

Minutes of a meeting of Arreton Parish Council held on **Thursday 21st February, 2019** at **Arreton Methodist Church Hall at 10.30am.**

Present: Cllrs Kimber, Calloway, Cooper, Healy, Orchard and Verey.

In attendance: Sheila Caws (Clerk).

046/19 Apologies for Absence

None

047/19 Questions from the public

There were no questions from the public

048/19 To receive any declarations of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interest and requests for dispensations under the Localism Act 2011. To give notice of any item to be raised under agenda item 051/19

Nothing was raised.

013/19 Island Planning Strategy

After some discussion, the following points were agreed:-

Section 2 – The Island and the issues we face

In section 2.37, the members of Arreton Parish Council noted that in the decade 2005-2015 there was an increase in the population of the Island of 2,200. In section 2.9 the average number of houses built in the last four years of this decade was 400 and so an assumption could be made that between 3-4,000 houses were built in the period 2005-15. Given the disparity in the figures, was there a corresponding increase in the number of second homes/holiday lets? If so, could this be reflected in the figures? As the Island is known to have a high number of second homes, are these included in the projected number of houses required?

Section 2.38 refers to the expected increase in the numbers or residents over 65 and a projection that there will be an increase in that age group of over 16,600 people. Are the statistics suggesting that an extra 16,600 will move to the Island or that the number will increase through natural aging and a higher life expectancy. Sections 2.41-2.43 refer to the potential problems of an increasingly elderly population and the provision of health and social care. Does the Plan take in to account the need for an increase in the number of care homes? Section 2.41 refers to the percentage of the Island population expected to be suffering from dementia by 2030, which is expected to increase from 1.4% to 9%. Does this reflect the expected increase in the number of residents over 65 in that time?

Section 5 – Delivering the housing we need

An explanation of the derivation of the targets, which may be central government mandated targets, should be given. The need for affordable housing is exposed in this section but the need requires to be better addressed. Although there are requirements for affordable housing in developments of ten or more housing and for a contribution from developments of less than ten units, the policies appear weak. It is unclear how the new policies differ from the current policies, which have clearly failed to a disastrous degree in providing affordable housing. The Chapter should be much more prescriptive in setting out how to improve the position regarding affordable housing; if it is not then the situation will almost certainly continue to deteriorate. The current position on delivering affordable housing is very poor and the Plan should set out how it would address this.

The projected figure of 9,615 new houses (DWHN1) could potentially equate to around 20,000 or more occupants. Given that the population increase from 2005-2015 was 2,200 and there are around 1800 families requiring rehousing (say 8,000 people), who are the

other 10,000 for whom these homes are apparently required? Can the affordable housing need (35%) be specifically included in this requirement?

Given the reaction to the mere mention of new communities it seems likely that, however well-intentioned the aim, delivery will be very difficult (DWNH4). For walking and cycling to be attractive means of local transport (point 5), the new communities will have to be within walking or cycling distance of schools and employment and, ideally, a good-sized local food shop, a Tesco Metro or equivalent. This aim would seem to rule out West Wight as a location due to a lack of employment. Given that many existing villages are struggling, surely it would be better to have a relatively small increase in most villages and support the infrastructure there than to create large new artificial communities on greenfield sites? There must also be potential to re-invent the high streets with more accommodation provision and make the centres of our towns better populated.

Section 5.69 has the potential to give developers a loophole to dispense with the provision of affordable housing. If the contribution is a percentage of the value of the development then it is unclear why this alone would make developments uneconomic. The open book approach is however supported and there should be no exceptions whatsoever.

Section 6 – Supporting and growing our economy

There were no specific recommendations or proposals directly affecting Arreton Parish (SGOE1 and EA6). However, the potential for development at Sandown Airport could impinge on the Parish owing to its proximity and the likelihood of additional traffic, accommodation requirements etc. The members of the Parish Council would therefore like to ensure that any considerations are not just confined to the immediate surroundings of the airport.

The members of the Parish Council are pleased to see that particular reference is made to horticulture in the Arreton Valley under SGOE2. They agree that farm diversification is to be encouraged where necessary (SGOE4) but question the policy of reusing redundant farm buildings for the accommodation of agricultural workers. Whilst this is a laudable idea, historical evidence suggests that such buildings are usually converted for high-end homes. Likewise, the conversion of existing farm buildings for employment purposes. Without the existence of some form of enforceable policy, this remains merely aspirational.

SGOE9 refers to high level tourism but no definition is given. How does this differ from other forms of tourism?

