



PEASEDOWN ST JOHN PARISH COUNCIL

The Beacon Hall, French Close, Peasedown St John, Bath BA2 8SN
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Minutes of the Full Council Extraordinary Meeting held on Tuesday 2nd April 2024 at 7.00pm at Beacon Hall, French Close, Peasedown St John

Present:

Councillors:

Gill Auld; Fiona Carr; Mandy Clarke; Richard Clarke; Audrey Gillard-Sprake; Howard Hartley; Gavin Heathcote; Simon Kidd; Andrew Larcombe; Conor Ogilvie-Davidson (Vice-Chair); John Ogilvie-Davidson; Jonathan Rich (Chair); Les Sprake; Kathy Thomas; Daniel Walker.

In attendance:

Tanya West – Parish Clerk & RFO

Public Session

There were two members of the public present at the meeting; neither of them wished to raise anything.

The Clerk reported that McLoughlin Planning and Vistry Group PLC were unable to attend the meeting but had advised they were currently working on a revised plan for housing and mixed use of employment and community space on the site south of the bypass. They would share the details of the plan with the Parish Council when they also submit their proposals to B&NES Council. The Clerk had agreed to issue them with a copy of the minutes of this meeting.

The Chair asked if any persons were recording the meeting. No one responded that they were.

C118 – 02/04/2024 Attendance Roll Call and Declarations of Interest

An attendance roll call was undertaken and those present are detailed above.
No further interests to those already disclosed to the Monitoring Officer were declared.

C119 – 02/04/2024 Attendance and Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Jo Davis due to being away. This apology was noted.
Cllr Ray Love was absent without apology.

C120 – 02/04/2024 Minutes

The minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 27th February 2024 had been circulated in advance of the meeting; it was **resolved** that they be accepted as a true and correct record of that meeting and were signed by the Chair accordingly.

C121 – 02/04/2024 Items for Urgent Report

There were no items for urgent report.

C122 – 02/04/2024 Local Plan Options Document

The B&NES Council Local Plan Options document had been available for review for some weeks. Councillors considered a formal response, to be submitted on behalf of the Parish Council, to the public consultation of this document. The completed feedback forms from residents, following the recent councillor surgeries, had been circulated as pre-reading.

Cllrs Gill Auld, Fiona Carr, Howard Hartley, Kathy Thomas hosted two councillor surgeries in March for residents focusing on the Local Plan Options document consultation. The surgeries were very well attended, and there was a good mix of ages demonstrating that the subject in question was of interest to the residents of the village.

Cllr Kathy Thomas reported that between 60 and 70 residents attended the councillor drop-in sessions, with Beacon Hall open for 5.5 hours on Monday 18th March and for 3 hours on Saturday 23rd March. There were residents in attendance throughout these periods.

The general feeling at the drop-ins was that local residents were supportive of 200 houses, if there were corresponding improvements to infrastructure. However, this view was not upheld by the comments in the returned written feedback forms (of which 22 had been received to date). The results of these were as follows:

- Object to 200 homes – 12
- Supportive of 200 homes with improved infrastructure – 6
- Supportive of 200 homes – 1
- Indifferent to 200 homes – 2
- Tentative support for 200 homes - 1

Consequently, Cllr Thomas went on to state that the overall response was to object to 200 houses and that she felt very seriously the Council should respond based on the majority of the feedback forms received.

Cllr Gavin Heathcote was asked to comment in his capacity as a Ward Councillor. He advised he felt the biggest issue is the strain on the infrastructure as no improvements to the current facilities are intended to be created in connection with the proposed additional 200 homes. He also advised that he had asked for information on the proposed solar farm and if there were plans for any direct benefit for Peasedown St John residents. Finally, he mentioned for councillors to be mindful of not just focusing on Peasedown St John but to consider neighbouring proposals. As there is another proposed site option, also off the A367, but within the parish of Radstock which is for 1,000 homes, which is likely to have an impact on Peasedown St John.

