

**FLAX BOURTON PARISH COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD**  
**AT THE VILLAGE HALL, FLAX BOURTON**  
**MONDAY 11<sup>th</sup> December 2017**

Meeting Commenced: 7.30pm

Meeting Concluded: 9.05pm

**PRESENT:** Councillors: Mrs Ellis (Vice Chair), Higgins, Lillington and Burton. Clerk: Sarah Jezard, Nick Wilton: District Councillor.

Councillor Mrs Buckley arrived at 7.35pm.

**APOLOGIES:** Councillor Mrs Moss

**IN ATTENDANCE:** 50-60 members of the public present.

**Public meeting:**

Councillor Mrs Ellis introduced the meeting and explained the format of the evening's proceedings. She explained there would be 45 minutes for public comments, specifically focusing on the Joint Spatial Plan (JSP) consultation and that after 45 minutes, the meeting would be for the Council to discuss the other agenda items. In relation to the JSP discussion, she stated that as a Parish Council, our focus is to help everyone in the village and reflect everyone's views. However, she made it clear that the Parish Council is not an action group. She asked for people to leave their email addresses, follow us on Facebook or look at our website so that we can keep in touch and send relevant updates on future developments and consultations.

Councillor Higgins provided the background to the Joint Spatial Plan (JSP) for the West of England which includes South Gloucestershire, North Somerset, Bath and North East Somerset and City of Bristol. He stated the focus of the JSP is about housing growth and employment and that there have already been two rounds of consultation, in November 2015 and November 2016. Flax Bourton Parish Council responded to both consultations. The latest version is the final version and has been endorsed by the four councils of the 4 unitary authorities detailed above.

He said there are plans for 105,000 dwellings over this period between 2016 and 2036 which includes 25,000 for North Somerset Council of which c.5000 are designated for affordable housing. As we are now at the final stage of the plan, consultation and comments are limited to 'soundness' and 'legal compliance'.

There has been no additional housing identified for Flax Bourton and Greenbelt policy is not changing at a local level at present. Backwell and Nailsea have been identified as strategic development areas. For Backwell, 800 units were identified in the 2016 version of the plan. This has now been reduced to 700 units in 2017. It should be noted that proposals by Taylor Wimpey for 700 units at Grove Farm are subject to a full planning application.

With regards to the Joint Transport Study, no specific routes have been identified and the lines drawn on maps are purely conceptual at this stage.

The Parish Council has been told that there will be an updated Joint Transport Study in April 2018 which will identify different 'route options' to link the A370 to Backwell/Nailsea and the M5 and this will also be subject to a full consultation.

While the other three Unitary Authorities mentioned above have signed up to the Metro Mayor and have budget allocated for infrastructure, North Somerset Council did not sign up for this and therefore do not have any budget allocated for infrastructure.

The Parish Council is of the belief that it will need to seek professional advice in relation to the new transport link.

The following public comments were made;