It was also felt that some of the themes of Ecoisland should be revived to attract service centres and other clean industries.

Section 7 – A better connected Island

The members of Arreton Parish Council felt that, with the advent of quieter electric cars (7.29) and the potential for accidents for those harder of hearing, 20 and 30mph limits should remain but the rest of the Island be subject to a blanket limit, say 40mph. Another suggestion is electric buses.

The Military Road is a tourist asset and should be moved inland to protect it from erosion. Land lost by the National Trust would be gained in the short term by having the site of the old road (7.13). Should it be possible to restore the road through the Undercliff, perhaps with a bridge, and link it with the Military Road this would provide another asset to tourism and the economy.

Cycling is to be encouraged (BCI2) and current viable footpaths should be converted into bridleways for use by cyclists and horses. An enhanced network of cycle tracks would be of great benefit but where they cannot be linked up, car parks at the end of them with electric charging points might prove an incentive to some. (BCI5 and 7.32).

Section 8 – Creating sustainable, strong and healthy communities

The members of Arreton Parish Council feel that the provision of an electric car infrastructure would encourage visitors to the Island (see also comments in section 7) as would a more accessible bus network, given the projected increase in the over-80s who may no longer wish or be able to drive (8.21).

The support of renewable and low carbon technologies is to be encouraged as it would improve regional energy security. Existing expertise should be utilised to develop and use renewable energy capacity on the Island (CSSHC9). However, if the Island aims to self-sufficient in renewable energy and requires a possible maximum provision of 300MW at peak demand, a variety of sources would be required. For example, electricity produced solely by anaerobic digesters would require 120 installations and the Island only has the capacity to supply eight and there would be no food production. There does not appear to be a proposed strategy.

New developments, both domestic and industrial, should be required to be required to have sources of renewable energy built in so as to make them carbon neutral (8.52) and require higher target than that indicated in CSSHC10 – at present only 10%.

The landscape should, of course, be protected from the cumulative impact of renewable resources (8.56) but within those restraints, the IW Council should be looking to work with the Government and others to develop our economy as one with a renewable onshore and offshore energy infrastructure.

The Plan says nothing about fossil fuels although mineral extraction is covered. Arreton Parish is an important centre for the extraction of aggregates, sand and gravel and the members of the Parish Council would like to see this recognised and protection measures put in place. The members are particularly surprised that the Plan does not address the issue of the potential for oil extraction. There could be issues around transport (the numbers of tankers) or pipelines, storage, accommodation for personnel and so on. The members are also concerned that many of the industries in Arreton are outside local control e.g. the oil drilling, the anaerobic digester and the gravel extraction and are therefore not answerable to the local community.

There are also concerns as to where the waste from the construction of so many new houses will go. Arreton already has three sites with permits for the disposal of waste from the construction industry. A further concern is where will all the waste from the 9,000+ new houses go? Does the new recycling plant at Forest Road have the capacity to increase the amount of waste it is projected to process and there is little room for the expansion of landfill sites (8.70).

The Island already imports 30% of its water supply from the mainland. Given the increased housing that will be required in Hampshire and other areas, will the necessary increase in supply to the Island be available? (8.84)

Section 9 – High quality environment

There is much to be recommended in this section, especially the Dark Skies Policy (HQE9). The proposed Dark Skies Park in the south-west of the Island is an imaginative step that should be supported. However, the members of Arreton Parish Council would like to be reassured that the policies necessary to create such a park will be extended to the rest of the Island, especially as the IW Observatory is on land immediately adjoining the south-eastern parish boundary.

As noted above, water resources are a concern (HQE10) both the supply of fresh water and the disposal of waste.

Some of the environmental policies will require careful management as the Island is so reliant on tourism and agriculture, as noted in HQE8.

050/19 To note the date of the next meeting, 11th March 2019

051/19 Any other matters raised by Councillors for discussion only

Cllr Orchard noted that the sign at Blackwater that had previously been repaired by Island Roads had been damaged again.

The Clerk drew attention to a licence notice for an ice cream van at Merstone Station. Councillors were invited to respond as private individuals if they so wished as the closing date for comments was before the March meeting.

There being nothing else raised, the meeting concluded at 12.45pm.

Sheila Caws, Clerk to the Council

Hillis Side, Rew Street, Gurnard, Isle of Wight PO31 8NW

E-mail: arretonpc@outlook.com Telephone: 07587 008183

25th February 2019

.....

Chairman

.....

Date