

PAULERSPURY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council

held on WEDNESDAY 4 JULY 2018

commencing at 10.00 AM in Paulerspury Village Hall, High Street, Paulerspury

PRESENT: Mrs Sawyer (Chairman), Mrs Fish, Mrs Gee, Mr Bloomfield, Mr Barnes, Mr Harvey.

85/06/18 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Boothman, Mr Davey-Turner, Mrs Sawbridge, Mr Barker, Mr Baker and were accepted by the Council.

86/06/18 **MEMBERS' DECLARATION OF INTEREST** *for items on the agenda and update of Interests where required*

No declarations declared.

87/06/18 **MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS**

Comments are welcome from those attending the meeting. The total time allowed for this item is 15 minutes with a maximum of 3 minutes per speaker. Further public comment during the meeting is permissible only at the invitation of the Chairman.

There were no members of the public present.

88/06/18 **PLANNING MATTERS**

a) **Mr and Mrs P Jaye Manor Farm, 1 Careys Road Pury End.**

Variation of condition 8 (occupancy restrictions) of planning permission S/2015/2356/FUL (Change of use of barn to two bed and breakfast units) to allow the business to be sold separately.

Paulerspury Parish Council **OBJECTED** to this application and had the following observations to make.

Linking of hovel to farmhouse by condition was part of SNC's assessment of the original application S/2015/2356/FUL - officer's report: Appraisal.

"As the proposal relates to the setting of a Listed Building and is also curtilage listed the proposal fails to be considered under Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990."

Although seeming to make a reasonable case, the statement supporting the current application played down the officer's comments and did not refer to the hovel still being outside the confines nor access to it being within the curtilage of Manor Farm and

the Granny Flat.

This proposal had similarities to other previous proposal sequences where a property's associated building has been converted to a garage or store, then subsequently to a habitable property and finally to be sold off as a separate property.

Paulerspury Parish Council has generally been opposed to such schemes and, for consistency, it objected to Application S/2018/1203/FUL. Condition 8 of S/2015/2356/FUL should be retained in its entirety.

b) Local Government Reform in Northamptonshire

Public consultation commencing on Monday, 18 June and ending on Sunday, 22 July 2018

- Questionnaire available online from each of the districts, boroughs and county council websites from Monday 18 June 2018
- Paper copies available with freepost return address from 25 June – copies will be available at council offices, libraries, leisure centres etc.
- A representative telephone survey to be carried out by the independent company running the survey across the county, ORS
- ORS will also be running focus groups with invited residents

The Parish Council discussed this at length. The Council resolved that there should be three unitary councils :

- Northampton Borough
- West Northamptonshire Unitary Council comprising Daventry and South Northamptonshire councils
- North Northamptonshire Unitary Council comprising East Northamptonshire, Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough councils.

Paulerspury Parish Council did not consider it appropriate for the rural councils of South Northamptonshire and Daventry to be amalgamated with Northampton Borough Council – an urban council.

A detailed response to the consultation was formulated which would also be sent to the RT Hon.Mrs Andrea Leadsom MP. See attached.

89/06/16 **MATTERS FOR URGENT ATTENTION OR FOR THE NEXT MEETING.**

There were no matters for urgent attention or the next meeting.

The meeting closed at 11:00 am

ATTACHMENT TO THE MINUTES OF 4 JULY 2018 Reference: 88/06/18 b)

On the evening of Tuesday 3rd July, along with many councillors from Town and Parish Councils within Northamptonshire, the Parish Clerk and I attended a presentation at the Forum on the consultation currently being undertaken concerning the formation of two Unitary Authorities for the County. The presentation was hosted by NALC and given by ORS. At the end of the meeting a vote was taken which did not produce the result for a reduction in the number of councils in the county from eight to two, which the Consultation Brochure advocates. There was overwhelming support for three Unitary Authorities within the County, largely on the grounds that Northampton should be a Unitary Authority on its own because of the urban nature of the population versus the largely rural nature within the other seven Councils. This particularly concerns both Daventry and South Northants who, under the current plan, will be most affected by being merged with Northampton.

Paulerspury Parish Council is of the opinion that the Consultation document is misleading for many reasons:

1. The authorship of the document itself is muddled and confusing, furthermore it is unclear who has actually written the document. It does not give enough factual evidence on which members of the public can make their decision and reads more like a marketing brochure justifying a decision which has already been made.
2. We believe there is at least one area which is misleading. Page 1 paragraph 4, states that 'Northamptonshire's eight councils are proposing to reduce the number of councils in the county to two', whereas we believe this decision has been a government mandate as a result of the failure of Northampton County Council, hence the reason for the consultation itself. Indeed page 4 paragraph 1, states 'The extent of the county council's financial problems, and their causes, have led the Government to direct a major change'. Which is correct and how are the general public going to be able to understand what is being asked of them, when the information they are given is contradictory?
3. The questionnaire contained within the document, itself contains many closed questions, thus ensuring the responses are likely to be in line with the result the consultation requires.
4. The reason for the vote for three Unitary authorities at the meeting on 3rd July was the result of a general feeling that urban boroughs such as Northampton have very different objectives to those of the mainly rural remaining seven councils.
5. The document rules out three Unitary authorities on the grounds that a Unitary authority for Northampton Borough would not meet the Government's population test, as the population of Northampton Borough is less than 300,000. Of the 55 Unitary authorities already established in England, 44 have a population of less than 300,000 and, of those, 28 have less than 200,00.
6. Page 3 of the document outlines the stated benefits of the Government proposals, although no evidence is given to support this. The first point states 'improve local government and service delivery across the area, give greater value for money, generate savings, provide stronger strategic and local leadership and be more sustainable'. All of which South Northants Council has managed to achieve in their successful partnership with Cherwell - a fact which appears to have gone unrecognised.

With regard to the consultation process itself, the timescale is very short indeed with responses required from the public by 22nd July. In many cases this date will miss the

inclusion of information in, for example, parish newsletters so that widespread notification of this game changing proposal to residents is compromised from the start.

In summary, Paulerspury Parish Council is deeply concerned about the local government reform consultation process. It appears to steer consultees into making a decision to support the introduction of two Unitary authorities for Northamptonshire, when the introduction of three authorities would ensure the varied requirements for the urban population of Northampton are properly met, without detriment to the largely rural populations in the remaining seven councils.

It is of grave concern to the Council that, with the focus of attention being largely on Brexit at this moment in time, major decisions for a significant change for future governance within the county of Northamptonshire will be rushed through without real thought or impact assessment, to the severe detriment of the majority of the population.