

# Burwash Parish Council Planning Committee

Minutes of the Planning Committee

Held on the 28<sup>th</sup> August 2020, at 11am

Due to the coronavirus crisis this meeting was held online using Zoom and was recorded.

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**Members Present:** Chair Cllr I Rees, Cllr Franklin, Cllr Newson, Cllr Caulkin

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**The meeting was opened at 11am by Chair Cllr Rees.**

There were 5 members of the public present including Cllr John Barnes.

## **1. Public Time (15 minutes).**

### **Subject: Changes to the Planning System Government Consultations**

**Mr Banks** congratulated Cllr Newson on the draft document that she has prepared for the Planning Reform consultation and the succinct way in which she has answered the questions.

Mr Banks suggested not to group the replies as otherwise will not be counted in government analysis for each point and risk of being marked as no opinion, even if it is covered by a global response elsewhere.

Where Yes/No answers suggested writing individual answer to these too.

**Cllr Newson** confirmed she was working to a very tight deadline but was open to tweaking it depending on councillors' views when the item is discussed at Item 12.

**Mr Banks** suggested that the consultation programme is less important than lobbying the MP.

**Cllr Newson:** everything is important; response to NALC, council responding separately through NALC, individuals and groups responding, lobbying MP and letters etc.

**Mr Banks** made committee members aware of devolution paper being prepared by government for next month. Plans are in place to amalgamate local and county council. Removal of local input that you get with a local council.

**Cllr Rees:** a lot of local council input it already being removed through the planning reform.

**Mr N Moore:** White paper is very vague; questions are those which you do not want to answer. Centralised target (we struggle already at current 52). Rother will have more pressure to approve development. PIP – design code as a reference point. We are fortunate to have the High Weald Design Guide- but even with a very good guide developers can get it wrong. I.e. White weatherboard cladding on initial Ashwood plans.

Public time ended 11.12

**11.12am meeting was paused while Cllr Franklin contacted Cllr Barnes to join the call**

**11.20 meeting resumed**

## **2. Apologies for Absence.**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Chapman and Wraight.

## **3. Disclosures of Interest.**

None disclosed – *but no specific mention of this Agenda item by Chair*

## **4. Minutes from the previous meeting.**

- a) Members unanimously approved the minutes from the last meeting dated 17.8.20 and resolved to submit them to Full Council at the next meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> September 2020 for Full Council to approve and accept them.

**Action: Asst Clerk to add to Full Council Agenda**

- b) It was confirmed there are no outstanding action points from the previous minutes.

## **5. Planning Applications. (Standing item)**

- a) No further updates had been received about Furnace House and no news from the agent. No current applications for committee to consider.

## **6. Any Planning results received (standing item)**

- a) 91 Shrub Lane, Burwash RR/2020/1010/P  
Proposed single storey side extension.  
Members acknowledged that planning permission had been granted.

## **7. Planning Appeals (standing item)**

- a) Red Cross Centre Appeal Ref. 2687 Application: RR/2019/2193/P  
The appeal has been validated but not started and no timescale has been given.

**Action: Asst Clerk to notify members once the appeal begins and keep on Agenda**

## **8. Burnt House Farm**

- a) Cllr Rees to give Verbal Update on Site Visit 27.8.20  
As Cllr Wraight was not present Cllr Rees decided to include this on the next Agenda where the report she had prepared could be covered in more detail.

**Action: Asst Clerk to add to next Agenda with report from Cllr Wraight**

**11.24 Cllr Rees paused the meeting to welcome Cllr Barnes to the meeting.**

**11.25 Meeting resumed**

## **9. Correspondence to the clerk (standing item)**

None

## **10. Strand Meadow (standing item)**

There were no updates.

## **11. Conservation Boundary**

a) Verbal Update from Cllr Caulkin on progress – nothing to note as waiting on further information from Rother. Once there is news a report will be sent to Planning then Full Council.

b) Update on pavements and whether will be included in the conservation area.

Cllr Caulkin gave a verbal update.

About 2 years ago an issue where trying to replace a section of brick paving with concrete.

Mr Steve Moore managed to get the paving replaced like with like.

Cllr Franklin queried whether if the pavement were to form part of the conservation area then would Rother DC have an obligation to maintain them. Members agreed this would be the case.

**Action: Cllr Caulkin to circulate email to everyone.**

## **12. Planning Consultations issued by The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government**

**a) Changes to the current planning system (NALC deadline for responses 17 September)**

**b) Planning for the future - the planning white paper (NALC deadline for responses 15 October)**

**c) Transparency and competition: a call for evidence on data on land control (NALC deadline for responses 16 October)**

**The above three items were discussed in the next section in relation to each other.**

Meeting was paused at 11.27 for Cllr Barnes and then Mr Banks to speak.

