

MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY PARISH COUNCIL  
MEETING OF SWANTON ABBOTT  
HELD ON AUGUST 15th. 2017 IN THE VILLAGE HALL,  
SWANTON ABBOTT AT 7 p.m

PRESENT – Cllrs. Belsham (Chair), M. Vaughan, R. Gee, S. Underwood & S. Howlett, the Clerk, G. Kimmerling, NNDC Cllr. Williams, Mr. R. Gilbey – Village Hall Committee & 53 members of the public.

Cllr. Belsham welcomed everyone to the meeting. She explained that members of the public would be invited to speak after her presentation on the new proposed development for Swanton Abbott.

17.40	<p>a) <u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u> Received from Cllr. Taylor &amp; Cllr. Haden – at work.</p> <p>b) <u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST ON ITEMS ON THE AGENDA</u> Cllr. Gee – Village Hall Committee &amp; Cllr. Underwood – her house is close to the proposed development.</p>	
17.41	<p><u>PRESENTATION OF THE NEW DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL FOR LAND BY LONG COMMON LANE.</u></p> <p><b>a) Chair to present the new proposal from the developers and to invite discussion from members of the community.</b></p> <p>Cllr. Belsham welcomed everyone to the meeting. She gave a power-point presentation assisted by Cllr. Howlett. Cllr. Belsham explained that this is a significantly different proposal from the previous one which Heritage Developments have put forward following on from the results of the survey. The following concerns had been raised in the survey:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Flooding – an independent flood report was commissioned by Heritage Developments. This states that the proposed development would not have a negative impact on the existing drainage issues and the drainage would be routed offsite to the adjacent field. This would be tested by NNDC at any planning application stage.</li> <li>2) Impact on the road network – this would be looked at by Highways at the planning application stage.</li> <li>3) Affordable Housing – There are currently 31 people on a waiting list for properties in Swanton Abbott and the surrounding villages so there is clearly a need. The new proposal is for 4 affordable units on the present Village Hall site and also offers 6 terraced properties which would provide cheaper market housing.</li> <li>4) Possible phase 2 for development – The area of land which backs onto the houses in Cross Road would be safeguarded by a 100 year covenant which would restrict any development. This could be landscaped to obscure the view of the new properties and would be maintained by the Parish Council. Any extra costs should be met by the precept from the new</li> </ol>	Page 149

build.

Three plans of the proposed development were then shown. It was explained that this is an indicative layout which could change. The proposal is for 11 detached, 4 semi-detached & 6 terraced properties, a new licenced and more energy efficient village hall with improved parking and a village green with access to the existing play park. The 'roads to nowhere' have been removed and the layout amended. This proposal has increased the number of market houses from 16 to 21 with the affordable units on the present Village Hall site.

Cllr. Belsham then gave relevant information on NNDC's 'Call for sites'.

Landowners were invited to put forward land for potential development. These plots of land are then combined to form the Housing & Economic Land Availability Assessment document (see <https://www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/media/3322/helaa-part-1-final-report.pdf>)

The plot of land in question by Long Common Lane has been put forward, has been assessed and found suitable and available for development. It could accommodate 104 housing units. This is a crude capacity model figure used by the Government and not a suggested design capacity. There are 3 other large sites in the village which have been put forward as well as smaller areas.

Mr. Roger Gilbey – Chair of the Village Hall Management Committee then explained the reasons for providing a new Village Hall.

- 1) Social/Community hub. The present hall is not suitable for all who wish to use it and cannot be used for larger events. A new, larger hall next to a Village Green would present opportunities for all members of the community.
- 2) The scope for activities is limited; it would be good to offer such sports as badminton, indoor bowls & table tennis.
- 3) Family friendly environment. The present hall is not disabled-friendly and the small size of the kitchen and main hall has resulted in cancellations. A hall next to a Village Green would offer many more possibilities for the whole family.
- 4) Energy efficiency. At present, most of the costs for running the present Village Hall go on heating, lighting etc. These costs would be much reduced in an up-to-date building.
- 5) Safety issues. The present hall is next to a dangerous bend in the road, there is very limited parking on site and nowhere for children to play outside. The furniture has to be stored outside and brought into the hall each time it is used which is a safety concern.

Cllr. Belsham summarised the proposal:-

21 housing units by Long Common Lane & 4 on the existing Hall site.  
A Village Green with improved links to the Play Park (which is being updated and improved)

