

**Minutes of the meeting of  
Thompson Parish Council  
held at 7.30 pm on Monday 16 October 2017  
in Thompson Village Hall**

**Present:** Jean Kaye, (Chair), Duncan Gregory, Alan Dujon, Ian Robertson, Irene Smith, Roy Shovelar, Kate Winslow, 13 members of the public and the Acting Parish Clerk.

**1 Apologies for absence:** None.

**2 Declaration of Interest:** None

**3 Planning Applications:**

**3.1 Planning Application 3PL/2016/1122/F 2 new dwellings at 36 Pockthorpe Lane, Thompson, Thetford, Norfolk IP24 1PN:** Jean Kaye announced this item and

immediately suspended the meeting to allow public participation, saying that persons wishing to speak could speak once only for 3 minutes, speakers should address the chair and should not be interrupted during their presentation. The applicants were invited to be the last speakers so that they may, if they wished, address comments made by other members of the public. The numbers speaking for and against this application were approximately equal.

The comments against the application were that the application fell outside the village settlement boundary, it being acknowledged that recently application for two developments outside the boundary had been granted; these being a new community building which should be of benefit to the entire village and for a cidery, a project which should bring some employment to the area. It was suggested that to allow this development outside the settlement boundary would set a precedent leading to ribbon development and open the way to further applications in what Breckland Council consider to be a low growth village. The meeting was reminded that the 2016 Village Appraisal found that the majority of villagers wished to retain the settlement boundary in its present form. This allows for only minimal growth in the village.

Speaking for the application the view was presented that the failure of Breckland Council to secure a 5-year building land supply renders building outside the settlement boundary allowable. The view was also expressed that the village has an increasing elderly population and was in danger of stagnation unless more housing become available.

One speaker spoke to defend reputation of the applicants, untrue rumours having been disseminated suggesting that Mr Scott was trying to obtain support for the application by building off road parking/driveways for 3 residents of Pockthorpe Lane. This is untrue, these works were carried out by each individual householder's own contractor and were necessary because of the narrowness of the carriageway along part of the lane.

The applicants spoke regarding planning guidelines saying that they assume the need for growth and were against stagnation. Their application is for two houses fronting onto an existing highway and in one of which the applicants intend to reside. It was stated that there has been a need for a turning place in Pockthorpe Lane for forty years or more and their application would provide a turning circle to satisfy this need. The long-term development of Thompson requires more housing to allow new people to come to the village. Complaints about water supply, drainage and additional traffic during development that have been used as reasons for rejecting the application are not relevant under planning guidelines. It was stated that three members of the council were residents of Pockthorpe Lane and the applicants felt that they should have declared this under declaration of interests.

The meeting was re-convened and the members discussed the application. Ian Robertson said that he could not make up his mind about this application and had no particular problem with it. Kate Winslow said that she lived in Pockthorpe Lane and

accepted that some growth was necessary to prevent stagnation but Thompson was ear-marked as a low growth village and that the views of all villagers need to be considered. She queried the use of the phrase turning circle suggesting that it was in fact a turning head and continued that she felt that the passing place proposed for the Lane was in the wrong place as it was of no use for those trying to access the narrowest part of the lane and that it would be better on the southside of the bend at the start of the narrowest section of the lane. She added that she felt that to maximise impartiality the application should be decided by the planning committee and not by one person. Irene Smith said that although the development was outside the settlement boundary the inclusion of the much-needed turning circle made her look on the application in a more favourable light. Duncan Gregory said that the application was difficult to support if the views of the village, expressed in the Village Appraisal, were taken into account and to allow this application to succeed would set a precedent for further development in the village. Roy Shovelar said that his objection was that the application was outside the settlement boundary. Alan Dujon said that approximately 1/3 of the village population lived in or adjacent to Pockthorpe Lane and that it was therefore not unreasonable for 3 Parish Councillors to reside there. It was necessary to consider the view of all residents when considering this application. The village, in reply to 2016 Village Appraisal said that they wished to retain the current settlement boundary and a majority were opposed to uncontrolled growth. His concern about this development, outside the settlement boundary was mission creep i.e. ~~it~~ it would lead to ribbon development. The application does not fit with the views of the majority of parishioners nor does it fit comfortably with the Local Plan. On the vote 1 Councillor voted in favour of the application and 3 against. There were two abstentions and there being a clear majority the Chair's deciding vote was not needed.

Decision Thompson Parish Council voted against this application and the Acting Clerk was directed to inform Breckland of this decision and ask that, to maximise impartiality in the decision-making process, the application is put before the Planning Committee for a final decision

**4 Date of Next meeting:** Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> November 2017

**5 Any other business (for agenda of next meeting):** The Acting Clerk was directed to write to Breckland to express the Parish Council's disquiet regarding the content and tone of some of the comments which had been uploaded on the Breckland/Capita planning portal. The Parish Council was also concerned about the apparent lack of scrutiny before the attribution of at least one of the comments which had been uploaded.