

GOLDSBOROUGH AND FLAXBY GROUPE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting (APM) held on Monday, 9th May 2016 at 7.30pm at the Bay Horse Inn, Goldsbrough.

Present: Councillors Matthew Davies (Vice Chairman), Claire Morrell, Jackie Dowker, Simon Oldroyd and (Clerk) Derrik Summers

Councillor Matthew Davies was Chairman for this meeting

Mr Ray Mallon (**RM**) representing Flaxby Park Limited

plus PC Marie Scott and a police colleague and 28 members of the public were in attendance.

1. Apologies

Councillor Michael O'Brien had given his apologies and Councillor Steve Rowe was unable to attend due to a prior commitment and had given his apologies.

2. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 11th May 2015 were approved as a correct record.

3. Flaxby Golf Course housing development

The Chairman reported that, given the recent developments and press regarding the acquisition of the former Flaxby Golf Course site by Flaxby Park Ltd (**FPL**), the Parish Council had invited a representative of FPL to attend this meeting.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr Mallon was invited to provide an overview and an update regarding FPL's acquisition of the site and their present intentions for its development.

Mr Mallon introduced himself mentioning that he had been in the police for over 25 years, had also been in politics and was now assisting Flaxby Park Ltd. He went on to say that FPL was headed up by Chris Musgrave and Trevor Cartner and they were supported by Ann Gloag.

Mr Mallon reported that FPL had exchanged contracts with the Official Liquidator to purchase the site and that completion of the acquisition was expected shortly. FPL would then own the freehold of the site.

Mr Mallon then reported that nationally 1 million homes are needed to be built by 2020 and for Harrogate Borough Council it needs to have constructed in its area a total of 12,650 homes by 2031.

Mr Mallon further noted that the FPL proposal is for a development of circa 1,500 homes, together with community benefits including grassed areas, a village feel, a school and transport links.

Mr Mallon referred to a development at Wynyard Park near Stockton that Chris Musgrave has been involved with and likened the quality of that development to what FPL have visions for their proposals on Flaxby Golf Course.

Mr Mallon stated that the main primary objective of FPL is to have the Flaxby site considered and ultimately included as part of the emerging Harrogate Borough Council Local Plan. He noted that the final adoption of the Local Plan would not be until 2018 and that there would be a number of stages to go through between now and then.

Mr Mallon also stated that the statutory obligation to consult regarding the Local Plan, and hence in respect of the Flaxby site, would lie with Harrogate Borough Council. It would not be incumbent on FPL to undertake any public consultation regarding the Flaxby site, particularly after October 2016, although he stressed that FPL would indeed undertake "real consultation" and that such consultation would be fundamental to ensuring that the public, particularly in Flaxby, are engaged and heard as part of the process. Mr Mallon stated that FPL would not "steamroller the public".

Mr Mallon confirmed that FPL would only submit a planning application following final adoption of the Local Plan in 2018, if the Flaxby site had been adopted within the Local Plan.

In terms of the development of the scope and actual plans for the Flaxby site, Mr Mallon stated that whilst FPL are in an embryonic stage of their considerations, it is looking at circa 1,500 houses and that consideration will need to be given to the infrastructure that will need to be put in place for such a scale of development, including traffic, schools, medical facilities and all other infrastructure requirements. Mr Mallon stated that FPL would not be proposing or deciding on the number of houses to be built at the site but that this would be a matter for Harrogate Borough Council to consider and determine as part of the Local Plan process.

Mr Mallon stressed that FPL was only interested in developing and building "quality", that all builders (such as Taylor Wimpey) would be bound by stringent design codes set by FPL that would ensure consistent quality and a coherent development and that he could give a "cast iron guarantee" regarding this.

Mr Mallon then invited questions from those present.

Questions or statements addressed to Mr Mallon with responses were as follows:

1. What is to happen to the Golf Course in the interim period prior to any actual development.

Q. It was suggested that people would very much like to enjoy the site prior to any development for example to walk dogs.

