**SAUNDERSFOOT COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the Special Meeting held in the Methodist Church, Saundersfoot on 11th March 2013 to discuss the Planning Application for a proposed Civic Amenity Site at New Hedges.**

**PRESENT**

Councillors: S John (Chairman), W Cleevely (Vice Chairman), P Baker, S Boughton Thomas and T Pearson.

**IN ATTENDANCE**

John Griffiths, County Councillors J Preston, Mike Evans and Jacob Williams and 15 members of the public.

**1.** APOLOGIES
Councillors M Allsop, R Brabon, M Cavell, R Hayes MBE, D McDermott, H Morris and D Poole. Also County Councillor Michael Williams (Tenby).

**2.** Chairman John welcomed everyone to the meeting which was open to the public and was convened to discuss the planning application for the proposed new Civic Amenity facility in New Hedges. He advised the meeting of the normal procedure for planning applications, but as this was a very complex one (612 pages) it was decided to hold this separate meeting to discuss it.

He said each member had read the documentation and advised the meeting that speakers would be allowed a maximum of five minutes to speak.

**a.** Councillor Preston said that he declared an interest in acting for the owners of Brooklands Care Home, but continued to make the following comments:-

- No amendment had been made to the lighting on the site.
- The noise, smell and vermin will have a devastating effect on the vulnerable residents of Brooklands.
- Visual impact on the area would be devastating to the tourist trade which the area relies so heavily on.
- Surprised that professional people have decided to even consider locating the facility there.
- The seriousness of this application is on a par with the closure of the MIU in Tenby.
- Alternative sites not considered fully.
- Evidence shown from the medical profession shows the detrimental effect this facility would have on the residents of Brooklands

- Mr Rob Nixon informed the meeting that he had land on New Road in Begelly and this site ticks every box for this facility, but it was turned down.

**b.** Mr Tony Wales then informed the meeting that he was Chairman of the Community Health Council which was the watchdog for fighting for the rights of people. He said Brooklands was opened 27 years ago by the Umanee family and had 40 residents of which 12 are local.

He went on to say that there had been a tremendous amount of opposition to having this facility right next to Brooklands and asked what would happen if

an emergency occurred there, it would be very difficult to evacuate these vulnerable patients from the home at short notice.

Mr Wales said that what would happen in years to come, for instance, if privatisation took place and also why locate this facility here, the jewel in the crown of tourism in this area. He said that previous application for development on this area had been refused, so what has changed since then. He quoted from the Quality Act which clearly states that the most vulnerable people in society should be protected at all times and this development does not do this.

Chairman John informed the meeting that whatever decision the Council takes this evening does not mean that National Parks will arrive at the same decision.

**c.** Councillor Boughton Thomas informed the meeting that

- Many of the rejections of the 21 alternative sites made by Pembrokeshire County Council relate to transport issues, such as access, the need for roundabouts, traffic lights etc specifically relating to the costs of same, but the application costs so far incurred which now cover over 600 pages of statistics and reports to support the application of the site next to Brooklands must equate to a similar cost.
- Even though Pembrokeshire County Council have made significant improvements to the proposed site during this consultation period to try and appease objections, there does not appear to have been an equivalent effort made to try and seriously follow-up alternative site provision.
- If a previous small application was rejected by Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, for the site due to aesthetic reasons, how can Pembrokeshire County Council possibly justify putting in an application for such a large, onerous development on the same site. We understand pre-application meetings have already been held so how is it that it wasn't discounted as a non-starter at that stage.
- The 15 year site improvement plan covering noise, dust, sight pollution etc worryingly doesn't clarify how the same pollution and noise problems are going to be alleviated during the 9 month build period. In fact it would appear no improvements have been made to reduce the build impact on residents.

**d.** Councillor Baker stated that this was an emotive subject potentially siting the new Civic Amenity site adjacent to a busy main road and the Brooklands Care Facility, this had been on-going for nearly 12 months, during that time he had attended 11 meetings to gain as much information as possible this included a visit to Brooklands, visiting the C.A. site at Waterloo Industrial Estate and attending Public and County Council meetings. He had also spoken to the Alzheimer's Society and quoted from their document "Understanding and respecting a person with Dementia – It's very important that people with dementia are treated with respect. It is important to remember that a person with dementia is still a unique and valuable human being, despite their illness".

He continued we are here this evening to consider the application by

Pembrokeshire County Council purely on planning grounds and as such need to consider the Local Development Plans.

As a consultees, the Community Council has three options 1. Object, 2. Object but withdraw subject to conditions, 3. Support.

Within the Local Development Plan The Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority have made an allowance for a replacement of the Tenby C.A. and included this in item Policy 25 item 4.120, but no site had been identified, notwithstanding the allowance there are conditions that apply in the overriding policy 15 where conditions are still required to be met. He considered that within Policies 4, 16, 30 and 35 there were issues which he thought had not been met to comply with Policy 15.

Councillor Baker then read a statement from Mr Simon Hart MP who was unable to attend the meeting due to commitments in London.

" I fully support the Umanee family and local residents in their efforts to explain the unique circumstances at Brooklands and why the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park should listen carefully to their case. The National Parks planning committee has in the past rejected applications on this site, including less intrusive ones, so it should assess this one in a consistent way, paying particular attention to noise and traffic issues.

The views of local people in planning matters have never been more important. In this instance there is widespread concern that the arguments have not been properly address. There is now a chance to correct that."

**e.** Councillor Cleevely told the meeting that every single meeting he had attended questions had been asked but were answered in a subjected way and also expressed his concern at not considering alternative sites more fully.

**f.** Councillor Pearson said that with regard to the alternative site in Begelly, it was considered a flood area, but Mr Rob Nixon said that he had received a letter from the Environment Agency to the contrary.

**g.** Councillor Steve John expressed his concern that the proposed site will route its surface water drainage into the local watercourse, this leads directly to Saundersfoot and any pollutants in this water will affect the Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) that are either side of Saundersfoot Harbour as well as jeopardise Saundersfoot's coveted Blue Flat status.

Also he was concerned that the traffic figures were from the week before the June Bank holiday weekend, stating that the weekend maximum hourly traffic towards Tenby were 520 vehicles, however the appendix with the actual figures also contained data for the following week, where it showed 738 vehicles passing the proposed site towards Tenby in an hour on the following Saturday, that is one every 4 seconds. The application forecasts 46 vehicles arriving at the site in the same hour, which shows traffic attempting to turn right in the filter lane could not be able to safely cross and

this would cause congestion on a busy road.

**3. Conclusions**

After the meeting Councillor S John said “I am pleased that there were serious technical reasons put forward to object to this application, although I can see the need for a new Civic Amenity Site, this is certainly not the place to locate it”.

Following the considerations of those Community Councillors present and taking note of the comments supplied by those unable to attend, Councillor Baker proposed that the Community Council object to the application. Chairman Councillor S John put this to the vote; it was unanimously supported by all members. The Council would write to Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority recording their concerns with regard to Policy 15, concerns relating to traffic volume, potential water course pollution incidents and possible effects on the Blue Flag Beaches, light and noise pollution, the contradictory statistics. Councillor Baker commented “I am fully aware that there is a need for a new Civic Amenity site, but I do not believe that this is the appropriate location, I will attend the Planning meeting as the local County Councillor to voice my objections”.

All those present at the meeting were delighted with this decision and thanked the Council for carrying out a sensible and constructive debate on the issue.

The meeting closed at 8.05pm.