

**NOTES TAKEN FROM THE
EXTRA-ORDINARY MEETING OF THE PAKENHAM PARISH COUNCIL
MONDAY 13TH AUGUST 2007
AT 7.30 PM IN THE VILLAGE HALL**

AGENDA: The planned farming of pigs in Pakenham

Present at the meeting: Chair, Mr Henry Painter, Mr Nigel Farthing, Mrs Marion Sargent, Mr Richard Griffin, Mr Anthony Kibbel.

Apologies: Mr Michael Bryant.

Also present: 103 members of the community.

Meeting commenced at 7.30pm. Mr Painter drew the attention of those present to the literature circulated. This was a copy of a letter addressed to the council by Mr Peter Crichton, the agent for Mr S. Whitwell. Mr Painter requested comments or questions from the floor and stipulated that these should be preceded by the name and address of the individual.

He explained the powers of the Parish Council in terms of planning law and outlined the fact that the Parish Council had no legal power to affect the actions of Mr Whitwell and that he was acting within the law.

The following comments and questions were raised from the floor:-

Mr Patrick Bucknell, Gt. Barton Parish Council - was not unduly concerned as the prevailing wind would not effect any of the houses/dwellings within his parish. He thought that no problems would be reported but requested 'would we follow up the statement in the letter that there would be no inconvenience to anybody?'

Paul Harris, Manor Garth - 'Pigs smell - there is a problem at Saxham at Claas Combines, because of the smell from pigs there. What happens if we do get a smell?'

The chair stated that he understood the environment agency would only inspect every 6 Years if the numbers of pigs was over 2000. He also added that 'should there be a problem, the public could contact the buyer of the product i.e. Waitrose, concerning the inconvenience caused by their supplier.'

Richard Butler, Manor Garth - stated 'Mr Whitwell had made a mistake, that there was no money in pigs at this time and that there was a world shortage of cereal products.' He also stated 'What happened to the values displayed by your father, why are you doing it? Is there any link between this action and the refusal for planning permission for the house now under construction?'
There was a general murmuring of agreement.

The chair responded that Mr Whitwell was very concerned regarding public opinion over this.

A person who wished to remain anonymous, but who lives in Pakenham stated that the number of sows planned would produce 18,000 pigs per annum. This would cause major transport issues as it was not just pigs out, but vast quantities of feed in. A lorry would normally carry 270 fat pig or 400 weaners per vehicle to transport away. The bulk food coming in would be vast in comparison.

Gordon Abner, Bell House. - 'There would be road traffic problems to and from the farm processing plant, which is off the Upper Town Crossroads. How will this affect the street?' (*see addendum below)

A general discussion took place over the possible routes to be used by this transport and its affects on the community. There was much distress expressed over the thought of the impact on such a quiet village.

Margaret Stevenson, Manor Garth - 'Why is this being inflicted upon Pakenham? Is there not another site? Why not on his side of the A143 road?'

Mr Steve Dunn responded - 'Mr Whitwell lives six-tenths of a mile from the A143 and that he had had a discussion with Mr Whitwell who had stated that the land was not suitable being heavy clay.' This was met with derision by the meeting but was supported by Mr Robin Denys-Jones who stated that the land was too heavy being heavy clay. Mr Dunn also passed the opinion that the E/Agency only appeared to get involved when the damage had been done and did not protect the environment at all.

The chairman suggested it would help if blocks 2 and 3 could be adjusted to the line of the track. A discussion then took place as to the power of the Environment Agency to require a pollution control certificate in these circumstances. This was thought to be non applicable or effective in this case.

Paul Harris requested that the Parish Council write to Waitrose to make the point as raised earlier.

Mr Ron Blakeman, a recent new resident stated he was appalled by the new plan to run pigs on the land - it would produce mud on the road, other traffic hazards and a lowering of the quality of the environment into which he had moved. He requested that the Parish write to Waitrose and the parent company, John Lewis.

Ann Harrison raised the issue of the high probability of run-off from the eastern area affecting the public footpath and this should not be allowed to happen on the grounds of health and safety. She believed that the Suffolk County Council should be involved.

Peter Fiske, Great Barton Parish Council, raised the fact that Mr Whitwell had violet root on his land which made it impossible to plant sugar beet, it would cause the crop to be refused by the factory and this was one reason why the pigs were being used as a crop. He also raised the point that if you wanted to test the smell from a pig unit, try Rhymer Point where the smell was overwhelming.

