

**MINUTES OF AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF HAPPISBURGH PARISH COUNCIL  
HELD AT THE WENN EVANS CENTRE ON 14<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER AT 7.30PM**

**Present:**

**Cllr Glenn Berry (Chairman), Cllr David Mole, Cllr George Siely, Cllr Kirsty Ritchie, Cllr Robert Fleming, Cllr Cubitt Siely, Cllr Clive Stockton**

**Jo Beardshaw (Clerk)  
62 members of the public**

**This extraordinary meeting was called for the purpose of discussing planning item:  
PF/13/1220, land south of North Walsham Road. Change of use of land to caravan park for  
134 static caravans, 60 touring caravans and camping area**

- 1 **To consider apologies for absence.** Apologies were accepted from Mr Love
- 2 **To receive Declarations of Interest.** Mr Cubitt Siely explained that he has no direct interest in the application although he is a landowner within the village. Dr Stockton and Ms Ritchie both noted that they had no direct pecuniary interest, but that they benefit from the caravan site being within walking distance from their businesses. The Chairman explained that he knew the landowners personally but did not see them on a social basis. He explained that he also sells some horse feed to the landowner. The Chairman asked the public and the Parish Council if they had any queries or objections to the Parish Councillors present voting. None were made.
- 3 **Reports relating to planning application PF/13/1220**

The Chairman asked Hugh Ivins, the agent for the applicant, if he would clarify a few points. Firstly that the site area seemed to differ from the paperwork. The application is for 17.5 acres but the current site is stated as 5 acres. The applicant, Mr Lomax, explained that he wishes to have a lower density of caravans at the proposed site.

Secondly, The Chairman wished to clear up an issue with the report by Mr Ivins stating that the population of the village is 360. The electoral roll is 652 for Happisburgh.

Thirdly, the Chairman made clear to those present that the planning application was for an *exception site*, not normally considered for planning. He explained that these plans had been made under the auspices of the Pathfinder programme

Mr Ivins addressed the meeting, and explained that the caravan site cannot continue to stay on an eroding cliff top. Under the Pathfinder, planning policy does allow for a move, and the retention of the park in the village is important to the economy of the village. Mr Lomax had commissioned landscapers to ensure that the proposed caravan park would not be an eyesore in the village and had held an open exhibition to discuss the plans. 119 people had visited the exhibition. Under the Shoreline Management Plan, the recommendation had been to manage the retreat from the coastline, not to abandon the site altogether.

Mr Lomax explained to those present that he was extremely keen to 'take the village with him' and to work with the village to find the best possible solution for the village, for the businesses, and for the economy of the area as a whole

#### 4 Adjourn the meeting for public session

Mr Fleming asked why the application was for a change of use rather than a full application. Mr Ivins explained that a full application was a huge cost (around £9,000). Mr Lomax added that he had tried to include as much detail as possible within the outline planning without submitting full plans. Mr Fleming said that he felt that the outline planning was an issue and that, had he been able to see full plans, he might have felt more positive about the plans

A question was asked regarding the possibility of other sites within the village. Mr Lomax explained that other sites had been considered and that only this site had been a possibility for taking forwards. 1. Behind Lighthouse Close. It had been considered aesthetically not pleasing to have caravans underneath the lighthouse. 2. On the Playingfield. The village had not supported this idea. 3. The field beside the existing site. The landowner would not sell the land. 4. Cart Gap. Although this was a possibility, as it wasn't in the village it would not have helped the economy of the village and was not ideal from a Pathfinder point of view.

Mr Lomax felt that with the mitigating landscaping, the caravan park would enhance the look of the village over time

Mr Lomax was asked if he agreed that the proposed site was over 20 acres and the current site around 6 acres. Mr Lomax explained that under the rules of pathfinder he would not be able to exceed the limit of caravans as the rules only allowed like for like

Mr Burke addressed the meeting and stated that he opposed the application and asked that the Parish Council do the same. He felt that the caravan park brings people into the village and is very good for the village. Nevertheless, he felt that the application was for the wrong site because of the impact on people living in the area and the potential safeguarding issues with the proposed caravan park being next to the school. He felt that the alternatives had not properly been explored. He also noted that English Heritage may not be enthusiastic about the plans because of the impact on the historic nature of the village

Mrs Burke addressed the meeting and noted that she was not speaking as a school governor but as a resident of the village. She said that she felt that caravans bring transient individuals to the village, by their nature, and that this brings safeguarding issues to the school. She was aware that Norfolk Safeguarding Children's Board would be viewing the plans in detail

Mr Lomax replied that he felt that residents of caravans are no worse as people than anyone else. A member of the public said that he himself had children at the school, and that he was concerned.

A member of the public who lives in Whimpwell Street noted that she felt that evergreen trees would be more appropriate than deciduous trees along the line of the caravan park

A suggestion was made that as the proposed site is bigger than the old site, a buffer zone be placed between the caravan park and the houses.

There was some discussion about visual/ light and noise pollution from the proposed site.

