

## Minutes of Kettleburgh Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 10 September 2008

**Present:** Cllrs J Bater, R Durbin, P Garland, G Weeks, D Harris, T Jessop (chair), V Neilson.

The Parish Clerk was in attendance. Two members of the public were present.

The Meeting began at 7:15pm in **Open Session**. The Chairman welcomed the public, Cllr P Bellfield and Alan Cadzow, Area Director for Children and Young People, who presented Suffolk County Council's views on the Boundary Commission's proposals for Local Government reorganisation. Mr Cadzow was invited to give his report. He distributed a Review Briefing to all those present, to which he referred during his report.

As background to the current Boundary Commission's (BC) proposals, Mr Cadzow explained that following Ipswich and Norwich's failed bids for Unitary Status, Hazel Blears, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, requested the Boundary Commission to investigate the replacement of the existing two tier system (County and District/Borough Councils) with Unitary Authorities (UAs), in Suffolk and Norfolk. The remit for the BC proposals did not allow retaining the status quo. With regard to Suffolk, the BC's preferred proposal is for Suffolk to be divided into two UAs: Ipswich, Felixstowe and the surrounding 47 parishes (the 'North Haven' area) as one UA, and the remainder of Suffolk as the other UA. They also saw some merit in a One Suffolk UA. At the time of their review, their proposal suggested transferring Lowestoft into Norfolk, but overwhelming objections to this proposal have led the BC to delete this from their proposal. Ipswich Borough Council supports the North Haven (two unitaries) proposal. Suffolk County Council supports the One Suffolk proposal for the following reasons:

- A single authority will be cheaper.
- A large UA will have more clout regionally, nationally and in Europe.
- SCC already runs 75% of Local Government services.
- Specialist services are already run by the County Council.
- Procurement is easier with a large Council.
- The loss of eight District Authorities will make economic sense.
- Infrastructure efficiency.

It is hoped that the introduction of approximately 20 Community Boards (CB) in the County would overcome the remoteness of a Unitary Councillor. Although the mechanism has not yet been determined, and they would vary across the County, it is expected that they would include elected members and representatives from the Community and be responsible for funding, service delivery and identifying priorities at a local level.

Cllr Peter Bellfield added some comments from his perspective:

- On a personal level, he would opt for retaining the status quo.
- The Conservative Party, if elected before UAs were in place, would reverse any unitary decision that was made.
- There are many urban UAs already (Peterborough and Southend are local examples), but great resistance in rural areas. Shropshire is an exception as a successful UA: success depends upon the quality of the management. SCC is already a high performing Council.
- If the Unitary Bid is successful, the new authorities will be in place by 2010.
- There are already plans for County offices in Bury St Edmunds and Lowestoft.

Many points of concern were raised by Parish Councillors:

- The BC proposals do not provide any financial details (these will be made public on 19<sup>th</sup> September).
- There was great concern expressed over the idea of non-elected Community Boards.
- There would be large costs involved in any reorganisation.
- There would be a democratic deficit.
- The Pathfinder approach (not allowed by Central Government), which was aiming for more cooperation between County and District and across Districts, would be far more cost effective.
- There is an overwhelming desire to retain the status quo.
- Most other Parish Councils wish to retain the status quo.
- The North Haven proposal would leave rural Suffolk in a poor financial position.

The BC is requesting submissions from Parish Councils (and individuals) by 26<sup>th</sup> September. It will then review its proposals and prepare a report to be delivered to the Secretary of State on 31<sup>st</sup> December. A period of four weeks will then follow when representations may be made directly to the Secretary of State. She may then accept, reject or modify the proposals and finally make a decision as to whether any new Unitary Authorities are to be created.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Bellfield and Allan Cadzow for their contribution to the meeting.

Open Session was closed and the meeting commenced.

ACTION

1. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** There were none.
2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Cllr Tim Chase and Cllr Bob Snell.

**3. MINUTES of the meetings held on 2<sup>nd</sup> July and 20<sup>th</sup> August were approved and signed.**

**4a) PLANNING:**

**PLANNING DECISIONS FROM SCDC**

**C07/2308 and C07/2308 - Rectory Farm: Restoration and extension of house 2 and link to house 1.**

SCDC has now received plans which show the details of the link building, but delay in reaching a decision on this application is caused by the need to formulate a legal agreement to ensure that the restored building is not sold separately from the farm.

**C08/1422 Corner Cottage – Construction of a new 2-bedroom dwelling with garage. No Decision.**

The Clerk reported that she had investigated the two site specific proposals which had been received by SCDC, as reported by Cllr Snell on 2<sup>nd</sup> July: one was a submission by Mr T Chase for a small development of two/three bedroomed pairs of terraced houses on the land between Church Field and Churchside in Church Road; the second was a request for confirmation that the physical limit would not be extended on land behind Lings Field.