**Cllr Barnes** voiced number of concerns such as:

**Raising number of houses** to be built and distribution of them.

Paragraph 41 – objectives. Algorithm does not work.

With Covid will need algorithm to propel people to city areas and current brownfield sites.

**Zoning** – concerned this area would be protection zone and would be subject to national policies.

Need national policies that distinguish between the AONB and other protected zones.

**Mr Banks** referred to quote that Boris Johnson wants to “tear down the current planning system”.

Claims are that it will make things cheaper and easier for growth areas.

Dispute will be transferred to the decision process where designated as a growth area and then again when application goes in.

Other issues are with regards to sufficient homes. Targets have been increased.

Should be a new system that allows for incremental change.

Two issues

1) Data – as flagged by Cllr Barnes.

Suitable for incremental change, not a white paper.

2) Housing quota rising from 736 to 1173.

What about city areas?

Housing that is needed in the North is being transferred to London and the South East in the countryside. I.e. Nottingham falls by 30%, Leicester falls by 32%, Liverpool by 59%

### **Meeting resumed at 11.36**

**CLlr Caulkin:** talk of moving government power houses out of London to make North better cities.

**CLlr Newson:** if we must make house prices more affordable against local incomes then by definition housing will have to go to places like Burwash where housing is not affordable. Idea being put lots of housing in high cost areas to bring housing price down is highly questionable. Also, if the aim of building 1m new houses is for prices to fall people will potentially face negative equity. House prices will not come down (unless interest rates go up). No block on purchasing as an investment.

**CLlr Rees** referred to message Cllr Barnes had written on the Zoom chat screen at 11.39: "Cancellation of Section of 106 and raising of level at which affordables are required means CIL required to fund affordables- where does spending on infrastructure come from?"

**11.43: Meeting paused** - Cllr Barnes suggested that they start with the wrong diagnosis. Assuming planning system not generating enough land. Much land with approved planning not built. Supply being regulated by builders and developers which drives up house prices even further.

### **11.44: Meeting resumed**

**CLlr Newson:** social rent housing not being addressed properly

After discussion on the draft paper prepared by Cllr Newson on "Changes to the Current Planning System" Councillors unanimously **RESOLVED** to submit Cllr Newson's paper to Full Council for approval once she has made final changes based on this meeting's discussions. After approval at Full Council this document will be sent to NALC as the Parish Council response, to meet the deadline of the 17<sup>th</sup> September. Answers will also be submitted onto the government site.

**Action:** Cllr Newson to prepare overall summary and individual response to each question so as to finalise the document for Full Council.

**Action:** Asst. Clerk to add resolution added to Full Council Agenda and send final document to Clerk for inclusion.

**Action:** Asst. Clerk to check with NALC the format required for the response and report back to committee.

*Clerk update: email received on 3.9.20 with following response from NALC "It would be helpful if responses could be inserted into the word document under the question they relate to, or if you would prefer to respond in an email, please clearly indicate which question each response relates to. If you would like to add general points not relating to any specific question in your response, please do this at the start/end of the response."*

### **11:49 Meeting paused** for Cllr Barnes to speak

Rother are consulting on their Local Plan. If the Local Plan could be put in place before new legislation, then Local Plan would stand and be in place for 42 months.

Encourage as many as possible to respond to the Local Plan.

Cllr Barnes suggested looking at existing Core Strategy and see if it meets the communities' needs before Local Plan is put together. He suspected it does not.

**Action:** Cllrs Rees and Franklin to meet to discuss the Local Plan

### **Meeting resumed 11.52**

#### **d) Save Our Fields Working Party on Planning Consultations and Invitation for a Parish Councillor to attend upcoming meeting (date tbc).**

Cllr Rees – invited Mr Banks to speak.

**Meeting was paused at 11.52** for Mr Banks to speak

Mr Banks indicated that the item 12d) was incorrect and suggested it should have been amended as he had requested.

*Clerk note: It was felt that the item did cover the content of the email received from Mr Banks and was added as item 12d). Wording of item provided ample opportunity to discuss both the working group and the upcoming meeting to be set up with Huw Merriman MP.*

Mr Banks and the general view of the working party is that NALC is the least important in terms of response as it is coordinating one combined response that will go to the government ministry with the likelihood it will not be taken seriously. Most important thing is contacting the local MP (Huw Merriman) and back benchers to help quash the reforms. Very different to consultation but rather by representation through local parliament. Not restricted by the NALC or consultation deadline. Pressure on MPs highest priority.

