a thank you for his</p>

	<p>many years of hard work in the post. AJ thanked JH and everyone for their kind words. He had many good and bad times as a District Councillor but is particularly proud of his recent achievement at getting new homes for local residents/workers/families in the village. Thank you Adrian!</p>
06/2019	<p>District and County Councillors Reports</p> <p>As a resident of OB for many years, Cllr Askew was sad to hear about the problems faced by the PC, including the low numbers of Parishioners that regularly attend meetings. The Green, which used to be cut for hay, is now looking great. As a District and County Cllr, has also received some abuse emails but just have to ignore them. You can't please everyone.</p> <p>District Councillor Report: Was originally a Cllr for OB, NB and Banham but then the boundaries changed. Since AJ retired, happy to be back as District Cllr again. One focus has been to improve broadband in the area. Very pleased to see it improving (slowly) and that its just down to BT to complete the work. SM added that only one exchange box was planned for OB and that we are now up to 8, including Stacksford. Cllr Askew added that the website Better Broadband is a good source for advice on internet speeds.</p> <p>County Councillor Report: Councillor Askew read out a report and has provided additional information on matters affecting all of Norfolk, which are attached to these minutes for full reading.</p>
07/2019	<p>Village Green Report</p> <p>Sarah Dye summarised a written report that has been attached to these minutes for full reading.</p> <p>The Parish Council has a lease to manage the Green. Originally it was set at 5 years but has been proposed to extend it to 20 years in order to encourage long term investment. It also helps with funding and grants applications. It has already been signed by the Green Rights and the Lord of the Manor and just requires PC signature.</p> <p>A Parishioner added that Manor Pond is overgrown with algae and weeds, which are going to be dealt with but the treatment requires the correct temperature and water level. The slope into the pond will also be graded to allow easier access for wildlife. Sarah Dye explained that they have been advised not to include donated plants to the ponds due to the risk of contamination etc.</p> <p>A Parishioner thanked everyone in the community who contributes to the management and upkeep of the Green, including the man who cuts the grass by St Andrews Close. However he objected to the extension of the lease as he felt that it was unfair for the Parishioners who might struggle financially to support Green maintenance. A proposal was passed on to the PC, in which he suggested the Green be purchased by the PC. JH explained he would not sign the Lease Extension now and would add it to the next PC meeting agenda.</p>
08/2019	<p>Any other items or questions raised by the residents of Old Buckenham</p> <p>SM wanted to highlight recent Road Safety news. There is an active group on Cake St who monitor speed of vehicles entering the village. 15-20% of cars monitored were speeding. We have just been awarded £1600 grant to purchase an electronic sign to display drivers speeds which are proven to reduce speeds. 4 locations have been selected so far: Abbey Rd, Cake St, approaching from Attleborough and Hargham Rd. A parishioners highlighted an issue with a car being driven excessively fast in front of the Ox and Plough on several occasions who has been reported to police. AM explained that if this occurs regularly, then collect date/time information then police can attend to try and catch them. They can not act simply on the publics word, but must witness it themselves. The Police attend and monitor on Cake St due to the publics initial work monitoring speeds. Recently 23 people were caught speeding outside the Chapel on Hargham Rd, some of which were village residents.</p>

	<p>When asked if there was any way to monitor the size of vehicles using a road JH explained that the Police won't do anything as it is Trading Standards which have placed the weight restriction on Hargham Rd, but they are not enforcing it. The only thing the public can do is take a photo but they must be careful not to include the drivers face, the lorry/company and the registration only. We are hoping to get "No Construction Traffic" signs for Hargham Rd and Abbey Rd when the Attleborough SUE begins .</p>
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