

# BROXTON & DISTRICT PARISH COUNCIL

## Notes of informal meeting with Bolesworth Estate & Neighbouring Parish Councils Brown Knowl Methodist Church Monday 18<sup>th</sup> September 2023

### Present:

Bolesworth Estate – Vicky Ball, Gaurav Batra, Nina Barbour, Mike Crowther.

Broxton & District Parish Council – Kathryn Borman, David Williams, Ann Wright (Acting Clerk).

Burwardsley Parish Councillors – Stuart Anderson, Lynn Foster (unofficial attendance).

Cheshire West & Chester Council (CW&C) – Mike Jones.

Handley & District Parish Council – Nigel Johnson.

Tattenhall & District Parish Council – Neil Matthews, Robert Smith.

### Welcome & Introductions

All attendees of the meeting introduced themselves.

It was noted the meeting would be noted and the notes published.

### Appointment of Chairman

The meeting appointed CW&C Cllr Mike Jones as Chairman.

Cllr Jones confirmed he has had meetings with the Estate and is aware the Estate has plans and is holding more regular events as such it is important that there is open dialogue between the Estate and Parish Councils.

It was agreed there needed to be a 2-way dialogue noting that will be occasions when all do not agree but there can still be a constructive conversation.

It was noted the Bolesworth Estate has been around for 200 years and wants to be around for the next 200 years and that the Estate's aspiration is to always enhance the local area for the long term.

It was noted that both Broxton & District Parish Council<sup>1</sup> and Tattenhall and District Parish Council<sup>2</sup> have planning protocols in place which provide a framework for how the Councils manage conversations with developers. This enables such meetings to take place with reporting back at the formal parish council meetings (this is a standard practice in Parish and other type of councils).

It was confirmed that Burwardsley Parish Council had resolved at their last meeting not to attend this meeting, as such Stuart Anderson and Lynn Foster were attending in their own capacity and were not representing Burwardsley Parish Council.

It was discussed there are 2 main issues in Burwardsley, the first being the Cheshire Workshops/Candle Factory which is now closed and that the Estate has not kept its promise to keep certain properties such as the Flute Buildings being properly maintained. It was noted the Estate are attending a meeting with Burwardsley Parish Council in the near future to discuss and prioritise projects.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://broxtonparishcouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/PlanningStandingOrdersProtocol-May2020A.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://tattenhallpc.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/PlanningStandingOrdersProtocol2019.pdf>

# BROXTON & DISTRICT PARISH COUNCIL

## **Terms of Reference**

### Objective of Meetings

To allow Councillors and Estate representatives to have dialogue and obtain factual information which can be fed back to Councils and residents.

It was noted that the meetings are not intended to replace meetings between the Estate and individual Councils and that where progress can be made on bilateral basis this should continue.

### Attendance

Meetings to be attended by a maximum of 2 Councillors from each Parish Council in the Estate area, CW&C Ward Councillor and representatives from Bolesworth Estate.

### Frequency of Meetings

Meetings to be held quarterly and hosted by various attendees.

### Review

Format of meetings to be reviewed in 12 months.

## **Bolesworth Estate Update**

### Properties

Mike Crowther (Property & Leisure Director) confirmed a new team has been created over the past 3 years to manage the Estate's properties. The Estate is developing a in-house maintenance team to insure that the buildings are maintained to a high standard.

The Estate is monitoring building compliance and all properties meet compliance standards and presented a schedule of % compliance.

A new customer service approach has been developed to ensure the Estate is responsive and is also much more intensively measuring and focusing on tenant satisfaction.

There has been significant investment to date which is continuing as there is still work to do.

It was noted that the basic infrastructure of the properties is in place, and work is taking place to address the following:

- Generally enhancing the upkeep of properties
- Installing Eco ventilation systems where there may be issues
- Improving energy efficiency
- Update of kitchens and bathrooms.

The works are part of a developing 3-year systematic programme. It was reported in the last 3 months over 100 properties have been visited where required works have been identified.

It was noted that the age and nature of the properties mean they can be complex and expensive to maintain and sometimes tenant access and disruption are also important considerations as to when the works should be done.

# BROXTON & DISTRICT PARISH COUNCIL

The Estate is looking to work with tenants to take advantage of the Governments Eco 4 Scheme and will reach out to Transition Tattenhall to explore opportunities.

## Harthill Application

It was noted the school was closed over 15 years ago by the Local Authority, and the Estate has worked for a number of years to find a scheme which can fulfil the properties potential and contribute to beauty of the area. The Estate noted that the range of uses to which the site can be put is very limited given the site's location and the investment required. A small-scale leisure and recreation destination could add to the local community and be commercially viable.

The development is not proposed to be a late night party venue but rather a family venue similar to the Pheasant, with an accessible trail, where dogs can be allowed off leads and children play while providing access to the Sandstone Ridge. The Estate believes that this could significantly add to the quality of life of residents in the local communities.

It was noted the Estate hears and understands the concerns raised by residents and circulated information which sought to address these concerns, Councillors were asked to take this information back to their Councils and provide feedback.

The document includes measures to reduce speeding through Harthill, tackle fly parking and provides for 20% biodiversity gain.

