

Arkendale, Coneythorpe & Clareton
Parish Council

**Minutes of the Extraordinary Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 13 December
2016
St Bartholomew's Church, Arkendale**

Present: Cllr M Robertshaw (Chair), Cllr O Quarmby, Cllr J West

In Attendance: Angela Pulman (Clerk)

11 members of the public

2016.62 Apologies for absence – Cllrs P Houseman and S Shipman

2016.63 Declarations of Interest – none

2016.64 Public Participation – none

2016.65 Minutes of the previous meeting:

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 16 November 2016 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2016.66 Harrogate District Local Plan Draft Local Plan Consultation: Flaxby Option

Cllr M Robertshaw summarised the sequence of events to date, including the HBC Local Plan Consultation, the representation made to the PC by Flaxby Park Ltd, the PC questionnaire and the various meetings that have been held across parishes that will be affected by any proposed development at Flaxby.

Cllr J West summarised the results of the questionnaire circulated in the form of a leaflet drop to residents. In total 95 households responded, with 73 objecting to a proposed development at Flaxby.

Copies of a letter composed by the Parish Council in response to the Harrogate District Draft Local Plan Consultation were handed out to those in attendance and Cllr M Robertshaw summarised the content. Members of the public were given the opportunity to read the document and a short question and answer session was permitted by the Chair.

The Parish Council urges residents to put their own responses to HBC and a crib sheet on how to do so will be circulated via email to as many residents as possible. Cllr West reminded those present of the importance of including clear planning reasoning behind any objection/support for proposals in the Local Plan.

A number of residents at the meeting wished to express their thanks for the hard work undertaken by the Parish Council on their behalf.

The Parish Council agreed to send its response, as proposed, to the Harrogate District Draft Local Plan Consultation. (see **appendix 1** for copy letter)

2016.67 To confirm change to Date of next meeting.

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Wednesday 25 January 2017 at 7.30pm in the Community Hall, Arkendale. (Please note date changed from 11 January 2017).

The meeting closed at 20.15

Signed Dated

APPENDIX 1

Planning Policy Team
Planning & Development
Harrogate District Council
PO Box 787
Harrogate
HG1 9RW

13th December 2016

Dear Sirs

Harrogate District Draft Local Plan 2016 – Public Consultation

I am writing on behalf of Arkendale, Coneythorpe and Clareton Parish Council. The Parish Council has consulted with residents in the Parish (*which abuts the proposed new settlement at Flaxby*) to understand their views regarding the proposed new settlement outlined in the draft local plan for either Flaxby or Green Hammerton. We circulated a short questionnaire which describes the extent and location of the proposals and asked for feedback. 146 properties were approached and 95 (65%) responded. Of those 95 households 73% object to the proposals at Flaxby, a further 22% are undecided with only 4% supporting and 1% ambivalent. In light of our community response the Parish Council is engaging in your consultation exercise and we wish to object to the New Settlement at Flaxby.

In no particular order our principal reasons for objecting are as follows:-

1. Infrastructure

Three options for facilitating significant housing growth appear to have been considered by the Council:-

Scenario 1 – concentrating growth in the main urban areas.

Scenario 2 – a new settlement at Green Hammerton

Scenario 3 – a new settlement at Flaxby

Harrogate District Council's own "Infrastructure Capacity Study Draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan Stage 3 Report – October 2016" concludes at paragraph 8.4 that "an 'unweighted' scoring assessment indicated a **clear** preference, in infrastructure terms, to locate future housing growth in line with development scenario 1 – with a focus on Harrogate and Knaresborough" (*my emphasis*).

Paragraph 8.5 goes on to conclude when considering the two options for new settlements that "the infrastructure appraisal weighted assessment indicated a preference for any new settlements to be located here (*Green Hammerton*), rather than at Flaxby" (*my italics*).

Paragraph 8.6 concludes "The infrastructure appraisal weighted assessment did not change the initial appraisal conclusion that concentrating future growth on the existing urban areas (scenario 1) is preferable from an infrastructure appraisal perspective, in terms of cost, viability and delivery".

I do not propose to go into further detail on infrastructure as the analysis is clear and detailed in the three reports (of which the one cited above is the third), however it is important to highlight that the Council's own investigations conclude that the new housing should be located around existing urban centres rather than in a new settlement, but even if it should be located at a new settlement, that that settlement should not be at Flaxby.

2. Highways

It is worth dwelling on highways whilst acknowledging it is covered in the infrastructure appraisal referred to in section 1 above.

Junction 47 of the A1 and the A59 from there into Harrogate is acknowledged as a serious traffic congestion hot spot. The problem is so acute that North Yorkshire County Council's "A Strategic Transport Prospectus for North Yorkshire, The Places in Between Contributing to "The Northern Power House"" document highlights the A59 to Harrogate as an immediate strategic problem requiring addressing. Exiting on to the A59 from Flaxby is difficult at most times of the day and night on impossible at peak times due to the volume of existing traffic on the A59. This situation is set to deteriorate further with the opening of the Allerton Waste Recovery Park (AWRP) at Allerton Park which will see an intensification of some 600 HGV movements a week

on the A59. In short it is difficult to believe that junction 47 of the A1 and the A59 into Harrogate can accommodate further traffic of the levels that will be required to service a new settlement. This problem will only be exacerbated by the ridiculous proposal to send 1000's of secondary school children from the New Settlement to Boroughbridge (*where there isn't capacity to expand*) by bus or to Harrogate High School by bus, there not being the ability for secondary schooling on site.

