

Planning Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 13 August 2021

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Present

Harry Blathwayt, Nigel Brennan, Bill Dickson, Gail Harris, Paul Hayden, Tim Jickells, James Knight, Leslie Mogford, Vic Thomson, Melanie Vigo di Gallidoro and Fran Whymark

In attendance

Jack Ibbotson – Planning Officer, Cally Smith – Head of Planning and Sara Utting – Governance Officer

Members of the public in attendance who spoke

Mr Crowfoot of Geldeston Parish Council and Jodie & James Bromley (applicant) for item 9.2 – BA/2019/0412/FUL – Three Rivers Campsite, Station Road, Geldeston

Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014

The Head of Planning explained that the meeting was being audio-recorded. All recordings remained the copyright of the Broads Authority and anyone wishing to receive a copy of the recording should contact the Governance Team. The minutes remained the record of the meeting.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Stephen Bolt, Andrée Gee and Michael Scott.

2. Appointment of Chair

Melanie Vigo di Gallidoro had been proposed by Tim Jickells and seconded by Gail Harris.

Melanie Vigo di Gallidoro was appointed Chair.

3. Appointment of Vice-Chair

Tim Jickells had been proposed by Melanie Vigo di Gallidoro and seconded by Bill Dickson.

Tim Jickells was appointed Vice-Chair.

4. Declarations of interest and introductions

Members provided their declarations of interest as set out in Appendix 1 to these minutes and in addition to those already registered.

The Chair advised members that this was the last meeting for the Planning Officer Jack Ibbotson, who was leaving the Authority after three years to take up a post at Norfolk County Council. Jack had made a great contribution to the work of the planning team and, on behalf of all members, the Chair wished him all the best for his future.

5. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2021 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6. Matters of urgent business

There were no items of urgent business.

7. Chair's announcements and introduction to public speaking

Public Speaking: The Chair stated that public speaking was in operation in accordance with the Authority's Code of Conduct for Planning Committee.

8. Requests to defer applications and/or vary agenda order

No requests to defer or vary the order of the agenda had been received. It was noted that item 9.1 had been deferred, as previously advised to members via email.

9. Applications for planning permission

The Committee considered the following applications submitted under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (also having regard to Human Rights), and reached the decisions set out below. Acting under its delegated powers, the Committee authorised the immediate implementation of the decisions.

The following minutes relate to additional matters of information or detailed matters of policy not already covered in the officer's report, which were given additional attention.

(1) BA/2020/0254/FUL - Catfield

Habitat restoration works and provision of temporary welfare facility

Applicant: RSPB

The Chair reminded the Committee that, as previously notified by email, this item had been deferred as the Authority was still awaiting some information and a number of matters needed to be resolved before the application was ready to be determined by the committee.

(2) BA/2019/0412/FUL – Three Rivers Campsite, Station Road, Geldeston

Demolition of service sheds and container; erection of new service building; shower room extension to boatshed; enlargement of basin and pontoon to provide mobility access and mooring/charging for electric day boats and visitor berth; play area; increase in number of caravan standings from 12 to 20; hard surface path to south end of site to provide mobility access; improved slipway

Applicant: Mr James Bromley

The Planning Officer (PO) provided a detailed presentation on the application for various works and changes to how the site operated at the Three Rivers Campsite on Station Road in Geldeston. He advised that, since the report had been prepared, two further letters of representation had been received: one from the Parish Council recommending members undertake a site visit, to which he responded that it would be for members to determine but he had very recently taken a number of photos to illustrate the site, and the other was from Mr Crowfoot asking if officers were aware that the site had been historically raised land. The

PO advised that this was covered in the report and he had also covered this issue as part of his presentation.

In assessing the application, the PO addressed the key issues of: the principle of development; the impact upon the landscape; impact upon ecology and peat soils; impact upon the amenity of neighbours; design and flood risk.