## Noise

It was noted that the Estate has no plans or any intention to have loud external amplified music at the Harthill site. The Estate agreed they would speak to the CW&C planning officer about a condition to manage external noise possibly based on decibel levels.

It was noted noise issues can be addressed by both planning conditions and licencing.

It was noted noise is a big issue for residents given that the area is naturally quiet and that is what attracts people to the area and that the noise particularly carries from Bolesworth Castle and Harthill up to Burwardsley.

It was noted that there is concern from residents that the Harthill development will escalate and change to a wedding venue with Airbnb accommodation.

## Walking Routes

It was noted that there is concern that the Estate will create walking routes between their sites. It was suggested that route to the Sandstone Trail was acceptable as the Trail already exists but that some residents would be against creating walk routes to other Estate facilities.

## Traffic

Concerns were voiced that there needs to be adequate signage for drivers to find attractions as there has been issues with vehicles getting lost and causing issues. The Estate confirmed they are also looking to address these problems, particularly where drivers are following satnavs.

It was confirmed the Estate is 110% behind traffic calming measures but are limited in what they can do by highways regulations. It was noted that Broxton Parish Council has deep concerns regarding the A534 given

# BROXTON & DISTRICT PARISH COUNCIL

the speed of vehicles including motorbikes travel along the road which vehicles will be slowing down on to turn to Harthill.

It noted that Highways will allow interactive signs on the A534 but these need to be funded by the Parish Council. The Estate is happy to add its voice and explore how it can assist the local Parish Councils in discussions with CWAC to alleviate concerns.

## Bolesworth Sites

It was noted that the Estate has a number of challenging sites which it needs to tackle however no master plan has been developed and no decisions have been made beyond the Harthill application.

The sites included:

## Carriages

Currently providing accommodation for Ukrainian refugees, there are no plans for its future and there is no rush to take any action.

## Lynedale House / Beehive

It was noted there has been some interest in the property. The property will require quite a bit of work for some future uses given the way the property is divided.

## Portico

It was noted this site is really important to the Estate and Barbour family, the development for the site which has been approved no longer financially stacks up as such a solution has been sought to sell the site to an affordable housing provider who would deliver the site as designed with 100% affordable properties. It was asked if a condition could be included on the site to give priority people from or with a close connection to Tattenhall and District Parish Council area as this is considered to be helpful to the local community. (This would be similar to the condition on Grackle Croft)

It was agreed CW&C Cllr Jones and the Clerk would provide additional information to Estate about this.

## Harthill Church

Works are near completion to strengthen the structure of Harthill Church and stop it falling into disrepair. The vision for the Church is to compliment the use of the Harthill development, details have not yet been developed.

## Mickerdale

Is an investment work for the Estate given the Estate's desire to restore this beautiful historic building to the area following the devastating fire. This project may be an example of where funding is obtained by the Estate by selling other assets.

## Rawhead Farm

It was noted this property is in Cheshire East, there are no plans for this property and the property has very poor access which will limit possible future uses. One idea that the Estate has discussed internally is about creating a very small boutique hotel or retreat there but no further action has been taken to explore further.

# BROXTON & DISTRICT PARISH COUNCIL

## Cheshire Workshops / Candle Factory

This is an incredible site but there are currently no plans for the site, although it is a priority for the Estate moving forward. The site is due to be discussed with Burwardsley Parish Council. It was noted that some residents would rather see this site being used for residential purposes rather than commercial to limit traffic in the village, although this proposal may have significant planning issues.

It was noted that the Estate has considered the nature of the area and the possible Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) designation and has looked at small scale leisure developments.

## **Events**

It was noted that the permission for the Christmas event ends after this Christmas and as such the Estate is in conversation with Cheshire West and Chester about plans for the future. It was noted the Estate can not accommodate a large number of high footfall events due to ground conditions and the impact on the fields . Large scale events can only really take place between May and the end of September.

The Estate believes that the events add to the cultural content of the local area and are enjoyed by large numbers of local residents. The Estate explained its ambition to improve the quality of the events rather than the number and there is a consideration to combine the 2 horse shows. The Estate is looking to run more off-site events and also small-scale corporate events on site.

The Estate are looking at developing a 3 year plan and it was agreed these plans for Events will be discussed in more detail at the next meeting.

It was reported that complaints had been received about the lighting and noise created by the event held over the weekend. It was agreed noise is impacted by weather conditions including cloud levels and wind direction. It was also noted that many locals who had attended the recent event had really enjoyed it. It was noted the noise issue will be taken into consideration and if anything can be done to alleviate the issue.

## **Reporting Issues**

It was noted that residents and Councils can raise any issues with the Estate and should contact Vicki Ball on [vicki.ball@bolesworth.com](mailto:vicki.ball@bolesworth.com)

All were thanked for attending the meeting and taking part in the discussions.

## **Future Meetings**

Monday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2023 – 7.30pm - Barbour Institute, Tattenhall.

Monday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2024 – 7.30pm – Venue TBC.

Monday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2024 – 7.30pm – Venue TBC.

Monday 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024 - Venue TBC.

Ann Wright  
19/09/2023