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STANFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Stanfield Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday March 9th 2022 at 7.30 pm. in St Margaret's Church, Stanfield.

Councillors present: Cllrs R Duffield, I Thompson, L Walker, D Britton and M Jenkins

Others Present: Dist. Cllr Robert Hambidge, Cllr Andrew Holdsworth, Cllr Simon Wood, 21 Electors and representatives from Brisley Parish Council, Horningtoft Parish Council and Whissonsett Parish Council

1. Welcome and to consider accepting apologies for absence

The Chairman welcomed those present. There were no apologies received.

2. To declare any Interests re items on the agenda

There were no Interests declared.

3. To discuss ongoing Planning Issues

Cllr Holdsworth explained, to those present, the background of the situation regarding the caravan situation down Back Lane. An Enforcement Notice was served in 2017 because of the caravans. The Appeal was dismissed and a caravan was removed and one stayed on site and the land was sold. In February 2021 hard standing was put down and caravans were on site. This was investigated and a Notice was served. An application to put more caravans on the land was received and some information regarding Travellers' pitches was received. There is guidance in place for Travellers and this has to be adhered to. The impact on the community needs to be considered and Breckland Council are aware of this fact. The application is still being looked at and Breckland Council are being engaged with legal representatives and soon they will be visiting the site to ascertain whether the occupants have Gypsy and Traveller status. As well as this status, subjects such as Education and Health etc. need to be investigated. Once all the facts have been gathered, the application may have conditions imposed on it. It will not be a quick process. It is difficult to gain entry onto the site and when the inspection takes place a Welfare Officer will also be attending.

The Whissonsett Parish Council representative asked about Environmental and Health issues or waste and fly tipping. She was told this was a valid concern. Plastics are delivered to the site and there is much burning going on. Skips come to the site full and go away empty and there are regular bonfires. Toxic waste is being burnt. She asked if there is no planning permission, what is in place for sewage and drainage as waste is usually a big issue. Septic tanks have been installed on site.

Some questions were asked regarding the situation with Mr Egland. Mr Egland is still in breach of his Enforcement Notice so he can still be evicted and prosecuted but there are issues as to why this is not happening at the moment.

Regarding the Travellers application, planning permission could be done on a temporary basis, a permanent basis or refused. If granted, then conditions can also be put in place. Impact on landscape will also be looked at. If it is refused, an Enforcement Notice will be served. The Travellers have to restore it to its original state. If they do not, they could be prosecuted. They could Appeal but the whole process could take several months. There is a 6 month period to Appeal against the situation. Prosecution only punishes them for not carrying out what they should do. Gypsies are recognised as an Ethnic Minority and Local Authorities have to have regard for this fact. Breckland Council will investigate whether the Travellers meet the criteria. Rules must not be deviated from, otherwise problems would occur. The rules regarding special sites will have to be looked at but it does not automatically mean that the Travellers will get the planning permission. At the moment they have broken planning legislation and control. Breckland Council are working with Barristers to find out if the people are genuine Travellers and Gypsies. Comments were made regarding a Nomadic life style.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PERIOD

A resident present stated that the dogs on the land are threatening and this is unacceptable. In the past, the route he took for a walk with his dog was a pleasant route but the dogs there sound vicious and he will not use that route any more. Another resident thanked the Breckland Councillor for organising the meeting. He stated that what is going on is affecting the quality of life of the residents. In 2017 some parishioners stated they felt there was cause for concern. Also another resident asked if the Travellers had been asked to become involved with the meeting and he was told they had not personally been invited to attend but the meeting was advertised on the notice board and website.

A resident, who lives close to the site, explained how his life is being affected negatively by the presence of the Travellers.

The Vice Chairman of Stanfield Parish Council made the comment that if planning permission was granted, he felt it could be a slippery slope. Stanfield has had no new buildings allowed for about 12 years and young people have not been granted planning permission. However, the Travellers have moved onto the land without planning permission, which is unacceptable as everyone should be governed by the same rules.

The Horningtoft Parish Council representative mentioned that there is a site at Swaffham for Travellers but it is only 50% occupied, so he wondered if the site at Stanfield was being considered because of this fact. Black smoke goes onto the land of some residents because of the Travellers and he asked if Breckland Council would compensate residents who may become develop medical problems because of the smoke. The water could also be affected because of the pollution. There is a new fence being erected, so it looks as if the Travellers are extending further into the field.

The Stanfield Parish Council Chairman, Mr Thompson, thanked the Breckland Council representatives for attending the meeting. They stated they will submit feedback on the impending meeting at the site. A resident suggested that the Skip company involved with the delivery of the skips could be investigated. Also the waterways need to be investigated because the water is getting polluted.

A resident commented that everyone in the village is entitled to a quality of life but this is being badly affected by the presence of the Travellers and their actions.

4. To confirm date and time of next meeting – 14th March at 7.30 p.m.

The next meeting will be held on Monday March 14th at 7.30 p.m. in St Margaret's Church.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting finished at 8.36 p.m. and the Chairman thanked those present for their attendance,


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Chairman

14/03/2022
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Date