Working party approaching other local councils and other experts and working on a plan of action and approach to ensure more likely to get a meeting with Huw Merriman.

Confidential private meeting with experts initially then one with public with points paraded.

Proposal that Mr Banks and Save Our Fields is suggesting is for Parish Council to join with Save Our Fields Working Group and other local Councils to enable Parish Council to help present views and get message across through local MP and other key attendees. Asking for Parish Councillors to join the working group. Collective view would fall on very fertile ground.

Mr Banks referred to letter (email 24.8.20) which is attached in the Appendix for reference.

The proposal is that the Parish Council join their working party along with other local Parish Councils that SOF is approaching to exert maximum pressure to put an end to the suggested reforms by:

a) Join working party and send councillors along to meetings.

b) Help prepare representations on various documents in coherent form and make the views known locally in Rother and nationally.

c) Help drum up support for people to attend so as many people as possible can attend the meeting(s). Cllr John Barnes has agreed to Chair it. Multiple meetings could be set up depending on numbers wanting to attend.

**12pm: Cllr Barnes** said that he agreed that when lobbying government need to use all channels possible. Most profitable would be arming the back benchers so that they are asking all the awkward questions.

#### **12.02pm: meeting resumed**

Cllr Franklin explained he had replied (on 26.8.20) to Mr Banks' email where he had offered to put the meeting on our E-Bulletin and website, and if they wished could run the zoom meeting. He stated Council should be for it and should not be a problem drumming up support. Offer of help is there.

Cllrs Franklin, Caulkin and Rees (if available) happy to join the working party meetings.

Cllr Rees asked that Mr Banks keep the Planning Committee informed.

Cllr Newson: asked Mr Banks about maximum number for Zoom meeting of 50/60 that was mentioned earlier.

Question: Could Huw Merriman do a talk to the local community about his opinion on the government reforms? Could he do a public meeting for hundreds to attend on Zoom with Question/Answers. People are entitled to hear what MP has to say about it.

#### **12.05pm meeting was paused for public to have input**

**12.05:** Mr Banks replied that the Zoom meeting size would be discussed at the next Working Party meeting. Mr Merriman cannot be an expert in every subject. Purpose is to draft a paper so he understands the proposals before he responds with his view – which is reason for initial meeting with experts that Mr Banks was talking about earlier in the meeting.

**12.07:** Cllr Barnes thought smaller meeting about what the implications are then a larger or series of meetings where public could be present would be a good approach.

#### **12.08 pm meeting resumed**

Cllr Rees stated that the Planning Committee would Support Save Our Fields Group who appear to have a good plan in place and who are also working with Cllr Barnes.

Councillors to attend meetings.

No formal resolution was needed as anyone can join the working group – open invitation to councillors.

**Action:** Asst Clerk to add to future agendas for updates

**13. Information for noting or including on a future agenda.**

- **Planning Reform Consultations:**
  - **Planning for the future - the planning white paper (NALC deadline for responses 15 October)**
  - **Transparency and competition: a call for evidence on data on land control (NALC deadline for responses 16 October)**
  - **Save Our Fields Working Party**
- **Conservation Boundary**
- **Correspondence (email and text) Mr. Ali Saheb about land at Judins**
- **Red Cross Hut Appeal**
- **Burnt House Farm – report on site visit 27.8.20 and report by Cllr Wraight**
- **Enforcement to be returned to agenda as standing item**

**14. Date of next meeting and time to be agreed.**

Asst. Clerk to circulate suggested dates once it is known if there are new planning applications on the upcoming Weekly List.

**Meeting closed at 12.20pm**

**Appendix – Item 12d)**

Correspondence from Mr Robert Banks of Save Our Fields sent to Cllrs Rees and Franklin

**Sent:** 24 August 2020 15:12

**Subject:** The government proposals

Dear Bob and Ian,

**The new planning proposals**

I am glad the Parish Council is concerned about the new 2020 planning proposals.

Burwash: Save our Fields' core group met last Saturday and decided to invite Huw Merriman MP to a Zoom meeting, so people can express their views on the proposals. We would like the Parish Council and other groups to be involved with the event. It is proposed that John Barnes will chair the meeting.

The meeting would be one of a number of ways groups and individuals can make their views known.

If you would like a member of Parish Council to be on the small working group organising the event, that would be most welcome.

I hope you think this exercise would be worthwhile and I hope you will join with us to ensure our member of Parliament is aware of the strong views that are being expressed about the proposals.

Regards,

Robert Banks