A new, licenced Village Hall with parking

	<p>The area of land near Cross Road safeguarded by a 100 year covenant to prevent any future development. A Central Hub for the village.</p> <p><i>She then invited questions from the floor. The Clerk explained that the meeting would follow the Parish Council Standing Orders. Members of the public would be invited to speak by the Chair for 2 minutes and only once. Any member of the Parish Council could be invited to answer questions.</i></p>	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The drainage report did not include the area of land by the existing Village Hall. <i>This would be looked into at the Planning stage.</i></li> <li>2) This plan is similar to the first proposal and people were against that so why are we being asked to look again and the drainage report was for the first plan so is not relevant to this one. <i>This plan is significantly different from the first one and the Parish Council has a duty to present this to the village. The drainage issues would be looked at if the scheme went to Planning.</i></li> <li>3) The Local Flood Authority would need to be consulted about surface water flooding; the drainage dyke would need to be maintained; the disposal of sewerage has not been covered; there was concern that a licenced Village Hall would compete with the pub; could the village join with other villages and share a Village Hall. <i>NNDC Cllr. Williams was invited to speak. He said the flood report had been commissioned with a reputable company and did make sense. The Planning Authority would consult with the local Flood Authority when there was a final scheme. There can be a legal agreement set up to include upkeep. The Village Hall would not be in competition with the pub if it were licenced as it would not be open all the time.</i></li> <li>4) If the site was developed with up to 100 units the drainage issues would be greatly magnified. There would also be more affordable units on the site. <i>NNDC Cllr. Williams was again asked to comment. He explained that the 'Call for Sites' is a pool of land which the Local Authority can call on. North Norfolk need 8387 new houses, 519 sites have been identified which could provide 38,000. This site would not get 104 but it would be a lot more than 21 units. Although present policy is for no development in Swanton Abbott, this could change.</i></li> <li>5) How many of the 8387 units have already been built. <i>NNDC Cllr. Williams will find out.</i></li> <li>6) Local children and future generations need houses. There is an option here for real community benefit with just a few houses.</li> <li>7) A new resident – Change is inevitable and people should embrace it and be in control of changes so that they can use it to best effect. Swanton Abbott has no centre, no heart. The proposed Village Hall and Village Green would provide a</li> </ol>	<p>Page 151</p>

central meeting point and a few extra houses would enhance the village. If this scheme is rejected you could get a lot more houses, no amenities and have no control over future schemes.

- 8) A survey was carried out after the first proposal and from the responses received the majority was against this so why ask the village again?

*This is a significantly new proposal which has addressed many of the issues raised by the survey and offers protection from future development on the site. The survey was to gather information. Out of 360 residents, only 146 responded.*

- 9) It is believed that the present Village Hall is on land which has a covenant attached which only allows the land to be used for a Village Hall.

*Mr. Gilby was invited to reply. The Covenant is dated 1927 when the land was bequeathed to the village. Things have changed since then and the Charities Commission looks at what the Trustees can and cannot do. There is a value to the land which would be transferred to the new area and handed over to the Trustees. The land which the present Village Hall is on must be used to meet the needs of the Community and Affordable Housing would fit that need. The Village Hall can be transferred to the new site.*

- 10) As someone involved with the Village Hall for 40 plus years and involved with much fundraising I was horrified to think that the hall might be moved but I believe that you must move with the times. A small housing development would be good.

- 11) I have lived in the village for 18 years and my house backs onto the site. 21 houses represents 10% of Swanton Abbott which is too much. We could become a suburb of North Walsham. Isn't there enough Affordable Housing in North Walsham? The extra traffic would put too much stress on the road network in the village.

- 12) Cllr. Belsham, as a resident, are you in favour of the development?

*Cllr. Belsham – I have concerns with increased traffic and the drainage issues and have empathy with people who back onto the site but I would rather be in control of events. I have to consider the whole of the village.*

- 13) The drainage report is irrelevant as it related to the first plan. Water doesn't naturally flow up-hill. It will flow downhill to Cross Road and cause flooding.

*Cllr. Vaughan said there was over 1 inch of rain recently but the drains by the phone box had been cleared which meant the water could get away. Most of the water going into Cross Road was coming down Long Common Lane. Anglian Water are putting in two new pumps and enlarging the capacity of the holding tank in Aylsham Road which should make things better.*

- 14) How can you guarantee that there won't be more than 21 houses built on the site? The developer could change this once permission is given to develop the site.

*NNDC Cllr. Williams said if the development were to go ahead it*

would need local support. It would be very tightly controlled by Planning.

This was the end of the questions session.

**b) To consider any future action.**

Cllr. Belsham said the Parish Council now had to consider the next stage. It needs to agree on the method for finding out how the whole village feels about the proposal. There are two suggested options:- An Official Poll organised by NNDC or a Poll initiated by the Parish Council but carried out with a Clerk from another parish with a small number of residents in attendance.

The Clerk explained how the Official Poll run by NNDC would work. A meeting would be held to agree the wording of the poll question (by a vote) which can only deal with the principle of the proposal, not the details.

The Poll must be held within 25 days of that meeting and would be like a normal election with a polling station run by NNDC.

The poll times are 4p.m. to 9p.m. and the votes counted at the end of the evening.

There are no postal votes.

The cost would be up to £1000 added to the council tax bill.

The Parish Council organised Poll would be run on similar lines but would be more flexible and much less expensive.

Members of the public were asked to vote on their choice of Poll

Official NNDC poll      17 in favour

Parish Council poll      19 in favour

A decision on the wording of the question and the date of the Poll will be made at the October Parish Council meeting.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.20p.m.