- 'There is already a bottle neck for traffic at the Cumberland basin. Shouldn't NSC be considering further use of trains and public transport etc to avoid this problem becoming worse?' Cllr. Higgins agreed this should be included in responses.
- 'Does the JSP include the expansion of the airport?' Cllr.Higgins replied 'Not that we are aware'.
- 'The public are being asked to comment on the Joint Transport Study (JTS), but there is no detail as yet. If the suggested road line is not correct, should we be commenting at this stage?' Cllr. Higgins replied that it is worth making a comment on the concept now but that there will be another opportunity to respond when the latest JTS is issued.
- 'Should the public consider challenging the current Greenbelt policy e.g. The Vale in our response?' Cllr. Higgins replied that the current greenbelt policy could be challenged but at the moment, this is not on the agenda.
- 'The North Somerset Council website is difficult to navigate and identify how to respond to the consultation.' Clerk to send out a link to the system for anyone who has provided an email address. This will also be included on Facebook and the website.
- 'The Highways department at an NSC briefing to residents has commented that the requirement for new housing isn't going to go away and whatever comments the public have, we still need new housing.'
- 'The suggested road on the Taylor Wimpey Grove Farm map goes across Backwell Common and cutting through to the A370 via the cricket club.' Cllr. Higgins suggested this is conceptual and no route has been defined or agreed.
- 'Has any thought been given to how long it currently takes to get into Bristol and how this could be made easier?' One member of the public responded by saying it is rumoured that the flyover into Hotwells from the A370 will be moved at some point in the future, closer to the suspension bridge, as it is currently dangerous and there have been lots of accidents on this stretch of road.
- 'If the Council appoints a Transport Consultant, can this information be made public once available?' Cllr. Higgins replied that we will liaise with residents on feedback about this.
- 'Is there a map of the original plan for the Long Ashton bypass from some time ago?' Cllr. Higgins stated he wasn't aware of this.
- Should the housing growth be related to the rate of employment growth? Does this justify a comment on soundness? How much confidence do we have in these

numbers?' Cllr. Higgins said it shouldn't just be one plan for 20 years but reviewed regularly. He agreed this could be commented on.

- 'What can we comment on in our response?' Cllr. Higgins stated that initial advice from planning consultants suggests responses must address the following issues;
  - o Has the plan been positively prepared?
  - o Is the plan justified?
  - o Is the plan effective – i.e. deliverable?
  - o Is the plan consistent with national policy?
- 'Development of new houses is important but it must be proportionate to the size of the village.'
- 'NSC haven't yet signed up for the Metrobus. Do they have budget and isn't Nailsea and Backwell station already at full capacity? This would need to be enhanced.'
- 'The need for housing is acknowledged but surely the road needs to be developed first as there is no infrastructure at present. The houses can't happen without the infrastructure. e.g. Long Ashton and Portishead – lots of housing but no infrastructure.'
- 'The potential impact of the housing on the roads and traffic congestion if the infrastructure is not in place is concerning i.e. the impact of the M5 being shut is severe at present and has an extreme knock on effect on surrounding areas.'
- 'Planners have discussed road on stilts etc, are these plans final?' Cllr. Higgins replied there are no clear lines on the map at this stage, it is all conceptual.

District Councillor Wilton stated if we object to the housing completely, we may get something we like even less. The number of dwellings is not negotiable. When asked if the Greenbelt decisions could be challenged? The reply was 'be careful what you wish for' as removing greenbelt could lead to further development. He also stated that North Somerset Council is strapped for cash. There is no right answer to this problem. The majority of the jobs are in Bristol and there is no 'magic money tree'.

Cllr. Higgins said that there is little mention of neighbourhood planning in the JSP. A neighbourhood plan would not be able "to trump the JSP or Local Plan". He also stated that in our past responses to consultations, Flax Bourton has majored on two areas: What is the impact on local services of 700 houses in Backwell and 2,500 houses in Nailsea, and what about the provision of infrastructure and potential traffic congestion?

The Joint Transport Study makes clear that "A significant amount of work will be required to develop in more detail the components of the Transport Vision".

The public section of the meeting was closed at 8.13pm.

The Parish Council meeting commenced at 8.19pm.

## **1. To note any apologies for absence**

Apologies: Councillor Mrs Moss.

## **2. To receive Councillors' declarations of interest in items on the agenda and to consider any written applications for dispensations.**

None declared.

### **3. To approve and sign the minutes of the monthly meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2017.**

It was resolved to approve and sign the minutes of Monday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2017. Proposed by Councillor Roger Higgins and seconded by Councillor Carol Buckley; vote taken and all in favour.