Mr Lomax confirmed that he had no plans for a shop or clubhouse at the proposed site

It was suggested that Mr Lomax gives a commitment rather than an intention, by providing full plans and committing to them.

The subject of flooding in the village was discussed. Fiona (Pond Cottage) voiced her concern that with a greater area of hard standing there may come a greater risk of flooding. Mr Ivins had had a flood risk assessment done and noted that the flood risk was low. Fiona explained that she had done the same when she bought the cottage and the flood risk assessment was not correct. Mr Ivins noted that the proposed site incorporated a sustainable

drainage system. Fiona felt that a soak away would still impact on Whimpwell Street and Lighthouse Close. Fiona strongly felt that the caravan park would make the water problems worse in the village

A gentleman who lives opposite the entrance of the proposed site asked why the entrance was opposite residential property instead of at the corner of the area.

Rosemary Munday voiced her concern that there was poor pedestrian access to the village and down Beach Road, and she asked Mr Ivins if there was any plan to sort out this issue. Mr Ivins noted that they intended to fulfil the planning requirements, which did not include Beach Road or the North Walsham Road into the village.

The gentleman who rents Happisburgh Manor said that he anticipated dog mess problems within the new site as he currently experiences this himself

Mr Fleming, representing the School Governing Body, noted that the School had a strong objection to the plans on the basis of safeguarding children.

Various members of the public voiced their feelings that the caravan park is essential to the life of the village. In particular, one gentleman felt that the village should be working together with the Lomax family to help them find a workable solution. Various members of the public felt that the village would be dead without a caravan park.

The Chairman read out a letter from Carol Palfrey, who had been unable to attend the meeting. Carol had made points as follows:

1. The location of the proposed caravan site is completely inappropriate. Those who come to Happisburgh for a caravan holiday do so because the site is located in close proximity to the sea with easy access to the beach and superb sea views. I therefore question whether the applicant's research on the likely take-up of plots on the proposed site is sufficiently robust to ensure that this is a financially viable proposition.
2. The size of the site is such that it will completely dominate this part of Happisburgh and will destroy much of the character of the village for which it is known and loved by both residents and visitors.
3. The location of the entrance immediately opposite the drives of residences on the opposite side of the road presents a serious traffic hazard.
4. The increase in traffic movements during the summer months will place an unacceptable additional burden on North Walsham Road which, in the summer months, becomes very busy, particularly at weekends.
5. Barbecues and other outside events are important aspects of traditional caravan holidays. Such events, though perfectly acceptable in the right place, will present a high nuisance value (in terms of smells, noise and lights) to local residents who have chosen to live in this part of the village.
6. At the recent public exhibition, I was informed by an officer from North Norfolk Council that the only reason that this particular location had been chosen was that it was the only site which the owner was willing to sell. This seems a very flimsy excuse for submitting an application for a development which will have such an adverse effect on the lives of local residents.
7. I question the assertion that the caravan site is essential to ensure the future economic prosperity of the village and its amenities. I support the principle of having a caravan site, indeed it has been an integral part of the village scene ever since I can remember. Many caravan owners feel themselves part of village life and those who come on holiday enjoy what we have to offer. However, I believe that relocating the caravans to the proposed site is too high a price to pay because of the impact this will have on the quality of life in Happisburgh.

A member of the public said that he felt that the village needs the caravan park and that the village should look forwards and plan for the future and make solutions that suits everyone. He said that Mr Lomax had investigated all of the different sites.

The question was asked what months Mr Lomax planned to open the park. He confirmed that 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> October are his current dates and he has no plans to change them

Mr Lomax addressed the meeting and thanked those of the public who had made supportive comments. He noted again that he did not wish to steamroll any decision through the village. He felt that it was critical to strike a balance. He asked for the support of the village.

**5 Councillor discussion regarding planning application PF/13/1220**

Dr Stockton explained to those present that Happisburgh was unable to get sea defences, that Happisburgh has no defence, and that there is no potential for defence. He said that there is a huge advantage to the village of having the caravan park – not least because static caravan owners pay council tax. He felt that the caravan park brings life and business to the village. Dr Stockton noted that he had been at NNDC and involved when various other sites were explored, and that none were possible

**6 Recorded vote**

Councillors voted as follows:

Dr Stockton voted to support the plans

Mr Berry voted to object to the plans  
Ms Ritchie voted to object to the plans  
Mr Fleming voted to object to the plans  
Mr C Siely voted to object to the plans  
Mr G Siely voted to object to the plans  
Mr D Mole voted to object to the plans

Therefore the Clerk would write to North Norfolk District Council summarising the meeting and informing them that Happisburgh Parish Council voted 6:1 to object to the current plans

**7 Any other business**

**7.1.** Cheque PC558. Recreation Ground and Playingfield Trust. £425. Transfer of funds. Donation from fundraising events organised by Jan Newall and others. Authorised

**7.2.** Cheque PC559. Jan Newall. Christmas lunch repayment. £130. Ringfenced funds. Authorised

**8 Date of next meeting – Monday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2014**

**The meeting closed at 9.55pm**