Edgefield Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting, held in the Village Hall, on

Monday 20th May 2019, at 7pm

Present: John Seymour (Chairman) Mark Cook

 Emma Cletheroe Lin Pateman

 Anne Harrup Suzanne Longe

 Kirsty Cotgrove (Clerk) + 9 Parishioners

 Ed Mumford-Smith & Alex Williamson (Broadland Housing Association)

 Anna Clarke (North Norfolk District Council

**1. Chairman’s welcome and apologies for absence**

JS welcomed everyone and apologies were accepted for Harrie Morshuis & Steffan Aquarone (County Councillor).

**2. Minutes of the meeting held on 21st May 2018**

The minutes were agreed as a true record.

**3. Matters arising**

None.

**4. A presentation and Q&A from Broadland Housing Association**

Mr Mumford-Smith began by outlining the history of the ongoing project on Rectory Road. He confirmed that the rumours that BHA have purchased the play area are incorrect. He reported that they are in the early stage of talks with NNDC regarding purchasing the field behind the current development to build on if there is a housing need. The new project is for ten properties, thought at this stage to be 5 houses and 5 bungalows, with a tree ‘buffer’ between the development and existing houses. Six would be affordable (5 rental and one shared ownership) and 4 market value). Ed Mumford-Smith reiterated that they are still only in very early stage talks, and the land has not been purchased yet.

Anna Clarke explained the current housing need, which showed a total of 99 families / single people on the housing register for Edgefield and surrounding villages. Concern was raised by a number of Parishioners and Councillors who felt they were in favour of the first development, only because it was a one-off scheme. Ed Mumford-Smith explained that a second scheme would only go ahead if there was still a local need after the first development is complete. SL asked if there are figures for people on the housing list from Edgefield, without the surrounding villages. Anna Clarke advised that this is not available.

*Andrew Brown (District Councillor) arr. 6:55pm.*

Concerns regarding the additional traffic, ongoing noise from building and the lack of local workers were raised. It was asked how the current housing need figures compare to when the first development was approved. This information was not available. A Parishioner said that no new housing should be built until the current development was filled. A complaint regarding sewerage issues was raised, and it was confirmed that Anglian Water are dealing with it. Another complaint regarding litter and removing hedges was raised. Alex Williamson confirmed that the only hedges and trees removed were in accordance with the planning permission, and new hedges were planted in their place.

The provision of affordable housing in Holt was raised, and a number of people asked if housing in Holt, Briston & Corpusty would be more appropriate, as there are more facilities there. Anna Clarke advised that some people do want to live rurally. The history of the field in question was discussed at length, but it was noted that, although locals were entitled to farm the land in the past, it is now owned by NNDC.

The rental rates of the proposed properties were also discussed. A Parishioner asked why the proposed second phase still includes so many market value houses, rather than all affordable. Ed Mumford-Smith advised that these were only rough outline plans, and a higher percentage of affordable houses may be possible when figures are calculated. A Parishioner asked if it would be possible to put a restriction on the market value houses for local people only, as is the case with other ex-authority houses. Alex Williams explained that to have the restriction on reduces the value of the house, so a higher percentage of market properties would be required. The market properties will be marketed to local people first, before going on the open market.

The possibility of alternative builds, e.g. SIP panel houses were discussed, to speed up completion and reduce noise. Alex Williamson said that currently these are cost prohibitive, as the volume is not there.

JS thanked Ed, Alex and Anna for attending.

*Ed, Alex and Anna left the meeting at 7:45pm.*

**5. Chair’s report**

We meet monthly, usually on the third Monday of the month. All meetings are advertised on the village noticeboards.

Our meetings follow the same format each month and Parishioners and other visitors are allowed ten minutes at the beginning of each meeting to express their views on agenda items. This often runs over the allocated time. In addition, although not strictly correct procedure, Parishioners are sometimes, and at the discretion of the Chair, invited to make further comment.

The presence of our County and District Councillors is welcomed as are their reports on what is happening in the wider areas of Norfolk.

We sometimes hear the Parish Council takes no notice of what Parishioners have to say. This could not be further from the truth and we encourage everyone to come along to meetings to hear what is happening and to express their points of view. When we can make a difference we try to do so, however our powers are limited. The number of Parishioners attending our meetings continues to improve but more would be welcome.

Items which frequently appear on the agenda are:

Housing – The BHA development started late but is now well underway. There have been issues with blown rubbish, unreasonable working hours, mud on the road and inappropriate access to the site. All of these have been dealt with and it is hoped any future concerns will be dealt with properly. The possibility for a second phase has been discussed this evening.

Speed Management – The SAM2 speed activated sign records speed data in addition to the visible warning to drivers. Speeding continues to be an issue with the 85% average speed being 33-34mph. The Community Speed Watch team actively monitor traffic and are able to target specific times by using the data collected from the SAM2 sign. NCC continue to refuse to move the 30mph zone further North despite many requests from the Parish Council & Parishioners.

