



Caston Parish Council

CHAIRMAN: - Mr. David Blincow VICE CHAIRMAN: - Mrs. Kay Farmbrough

DRAFT

THE MINUTES OF THE EXTRA MEETING OF CASTON PARISH COUNCIL 27th May 2015, at 7.30 P.M CASTON VILLAGE HALL

Councillors present: - Mr. David Blincow, Mr. Brian Brooker, Mr. Frank Brown, Mr. Peter Chapman, Mrs. Leslie Crosthwaite, Mrs. Kay Farmbrough, Mrs. Jaki Porter.

Also present: - One member of the Parish of Caston.

1. **To accept apologies for absence:** - None
2. **Declarations of Interest** from members, in any item to be discussed were noted: - David Blincow - none, Brian Brooker - none, Frank Brown - none, Peter Chapman - none, Leslie Crosthwaite - none, Kay Farmbrough - none, Jaki Porter - none.
Dispensations from Council Members - none.
3. To agree a standard procedure for Caston Parish Council to assess and comment on planning applications received from Breckland Council.

The chairman read out the current planning application consideration procedure used by the PC : -

Under S101 of the Local Government Act 1972, there is provision for the Council to delegate, "executive decisions" to a, "committee" or, "officer." The Council would have to adopt a resolution allowing the Clerk, as the, "officer" to, "make decisions on planning applications in consultation with Councillors."

It would then be possible to circulate the planning application paperwork in the existing format so that Councillors could make comments and state whether they support or object to the application. The Clerk can then respond to the District Council stating the xx number of Councillors was in favour and yy number of Councillors was against and then list any comments. The details of the decision would then have to be reported and recorded at the next full Council meeting.

In the event of a planning application arriving for consideration during a non-meeting month, the system would remain the same and the information would be added to the next available agenda for discussion and reporting on.

*If the planning application was for a large site, warranted a village debate or the Chairman decided it was needed, then an extra full Parish Council meeting would be arranged.
This was Resolved and minuted on 4th February 2013.*

It was agreed by all councillors due to new planning rules that this needs updating.

The following are the main questions discussed: -

- A. What are the Government / District guidelines for planning applications? - A brief synopsis of these was handed out to the councillors for reading and referring to when answering applications, including a list of "material considerations" - items which are and are not allowed to be considered when replying to a planning application.
 - B. How to view and comment on plans at PC meetings, with time constraints of the meeting, and how to consult the wider public when contentious plans occurred. - It was agreed that some plans for things other than small changes to the identity of a building and the size of the projects being submitted i.e. small projects or a house/building, multiple houses/ buildings, or other items could be contentious. These would require a special meeting so that the public, developer and councillors could view and discuss the plans together. This has previously happened in the village. It was also noted that a site visit by councillors would not be a good idea in the evening due to safety issues and may have to occur during the day so as to fully understand the plans. It was agreed that this would be decided as needed.
 - C. The average number of days given by Breckland Council (21) for the consideration and the return of the PC's decision and comments can cause a problem. - The PC can request an extension on their return dates only if it is agreed by Breckland Council. The Clerk was asked to check the guidelines on the amount of days. The councillors are aware that Breckland have to work within their own timetable for planning meetings.
 - D. How is a decision letter formulated when a reply is sent to Breckland representing all seven councillors? - The Clerk explained the current method used and this was considered suitable.
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- E. Are comments submitted by councillors actually considered or read by the District planning committee? And are they best to be kept very short? - Refer to information on sheets. The District Council has a duty to read the comments and take note of relevant points put forward by the PC. But this does not mean that they necessarily agree with them so sometimes the outcome of an application is not the preferred result. Breckland Council planning department also has to refer to the Local Plan which stipulates certain criteria for new projects and also adhere to any Government Acts when making their decision.
- F. Does discussion amongst councillors occur? - This does happen at present, before during and after meetings. Though there is no separate formal planning meeting. Some councillors said that they had many years of experience considering plans and hoped that they still represented the village residents' views without the need to consult them every time a set of plans came in.
- G. Can councillors see each others comments and decisions before final submission given that timing is often of the essence? - At present this is difficult because only the last person to comment sees the previous ones unless they request this before the clerk returns the decision and comments.
- H. Is it possible for councillors or the public to persuade councillors to listen to ideas or change their view before they submit their decision and comments? - Lobbying about a planning application is possible as long as it is non-political and in the interests of the village and following the government list of Material considerations.
- I. The Councillors responsibilities are to represent the parishioners and their wishes with planning applications. - They encourage the parishioners to contact them if they had any concerns about planning application or any other matters. They said they had been elected to their roles by the Parishioners and were there to represent them as a whole.
- J. Would a "Round Robin" folder be suitable for all plans? - It was decided that all plans needed to be seen in paper format by all the councillors in turn, so that they could formulate their individual replies by looking at the plans in detail. It was noted that the Clerk takes all plans to the monthly meetings so they can be referred to if needed during the normal PC meeting and still commented on if the decision by the councillors has not yet been returned.
- K. At present the councillors do not state Objector or Supporter and leave the Breckland Councillors to decide by reading the comments.- This is not correct and will be corrected in the future and will state the final majority decision of the councillors.
- L. When do the PC hear about the decisions made by Breckland Council? - The Clerk receives a letter a few days after the decision and this is also available on Breckland Councils web site. This is noted in the following PC meeting minutes.
- M. Is a specific planning committee needed? - It was agreed that this was not necessary at this time.

