

## HELINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

### Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting held on Tuesday 9 August 2016 in the Helsington and Brigsteer Village Hall at 7.30 pm

**Present:** Cllrs A Davies (Chairman), B Mansbridge, S Carman, R Park, K Ritchie, S Savasi and J Seddon.

Also present were Ms J Saunders (Clerk) and 32 members of the public.

#### **36/16 Apologies**

None.

#### **37/16 Declarations of Interest / Dispensation Requests**

Cllr S Savasi declared a potential personal interest in Agenda item 5 re planning application no SL/2016/0703 Land to the East of Helsington and Brigsteer Village Hall. She advised that her daughter had provided her contact details to the applicant Helsington Community Land Trust and had asked for her interest to be noted. Cllr Savasi further advised that she did not feel that this had influenced her objectivity regarding this matter and was attending the meeting with an open mind. Cllr A Davies thanked Cllr Savasi for her openness and it was confirmed that she would participate in the discussion and vote on the matter.

#### **38/16 Minutes**

It was resolved for the Chairman to sign the minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 6 July 2016 as a true record.

#### **39/16 Public Participation**

A number of members of the public spoke with regard to planning application SL/2016/0703 (speakers were asked to give their names and an indication of where they lived, but this information has not been included in these minutes). There was some support for the provision of affordable housing based on local need, and some support for the use of the site for affordable housing development, but a number of concerns were raised about the current planning application. These included the impacts on traffic and parking; the impact of the proposed drainage arrangements on neighbouring property, land and the highway, including potential flooding, pollution and public health risks; lack of sustainability; costs to residents requiring car ownership; high build costs; costs of future management of the development; the inclusion of three open market houses needed to subsidise the affordable housing and which increases the scale and impact of the development; loss of too many trees and the need to retain trees as screening and to protect woodland areas; and excessive block paved, illuminated footpaths felt to be suburban and out of keeping in a woodland setting. There was some disappointment expressed that no representatives of the Helsington Community Land Trust were in attendance at the meeting, and it was confirmed that some members of the Trust were on the Chairman's agenda mailing list.

#### **40/16 Planning**

The following planning application was received and considered:

**SL/2016/0703 - Land to the East of Helsington and Brigsteer Village Hall, Brigsteer, Kendal - Change of use from forestry land to residential use and erection of eight dwellings (including five affordable dwellings), installation**

**of package treatment plant and formation of vehicular and pedestrian access.**

Support was expressed for the provision of an affordable housing scheme on the site, but concerns were expressed by councillors about the scale of the development, the inclusion of open market housing, the high cost of the development and the financial risks involved, the size of both the affordable and open market houses, the level of local demand for affordable housing and the implementation of the Trust's allocation policy, the environmental impact particularly on trees, drainage, insufficient parking, access arrangements and the impact on traffic and highway safety, the suburbanisation of a greenfield site in a small rural village lacking the appropriate infrastructure, and the long term management of the development.

It was noted that SLDC policy had been to exclude small villages from its Local Plan land allocations for housing development, and that the site of the proposed development in Brigsteer had been included only at the request of the then Parish Council in 2012. Although a subsequent Parish Council had rescinded this resolution and submitted a replacement representation opposing the land allocation, the site had remained in the land allocations for development. There was disappointment at the lack of dialogue between Helsington Community Land Trust and the Parish Council, and that no representative of the Trust had attended the meeting. Appreciation was expressed to those local residents who had attended the meeting and provided information or expressed their views in Public Participation. Members of the public were encouraged to submit individual written responses to the planning application. Cllr A Davies advised that he would be attending a site visit the following day by LDNPA's Development Control Committee, and highlighted some of the material planning considerations which would be taken into account by the Committee.

**It was resolved unanimously to oppose the application,** and to give the following reasons:

1. The scale of the development. 8 houses are too many for the site and too many for the village. The inclusion of 3 open market houses, 2 of which are 4+ bedrooms, is also opposed. It was noted that, although doorways were to be wide enough for wheelchair access, no other provision (eg downstairs toilet facilities) was made for elderly or disabled occupants. It was also suggested that there should be more provision of 1 and 2 bedroom units for single or couple occupation, and that the designs should have been more environmentally friendly.

There is concern that the high costs of this development and the financial risks involved in market housing subsidising affordable housing. The level of local demand for affordable housing is also questioned: the Community Led Plan survey responses indicated that there was community support for small scale affordable housing schemes (no more than 4 houses, favouring re-use of existing buildings and self-build schemes). It is felt that the 5 proposed affordable houses, in addition to the 3 affordable houses recently granted consent at Low Plain only 200 metres away, are liable to be completed within a short time span. This would be likely to cause a short - term excess of supply over local demand resulting in the affordable houses not being occupied by local people. It would also fail to provide for the longer term local need, thus resulting in demand for more development at a later date. This would not be sustainable in our small rural community. The Parish Council recommends that there is scope for a more realistic, phased development rather than that which is currently proposed.

2. The design of the development. It is felt that the suburban design of the houses is inappropriate for the rural village setting and that such a development would alter the character of the village and have a detrimental effect on the area. It is also felt that excessive paved footpaths were proposed, which again would suburbanise the site and be out of keeping with its rural, woodland setting.
3. Access and parking arrangements. The proposed access road is on a single track road close to a blind bend on a hill. There are no pavements on the road. The traffic/speed survey was undertaken some years ago when the Wheatsheaf pub was closed; this is now a popular and busy pub which already causes parking problems in this part of the village. There has been a road traffic accident in this vicinity within the last few months. 2 parking spaces per house are insufficient for residents and visitors.
4. Drainage. The proposed drainage system and sewage treatment plant would discharge through a private dwelling (Broom Bank), with risks of pollution and flooding and an impact on the amenity of the property dweller. There is concern about the size of the proposed tank, related hazards and future access for maintenance. The increase in the risks of flooding, including to the fields further down the hill, pollution and environmental health hazards, affecting both private land and the highway, are unacceptable.
5. Impact on trees. The proposed development will result in the loss of too many trees which are of value to the environment and to the amenity of local residents. More of the trees on the site, particularly those which provide a screen and limit the visual impact of the development, should be retained.

It was further resolved to enclose the following documents with the Parish Council's response to this planning application:

- i. The Community Led Plan survey responses re affordable housing;
- ii. Helsington Parish Council letter to SLDC regarding the rescission of the resolution to support the inclusion of the site in the Local Plan land allocations.

It was agreed that a draft response to planning application SL/2016/0703 would be circulated to councillors for final amendment and approval, prior to submission to LDNPA.

#### **41/16 Future meetings**

It was confirmed that future meetings of Helsington Parish Council would be held on Wednesday 7 September 2016, Wednesday 2 November 2016, Wednesday 1 February 2017 and Wednesday 5 April 2017.

It was noted that planning applications 7/2016/5513 re Briggs House Farm, Helsington and 7/2016/5515 re Crooked Gate, Brigsteer, had been received after the agenda for this meeting had been issued, and that LDNPA had granted extensions to the deadline for comments in respect of both applications to 8 September 2016 to allow them to be considered at the September meeting.

The meeting closed at 08.55 pm.

Signed: .....  
(Chairman)

Date: 7 September 2016