### **4. Planning Licensing and development**

#### **a. Joint Spatial Plan and Transport Study published 22nd November:**

- **To approve the appointment of Planning Consultants to advise on a consultation response by the Parish Council at a maximum cost of £3,000 excluding VAT.**

Three transport consultants were discussed to assist with the Parish Council's response to the JSP and Transport Study: Foxley Tagg, Key Transport Consultants and Motion. Quotes have been obtained from Key Transport Consultants and Motion. The Council is awaiting the quote from Foxley Tagg but they have provided an initial response which is very detailed. Cllr. Mrs Ellis expressed her concern about Motion's costs which come in at c. £3-5k. Key Transport Consultants are located in Bristol and it was felt that having a local firm was preferable and they have provided a comprehensive response to the request for a quote. They have stated they don't have any conflict in terms of who they are working for. Cllr. Higgins stated that the Council could handle the JSP response themselves but that it would require professional help on the Highways and Transport side of things. Cllr. Lillington stated he as keen for all the Councillors to have a say as to which provider is selected.

It was agreed to appoint Planning Consultants to advise on a consultation response by the Parish Council at a maximum cost of £3,000 excluding VAT.

Proposed by Cllr. Buckley and seconded by Cllr. Lillington; Vote taken and all in favour.

- **To authorise a sub-committee of The Chair, Vice-Chair and Councillor Higgins to agree and submit a consultation response following advice from Planning Consultants.**

Proposed by Cllr. Buckley and seconded by Cllr. Burton; Vote taken and all in favour.

- **To discuss any required actions on the Local Plan 2036.**

The JSP will be supported by a new Local Plan. The Local Plan focuses on the 4 areas affected in North Somerset i.e. Backwell, Nailsea, Banwell and Churchill. The questions about the local plan in the four specific areas are pre-loaded so we need to be careful in our response. Cllr. Higgins said that there is just one question on the Backwell questionnaire that the Parish Council proposed to comment on, which relates to traffic and infrastructure.

- b. To discuss any issues raised on the following applications:**

<b>17/P/5027/FUH</b>	<b>Westbrook Coach House, Main Road, Flax Bourton, Bristol</b>	<b>Erection of a two storey extension and a detached car port.</b>
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Westbrook Coach House has submitted a planning application to build a two storey extension. While this is in the greenbelt, it is possible to extend providing the extension is no more than 50% of existing floor space. Cllr. Higgins recommended the following response:

*'Although in the Green Belt and outside the village settlement boundary, the proposed side extension to this barn conversion property is acceptable. We believe the extension is within the "50% allowance". There is minimal impact to the setting of this property and neighbouring Westbrook or to the openness of the countryside.'*

<b>17/P/5115/FUL</b>	<b>Mill Farm Station Road Flax Bourton Bristol</b>	<b>Conversion and extension of existing building to form 1no. two bedroom unit of holiday accommodation</b>
<b>17/P/5116/LBC</b>	<b>Mill Farm Station Road Flax Bourton Bristol</b>	<b>Conversion and extension of existing building to form 1no. two bedroom unit of holiday accommodation</b>

Cllr. Higgins requested this application be held over for next month. Clerk to contact Raheel Mahmood, the Planning Officer allocated to this case. The original building is in the greenbelt and this application is to turn it into holiday lets. Cllr. Higgins to come back to Council on this application.

<b>17/P/5085/FUL</b>	<b>Graham House 20 Old Weston Road Flax Bourton Bristol</b>	<b>Graham House 20 Old Weston Road Flax Bourton Bristol</b>
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Cllr. Lillington has requested an extension to comment on this application as it hadn't been possible to log onto the website to review the application.

## **5. Financial reports**

### **a.To approve the monthly expenditure, budgetary control and bank reconciliation reports.**

All three reports were taken en bloc and it was resolved to approve the cashbook, budgetary control and bank reconciliation reports for November along with expenditure of £2,958.95 for December 2017, detailed as follows;

Flax Bourton Youth Group July	568.75	0.00	568.75
Playground repairs	1,044.00	174.00	870.00
Playground inspection - November	96.00	16.00	80.00
Bin-it Dog Bins	105.82	17.64	88.18
Royal Mail - POBox Annual Fee	258.00	43.00	215.00
Clerk reimbursement	30.20	5.03	25.17
Staff salaries	856.18	0.00	856.18
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£2,958.95</b>	<b>£255.67</b>	<b>£2,703.28</b>

Proposed by Councillor Lillington and seconded by Councillor Mrs Buckley; vote taken and all in favour.

