

Town and Parish Councillor Area Forum  
Fakenham Community Centre  
17<sup>th</sup> June 2010 7pm to 9pm

Note: This Area Form followed a public meeting hosted by Norfolk Constabulary called Face the People which started at 6pm

Present:	Tony Walters	Sculthorpe Parish Council
	Ben Francis	Wells Area Partnership
	Janet Holdom	Fakenham Area Partnership; Fakenham Town Council
	Lara Williamson	Holt Area Partnership
	Peter Bullimore	Morston Parish Council Clerk
	John Lisher	Lancaster (S) NNDC Councillor
	Anna Long	Kettlestone Parish Council
	Roger Towsin	Kettlestone Parish Council
	Mary Perowne	Great Snoring Parish Council
	Gloria Lisher	Lancaster (S) NNDC Councillor; Fakenham South Parish; Stibbard Parish Council
	Brenda Coldrick	Fakenham Town Council
	Mike Coates	Fakenham Town Council
	Val Hart	Swanton Novers Parish Council
	Pauline Wigley	Swanton Novers Parish Council
	Hugh Lanham	Walsingham Ward NNDC Councillor
	L M Beetle	Glaven Ward NNDC Councillor
	Jenny Marchant	Wood Norton Parish Council
NNDC	Philip Burton	Chief Executive North Norfolk District Council
	Maureen Clarke	Supporting Communities Team (SCT) Manager
	Frances Haywood	SCT Administration Support
	Kate Sullivan	SCT Community Liaison Officer
Apologies	D Parker	Fulmodeston Parish Council
	Dr. Marie Strong	Wells Ward, Norfolk County Councillor

### Introduction and Welcome

Philip Burton introduced the Area Forum format reiterating that the District Council holds three Area Forum's as opposed to the seven that were held in previous years. Phillip made reference to the earlier Face the People (public) meeting, the Agenda and welcomed all present. He then handed over to Maureen Clark accordingly.

### Community Empowerment Strategy (CES)

Maureen commented that it was good to see some new faces at this years meeting she gave a brief update on the Council's approach to community empowerment.

### Councillor Consultation

Maureen introduced the pack that everyone had been given; she explained how this works and directed councillors to flip charts to indicate their responses and add action points to the objectives.

The Consultation is to increase the number of people who can influence decisions made, regarding matters important to them in North Norfolk.

Maureen discussed how the Strategy and action plan are being drawn up by the a steering group made up of individuals from District Council, partners, e.g. Housing Landlords, Police, Education, NRCC (Norfolk Rural Community Council), NALC (National Association of Local Councils); she welcomed others to get involved.

The action plan will ensure resident's views are obtained to see what they would like to see happen in the District; awareness projects are already taking place regarding involvement in the democratic process as well as greater communication with groups in the district, directly, via the Town & Parish Councils, the LAPs and the Voluntary Sector;

Additional consultation packs are available – these can be obtained by contacting Supporting Communities Team on 01263 516346. Consultation ends mid to late September.

These need to be requested before September 6<sup>th</sup> to allow for posting.

Training issues were raised as an action point covered by 'What you would like to see happen to achieve the objectives';

The Councillor Consultation is one of many that will take place over a 12 week period from July to September. All comments will be taken into consideration and analysed, using appropriate software; Feedback will be given after the consultation; an action plan will then be drawn up. Suggestions that are not taken forward will be explained in this feedback.

### "Your Question Time"

Philip introduced this section and confirmed that questions that could not be answered will be taken away and a response will be given by officers directly.

It was noted that those with communication difficulties, with members or officers, at the council could contact his personal assistant, Kirsty Read on 01263 516017 who will make sure that the Council's 'Our Standards' are observed.

#### **' Letters/fax/email**

We will aim to respond to all queries, written correspondence, faxes and emails within seven working days of receipt. If the subject matter is more complex, we will contact you to explain the reason for the delay and, where possible, say when a response should be available. All our letters to customers will have a named person and telephone number for you to contact.'

FTC to put query in writing to Kirsty Read to follow up.

#### **Fakenham Town Council asked:**

This query relates to concerns around a **Taxi Rank**. Tony Gent from Licensing has responded however the local bus company objected to the Taxi Rank at which point communications appear to have stalled on the issue.

FTC Telephone Kirsty who will move this along.

