

EDWARDSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Extraordinary meeting of held remotely on Monday 27 April at 7.30pm.

Present: P Baker (Chair), D Williams, S Norman, P Clarke, M Gibson, T Wood, R Jones (Clerk)

1. **Apologies for absence** - None

2. **Councillors' Declarations of Interest in any item on this Agenda** - None

3. **Footpath Cutting Update**

Councillor Baker had received an unsatisfactory response from Suffolk County Council regarding the reduction in footpath cutting from three cuts to two for 2020/21; blaming the lack of consultation by SCC on the Covid19 emergency. Councillor Baker had spoken to two local contractors regarding taking over the cutting and will speak to Glynn French (SCC) to find out exactly the budget set aside for footpath cutting in Edwardstone. This will allow the Parish Council to properly budget for future cutting and a third cut in the current year.

The Clerk to circulate legible footpath maps to EPC members prior to the next meeting.

4. **To consider Planning Matters:**

DC/20/01050 Land South of Daking Avenue. Erection of 2 new properties – Councillors agreed to support Boxford PC's objections to this application (see attached)

DC/20/01442 1 Walnut Tree Cottages. Erection of single storey rear conservatory – Councillors agreed to support this application.

5. **Date of Next Meeting** – It was agreed to postpone the Annual General Meeting until 2021 with Councillor Baker continuing as Chairman and Councillor Williams as Vice-Chairman.

It was decided to hold another remote meeting via telephone conference on Monday 1st June at 7.30pm.

6. **Any Other (Urgent) Business**

Councillor Clarke had contacted Community Heartbeat Trust regarding signalling problems with the emergency phone housed with the defibrillator. He had been advised that a signal booster may be needed which would cost around £100. Councillor's felt that this may be an unnecessary expense as most people carry mobile phones to make an emergency call. It was agreed that more information was needed before a decision on whether to purchase the signal booster could be made. The Clerk to contact Community Heartbeat Trust for clarification on whether the emergency phone was a necessity.

The meeting closed at 8.10pm

To Harry Goodrich - Babergh Planning Control

From Debbie Hattrell - Clerk to Boxford Parish Council

Dear Mr Goodrich,
Planning Application DC/20/01050 Land to the South of Daking Avenue, Boxford,
Suffolk

Boxford Parish Council strongly objects to the above application, we would like to bring to your attention the following points:

- With reference to the applicants highlighted meeting with the Parish council in the application form. The meeting did indeed take place, along with Bryn Hurren and the Woodland Trust, its focus being the creation of proper access for the Woodland Trust to maintain Primrose Wood and for residence to enjoy; Something that we all would like and something that was promised to the village on the building of the initial 21 houses but never materialised. For the avoidance of doubt, the applicant is offering good access to Primrose Wood but ONLY if the application is agreed. The Parish Council would like the applicant to honour previous promises and provide that path without the proviso of only if the application is granted.

On this issue I would like to highlight the planning inspectors point raised on the appeal on this land by the previous applicant willing to give good access to Primrose Wood:

“Footpath links to the wider countryside were secured in the Planning Agreement for the earlier Goodlands Farm scheme and are not, therefore, an additional benefit of this proposal.”

We feel that you can take from this point that any access given is one that should have been given already, not one to be used as a bargaining tool to gain more planning approval.

- Irrespective of the access promises to Primrose Wood this application should be rejected on the grounds of highways safety. Suffolk Highways after investigating the safety issues on Swan Street put a limit of no more than 20 houses to be built (Saved policy HS21), this amount was built out on the first part of the site (in fact 21 were built but one has access off Swan Street). This policy was saved by the secretary of state's office, further upheld by Babergh committee on application for 25 units only to be tested again and upheld with the inspector's report (see para 25-26). That is 3 independent professional bodies that have concluded after much time and thought that there should be a limit which has now been met and that it should be upheld. That means no more. We fail to see how this application should contravene a Highways saved policy, Planning committee and inspector representing the secretary of state's office. Indeed the inspector described the road thus “in the context of a situation where the affected highway is currently unable to cope, and the available evidence indicates that traffic levels along Swan Street are rising.

- We would also like to bring to your attention that the Highways problems on Swan Street are not problems that are going to get better on their own, indeed the previous applicant, after spending some years and considerable funds on specialists were unable to come up with a single plan to make the road safer. This problem needs to be managed as best as possible, adding more cars when we have the option to say no is not the answer.

- The villages neighbourhood plan is currently moving forward with the first questionnaire having been conducted, this overwhelmingly supported the building of smaller properties, especially bungalows. The village does not need any further large properties.
- With respect to heritage impact, the Parish Council sought advice on the previous application, the response to which is still relevant to this application. Planning Officer Bethany Philbedge (MSc Town Planning), on behalf of The Suffolk Preservation Society, a county branch of Campaign to Protect Rural England. She wrote to Babergh on 4th April 2017 in respect to the previous application. She states that Any increase in the number of vehicles and the associated increase in noise, pollution and disturbance in the locality will exacerbate a current issue and will further impact the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the setting of many listed buildings. Ms Philbedge also draws our attention to National Planning Practice Guidance para 013 Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment, which states that when assessing any application for development which may affect the setting of a heritage asset, local planning authorities need to consider the implications of cumulative change.
- The Parish Council also has safety concerns surrounding the access off the existing road. You should be aware that the existing road is dual use by both vehicles and pedestrians, designed this way with no path, just a communal area for vehicles to drive on and pedestrians to walk on. We feel special consideration should be given to the 90-degree bend in the road which is a very real danger to users. The planning application uses this point to access the site; we feel to add a junction here would increase the risk of an already dangerous point. There have been a number of near misses where cars come around the bend and are confronted by children in the middle of the road as it is a cut through to Swan Street.
- The piece of land in question falls in to the category of Countryside, I would like to draw your attention again to the inspectors report when citing this point: "It is common ground that the appeal site falls within the countryside for the purposes of Policy CS2 of the Babergh Core Strategy 2014 (CS). This policy states that development in the countryside will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances subject to a proven justifiable need". The Parish Council believes this application does not justify a proven need in exceptional circumstances.
- We wish to highlight that we are not an antidevelopment village having supported the building of Sandhill, a development comprising of the correctly sized properties that the village needs in an area that was safe to the residence. In conclusion we would urge you not to see this application as just a couple of houses with the village getting a path to their wood. The application is for 2 large houses that are not needed, on land that is designated countryside with serious safety highways issues that have been proven and upheld by the highest of authorities, highlighting that a line has been drawn, no more new homes. The Parish Council sees nothing in this application to supersede the recent inspector's conclusions.

Regards

Debbie Hattrell
Clerk to Council