In response to a member's question on the amount of peat to be disposed of and how this was assessed as being an acceptable level, the PO advised that the initial survey showed the amount of peat in the spoil to be removed was approximately 60%. He referred to the policy, advising that, in this particular case, the harm had been reduced by reusing some of the peat in the landscape works (eg tree pits) but there were practical limitations. Furthermore, the location as a habitat had been assessed as low importance in this area. The policy was innovative but there were limitations on refusing works which involved peat. The Head of Planning added that, since the peat policy had been adopted two years ago, there had been changes in the way peat was thought about and the review of the Local Plan could see significant amendments to the policy, such as a possible compensation element. Officers were satisfied that the policy criteria had been met in this particular case, based on the existing adopted policy. This policy had enabled the Authority to have discussions with the applicant around how much peat would be coming out, what they proposed to do with it and how much they were limiting carbon loss.

A member referred to the number of drains in the area and questioned whether the Internal Drainage Board had been consulted. The PO confirmed that they received a weekly list of consultations from the Authority had but had not responded to this application. An informative could be added, drawing the applicant's attention to seeking the necessary consents from the IDB.

Another member referred to the wording in condition in paragraph 8.4 ("flood proofing") and questioned if this would place an unnecessary burden on the applicants. The PO advised that the Environment Agency required details of the building to ensure it would be sound and some of these were not able to be controlled by Building Regulations. The Flood Response Plan (in a simplified format), together with provision of a refuge and structural details would meet the requirements. They were not considered to be onerous in this respect and officers would review the wording of the condition.

Mr Crowfoot provided a statement on behalf of the Parish Council, stating that it objected to any expansion in the number of pitches and furthermore, would like to see a moratorium for the next five to six years. There were concerns at the way the application had been submitted and re-submitted which it was felt excluded the rights of the Parish Council to make its opinions and have an impact on what would be done. It was considered that the owner had developed the site to meet demand but there were a number of interests involved. Of main concern was the view from the east, particularly walking along the footpath along the bank, from where the roadway and tents could be seen pitched all along the area. Furthermore, a sign had been erected stating "pitches 9-20", pointing down the land along the side of the Wherry Dyke, which gave the impression that the decision of the Planning Committee had

been pre-empted. Secondly, the Parish Council questioned how the application was related to its locality and environment. The centre of Geldeston was a Conservation Area (dating back to 1984) and there were issues of the landscape, wildlife, other river users, walkers and the local inhabitants. After the previous application for this site, the Parish Plan had been produced. 66% of households and 66% of residents had submitted their views, stating that they had little or no objection to sharing their amenities with others but this was a quiet corner of the Broads and residents did not wish to see it becoming a tourism centre. There was no effective screening to block views of the numerous tents and it would take 5-6 years for a hedge to form an effective screen. This was why a time limit was being suggested by the Parish Council.

In response to a question on the number of people which made up the 66%, Mr Crowfoot advised that this would have been based on 400 residents or 170 households in total.

Jodie Bromley provided a statement in support of the application, commenting that the aim was to conserve wildlife and introduce more to the site. Many native hedge species had already been planted on site. They spoke to all their visitors to learn from their experience and always kept villagers in mind. She was on site for around 12 hours a day most days and dealt with any issues as they arose. New hedge plants were proposed for screening on the walkway side. The ones previously planted last November were already waist height.

In response to questions on the average number of people who would be on site and if this increased during certain periods, Ms Bromley advised that during winter there would be eight pitches available (eight hardstandings) with two people occupying each, plus some campers. In the summer, there would be three people per pitch (mix of couples and families). Numbers of people would be around 40 non-peak and 60-70 at peak times. The proposal was to increase the number of caravans from 12 to 20 but the number of tents would remain the same but this would vary on where they were. Occasionally, cyclists called by looking for a site last minute and so a few extra tents would be allowed on site. These would be shielded by the long grass and only a few cars were permitted in that area. James Bromley added that a caravan pitch measured 15m x 2m and so could also have a tent adjacent to it. Whilst there was no set definition between tents and caravans, there would be no more than 20 caravans on site.

A member acknowledged the concerns which had been expressed by the Parish Council but felt it was essential to encourage successful and responsible business development in this type of sector. Another member concurred, commenting that he felt an increase from 12 to 20 would not make a material difference. In looking at the report, he noted that the closest residents were 130m away and he applauded the applicants in their proposals for sustainable tourism.

Another member referred to the peat loss but recognised this was not peat of a very good quality. The current policy would protect the peat from being oxidised but the amended policy should be evolved to prevent the loss of peat habitats.