Village Pond – As always there are differing opinions about how the pond should look and be maintained. The working parties, under Anne Harrup’s guidance, are conscious of the need to keep it in a condition that satisfies the majority. The Norfolk reed is kept in check by removing the growing shoots several times a year. The borehole water has been tested several times and found to be high in nitrates. We have been advised not to use it to top up the pond in drought conditions.

Planning – As usual, the Council spends a considerable time looking at planning applications. The Stody reservoir gravel extraction company has another application in progress for an alternative second area to that originally proposed. Although this is not particularly contentious there is concern the reservoirs are to be filled from the river Glaven which is low due to continued low rainfall. The Orsted proposal for their offshore wind farm continues to take a lot of our time and this year we have been attending hearings and site visits with the inspectors appointed by central government. Orsted will not confirm if they will use DC or AC so the possibility for the enormous booster station still exists. The Matter is now with the inspectors to make their decisions.

Broadband and mobile phone signal – Unfortunately the Street and Chapel Hill are still lagging behind the main part of the village in being able to receive fast broadband. We are advised the work to rectify this will now be in the last quarter of this year.

Common land – We are, again, investigating what the situation is with the old surveyors’ plot on Pond Hills Road. It was sold to Stody by NCC and we should have received payment in compensation. Edgefield has successfully applied to NCC for Limekiln Lane to be added to the definitive map of public rights of way. We wait to see if the landowner can successfully object.

War memorial – During the year the War Memorial on the Green was officially added as a listed building, which affords it certain protection.

Highway Rangers – We encourage everyone to report any and all Highways problems to the County Council. We get a reasonable response.

My thanks go to my fellow Councillors, our County Councillor Steffan Aquarone and our outgoing District Councillor Georgie Perry-Warnes. We welcome our new District Councillor Andrew Brown. Most of all I thank our Clerk Kirsty Cotgrove.

**6. To note reports from village organisations**

Cottage Trust (John Seymour) – Very little to report, funds are in good order and we carry out repairs as and when necessary. Current trustees are Dawn Hulbert, Angela Turner, Irene Alsop, Suzanne Longe and myself. Two trustees are nominated by the Parish Council. The remainder are co-opted.

Jubilee Playing Field (John Seymour) – Although a separate charity the Parish Councillors are the trustees and matters relating to the field are discussed at Parish Council meetings. Rubbish continues to be an issue at the playing field and we are grateful to the Parishioners who remove and dispose of it for us. Mike Sillis continues to cut the margins of the field during the growing season as well as a diagonal cut from the car park to Limekiln Lane. The remainder is cropped for hay later in the season by Mike, who does not charge us for the grass or hedge cutting. We are very grateful to him. We are also most fortunate to have a regular donation from a local resident.

Village Hall (Jim Frost) - The last year has been another busy 12 months for the committee. We have had another 4 functions starting with Edgefest 3 last June, which with around 180 attendees, was our most successful and profitable function to date. Autumn saw us host a quiz night which was a sell out and very well received by those who attended. Our annual Christmas function was its usual mix of laughter and silly games and this spring we hosted two local comedians known as “The Norfolk Nuts”. Again, it was a sell out and thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended. Our next event is Edgefest 4 on 29th June and we hope to have as many local residents attend as possible. It is a great way to meet other people from the village!

Further improvements to the hall have continued and this year we have had a new combi boiler installed which has had the advantage of allowing us to remove the old immersion heater so providing us with more kitchen space and hopefully cheaper heating bills. We have also realigned the toilets so that both are unisex while leaving the old gents as a disabled toilet, as well as giving us an extra store room for tables and chairs.

The hall continues to be well used with outside groups as well as village organisations hiring the venue and the sound and visual equipment becomes ever more popular. In the future we hope to have new flooring in the toilets, hall and kitchen, but first we need to raise more money through our events and continued hiring of the hall.

Parochial Church Council (Richard Peaver) - We were delighted to welcome our new Rector, Canon David Longe, who was inducted in October to the new Matlaske Benefice, comprising the parishes of Matlaske, Edgefield, Saxthorpe with Corpusty, Hempstead, Barningham Winter, Plumstead and Baconsthorpe. Major repair work has had to be carried out on the church roof, as well as to the tower in the old churchyard. Expenditure on the latter was largely offset by a grant from the Norfolk Churches Trust, but nonetheless the church faces a challenging financial situation in the future, having had to draw on reserves over several years in order to make ends meet.

**7. A presentation and Q&A from Jeremy Goldney, regarding speed reduction in the village.**

The idea behind a survey has been much discussed in the past. JG is still currently information gathering for the second part of the survey. The first part will ask Parishioners if they feel speed is an issue and ask how it affects them. The second part will be facts based, and offer possible solutions, with a sliding scale of strongly agree to strongly disagree. JG is gathering facts and data from other Parishes, to compare to ours both with speeding and their speed reduction measures, to present to NCC to strengthen the case to challenge their policy. Both surveys will hopefully be forwarded to the Parish Council soon for approval. JS advised he had received an email from Steffan Aquarone, who highlighted potential problems with funding. It was confirmed that the surveys will be drop and collect, to hopefully increase response rate.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8:25pm.