In addition to the existing and shortly to be exacerbated factual highway situation is the more conceptual point that the A59 from junction 47 is the gateway for vehicles travelling from around the country to Harrogate and Knaresborough. Harrogate lauds itself as a top visitor destination for all manner of reasons and it has to be important to the local economy that the visitor destinations and attractions of Harrogate and Knaresborough and indeed its wider business base is not strangled by congestion at J47. We already see stationary traffic on the A59 during the Yorkshire Show and indeed during normal rush hour traffic backs onto the A1 and clogs the A59. It seems nothing short of economic suicide to further intensify the traffic demands of the network at this key gateway point by locating a new settlement here.

Local residents are also concerned of the impact on local roads of such a large new population from rat running. The intensification of use of these local roads is highly inappropriate given that there are not continuous footpaths in Arkendale, Coneythorpe and Clareton, nor is there street lighting through many of these villages. As a result the safety of the existing population, particularly children, is the primary concern brought about by the proposed intensification of the local network.

Lastly in relation to highways surely it is better to locate significant new housing (*and indeed commerce for that matter*) around transport nodes and in this regard the location of the proposed Harrogate relief road and the location of any new settlement should be considered together and co-located. None of the routes under consideration for the relief road go anywhere near Flaxby.

Acknowledging the need for new housing we would urge the Council to consider locating the new housing where there is the greatest existing highways infrastructure capacity on the edge or adjoining existing urban centres and ideally in a location that is able to benefit from the proposed new relief road.

3. Landscape character.

It is the case that the area proposed for the new settlement is agricultural albeit over recent years a golf course has been developed on part of the site. The area is rich in Flora and Fauna and there are significant populations of protected species including Great Crested Newts and Bats. The area has a rich heritage and views into and out of the site include the grade 1 listed Allerton Castle and the Temple of Victory. Existing bridleways and footpaths cross the site and link into the local communities including the Knaresborough Round. Significant parts of the Flaxby site are included within the East Knaresborough Arable Farmland area (69) as set out in HBC's Local Character Assessment where HBC's own stated aims include to "Preserve and enhance the rural pastoral and historic setting of villages" and "To preserve and enhance the diverse landscape pattern". This is clearly in direct conflict with the proposals for a new settlement. This all contributes towards an identity and Sense of Place that will be destroyed by the proposals and will necessarily impact hardest on existing local communities including Coneythorpe, Clareton and Arkendale.

All the residents in the Parish that would be affected by a new settlement at Flaxby live in rural villages or hamlets that contribute to this “Sense of Place”. Indeed the village of Coneythorpe is a Designated Conservation Area. It is the Council’s stated aim (Coneythorpe Conversation Area Character Appraisal 2011) that “Development should not impinge on the form and character of Coneythorpe”. The proposals for a new settlement will fundamentally change the character, community and identity of the local area by transforming the rural aspect to an urban and suburban one. The damage to existing residents’ way of life will be considerable and irreversible.

We do not believe this “remodelling” need take place given there are other solutions open to the Council to address the housing needs. Extending existing urban areas, as per the Council’s own infrastructure analysis recommendations would be to impact locally on those areas, however it would not change the nature of those areas in the same way and so the impact would be less severe on existing households and businesses that were already urban and suburban in nature.

4. Amenity of Proposed Development

In the event that proposals were forthcoming at Flaxby we do not believe they would be successful, because the location is not appropriate. Not only is it not appropriate for infrastructure, highways and landscape reasons as mentioned already, the Amenity of future residents is such that it will not be a desirable place to live. This is largely on account of its location between two major roads, the A1 motorway and the A59 with significant consequential noise and air quality impacts. The site is also significantly overlooked by the new incinerator which cannot be described as anything other as an ugly edifice and will be visible from many points across the settlement. Assuming the non-highway infrastructure issues are dealt with the traffic congestion that will result from a traffic reliant new settlement on an already creaking network combined with the fact that secondary education will not be local will all combine to minimise the attractiveness of the location to future residents such that it is possible to foresee the development not being a success. It would be a tragedy if the housing solution failed to solve the housing problem and at the same time destroyed the way of life of a not insignificant local community with a strong sense of identity.

We are further concerned of the potential to exacerbate all the issues mentioned in this letter by the proposals to massively intensify the commercial use of the Donnelly’s site currently being promoted by Forward Investment LLP as Flaxby Green Park. Consideration of the impacts of this development which extends to a further 580,000 sq.ft. B1 uses in addition to a new park and ride site and potential rail halt should be included in the Council’s decision making process and to do otherwise would be disingenuous.

The Parish Council and the residents accept the need for new housing in the borough however we do not agree that the solution to the housing problem is a new settlement at Flaxby. This is largely because the existing infrastructure is seriously inadequate, the impact on local communities will be too disruptive and the site is anyway inappropriate. Rather we would agree with the Council’s own findings that it would be better to deliver the new housing by extending existing urban centres. This would have the further benefit of not constraining the bottleneck access to Harrogate and Knaresborough presented by the A59 to the almost certain detriment of the wider business and tourist industries. Adopting this approach alongside reviewing greenbelt policies would surely result in better outcomes for all.

It is important that the Council gets these decisions right and we urge you to consider our comments.

Yours sincerely

Councillor Oliver Quarmby
On behalf of Arkendale Coneythorpe & Clareton Parish Council