RM. *The Official Liquidator is happy with FPL proceeding to completion of the contract to buy the site. It is now very close to that and then being freehold FPL could perhaps open it up in the interim period.*

Q. However there was also an issue of dog racers getting onto the site as well as other issues such as undesirables and fly tipping. The lack of security would be a concern.

PC Scott asked at this point for people to make the police aware of any issues so that the police would have the opportunity to take appropriate action.

RM. *FPL would look at this bearing in mind the revelations of what is going on at the site, with a particular concern for ongoing security issues at the site.*

2. Is there a fallback plan should housing on the site not be feasible or viable or not included in the Local Plan

Q. The site was originally destined to be a Golf Course with a prestigious hotel. If housing does not get allocated for this site as part of the Local Plan does FPL have a fallback option or a "Plan B" e.g. a Hotel and Golf Course.

RM. *FPL may need to consider a fallback but housing is its expertise and is how it would be taken forward. FPL has no Plan B. The acquisition of the site is purely speculative and their actual plans for the development are at an embryonic stage only.*

3. **Communication**

Q. RM was thanked for attending and then referred to the poor communication of Skelwith (the previous owner of the site, who had brought forward plans for a 2,500 house new settlement) and hoped that FPL would be much better at this. Too often Flaxby village had been informed after it seemed everyone else in the area and beyond already knew of something relevant to the Skelwith development.

RM. *RM stressed the fundamental importance of real and meaningful and timely consultation with local residents and that this was absolutely key to FPL's plans and intentions going forward. To aid communication RM would be prepared to attend every meeting of the Parish Council if need be and as things progress. He would also be prepared to meet people individually, in groups or whatever.*

Note: Whilst this commitment to consultation is encouraging, it was noted that, when asked how this would manifest itself in real terms and how would the public and Flaxby residents actually be able to provide feedback and contribute to the emerging development plans, RM was, save for offering to attend the bi-monthly Parish Council meetings, unable to confirm how such consultation would be undertaken.

4. **More detail about Wynyard Park**

Q. Could RM give some detail about the Wynyard Park development that is seemingly being used as a comparative.

RM. *Wynyard Park started about 25 years ago. On one side of the Billingham to Sedgefield road is the housing development and on the other is a business park on the old Samsung site. As an example of the quality of the sites, stone gate piers have been constructed, pulled down and rebuilt two more times as they did not meet the high build standards expected. Properties have been owned by footballers and executives and currently sell for between £250,000 and £500,000 which is high for the North East. It is a larger site with accordingly more houses than Flaxby might have.*

RM then went on to say that Flaxby and Goldsborough are the 'centre' of the consultation and FPL wants to hear what local people have to say, and that he hoped to take away today whatever he could in order to incorporate any suggestions into the FPL proposals as it evolves. He hoped that local people could become involved with the dwelling designs, the village feel, the grass areas for example and that it avoided becoming a site full of lines of boxes. RM then offered to arrange transport for visits to Wynyard Park for people to see for themselves its quality and general 'feel'.

5 **Harrogate District local plan**

RM. *HBC is preparing its Local Plan with the aim of Public Consultation commencing from October 2016. FPL therefore want to submit an outline proposal to HBC for inclusion in this Plan. They aim to incorporate any feedback as appropriate between now and when it is submitted.*

Note: Although not specifically all stated at the meeting, the following timetable is in place:

Public consultation on the draft Local Plan (vision and objectives, all policies, allocations, designations and development/infill limits) ---- October 2016

Formal Publication consultation on the Local Plan-----July 2017

Submission of the Local Plan to the Secretary of the State ----- Winter 2017

Examination of the Local Plan ----- Summer 2018

Adoption of the Local Plan ----- Autumn 2018

6. Village or town

Q. If this is to have circa 1500 homes, that equates to a town the size of Boroughbridge.

RM. *Agreed*

7. Traffic and volume of cars

Q. 1,500 homes could well generate circa 3,000 cars. How can this increase be accommodated. Already Knaresborough struggles to cope with traffic. If you were to see the A59 near Flaxby at about 8.30am in the morning you would appreciate how severe it is already.