In conclusion, it was considered that the proposed development was of an appropriate scale to a successful tourism business, in accordance with Policies DM29 and DM30 of the Local

Plan for the Broads. The suggested conditions would address any issues which had been raised by the statutory consultees.

Bill Dickson proposed, seconded by James Knight and

It was resolved unanimously

To approve the application subject to conditions relating to: standard time limit; in accordance with approved plans; materials condition prior to works above slab level/piling level of relevant building; flood response plan and structural details for flood proofing prior to commencement of development; details of boat wash down prior to commencement of development of the service building; details of slipway/ramp prior to commencement of works on the slipway; holiday use limit; use restriction condition (buildings not to be used for sleeping accommodation or human habitation); limit to size of craft used/launched from and within the site; landscaping management condition; car parking condition; lighting restriction/details; biodiversity enhancement and no amplified music.

James Knight left the meeting at this point (11.14am).

(2) BA/2021/0228/ADV – Norfolk Broads Direct, Wroxham

Site description – new entrance sign at site pedestrian entrance off Norwich Road

Applicant: Mr James Knight

The Head of Planning Officer (HoP) provided a detailed presentation on the application for advertisement consent for a new entrance sign at the pedestrian access to the site at Norfolk Broads Direct, accessed directly off the public footpath immediately to the south of Wroxham Bridge.

In assessing the application, the HoP addressed the key issues of: the principle of development; appearance of the proposed sign and street scene, and the height and siting of the sign.

Members considered the proposed sign was of a reasonable size and acceptable design; would not have an adverse impact on the street scene, result in an unacceptable obstruction to the existing entrance or contribute to congestion on the adjacent public footpath and, therefore, was in accordance with Policies DM16, DM23, DM43 and DM49 of the Local Plan for the Broads.

Harry Blathwayt proposed, seconded by Leslie Mogford and

It was resolved unanimously

To approve the application subject to conditions relating to: standard time limit; in accordance with approved plans and advertisement maintained in a condition that does not impair the visual amenity of the site.

James Knight re-joined the meeting at this point (11:29am).

10. Enforcement update

Members received an update report from the Head of Planning on enforcement matters previously referred to the Committee. Further updates were provided at the meeting as follows:

former Marina Keys, Great Yarmouth: a small amount of material remained on site but was insufficient to justify formal action. It was likely this would remain on site until works to implement the planning permission commenced. Therefore, it was recommended that the item be taken off the update report in the interim and an update would be provided in four months' time. Officers would chase the owner for a commitment to progress.

land to east of North End, Thorpe next Haddiscoe: more was to be cleared off site this week. Officers would visit the site shortly and further progress would be reported at the next meeting.

land off Damgate Lane, Acle: the owner and occupier of the caravan had both been written to and the occupier had confirmed they would be moving out. Officers would check at the end of this month. Planning permission was not required for the caravan to remain on site, so long as it was unoccupied. In terms of the other buildings on the adjacent site, officers were in discussion with the owners/occupiers and it was hoped to resolve through negotiations.

11. Lound, Ashby, Herringfleet and Somerleyton Neighbourhood Plan – proceeding to Regulation 16 consultation

The Head of Planning (HoP) introduced the report, which sought agreement for public consultation to go ahead on the Lound, Ashby, Herringfleet and Somerleyton Neighbourhood Plan. Members noted that the Broads Authority was a key stakeholder and therefore able to comment on the Plan. It was anticipated that a report would be presented to a future meeting of the Committee for endorsement of the suggested response.

A member commented that there was no reference to dark skies in the Plan and the HoP responded that this was not an area of the darkest skies. These would be found further north and south, but she would raise with the Planning Policy Officer to include within the Authority's response to the consultation.

Tim Jickells proposed, seconded by Harry Blathwayt, and

It was resolved unanimously to endorse the Lound, Ashby, Herringfleet and Somerleyton Neighbourhood Plan for consultation.

12. Fleggburgh Neighbourhood Plan – proceeding to Regulation 16 consultation

The Head of Planning (HoP) introduced the report, which sought agreement for public consultation to go ahead on the Fleggburgh Neighbourhood Plan. Members noted that the Broads Authority was a key stakeholder and therefore able to comment on the Plan. It was

anticipated that a report would be presented to a future meeting of the Committee for endorsement of the suggested response.

