

Minutes of the Billingford Parish Council Extraordinary meeting held on Wednesday 7th February at 7.00 p.m. in Billingford Village Hall

Councillors Present:- Cllr A Lake, Cllr K Crudgington, Cllr S Wilson and Cllr A Cutcher

Other Members Present:- Dist. Cllr G Bambridge, 12 Electors and Mrs G Hubbard, Clerk

1. Welcome and to consider accepting apologies received for absence
The Chairman welcomed those present. Apologies for absence were received from Cllr P Richardson and these were accepted.

2. To declare any Interests re items on the agenda
There were no interests received.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PERIOD

Cllr Lake introduced the Parish Councillors, Dist. Cllr Gordon Bambridge and the Clerk to those present. He also introduced Mrs V Crudgington and explained that she and her husband, Cllr Crudgington has spent many days compiling the response and carrying out hours of research. They were both given a huge vote of thanks by the Parish Council for their tremendous hard work on this subject.

3. To discuss planning application 3PL/2023/1058/F – land at rear of 8a Festival Road, Billingford.

The draft response to Breckland Council had been created and copies of this were pinned onto the display board at the meeting and copies were distributed to those present. This response had been agreed by the Parish Councillors in principal and the point of the meeting was to let those present know what facts were put into the response. One of the residents present stated that she would not object to the static caravans being put on the land but she was not in favour of the touring caravans.

When the Breckland representatives had attended the last meeting, the answers they gave to certain questions were not satisfactory. Cllr Crudgington believes that the answers he was given were not correct and he has done a great deal of research and he does not think planning permission should be given, nor should the sale of the land have gone ahead. There was no consultation with the Parish Council or residents. Breckland Council do not think they needed to consult. Cllr Crudgington has requested to see certain documents through the Freedom of Information Act but he still has not seen these documents. Documents held by Breckland Council clearly show that they should consult but they did not do this. Cllr Crudgington read out to those present several sections of the proposed response that had been created for Breckland Council Although residents have used the land for many years, Breckland Council state it is not regarded as 'Open Space'. The Parish Council disputes Breckland Council's position on this Cllr Crudgington further set out his reasons why. The Parish Council asked if any residents could provide photographic evidence of their time spent on the land. The Parish Council feels that it should make a Formal Complaint to Breckland Council regarding how the sale was made. Cllr Crudgington thought it was very telling that

since last year Breckland Council is now consulting with Parish Councils and local residents and they have since offered or gifted land for sale to other Parish Councils. He said their Asset Management document speaks volumes. In 2012 – 2014 there was correspondence regarding the Parish Council being keen to acquire the land but it was ‘shelved’ by Breckland Council at the time due to staff shortages. There have many objections to the sale/planning application by residents and these have been submitted to Breckland Council. Cllr Crudgington explained that the Parish Council does not make decisions, it works for the residents and fights their corner and residents must engage with the Parish Council. A lot of materials have been placed onto the land such as bricks and breeze blocks. The Parish Council is strongly objecting to the planning application on residents’ behalf as it is not suitable for any kind of development. In addition to the planning application, the Parish Council will have to consider a legal challenge to Breckland Council’s original sale of the land and a possible compulsory buy back if necessary (eminent domain).

Cllr Bambridge has heard from the Enforcement Officer today and they cannot do any more until there is any attempt to physically build anything or bring any structure such as a static caravan onto the site. He has been told that about 30 years ago a planning application was approved for some houses and there was supposed to be some temporary accommodation provided for nos. 9 and 10 but this did not materialise. Cllr Bambridge stated that whilst he is not a solicitor, he feels the Parish Council has a strong case and should pursue their current grievance against Breckland Council and its objection to the planning application itself.

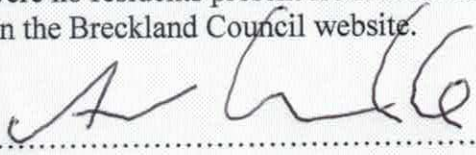
Cllr Cutcher proposed the response be accepted and sent, seconded by Cllr Wilson and unanimously carried.

4. To pass a Motion to make a formal complaint to Breckland Council regarding Transparency on sale of Council Land.

Cllr Cutcher proposed that a motion be passed for the Parish Council to make a formal complaint to Breckland Council regarding the lack of transparency on the sale of the Council land at Festival Road and this motion was seconded by Cllr Wilson and unanimously carried.

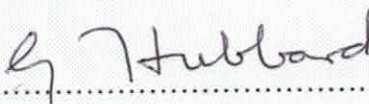
The next meeting will take place on Monday 19th February at 7.00 p.m. in the Village Hall.

There being no further business to discuss, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.25 p.m. and thanked everyone for their attendance. He expressed is disappointment that there were no residents present from Festival Road but they had actually submitted their comments on the Breckland Council website.



Chairman

19-2-2024
Date



Clerk

19-2-2024
Date