

FORUM REPORT – 13th SEPTEMBER 2018 7PM EDGAR SEWTER

Present: Councillors;

Cllr Peter Dutton (HTC), Cllr Keith Forster, Cllr Keith Greenberg (HTC), Cllr Maureen Took, Cllr Anne Fleming, Cllr David Wollweber, Cllr Paul Widdowson.

In Attendance: Nick Rees (Clerk).

Members of the Public: A register was kept on the door, manned by Jill Reece, 31 members of the public attended the meeting, Cllr Tony Allen and District Cllr Letitia Smith were also present in the public gallery.

1. **Welcome and request for discussion subjects** - Cllr Peter Dutton welcomed everyone and explained the purpose of the meeting and took subjects for discussion from the members of public. These questions were noted and answered under item 6.
2. **Overview of Building Developments** - Cllr Peter Dutton explained the Planning process and that although Halesworth Town Council were consulted on planning applications the final decision was made by Waveney District Council. All those present were provided with copies of a plan of Halesworth showing the current pre-application sites, the sites that had outline or full planning approval and sites awaiting further information. In addition Cllr Dutton noted that there was 2.64 hectares allocated for industrial use (Broadway Farm) but the Council had not received any other information on this site as yet. Cllr Dutton advised the residents that total number of dwellings identified on the map amounted to 713 which, assuming 2.2 person per dwelling, would increase the population by around 1600.
3. **Community Centre** – Cllr Keith Forster explained the Council’s proposal for a new community building on the Dairy Farm site. This site also has provision for a pre-school (Nursery) building. Cllr Forster explained that the Council had submitted its proposals to WDC’s Planning, Policy and Delivery Team and the Inspector of WDC’s Local Plan to reinforce the provision for a community building on the site. Cllr Forster also advised the residents that recent changes in the law would make it more difficult for the developers to avoid their obligations to provide affordable housing and make land available for community use.

A resident asked what happens to the records and correspondence in the future when the existing members had left the Council. The Chair advised that the Clerk would keep all records to ensure a future council could continue with the project. Another resident asked if the change to the East Suffolk Council would have any adverse effect. It was confirmed that the contacts that the Council had made would continue in their present positions.

4. **Barrow Crossing** – Cllr Paul Widdowson reported on the Council’s recent meeting with Network Rail where photographic examples had been given of misuse of the crossing. It was noted that the examples showing individuals crossing the lines

instead of the Barrow Crossing was trespassing and Network Rail would prosecute if possible. Other examples had shown people stopping on the Barrow Crossing taking photographs. There was no evidence given of people crossing behind trains but all were aware that this did happen, particularly with passengers getting off the trains. Cllr Widdowson reported that the meeting did produce some co-operation from Network Rail in that they would be investigating other options to make the crossing safer, which included locking gates, staggering the timetables to prevent two trains being in the station at one time, announcements on the trains and CCTV. Cllr Widdowson explained that Network Rail regarded the Barrow Crossing as a high risk, this was largely due to the number of people crossing in relation to the number of trains. New trains are to be introduced which are equipped with video cameras. They are also quieter and longer and this would present other problems. There were several points raised on this subject which had been discussed many times before such as the difficult alternative route over the Norwich Road Bridge and access for wheelchairs if the crossing closed. An interesting conundrum for passengers and for Network Rail is when trains arrive early and passengers wishing to board the train from the opposite platform would have to cross behind or in front of the train in order to catch it. It was hoped that Network Rail would respond soon and provide some solutions.

5. **Introduction of the Neighbourhood Plan** – Cllr Keith Greenberg reported on the progress of the Steering Group and recalled that it was at this meeting last year that residents volunteered to get involved. Cllr Greenberg urged all those present to attend the first consultation event at the Edgar Sewter School on the 27th September. The Chair of the Kessingland Neighbourhood Plan group would be at the meeting to explain how they achieved their plan over a five year period.

6. **Residents Subjects:-**

- I. Traffic Management around the Mansion House fire site: The Chair explained that Highways Recovery Team were dealing with all the traffic and pedestrian management but the Council would inform residents of any developments as and when notified.
- II. Lack of signage in the Thoroughfare car park: The Chair reported that after a long period of difficulties in being permitted to speak with SCC Highways staff, a solution has been reached and the situation will improve. The suggestion of a multiple finger post showing the Library, Park, Market Place and other attractions would be considered seriously but an overall signage strategy was needed.
- III. Bus Hub: The Chair understands that the project had not been terminated but nor is it being progressed. However, SCC has been informed by the bus companies that they would not use it even if it was built. The proposed development at the Thoroughfare car park would further reduce parking spaces in the town so this was an added concern if the project was resurrected. Halesworth needs all the parking spaces it can get for its economic viability.
- IV. Police presence in the town: The Chair reported that Simon Green had been appointed as Community Engagement Officer, many residents knew Simon. The Council is looking forward to working with him as much as possible but he has a very large area to cover.

- V. CCTV: The Clerk reported that he had obtained various quotes to cover the Thoroughfare, Park and as far as the Arboretum. The Chair asked the residents present at the meeting if they would be in favour and after a show of hands it was clear that a considerable majority would be in favour of CCTV.
- VI. Lack of Doctors: The Chair understood the frustrations for patients experiencing long delays in seeing Doctors, but this was in the hands of the CCG and the Surgery.
- VII. Speeding: A resident wished to draw attention to the high speeds of vehicles leaving the Triple Plea roundabout towards the Railway Bridge along the A144 and that this road should be considered for a lower speed rating such as 40 miles an hour. The Clerk had not received any reports of this before but advised the resident to report the matter to Highways or the Police. It was noted that there was not a Speedwatch group in Halesworth and consequently two residents put their names forward.
- VIII. Patrick Stead. It was noted that Halesworth & Blyth Valley Partnership has successfully registered the building as an asset of community value. The Chair said that the Council was not involved but this action had allowed a period of time to see whether a group could be put together to explore options for retaining the building for community use.
- IX. Lantern over the Welcome sign in the Thoroughfare Car Park: It was noted that this lantern was unstable. It is not listed as a Council asset and the Council was unaware who owns it. The Chair said that although the Council was probably not responsible it would get it repaired or made safe.

7. **Young Peoples Facilities** – Cllr David Wollweber reported on the combined efforts of the Council, WDC, Campus and the Apollo Centre in organising two days of summer activities. This had proven to be very successful and attended by around 55 young people. The Council would be working with other organisations such as Halesworth Volunteer Centre to see what other measures could be put in place to engage with the young people in the town. Cllr Wollweber reported that the Council were aware of some issues such as excessive litter around the Teen Shelter but the Council had engaged the services of outreach youth workers and were working towards other solutions to improve the situation.

A resident congratulated the Council on supporting the young people in this way and this was supported by many of the residents present at the meeting.

8. **Community Infrastructure and s106/s111 – An explanation and request for ideas** – Cllr Keith Greenberg explained the complicated rules regarding how these funds could be spent in the town. The s106 & s111 were particularly restrictive and could only be spent on open space improvements but fortunately this did not represent a large amount. The Community Infrastructure Levy would, over the next few years, represent quite a large income for the Council and this was far more flexible in how it could be used for improvements to the town's infrastructure.

Cllr Greenberg requested that residents put forward ideas to the clerk by email or via Facebook.

The Chair thanked everyone for coming to the meeting.

The meeting was closed at 9pm.