FTC wish to pay rent for their council offices however there appears to be something hindering this. Philip apologised for the lack of response.

FTC raised an issue regards the ambiguity of the Forum invitation. As Parish and Town Councils had, in previous years, been requested to send only two representatives they did not understand this year's invitation was for any and all Town & Parish Councillors. Maureen advised that the format of the Forum meetings was discussed and advised to the Town & Parish Councils and apologised for any ambiguity. It was particularly important to have as many Councillors present as possible given the Agenda items – Councillor Consultation and 'Your Questions'.

An email to be sent, by SCT to all Town & Parish Councils to clarify this point.

#### **Sculthorpe asked:**

Why are the Gypsy sites locked?

Both the sites at Fakenham and NNDC offices are temporary stopping sites for travelers and are generally used in order to move travelers on who are illegally camping. These sites allow the Police to move them on in a responsible timeframe. Both sites have been used in this respect.

#### **Q: from the floor – why are the sites so ugly?**

The Council was required to build these to a specific and pre-determined design. Having received a complaint Philip advised that the design was to an agreed standard and planting has been used at NNDC offices to soften the look of the site; this will become apparent in time.

#### **Q: from the floor – Should there be permanent traveler sites.**

Philip advised that evidence shows that travelers in North Norfolk are seasonal; there is not a need for a permanent site at present.

**Fakenham Town Council asked: What can be done regards camping on Morrisons land.**

This is private land where NNDC has no jurisdiction. NNDC is always open to discussions with local businesses; temporary site could be made available to Morrisons by arrangement.

Congratulations were to given to Philip Burton and Steve Blatch regarding the fact that no permanent sites for travelers have been created to date. Philip pointed out that it was a difficult position and the Council did not feel it could in anyway coerce travelers to live on particular permanent sites, even if any were available. Gloria Lisher – Town & Parish Council Champion commented that she had met with and asked the views of travelers at the short stay site in her ward; they returned good feedback regarding the site.

**Swanton Novers Parish Council asked:**

The 'explosion' of street signs in the district is causing particular issues for one householder; a street sign has been place on the wall of his house and he is not happy; Queries raised: What consultation was done in the parishes regarding street signs; Is it legal to put a street sign on a private property's wall; Complaints have been made, over the last 2-3 years regarding repairs and unmarked road signage to no avail. Further issues regarding The Street and The Croft in Swanton Novers where signage has caused problems for business whose post is going to the wrong address as a result.

Philip explained that NNDC operates the installation of the signage according to NCC guidance. Philip's understanding is that if a wall is available for signage the owner would be consulted accordingly. Consultations were carried out to the best of his knowledge. He will investigate and respond accordingly.

Details given to Frances Haywood and passed to Kirsty Read to follow up.

**Kettlestone asked:**

For over 4 years a particular area of public footpath was flooded as a result of a farmer's land operation. The landowner is known to have offered access to the footpath via his land but this has not been moved forward by NNDC.

The landowner is obliged to ensure that activity on his land does not hinder access to the pathway. Money will undoubtedly be an issue in this instance; responsibility for the footpaths lies with NCC. NNDC is happy to act as a channel for negotiations between the Parish and County Council.

Specific details to be passed via Kirsty Read from Kettlestone Parish Council to assist dialogue with NCC to take place.

Philip went on to respond to questions sent into SCT prior to the meeting by Parishes.

**Wighton - Q: Lack of police in our village**

This was answered during the Face the People, by Sgt Howard Alby contact Non-Emergency Police Number 0845 456 4567, during the Face the People presentation.

**Great Snoring - Q: Is it correct that Great Snoring is not allowed new homes under New Planning Regs?**

Answer prepared by Steve Oxenham, Head of Planning and Building Control 01263 516135.

Under the Core Strategy, which was adopted in 2008 following independent examination by an Inspector, it was agreed that most development, including that for market housing, would be limited to towns and 16 Coastal and Service villages. Smaller settlements, including Great Snoring, were designated as Countryside, where development is limited to that which supports the rural economy, meets affordable housing needs and provides renewable energy.