Gail Harris proposed, seconded by Harry Blathwayt, and

It was resolved unanimously to endorse the Fleggburgh Neighbourhood Plan for consultation.

13. Consultation responses

The Head of Planning (HoP) introduced the report, which provided a proposed response to two planning policy consultations recently received: one from Thorpe St Andrew Town Council seeking comments on the first draft of its Neighbourhood Plan and the other from Gt Yarmouth Borough Council seeking comments on the modifications to its Local Plan, following an examination by an independent Planning Inspector.

In terms of the Gt Yarmouth Local Plan, a member referred to the comments under Policy L1 (holiday accommodation areas) and the issue of additional visitors to the Broads, which he thought the Authority was trying to encourage. The HoP responded that this policy related to holiday accommodation in Great Yarmouth, which would result in additional visitors to the Broads. Whilst this was encouraged, to an extent, the impacts needed to be recognised. The new Local Plan for the Broads would include reference to the impact of additional housing and a tariff which would be imposed on all new houses across the county. This financial contribution (circa £185 per property) would be used to support projects such as environmental education, interpretation to highlight the sensitivity of sites and minimise impacts on that particular site. With reference to this document under consideration, the policy needed to look at the impact of new visitors arising from new holiday accommodation, which was not currently addressed. She referred the member to the Norfolk Green Infrastructure and Recreational impact Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (GIRAMS).

In response to a question on how the committee would assess planning applications against both the Neighbourhood Plan and the Authority's Local Plan, particularly if there was any conflict, the HoP confirmed that the development plan for the Broads was its Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plans had the same status, so they did form part of the development plan. She referred to the "soundness" test which was used by the Examiner to assess whether plans had been prepared in accordance with legal and procedural requirements. To be found "sound", plans had to be:

- positively prepared
- justified
- effective
- consistent with national policy and other policies for the area.

An example was the Lound Neighbourhood Plan where officers had highlighted some inconsistencies and thereby a soundness issue. Therefore, in overall terms, both sets of plans had to have a level of conformity with each other.

Tim Jickells proposed, seconded by Gail Harris, and

It was resolved unanimously to note the report and endorse the proposed responses.

14. Minutes of the Heritage Asset Review Group meeting held on 25 June 2021

The Committee noted the minutes of the Heritage Asset Review Group meeting held on 25 June 2021.

It was noted that, at the Annual Meeting, it had been agreed to extend the membership of the Group to all members of the Authority and the Chair encouraged all members to attend.

15. Circular 28/83 Publication by Local Authorities of information about the handling of planning applications – 1 April to 30 June 2021

The Head of Planning (HoP) introduced the report, which provided the development control statistics for the quarter ending 30 June 2021. Key figures were in table 3, which showed that the Authority had met all of the national targets.

A member referred to table 2 and the figure of 40% of applications which required an extension of time and questioned the reasons for this, ie was it an underlying operational reason due to a shortage of resource or due to the applicant not having submitted the required information. The HoP responded that it was a combination, with officers often waiting for information, referring to the application which was due to be considered at the meeting today but had to be deferred. In terms of resources, this was not a particular issue at the current time. The member commented that he considered 40% to be a high percentage and it would be useful in future reports to have the figures split into the reasons for the extension.

The report was noted.

16. Appeals to the Secretary of State

The Committee received a schedule of appeals to the Secretary of State since the last meeting.

17. Decisions made by officers under delegated powers

The Committee received a schedule of decisions made by officers under delegated powers from 5 July to 30 July 2021 and any Tree Preservation Orders confirmed within this period.

18. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Planning Committee would be on Friday 10 September 2021 at 10.00am at Yare House, 62- 64 Thorpe Road, Norwich.

The meeting ended at 12:05pm

Signed by

Chairman

Appendix 1 – Declaration of interests Planning Committee, 13 August 2021

| Member | Agenda/minute | Nature of interest |
|--------------|---------------|---|
| James Knight | 9.3 | Applicant. Disclosable pecuniary interest so left the room for this item. |