**4b) Comments on Planning Documents:** The Chairman is preparing a response to two documents relating to planning matters (background notes accompany these minutes):

1. SCC Minerals and Waste Policy – a submission document, which has no impact on Kettleburgh: the topic of the soundness of this document remains under review within the East of England Plan. The Parish Council's response will be that we have no constructive comment.
2. East of England Regional Assembly – consultation on draft project plan and statement of public participation: the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), or East of England Plan is the document from which the Local Development Framework (LDF) is produced. It is now being reviewed and will be valid to 2031. The Parish Council will support this document. The relevance to Kettleburgh will be in how SCDC interprets the RSS into the LDF.

TJ

**5. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVIEW:**

The Chairman summed up the discussion held in Open Session:

- All were in agreement that this was an important issue.
- In our response, the Parish Council needs to state that retaining the status quo is the preferred option, but also to comment on the proposals.
- Cllrs Durbin, Garland, Jessop and the Clerk, who had attended presentations locally by SCC, Ipswich Borough Council and the Boundary Commission, agreed that the strong opinion of the majority of those attending was that if a choice had to be made, a single unitary (One Suffolk) was the preferred option.
- The lack of support for the North Haven option (two Unitaries) reflected the fact that Ipswich and Felixstowe have all the economic wealth, leaving rural Suffolk lacking in economic resources.
- The only merit in the SCDC preferred option (an East/West split plus a Unitary Ipswich) was that a single authority would look after the coastal area.
- There has been no comment to Parish Councillors from residents in Kettleburgh on this subject.
- Suffolk Preservation Society has produced its response to the proposals and is in favour of retaining the status quo. Their proposals will form a useful background to and reference for the Parish Council's submission.
- If the North Haven proposal is adopted, rural areas will suffer, particularly with regard to care in the community.

Opinions varied as to the best way to respond to the BC:

- All Councillors were in favour of retaining the status quo, yet this was not a valid response, being outside the remit of the BC review.
- Not enough facts were given to respond in the terms required by the BC.
- It was a case of choosing the least bad option.
- Not enough facts are available to make sound comments to the BC.
- The arguments relating to finance and economies of scale were faulty.

TJ

The Chairman requested any further views to be sent to him. He will then prepare a response to be sent to the Boundary Commission.

**6. NOTICE BOARD:**

The Chairman has made enquiries with James Robin at Marshall Hatchick (solicitors) regarding the gift by Mr Matthew Payne to the Parish Council of the triangle of land on which the Parish notice board stands. The cost for legal and Land Registry fees would be in the region of £100. Enquiries about restrictive covenants and the need for planning permission should be made. **It was proposed and agreed by a majority of Councillors that the Council should proceed with the acquisition of the land.** The Chairman will obtain a Deed of Transfer and present it to Marshall Hatchick. The Clerk will write to Mr Payne to accept his kind offer.

TJ  
JC

**7. FINANCE:**

- a) **The Financial Statement was received and approved.**
- b) **Review and Renewal of Insurance:** The policy renewal note from Suffolk ACRE now includes 'legal expenses cover'. Upon enquiry with Suffolk ACRE, it appears that this cover is now mandatory as part of the Parish Council Group Insurance Scheme. It was accordingly agreed that the increased amount of £199.49 should be paid, giving cover to the end of September 2009. JC
- c) **Invoices for payment were approved and signed.**
- d) **The Annual Return for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008 is now complete and has been accepted and approved by the Council.** The only issue arising was the employment status of the Clerk, with relation to PAYE and NI deductions. This matter has been investigated to the satisfaction of the Internal Examiner and will be readdressed when the Clerk's pay and conditions are reviewed in March 2009. The Notice of Conclusion of Audit will be displayed for a period of fourteen days on the Parish notice board. JC
- e) The Clerk requested that Councillor Responsibility budgets for the year 2009-10 be sent to her by 15<sup>th</sup> October. ALL

**8. PARISH TREE SCHEME:**

In the absence of Cllr Chase, the Clerk presented the two proposals made for this year's Parish Tree Scheme:

1. Kettleburgh Green Trust: 50 metres of native hedging at a cost of approximately £100.
2. Mr J Bater: continuation of planting alongside FP11 at a cost of approximately £30.

Following a discussion on the merits of spending the precept on this scheme, the following proposal was unanimously agreed that: **The Parish Council would facilitate the Parish Tree Scheme. If residents or organisations in Kettleburgh wish to take part, they would bear any cost not covered by SCDC.** Cllr Chase will be requested to make the necessary arrangements with SCDC and pass the costs on to the above two proposers. TC

**9. CLERKS REPORT:**

- a) Review of Quality Parish Status: this has been completed between meetings by email. Councillors were satisfied that the Parish Council fulfils the requirements of the Quality Parish Scheme, but do not wish to undertake the formal process of applying for Quality Parish Status.
- b) Distribution of newsletter: Cllr Durbin has produced the latest news-sheet on the subject of traffic calming issues. A public meeting, arranged by Cllr Durbin, will be held on 4<sup>th</sup> November to discuss this topic further. RD

**9. CORRESPONDENCE:**

*All correspondence was circulated amongst Councillors.*

**10. REVIEW OF ACTIONS REGISTER:**

The Actions Register will be reviewed to bring it up to date.