The Local Development Framework (LDF) process is continuing and the next stage is the examination in public by a Planning Inspector of "site specific" proposals which will set out sites allocated for future development. The LDF provides for up to 8000 new homes to be built within the context of the Regional Spatial Strategy approved by East of England Regional Assembly (EERA). Although the new government is abandoning regional strategies, NNDC is intending to retain the 8000 home proposal to ensure an adequate supply of affordable housing derived from market developments through S.106 agreements. The most significant development will take place at Fakenham, North Walsham and Holt.

**Great Snoring – Q: Main drainage only 4 miles from Fakenham employment area - our population is dropping**

Further clarification is needed in order to be able to deal with this point.

Great Snoring Parish Council are to contact Kirsty Read 01263 516017.

**Sculthorpe – Q: What is the implication of combining NNDC services with other councils?**

NNDC is facing unprecedented changes. Financial modeling over the next few months will take place. The bulk of our income comes 40% from Council tax and 60% from Government grant. We are awaiting a clearer indication of the reduction in the Revenue Support Grant, and anticipate that grant funding to local government could fall by up to 25% over the next 3 years.

Shared service opportunities are being negotiated. There are 2 initiatives at present. One involves working with Gt Yarmouth and King's Lynn to combine Council Tax, Revenues and Benefits Services, to create efficiencies, through reducing overheads, IT cost and overtime the number of staff engaged in managing and delivering these services.

Philip confirmed that local people will receive 'just as good if not better services and value for money'.

The second area is working with King's Lynn regarding a joint Waste and Recycling contract. Our current contract with Norse Group ends in 2011. NNDC and King's Lynn are currently procuring a new contract (their contract ends in 2013); we will start using the new contractor with King's Lynn joining the programme in 2013; we have already saved money at the procurement stage by working together thus far. It is interesting to note that neither of the existing contractors has made it through to the final selection, so a new contractor will be appointed.

Fakenham Town Council advised that they currently use a private contractor for Town waste and would be happy to discuss a trade waste contract with NNDCs contractor NCS Group.

Environmental Health Trade Waste team to contact FTC.

**Blakeney – Q: Can the District Council advise what reply it gave to NCC with regard to the loss of revenue taken from the NNDC Affordable Homes building plot and what it is doing to retain these funds?"**

The council petitioned for the money to be returned for affordable housing. If a refund is established, however, the case must be made for investment in North Norfolk linked to future development proposals.

**Blakeney – Q: Will the District Council please make it easier for rural communities, particularly those in areas such as the AONB & Conservation Area to have mobile telephone coverage, even if it means amending the planning policy? Many of the rural coastal areas are facing the real question on whether or not to retain the flood sirens which NCC do not wish to keep or maintain. However, without a flood siren system all emphasis would be on the availability of using the mobile phone and hence the receiving of a signal in such coastal communities in the first instance.**

This has been dealt with in response sent to Blakeney Parish Council by Kirsty Read 9th June 2010. For a copy of the response please contact Kirsty on 01263 516017.

**Fakenham Town Council asked: EEDA/ERRA are dismantling in terms of Regional Development, what will take their place?**

There is no clarity regards this; the new government suggests that their powers will be returned to the local authorities; however, no detail has been forthcoming, for example what will sit with Norfolk County Council and what with the district.

Local Enterprise Partnerships could be established to take on the role of the regional development agencies (EEDA in the east) but no clarification has been given about geographical boundaries.

### **Any Other Business**

Maureen explained the Vocal Local, NCC campaign; this is to build awareness of involvement by local people in local democracy or community projects. Councils can raise awareness with free merchandise, stickers, posters, t-shirts etc. which can be obtained from Anne Tansley-Thomas at Norfolk County Council. Contact Consultation & Community Relations Officer, Norfolk County Council, Martineau Lane, Norwich NR1 2DH or via email [anne.tansleythomas@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:anne.tansleythomas@norfolk.gov.uk) or Tel: 01603 222844. Visit website: [www.vocallocal.org.uk](http://www.vocallocal.org.uk)

Great Snoring pointed out that the Council sends the Parishes large quantities of paper and asked if this could be monitored and reduced.

Philip thanked all for their questions and participation.

*These notes are given in good faith and represent an accurate account of the discussions which took place. If anything contained in these notes is not according to your understanding of the meeting please contact SCT on 01263 516346 and ask for Frances Haywood.*

Notes End

Area Forum 17<sup>th</sup> June 2010 held at Fakenham Community Centre 6 – 9pm

This was noted and services will be informed to be conscious of this in future.