

**EXTRACT FROM MINUTES OF COPYTHORNE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON  
TUESDAY 14<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2017 AT 7.30 P.M. IN THE PARISH HALL (Main Hall)**

**Chaired By:** Parish Council Chair Cllr Joseph Reilly

**In Attendance:** District Councillors Diane Andrews; Derek Tipp and 49 members of the Copythorne Electorate.

**Locum Clerk to the Council:** Mrs Susan Brayley

**7. Affordable Housing:**

Parish Cllr Simon Lucas gave a presentation on the status of the Affordable Housing proposals for the Copythorne area being put forward by the Parish Council, NFDC and the HARA organisation. This was followed by a question and answer session as follows: -

- *Please note use of this bullet point indicates a question raised by an attending member of the electorate.*
- Concern that the proposal of one property for sale at open market rate was contrary to original agreement
- How do we know that local connections will rate higher on Housing Association scoring system and what does “local” mean – living in or outside the area.

Cllr Andrews advised that the allocation was done by the NFDC using their local connection allocation system and had already been successfully used at Minstead.

- Concern was raised that in a previous open meeting the NFDC representative had indicated local connection could not be guaranteed as other circumstances could alter this priority.

Cllr Andrews advised this applied to Social Housing waiting lists not Housing Association lists and that the Parish Council would want to have firm agreements on terms and conditions ahead of the building programme.

- It was observed that the NFDC lettings policy need to be seen and understood by all.
- Questions were raised as to the basis of the Housing Association undertaking and could the electorate be reassured that these properties would not be removed from the rental market via “the right to buy”. Or be taken via an NFDC or similar exchange agreement

Cllr Reilly advised this would be in the formal agreement with the Housing Association and again local connections were key, so no exchange basis.

- A query was raised as to the process of circumstance change, if family in property and circumstances improved was there a review method that would compel the property to be given up to others.

Cllr Lucas replied this was a vexatious issue nationwide, however reassessment could take place after five years.

- What would happen if there were not enough local people to fill the properties?

Cllr Lucas advised in theory would be filled from NFDC allocation list, but not an issue in Copythorne where demand was greater than availability.

- It was pointed out the subject had been under discussion since 2012 and was no further forward and that information was slow to be released and not timely. Was regularly not on website early enough and the residents were getting contradictory information. Points raised with the HARA representative were not acted on nor were several simple errors, e.g. flooding: boundary issues and the sudden adding of land not previously put forward. Questioned who was leading the process.

Cllr Lucas advised that all the points raised would have to be included in the revised schedule and that the additional land had been removed but pointed out that the landowner clearly wanted to develop that site.

- Concerns that inaccuracies raised had not been acted on by the Working Party, and that the proposed open market property was being made available at public expense and could not be permitted to remain empty. Was also concerned that was all happening too fast, non-recognition of flooding issues at Bartley, nor was the impact on local infrastructure such as schools being investigated.

Cllr Lucas advised that school placement process was based on several factors and if there were more eligible children in the catchment area these would take priority.

- Concerns were also raised concerning lack of public transport, Drs Surgeries and shops, etc.

Cllr Lucas pointed out there were only 15 units planned.

- It was stated that the discussions had been going on a long time and that the majority of the Parishioners did not want this to go ahead and when were they going to be taken notice of and when were they going to be governed by a majority.

- A vote was suggested

- It was pointed out that those in attendance were not representative of all the residents views and that a ballot should be taken separately to get the real view.

Cllr Lucas advised that a previous consultation (not referendum) had given back a large majority of favourable feedback.

- Questions were raised as to the necessity for affordable housing in the area.

- It was advised that as both principle planning authorities (NFNPA & NFDC) were in the process of developing 20-year plans, it would be advisable to wait on their completion.

- It was stated that there were sufficient members of the electorate in attendance to demand a Parish Poll be conducted within 30days.

The Clerk advised that 30days was insufficient time to issue the papers and that would need to obtain advice from the Council advisory body, Hampshire Association of Local Councils as to the correct process. When the attendees stated they were unhappy with the use of HALC, the Clerk suggested that she contact the Elections and Governance Officer at the NFDC for advice as any poll would be conducted by the NFDC. This was agreed as acceptable. The Clerk to seek advice from NFDC concerning Parish Polls and then to publish this in detail on the website.

Cllr Lucas advised that advice had been received that day concerning potential new funding streams, but these were not yet understood and needed investigation.

- It was observed that a Parish Poll was not binding on the Council and believed it could only be on one question and requested Clerk clarify this with NFDC.

- It was stated that elected representatives should consider if they were making the wrong decision and that decision would force the electorate into demanding a poll.
  - It was stated that not all electors were against the affordable housing proposal.
  - It was questioned how the meeting was advertised and was advised via the statutory requirements of noticeboards and website.
  - It was questioned why not individual email? And was advised not statutory requirement and was published on website.
  - It was observed that safeguards needed to be put in place to stop the flow of misinformation.
  - Assurance was requested that the Council would not fall back on the 2012 questionnaire as the wording was inaccurate and it was largely now discredited.
- Cllr Lucas advised that this would be properly restated so that could deliver a straight "Yes" or "No" not a "Maybe".