Following the above updates, the Chair encouraged debate and asked all those councillors present for their comments. The following is a summary of the points raised:

- It is a fact more houses are needed. If some are not built in Peasedown St John, then where will they be built? They must be built somewhere. New building generates jobs, taxes and infrastructure. The bigger picture needs to be looked at.
- Many people in their mid-thirties do not own their own home and will never likely be able to afford to do so. This needs to be addressed as there is currently an approximate 14 year wait on the social housing register due to insufficient housing numbers being available. That said, there is also a lot of underoccupied properties with people living in 3- and 4-bedroom family homes that no longer require that size of house, but it becomes difficult to move the residents having been their family home for years.
- It would be helpful to know how many more homes the school and doctors' surgery can manage under the maximum levels as specified by the Government.
- Many residents asked about the type of houses planned to be built. They want to see smaller properties that are more affordable, and bungalows for those older and less able rather than just 3- or 4-bedroom family homes.
- Whatever the development, transport links in and out of Peasedown St John needs to be improved.
- It was suggested for another park and ride to be created in Peasedown St John to link to the park and ride at Odd Down, taking more traffic off the A367 into Bath.
- The comments from residents, both those objecting to and those in support of additional housing, had the same supporting comments in that the associated infrastructure needs to be improved.
- The Local Plan Options document states there will not be any infrastructure improvements for Peasedown St John.
- It was suggested that smaller, 'greener' properties was the way forward. Also, to restrict the number of second homes and buy to let properties. The Local Authority can impose such restrictions under Section 106, which is already carried out in places such as Dorset and Cornwall.
- The landowner and building contractor determine what type of dwellings and buildings are erected. This is not determined by B&NES Council, their role is to determine the location of development.
- A special needs school would be beneficial to the area as there is large demand for this.
- A solar farm would help to meet the increased power demands for the additional houses.
- The country should not be reliant upon other countries for our energy supply; solar panels should be allocated to all new build properties to help address this issue.
- About 50% of the respondents supported the solar farm proposal.

- Concerns were raised that too much detail was being considered as the Options document is a high-level plan.
- Councillors were reminded that this is an 'options' document. The proposal for Peasedown St John is just one of the options for the whole of the B&NES area.
- The Council needs to decide what is the most valuable use of the land south of the bypass. Is that solar panels or homes for people to live in and places to work?
- The land south of the bypass would be more useful for housing so long as renewable energy goes hand in hand with it. It would also be better for the development to be undertaken by a social housing provider as it will result in higher levels of social housing than if built by a private developer.
- Development south of the bypass would create further segregation of the village between the 'old' and 'new' parts.
- It was suggested to commission a Housing Needs Assessment as an alternative to a Neighbourhood Plan. This would provide evidence to back up the Parish Council's comments on future planning policy and planning applications.
- Concerns were raised that the response was not representative of the feedback received from residents. It was replied it was representative democracy.

It was **resolved**, by majority vote, to respond to the Local Plan Options consultation with a **partial objection** with the following supporting comment:

Peasedown St John Parish Council recommends the land south of the bypass is better used for housing and employment purposes rather than renewable energy sources. Also, that within any new development allocation, the Parish Council stresses it is essential for improvements to doctors, dentist, education services and local transport infrastructure. Furthermore, any new development to include smaller, greener properties with a Section 106 restriction on buy-to-let properties.

The Clerk to submit the response by the extended consultation deadline of 16th April 2024, along with a copy of the draft minute as supporting evidence.

C123 – 02/04/2024 Risk Register

Councillors received an update on the works undertaken throughout the year and associated updates to the Risk Register document. It was noted that although a number of the actions identified were now complete, resulting in a lower risk rating, there were still some items that required work or would continue to be a higher-level risk due to the nature of them.

Cllr Simon Kidd raised a point about the IT security measures in place. The Clerk asked if he would work with her on this matter to increase the necessary cyber security.

It was **resolved** to accept the updates and to note the Parish Council's Risk Register document and to delegate to the Clerk to work with the various Standing Committees on the remaining action plan.

C124 – 02/04/2024 Future Agenda Items & Cllr Questions

Councillors had an opportunity to provide the Clerk with requests for possible future agenda items and to raise questions on items not otherwise covered on the agenda.

- The Clerk was requested to ensure that the Asset Register was in good order in readiness for the appointment of the new Responsible Finance Officer and the new Standing Committee structure.
- The draft Terms of Reference and Delegations for the new Standing Committee structure was noted needed including on the April Full Council meeting agenda for review prior to adoption at the Annual Full Council meeting in May.
- That the Planning Committee commence investigations for obtaining a Housing Needs Assessment for Peasedown St John with a view to reporting back to Full Council for funding.

C125 – 02/04/2024 Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Full Council is scheduled to be held on Tuesday 23rd April 2024 at 7pm at Beacon Hall.

The meeting closed at 8.13pm.

Signed..... Date.....