RM. *Had no answer to this other to note that. this problem is a consequential effect of the need for additional housing in this country. Traffic assessments would need to be undertaken. RM considered that there might be a number of options, such as Park & Rides, a train halt and improved public transport, that might seek to alleviate the situation.*

8. October 2016 Local Plan

Q. What are FPL's plans leading up to its submission to HBC..

RM. *We are very much at the early stages. Chris Musgrave has met with HBC and NYCC to express interest but without very little specific to discuss other than a vision for the development. It will however need to evolve over the coming months and this is where real and meaningful consultation with Flaxby and local residents is important. RM confirmed that at present FPL has on plans in terms of the scale and size of the proposed development.*

9. FPL Plans in the longer term

Q. When might detailed Planning Permission be put forward.

RM. *That is a very long way off and unlikely to be earlier than Autumn 2018, should the Flaxby site be adopted within the Local Plan at that time. On the way there are many issues to resolve before FPL could present its application for Planning Permission. However plans will need to be produced ongoing in concept form and made available for all to see.*

10. Site traffic

Q. Can there be an assurance that the site entrance for any development would not be situated so as to lead to site traffic coming through the village of Flaxby. Could it be off the existing roundabout on the A59 towards the A1M.

RM. *That appears to make perfect sense on the face of it.*

11. Development not wanted

Q. Despite the preceding questions regarding various aspects of the potential development, the general consensual view is that local residents do not want any building works on this site at all. Residents would much prefer it stayed as a Golf Course. Those in attendance were keen to make it clear to RM that, despite participating in the discussion regarding particular issues with the site being developed, he should take away the clear message that no-one was desirous for there to be any development whatsoever.

RM. *Understandable - however there is a huge need for housing and FPL has taken the decision to present this as a suitable site for HBC to meet part of its housing need and the acceptance or not of any FPL Planning Permission submission will rest with HBC.*

12. Jobs for local people

Q. Is there any assurance of jobs for local people in the new development itself should it be built.

RM. *I simply cannot give that assurance. The decision would be out of the hands of FPL*

13. Schools

Q. The impact on educational needs in the local and wider area would be fundamental to the consideration of the viability of the site for any large scale development. The population of a new settlement of 1,500 houses would have a tremendous effect on both primary and secondary schooling in the area. Consideration would need to be given to the schooling requirements in the new development itself, as well as the consequential impact on existing schools in the area. By way of example, it was noted that the nearest secondary school is Knaresborough King James which, at a current size of 1,800 pupils, has no room for expansion. Any new development would accordingly have to consider secondary education, as well as primary education.

RM. *Noted.*

14. Security

Q. Can security be maintained at the site.

RM. *As mentioned earlier it does appear to be an issue and this will be seriously considered.*

15. 'White Elephant'

Q. If not careful the site could end up being full of houses not being sold or not saleable. Whilst there might be a demand within the Harrogate Borough, is there any actual demand for houses in this particular location (as opposed to that in the existing urban areas, with existing and developing economic centres (jobs)).

RM. *Quality sells and FPL does not foresee such a problem.*

16. Affect on Flaxby Property values

Q. Already the resurgence of a large development next to the village appears to have affected the saleability/price of homes in Flaxby. This is a major concern given that this could be being considered up to 2018 / 19.

RM. *This may be correct but I cannot comment at present.*

17. Keep us informed

Q. Please keep Flaxby informed before anything hits the press.

RM. *That is something that FPL and I want to do.*

Matthew then closed the meeting, thanking Mr Mallon for coming to the meeting. Mr Mallon thanked everyone for the opportunity to attend and looked forward to returning in due course.

(The meeting concluded at 9.15 pm)