4. Discussion regarding to what extent and when council should advise neighbours and the village of applications.

The meeting was adjourned at 8.10pm for a question from the parishioner
 Are the PC allowed to put planning notices up on other peoples property?
 and reconvened at 8.15pm

- A. How do the public know about the planning applications in the village? - The plans are available to view on Breckland Councils web site and there is a Link to this on the PC web site. The planning application details are added to PC monthly Agendas and put on the three village notice boards. It was agreed that this might not be enough and not reach the people who may be most concerned about an application if they knew about it.
- B. Why do Breckland Council no longer put up Site notices for all too see? - These are no longer put up near or on the property if the plans are "Householder" applications. They are if they are for a development. Neighbours should be informed by Breckland Council about planning applications next too them but not if they are for small alterations to previous plans.
- C. Could the PC put up site notices so that parishioners are more aware of planning applications? - The Clerk has been asked to look into this and if there are any legal issues as to where the notices could be placed.
- D. How can the PC encourage parishioners to consider and comment on planning applications? - Not everyone wishes to do this and so the Parish Council can represent them if they prefer but they need to talk to a councillor.
- E. Often the public do not attend PC meetings despite being invited. Unless there is a contentious application when many do attend and often speak at the public participation section of the meeting.
- F. How can non-internet users view plans? - If they are not currently being looked at by a councillor the Clerk looks after a copy of the plans which can be referenced by the parishioners.

The meeting was adjourned at 8.45pm for questions from the parishioner
 Do Breckland Council ever reject planning applications before the PC see them? - They should advise the client as to what is legally allowed before accepting the application but all planning applications for Caston and Northacre are seen by the PC except for Changes of Condition and Tree Work applications.



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Reconvened at 8.55pm

The Chairman summed up the discussion and it was agreed by all councillors that as there is a diverse population in Caston, each using different types of media, a more varied method of notification of planning applications was needed in order to reach as many interested people as possible. It is hoped to open up the decision process and to encourage more people to discuss the planning applications for the village.

It was proposed that the following points should be added to the current method agreed on 04.02.13: -

- a) A site notice is put up by the PC subject to approval of Breckland Council.
- b) All planning applications should be added to PC web site with a link to Breckland Council site details. Plus the Agenda - notice boards as usual.
- c) All planning applications are to be viewed in paper format by the councillors in the current "Round Robin" method so that comments can be formulated.
- d) If the planning application is considered by the Chairman to possibly be of a contentious nature, e.g. a complete new building or buildings, or large addition to a current site/building, or large object on a site, then this should be discussed as a priority by all councillors and public at the next available monthly PC meeting. If due to time constraints, a quick reply was needed, then a special PC meeting should be arranged to take place as soon as possible, expressly for this item to be considered. (This is a rewording of the 2013 last paragraph)

This motion was seconded and vote was taken. 1 councillor abstained subject to the possibility of the alteration of 21 day rule and also extra consultation on issues already mentioned above. 6 councillors were in favour.

It was **Resolved** to add the above four points to the current method of planning application consultation, comments and decisions subject to Breckland Council approval of point 1.

5. The next meeting date is Monday 1st June 2015 in Caston Village Hall at 7.30 pm.

The meeting closed at 9.00pm

CHAIRMAN: -

DATE: -

CLERK: -

Alison Skipper 27th May 2015

14 Participation & questions from the public: -

- None