

Bramfield and Thorington Parish Council

A Meeting of the Parish Council was held virtually via Zoom on Monday, April 12th 2021 at 7pm.

Minutes:

Present:

Cllr. A. Thomas (Chairman); Cllr. A. Rozkalns (Vice-Chairman) (Arrived 7-06pm); Cllr. M. Bond; Cllr. D. Hughes; Cllr. J. Key; Cllr. S. Key; Cllr. A. Niven and Cllr. W. Shoote:

Also Present:

Paul Widdowson (Clerk); District Cllr. N. Brooks (Arrived 7-27pm) (Left 7-43pm) and four parishioners (Two left at 7-57pm) and the two planning applicants who left at 7-40pm:

1) **Apologies:**

County Cllr. R. Smith:

2) **To receive Declarations of Interest:**

Cllr. A. Rozkalns and Cllr. M. Bond declared a personal interest as member of the Village Hall Committee.

Cllr. J. Keys and Cllr. S. Keys declared a personal interest in the planning application DC/21/1239/FUL.

Cllr. W. Shoote declared a personal interest in any donation to the Bramfield Primary School.

3) **Requests for dispensations:**

There were no requests for dispensation.

Item 12: Planning Matters was discussed at this point.

Proposal: Change of use to outdoor theatre.

Address: Thorington Theatre, Thorington Road, Thorington, Nr Southwold, Suffolk. IP17 3RB.

Ref: DC/21/1239/FUL

Cllr. W. Shoote asked some questions of the applicants concentrating on traffic levels getting into and out of the site. He asked if the applicants had a traffic management plan which included emergency access. The applicants said that they understood the comments and would be taking them up with East Suffolk Council.

A parishioner also believed that the traffic management, emergency services access, pollution control and infrastructure were not adequate and Cllr. D. Hughes agreed stating traffic and safety issues with the A12 and wondered if a 40mph speed limit should be implemented on the A12 near the site.

Cllr. W. Shoote proposed that the Parish Council approved the planning application as he was very supportive of the concept but subject to changes needed over concerns of the noise impact on the neighbours and on traffic management. This was agreed by the Parish Council and Cllr. W. Shoote agreed to write the Parish Council submission to East Suffolk Council which is below.

Bramfield and Thorington Parish Council discussed the retention of the theatre at Thorington (DC/21/1239/FUL) on 12th April 2021. The Councillors were disappointed to be considering another retrospective application within the villages but were grateful for the applicants' attendance at the meeting and the ability to query/clarify elements of the proposal with them.

*The Council voted to **APPROVE** the application for the retention of the theatre and felt that an outdoor theatre of this kind would be well received by residents and visitors to the area alike.*

Despite this 'support in principle' several concerns were raised by the nearest residents and Councillors. The applicant indicated a willingness to address/clarify these issues with East Suffolk District Council and to comply with any conditions imposed on any consent (if forthcoming).

Clarification was sought regarding:

- 1. Any surfacing for tracks to the car parking area;*
- 2. The extent and location of lighting;*
- 3. Emergency service access to the site;*
- 4. Likely noise level limits at the boundary (limited via condition preferably);*
- 5. The time when the site would be vacated by in the evening (the applicant noted that actual shows would finish by 10pm) – controlled by condition;*
- 6. The type of performances to be carried out on site. The Council were supportive of theatrical performances as applied for but did not wish to see numerous musical concerts with amplified music taking place:*

The main concern for the Parish Council related to highway safety. It was noted that despite the new 40mph speed limit by the Round House it was a dangerous junction to pull out from, especially if drivers are unfamiliar with the road.

It was considered undesirable for significant traffic to exit the site turning west. The single-track carriageway (with bends and limited passing places) combined with surprisingly high existing use (hundreds of vehicles daily - data can be provided from the Bramfield end of the Thorington road if required from the Council's speed monitoring device) makes the road unsuitable for additional traffic, particularly by those unfamiliar with the road in poor light in the evenings.

Exiting to the east traffic would travel 300m along a single-track carriageway before joining the A12. Councillors have experienced difficulties turning out of this junction (speed and frequency of traffic resulting in waits of over a minute on occasion). Weekend afternoons/evenings (traffic returning from the coast) and commuting times being the worst times.

It is likely the bulk of traffic will wish to exit the site at about the same time post performance. 100 to 180 cars exiting the site (car park has a capacity of 200 vehicles) and joining the A12 at a rate of one every 20 seconds (3 per minute) would take 33-58 minutes to clear or at 12 seconds per car (5 per minute) 20-36 minutes. Due to being single track this could mean that the road is essentially blocked to residents and emergency vehicles turning west off the A12 for 30-60 minutes after a busy show. This was considered unacceptable.

