

The Parish Council (PC) met 10 times in 2015-6; 9 ordinary meetings and one special meeting on 21 December 2015 to consider a planning application for the development of land at Herne Lane for housing. One scheduled meeting, 28 July did not attain a quorum. The main issues have been: -

- |    |  |   |                                    |
|----|--|---|------------------------------------|
| 1  | Representations to Breckland Council (BC) on Policy and Planning Applications. |   |                                    |
| 2  | Broadband  | 3 | Highways in and around Beeston     |
| 4  | A Budget for 2016-7  | 5 | Open Space Maintenance Contract    |
| 6  | Millenium Ponds  | 7 | Letter Box Closure                 |
| 8  | Beeston Website  | 9 | Retirement of Parish Council Clerk |
| 10 | Membership of the Parish council   |   |                                    |

- 1 Representations to BC
- i Planning Policy  
Breckland Local Plan(LP)

In January BC circulated a new LP in two parts for public consultation, 'Preferred Directions' (PD) and 'Emerging Site Options' (ESO). The new LP goes further with the ideas first put into the public arena in 2014-5 and allocates the greater shares of development in two 'Key Settlements' (KS), (Attleborough and Thetford); lesser shares in three 'Market Towns' (MT), (Dereham, Swaffham and Watton), in twenty nine 'Service Centres' (CS), (eg Litcham and Beetley) development to enhance 'Local Services'; and, 'Rural Settlements' (RS), both with and without 'Settlement Boundaries' (including Beeston) where new allocations would not be proposed. ESO classifies sites for development in three categories, as 'Strategic Extensions with Planning Permission', 'Reasonable Alternatives' (RA) and 'Unreasonable Alternatives' (UA). RA and UA are on land that various landowners and developers would like to add to the planning process. BC's next step will be to assess these representations, which may lead to a Public local Inquiry, to determine a new LP for development up to 2031. Beeston has no RA although a handful of landowners has asked for their ideas to be added.

#### Community Assets (CA)

BC introduced a strategy for PCs to identify and support CA that might come under the threat of closing as the result of pressure for local changes. The PC asked BC to put 'The Ploughshare' on its list of CA in Beeston, which brings into effect the need for clear procedures to apply to its disposal within a period ending on 4 June 2016. A local committee, 'Save Beeston Ploughshare' (SBP) distributed leaflets to 1,100 houses in and around Beeston, called a public meeting and began the job of establishing terms to negotiate with the owner. On 29 March the PC made a grant of £100 to the committee to cover administration costs. The topic is now a permanent item on the PC's Agenda, the body of the work is under the management of SBP who have undertaken to keep the PC up to date with progress.

- ii Planning Applications  
NC Residual Questions

The developer has started work on the new access for lorries from the C222 to the existing quarry and land-fill area in Litcham Road, a NC application determined in 2014-5. This means the existing access from Watery Lane would become no longer necessary, which should reduce the need for heavy lorries to run on Watery Lane and its approach roads in Beeston.

NC has a S106 Agreement which required contributions to off-site footpath improvements with the previous developer on the quarries in Bittering. The improvements agreed at the time do not now look as if they would be the ideal investment and the 3 PCs have some leverage in a review of the works to be done. It would be opportune to revive the idea in the coming year with NC, primarily through the PC.

#### BC Applications

The volume of new house building and extensions to existing houses has started to rise from the low levels of 2014-5. BC approved one significant application for the generation of energy from renewable sources, a measure of the extent of this is that the Parish is now generating enough renewable energy to meet the demand for electricity to domestic premises in Beeston.

#### Planning Applications for new Housing

There have been three cases of an application for 6 or more dwellings; the threshold where a share of affordable housing has to be provided. One was withdrawn and later made again for development on land at the junction of Herne Lane with Dereham Road and one is at the junction of Herne Lane with The Street. The PC's main concerns were with their concentration on large dwellings where there is a greater demand for affordable housing for local needs and the use of land outside the boundary where further development should be expected. Both cases are on areas of land that are

the subject of representations as ESO, which will need to be considered in the emerging LP. The sum of the areas of land involved amounts in all to about the same as the area already devoted to housing in Beeston.

2 *Broadband*

British Telecom has continued working on the local telephone network, a faster service is now available to users who chose to pay for a fibre-optic connection.

3 *Highways in around Beeston*

i The proposed 'trod' on the west side of Dereham Road will cost more than at first estimated because of land purchase costs. The work has been withdrawn from NC's programme and the PC's share of the cost refunded. The long term problem of a safer access for adults and children to the school will thus need a different remedy.

ii The Street is subject to a conflict of interests between pedestrians and vehicles to the extent that safety is perceived to be at risk from passing heavy lorries and tractors. The one planning agreement that governs traffic conditions in Beeston stems from a consent for East Anglian Stone (EAS) to use their existing depot. NC has recently said it will try to find a way to control heavy vehicles from using unsuitable roads. The PC has prepared a statement of conditions on the existing road network, which may provide a useful starting point for analysing where trouble spots occur.

iii The PC reports the appearance to NC of potholes in the highway and the need to trim highway verges where they obstruct visibility.

4 *The 2015-6 Financial Position and a Budget for 2016-7*

In 2015-66 the PC had an income of £ 7,250 from its precept and made grants to a range of local charities:-

	£
Beeston Playing Field Committee	750
Beeston Village Hall	1,500
British Legion Poppy Fund	40
Tapping House Hospice Charity	75
Beeston Church Grounds	300
Bittering Church Grounds	150

The PC decided not to increase its Precept for 2016-7.

5 *Open Space Maintenance Contract*

The PC decided to renew its contract with the contractor appointed in 2012.

6 *Millenium Ponds*

The natural state of the ponds has declined, probably due to road water run-off that will have brought salt, fuel oil and grit in to play. Advice on the ecology and future potential of the ponds may be available through the Norfolk Wild Life Trust.

7 *Letter box Closure*

The Post Office (PO) closed the letter box at the former PO without giving the public an account of their procedures for consulting the public. Despite repeated effort on the PC's part the PO has not sent the PC an explanation.

8 *Beeston Website*

Paul Marchant continues to service the website, the PC thanks him for his time and effort in this task.

9 Bryan Leigh would like to retire from his post of Clerk to the PC. The PC thanks him for his commitment and his thorough approach to the work of managing its affairs and wishes him a long and healthy retirement. Steps to recruit new Clerk are in hand.

10 *Membership of the Parish council*

The PC used its authority from BC to co-opt three new members to the PC, which raises its membership to the legal requirement, adds experience and should overcome the risk being not able to attain a quorum.

Julian Farrall 26 April 2016