

WHISSONSETT PARISH COUNCIL

POLICY REGARDING PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Policy Approved: 8th March 2021

Date of next Review: 2024

Background and purpose of the Policy

Note that this policy is suitable for a smaller council such as Whissonsett Parish Council, who do not meet every month.

The Parish Council is mindful that it has an important role in relation to planning applications. It is a consultee in the planning process. Responses to those applications, must be within a specified time frame, usually 21 days.

Wherever possible it will deal with planning applications at its Parish Council meeting. However, where those applications cannot be dealt with at a routine meeting the Parish Council has set up a Planning Advisory Group (PAG) and given delegated powers to the Parish Clerk in respect of decision making. **All Councillors are members of the PAG.**

There is a need for transparency in this process. This policy is therefore written to explain how the council will deal with planning applications so enabling both council members and the public to involve themselves effectively with that process.

Responses to planning applications

This paragraph describes the way that Breckland Council (BC) deals with Planning Applications. Planning Applications are notified electronically to the Clerk by BC. These notifications give a link to the planning portal where details of the applications can be found. BC request responses within 21 days. This is to enable BC to achieve the timetable set by government in relation to planning applications. It is often possible to ask the planning officer dealing with the planning application to give an extension to this 21 days – the outcome of this request though is dependent on planning committee dates and other information.

The application will feature on the Parish Council agenda, for consideration at its meeting. Councillors should view all documents relating to an application online at the BC website prior to a Council meeting.

If the application needs to have a response and there is no planned Parish Council meeting, the Chairman, in consultation with the Clerk, will decide whether a special Parish Council Meeting will be called. Only in exceptional circumstances, where an application is deemed to affect the whole parish, will the Chairman call a special Parish Council meeting. Otherwise the application will be considered by the Planning Advisory Group (PAG) – see below.

Dealing with applications at Parish Council meetings

Where possible, the Parish Council will consider planning applications at its meetings and those applications will be detailed on the agenda. In the event of them being received after the closure of the agenda, but before the meeting, the Clerk will advise the Chairman of their inclusion in the next meeting. This can only be done where all of the planning documents are available to view on the planning portal.

The Parish Council will consider applications in line with BC's Planning Policy guidelines and "material consideration" which includes, but is not limited to: amenity, appearance of the development, conservation, design, effect on wildlife, highway safety, historic buildings, loss of light or privacy, noise, overshadowing of your home, traffic and parking issues, loss of sunlight. Issues which cannot be taken into account are civil matters and include: boundary disputes, construction noise, effect on property values, loss of view, private rights.

In the event of a Planning Agent coming to a Parish Council Meeting to speak, this will be permitted in Public Question Time with the same restrictions in respect of time allocation being placed on the Agent as if they were a member of the public. **Chairman's discretion is final**

Dealing with applications outside of the Parish Council meeting

The Parish Council has set up a Planning Advisory Group (PAG). The Parish Council has also given delegated powers to the Parish Clerk in respect of planning applications. In the event of an application being received too late for inclusion in the meeting or just after a meeting, then the PAG will advise the Clerk of their comments on the application electronically within the 21-day consultation period. The Clerk will then respond to the Planning Directorate from the information provided, with the powers under Local Government Act 1972, authorizing delegation to the Clerk.

In the event of an application being received from a Parish Councillor, the same process will be followed. The Councillor will be expected to declare an interest and may request a dispensation to speak/vote.

It is noted that BC's Development Control Committee has the final say on all applications, and the Parish Council is only one of many consultees. Parishioners can write to the District Council with their views on planning applications, and it is helpful to the Parish Council if they send a copy of their letter to the Parish Clerk. Letters received will guide the Parish Council in formulating their response to applications. Parishioners should ensure that their letters are received by the Clerk or the Chairman before midday on the day of the Parish Council meeting.