#### **b. To discuss the draft 2018/2019 budget**

It was noted to consider the following in the budget for next year;

- Staff salaries
- New office equipment
- Nailsea Community Transport no longer requiring a grant
- Consideration of professional fees given the Transport Consultants fee is likely to be in the 2017/2018 budget – TBC.

It is likely the precept for 2018/2019 will be c. £26,000.

An action was taken by the Clerk to obtain details of the Youth Group's accounts this year. The Youth Group will need to reapply for budget from the Parish Council and an understanding of the number of attendees etc is required.

If anybody has any further comments on the budget, please notify the Clerk.

The final budget for 2018/2019 will be presented at the January meeting.

#### **6. To co-opt a new Councillor to fill the existing vacancy.**

There is one vacancy for the position of Councillor and two applicants and co-option into this vacancy was due to take place on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2017. However, a recent bereavement of one of the applicants has resulted in the Council not being able to conduct an interview with this candidate, who is still keen to stand for Councillor.

To be fair to both candidates, Deborah White at ALCA was consulted and she advised the Council would need to decide the next steps and vote accordingly. A discussion took place as to whether co-option should be deferred to allow the Council to interview the candidate or if co-option should go ahead as planned. It was also suggested the Council should consider taking on two new Councillors and the Clerk is tasked with looking into the possibility of this.

The Council agreed that co-option should be deferred to the January meeting.

Proposed by Councillor Burton and seconded by Councillor Higgins; vote taken and all in favour.

**7. To discuss progress with the Parish Council's lease of Designated Community Land (DCL) adjoining the school from North Somerset Council.**

North Somerset Council has completed the purchase of the DCL and subject to the original Heads of Terms still being correct, Flax Bourton Parish Council is keen to progress the lease now that NSC has responded to our Request for Information. While there are a few outstanding questions, the next stage will be for our lawyer to;

- Review the lease;
- Look at the rights to be granted by the Diocese in the lease;
- Review the purchase documents in detail (transfer and option);
- Review the statutory declaration for the strip on the SW boundary of the land;
- Review the replies to enquiries provided by the previous landowner;
- Arrange searches, except the local search which NSC has provided.

In addition, there has been discussion with the Trustees of the Wraxall estate about leasing the land adjacent to that owned by NSC to potentially increase the size of the DCL. This was expected to be at the same rate as the lease with NSC. However, a recent email from Savills, the lawyer acting on behalf of the Trustees of the Wraxall Estate, suggests a requirement to fence off the land from that owned by NSC and higher rent than expected for this additional piece of land. It suggests that the proposed terms of this lease may be prohibitive. An email asking for clarification of the situation has been sent and it is likely that this issue will be discussed in January where the Council will be asked to discuss whether or not the terms laid out by the Trustees of the Wraxall Estate are viable.

**8. To receive an update on the progress of actions from previous meetings.**

Speed check on Station Road – we have not heard back from Rob Thompson. Clerk to chase this up.

Tarmac Quarry Clean Up – it was confirmed that the main road is cleaned monthly.

Website – on hold until January.

Earth encroachment on the A370 – Clerk to follow up with Gregg Brake.

**9. Open forum.**

Councillor Higgins provided his apologies for the meeting in January.

**10. The next meeting of Flax Bourton Parish Council is on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2017 at 7.30pm at Flax Bourton Village Hall.**

There being no further business, the Vice Chair closed the meeting.

Signed .....

Dated .....

DRAFT