If the District Council are minded to approve the application, we would ask that a traffic plan is negotiated/conditioned ideally requiring traffic to turn right out of the site and for the release of traffic from the site entrance to be controlled to ensure that the highway is not blocked by queuing traffic after shows. The applicant indicated a willingness to create a

traffic management plan to minimise disruption and avoid the road becoming impassable. The Parish Council would like the District Council to ensure that they are satisfied that the free flow of traffic from the A12 to Thorington/Bramfield will not be compromised before approving the application.

Finally it was queried how the provision of a theatre in this location could be considered to contribute to sustainable development being realistically only accessible by private car. Concerns were also raised regarding the pollution implications of traffic coming to the site and queuing to leave.

Proposer: Cllr. W. Shoote: Seconder: Cllr. D. Hughes:

4) **To receive a report from the County Councillor and the District Councillor:**

District Cllr. N. Brooks said that all councillors were in purdah owing to the elections on May 6th so he said everything was very quiet. He reported that he was still going to routine meetings and was currently inspecting the amount of traffic going to the coast. District Cllr. N. Brooks confirmed that he would be on the Planning Committee that looked at the planning application discussed by the meeting and therefore said he had no view on it.

A parishioner asked what to do if he believed that a business was operating outside the terms of a planning application. He was told to take it up with East Suffolk Council.

5) **Public Session: Members of the public have fifteen minutes to ask questions on topics on the agenda:**

There were no members of the public wishing to ask questions.

6) **To confirm the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday, March 8th 2021:**

The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday, March 8th 2021 were agreed.

Proposer: Cllr. D. Hughes: Seconder: Cllr. M. Bond:

7) **Traffic Report on A144:**

Cllr. A. Niven reported that Speedwatch would be starting again and as the Police have decided to trial Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) and he has put an application in for the ANPR to be in Bramfield for a week.

8) **Cil Money:**

The Clerk said that the Parish Council had received £7777-43 in Cil Money. Cllr. A. Rozkalns said that the Village Hall was currently closed but he said that he was bring a plan of renovations to the Village Hall Committee which he believed would cost around £30 000. Cllr. A. Rozkalns said that the Village Hall Committee had enough money to start the renovations but hoped that the Cil Money could be used to help the Village Hall.

The Clerk said that at the February 8th 2021 Parish Council Meeting, the Parish Council had agreed to spend all of the £7777-43 on the Village Hall Refurbishment.

Therefore the Clerk asked Cllr. A. Rozkalns to send to the Parish Council the invoices regarding the renovations as the Parish Council would then pay them up to the Council's limit.

9) **Village Hall:**

Cllr. A. Rozkalns said that there was nothing to report.

10) **Pitman's Grove Wild Area:**

Cllr. A. Thomas reported that Bramfield Primary School pupils were naming the area and Flagship were organising an opening ceremony in the summer.

11) **Internet Banking:**

Cllr. A. Rozkalns said that he would be approaching Barclays Bank.

12) **Planning Matters:**

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This item was moved by the Chair to after Item 3.

13) **Clerk's Report and Correspondence including Donations:**

The Clerk said that he had received the Suffolk Preservation Society Magazine, a letter from the Royal British Legion regarding their 8th May 2021 Local Centenary Celebrations, Police Report, a Suffolk Accident Rescue Service Thank You Letter and Bramfield Primary School have asked if the Parish Council will give them a Donation.

14) **Financial Report:**

a) **Balances at the Bank on March 31st 2021:**

Business Community Account	£7415-40
Business Savings Account	£6630-28

b) **Cheques and Receipts:**

Chq. 101194	Clerk's Expenses – April 2020 until March 2021	£26-64
Chq. 101195	SALC - Audit Zoom Webinar on 11 th March	£24-00
Chq. 101196	SALC – Membership Subscription for 2021-2022	£192-08

Proposer: Cllr. A. Rozkalns: Secunder: Cllr. M. Bond:

15) **Payroll Service:**

It was agreed to use Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC) as the new Payroll Provider and to agree the Contract.

Proposer: Cllr. D. Hughes: Secunder: Cllr. W. Shoote:

16) **New Policies:**

Cllr. D. Hughes said that she was still working on the Audit and Impact Assessment and she would bring it to the next meeting.

17) **To receive information and agenda items for the Annual Parish Council Meeting to be held on Monday, May 10th 2021:**

The Clerk explained that owing to the Parish Council's ability to hold meetings on Zoom ending on May 6th 2021, the Annual Parish Meeting and Annual Parish Council Meeting will have to be held before then. It was agreed to hold the meetings on Tuesday, 4th May 2021 or Wednesday, 5th May 2021.

The Meeting ended at 9-22pm.