

Castle Acre Parish News

The Parish Council (PC) met on Thursday 14 March for the usual monthly meeting with four residents in attendance.

Borough Council Local Plan Review to 2036 - Cllrs considered the Borough's public consultation on two new building sites, put forward by landowners, with a combined 28 dwellings. Site 1, with 20 houses, extends into the field at the top of Massingham Road which already has planning permission for 11 dwellings, plus an outstanding application for four lower cost semi-detached units - a total of 14 to be built this summer. Cllrs object to what would be a very large, sprawling housing estate, inappropriate in the village setting.

Site 2, with 8 houses, is on land adjacent to the new school behind Back Lane. Cllrs object to this on historical, environmental and safety grounds. Once called 'Further Pond Close', this land formed part of Fox's Manor in the reign of Henry III; it was subsequently an ancient meadowland for grazing and has now been left unworked for about 18 years. The site supports a diverse range of wildlife, including a pair of Barn Owls. Highways safety - with two cars per household, congestion would increase between the shop and the school with some 20,000 extra vehicle movements, endangering pedestrians. The Inspector of the current Local Plan stated 'developing this land would not contribute significantly to improving the setting of the village'. Cllrs prefer to see this land as a Green Open Space and/or used to extend the school buildings.

The Borough Council's calculation, based on population growth, estimates that the village needs 12 more houses to 2036 on top of those already approved. Cllrs think this should be only 8. This number mirrors the majority opinion from the Neighbourhood Plan findings, calling for small estates of three to five houses. Cllrs believe there is scope to build elsewhere in the village.

The PC's draft response to the Borough's consultations will be debated at the PC meeting on 11 April. Your verbal views there, or before by e-mail to me please, will be most welcome. The Borough Council's consultation is open to everyone until 29 April. To have your say, please go to www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/homepage/252/local_plan_review_2016_-_2036

Bus services from April 7th 2019 – There will be service changes as Peelings and Carters no longer wish to provide bus services when new laws come into place from January 1st 2020 which do not allow coaches to be used on local bus services. Passengers will see low floor more accessible vehicles used on many services.

Castle Acre, currently served by the Swaffham area flexibus, will now be served by a timetabled direct services linking passengers to both Swaffham and King's Lynn with no need to either pre book or connect to onward services. Email me for a copy of the new timetable or see it at the bus stop.

Traffic speeding checks – traffic data from the SAM2 unit on Newton Road indicates that 50% of vehicles are exceeding the 30mph speed limit, with several going over 60mph. These findings will be passed to our police Beat Officer who will no doubt appear with his speed gun. Be warned!

To view past Council Minutes and finances, go to www.castleacre.info/parish_news.htm

The next PC meeting is at 7.30pm on **Thursday 11 April** at the village hall.

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