**11. QUESTIONS TO CHAIRMAN**

- Cllr Harris queried when the rota for refreshments would be available. The Clerk will email it to all Councillors. JC
- Cllr Neilson queried the procedure for members of the public to make their views known once the Council was in session. She was assured that a member of the public might indicate to the Chairman that s/he has a point to raise, and wait to be allowed to speak to the meeting.
- Cllr Garland's draft questionnaire on Parish Views will be added to the next agenda.

The following items from the agenda were held over to the next meeting:

Village Green Report  
Councillor Responsibilities

**12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:**

Wednesday 12 November 2008 at 7:15p.m. *Agenda items by 28 October please.*

**13. The meeting closed at 10.05p.m**

## **File Note for the Meeting to be held on the 10<sup>th</sup> September 2008**

Two letters were received by the KPC in July 2008 requesting comment as follows:

One is from Suffolk County Council's 'Minerals and Waste Policy Team' dated the 30 July 2008 regarding "Minerals Specific Site Allocations Submission Documents" (sand and gravel extraction sites). These submission documents are in response to the 'East of England Plan' (which is the subject of the second letter) and the consultation period for these documents closes on Friday the 12<sup>th</sup> September 2008. I have reviewed the relevant information regarding this issue and conclude the following:

None of the 12 proposed sand and gravel extraction sites directly affect Kettleburgh. Of the 12 sites only two are new, Chilton and Timworth the other 10 are in fact more like 7 as Waldringfield, Homersfield/Flixton and Worlington/Red Lodge have 2 sites each. Notwithstanding the lack of affect on Kettleburgh the representations now called for are regarding the 'soundness' of the document not its content as such. It would also appear that little interest has been expressed in this topic generally. The Minerals Core Strategy received few representations when it went out for public consultation. The subsequent Development Plan Documents (DPDs), at the 'Preferred Options' stage received 38 representations made mainly from statutory bodies but some were received from members of the public objecting to the inclusion of preferred sites. However none of the representations were considered to be reasons for excluding any of the identified sites. I see little benefit for the KPC to offer representations regarding the 'soundness' of this document. [In any case this topic remains under review as a topic within the East of England Plan.]

The second is from EERA (East of England regional Assembly), dated July 2008 regarding "Review of the East of England Plan – consultation on draft project plan and statement of public participation". The consultation period for these documents closes on Monday the 15<sup>th</sup> September 2008.

[Some background (if you were not already aware of it) – before the 'Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004' came into being there were three tiers in the planning hierarchy; Regional Planning Guidance (RPG6 for Suffolk), County Structure Plans and Local Plans. Now there are two tiers; the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)(for us this is the East of England Plan) and Local Development Frameworks (LDF).]

As you may expect the RSS is a high level document setting out ground rules which are expected to be followed when LDFs are drawn up (or, as is the case for minerals extraction, when the County Council propose their 'Minerals Specific Site Allocations').

The East of England Plan was issued in May 2008 and EERA is committed to carrying out an early review of it in particular to roll forward the plan to provide for the period up to 2031 (the current plan goes up to 2021). The documents now out for public consultation are EERA's draft project plan and statement of public participation. I have read both of these documents and have briefly gone through the East of England Plan.

It is my view that EERA's Draft Statement of Public Participation is comprehensive and I cannot begin to consider how else they could suggest a greater level of participation and I would suggest that the KPC support this document.

EERA's draft project plan also appears to me to be a sound proposal. There are five objectives for the review:

- To identify the appropriate development strategy for the region for the period 2011 – 2031, with a longer term view to 2050
- To consider whether there is any need to amend, or add to, the generic policies within the current Plan
- To maximize partnership working with regional stakeholders and community involvement in the review process
- To consider whether any changes are needed to national policy to assist better delivery of the strategy
- To submit the draft Plan to Government by the end of 2009.

(EERA seeks comments on these objectives.)

Stage 1 is the production of the project plan and statement of public participation (nearing completion),

Stage 2 is 'Developing the Evidence Base',

Stage 3 is 'Preparing Development Scenarios and Consulting Options',

Stage 4 is 'Preparation of the Draft Revised Regional Spatial Strategy',

Stage 5 is 'Approving the Formal Submission of the Draft Regional Strategy',

Stage 6 is 'Testing the Draft Spatial Strategy',

Stage 7 is 'Proposed Changes' and

Stage 8 is 'Publication of the Revised Regional Strategy'.

(EERA seeks comments on stages 2 and 3 and the broad approach to the review process.)

I can see little to criticise in the draft project plan as it is very thorough but more to the point there is little in the East of England Plan that directly affects Kettleburgh or, indeed, any rural area. What is important is how our 'Local Development Framework' interprets this higher level plan, thus my next objective is to review how this looks currently. (What the East of England Plan does provide is ground rules to be followed in regard to sustainable development, affordable housing, location of development and timely provision of services.)

I suggest the KPC confirms its support for the review as described in the draft project plan.

TE Jessop

9<sup>th</sup> September 2008