Mrs Townsend, The Owell - claimed that the view from the village would be permanently disfigured and could the Environment Agency review the effects of the added level of phosphates and nitrates into the water of the area from the effluent. She was also concerned at the value of her property. She encouraged others to write to Mr Whitwell.

Rose Heap - 'Can other official bodies be contacted? What is the view of the meeting and the council of the perceived involvement of the Borough Councillor with the Whitwell family and should he declare an interest? She requested that we chose another councillor to represent this matter to the Borough Council due to possible bias.

Mr Harvey, Thurston Road - Pest control regarding the rats was not a problem but that of flies, feral pigeons, rooks and sea gulls was a problem.

Richard Taylor, Manor Garth - 'I have enjoyed the clean air and the local scenery for the past 14 years and that these will be destroyed' in his experience of RAF Mildenhall.

A general discussion took place as to the impact of the pig unit on the property values of the village.

Emily Dean, The Owell - Demanded the democratic right to protest and questioned the democratic attitude of the Parish Council. The chair responded 'It could only act lawfully, it democratically had to represent the views of all the parish.'

Holly Weaver said 'We must stop them before they come.'

Peter Fiske stated 'This action will spoil 2 parishes.'

Steve Dunn said 'Could the council ask "Would you have ever told us if this had not been revealed by a member of your staff?"'

The chair requested that the person who had revealed the information, who was present, explain the circumstances of her receipt of the information, if she was prepared to do so.'

Ann Harvey stated that the plans had been given to her by Mr Crichton and that Mr Whitwell had been aware.

Mr John Culley made the point that it was obviously quite clear that the general concern being displayed by the meeting as to this proposal was of a high level.

Mr Roger Curtis said: What are Gt. Barton Parish Council going to do?

The response was that the village was being split between those nearby who were concerned, and those further away who were not.

Samantha Kyle believed that a petition should be circulated to gather the opinion of the rest of the villagers and get the views of the whole village. 'I believe that John Lewis, Waitrose, the MP, the Press and all the councils should be informed to raise opinion re the threat to such a lovely village.'

Mr Griffin responded by stating that any opinion poll or petition should be carefully worded as incorrect wording would skew the results and be easily criticised. Her attention was drawn to the member of the press, Bury Free Press, who was present.

Robin Denys-Jones then stated - 'I hope this doesn't mean that if we turn against the keeping of horses because they harbour flies that the council would treat it in the same way. Who knows where this sort of attitude would end?'

The council members were then requested to send a letter to Mr Whitwell and all other agencies concerned. It was stated that a petition be started from the village to display public feeling towards the proposal.

The chair responded by saying that we would be sending a letter to Mr Whitwell which would include the contents of the notes taken at the meeting. He felt, and was supported in this by Mr Farthing, that the council felt that all persons concerned should write to all the parties ranging from Mr Whitwell, the Environment Agency, Suffolk Preservation Society and other like bodies together with the local Member of Parliament. 700 letters would be more effective than one sheet of paper with 700 names.

John Head - 'Would the letter include a count of the persons present at the meeting?'

Holly Weaver. Repeated her concern for health and safety and footpaths.

Ruth Brown - 'Can I raise the issue of run-off into the neighbouring SSSI?'

Mr Durr - the meeting of the peoples of Pakenham had a right to question both Mr Whitwell and Mr Crichton and that there should be a meeting for this purpose.

There was a request that the letter from the council to Mr Whitwell ask for the meeting to be held sooner rather than later as six weeks was too long and the pigs could be in place by then.

Mr Dorling said that he was very pleased to see so many people taking an interest.

Mr Farthing said that he wished to maintain the ambiance of the village and that he had no intention of letting the village go to rack and ruin but that the councils actions must remain lawful.

The chair thanked the public for their massive turnout.

The public meeting closed at 9.20pm.

Following the main meeting a further meeting of the Parish Council members present fully supported the proposal to send a letter with a copy of the notes taken at the time, to Mr Whitwell as soon as possible requesting a meeting within the next 2 weeks and that a copy of these notes should be displayed in the public notice board.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 9.40pm.

Addendum

* Email from Gordon Olvera - 20.08.2007

To correct the meeting minutes, I would like to add that Gordon Olvera (Bell House), made the comment concerning the impact of transportation to the village that would be required to support the Whitwell proposed pig farm as opposed to Gordon Abner. I would also like to add that the comment was actually proposed to the Pakenham Parish Council and not to Mr. Whitwell. To clarify, my comment focused on requesting restrictions to HGV traffic on The Street since it is already congested and there have been serious accidents along the road. The Parish Council responded that they were unable to impose any restrictions and anticipated there would be no increase in HGV traffic to The Street.