

Gavinton, Fogo & Polwarth Community Council

Minute of special meeting called by Mr Markby, Mrs Purves and Mr Lamb held on the 10th August 1994 in the village hall Gavinton to discuss the council's response to the Regional Council's decision to allow a further period of consultation until 1st September before ratifying the Border Regional Plan .

PRESENT

Mr R M Sinclair (Chairman), Mrs C Allman, Mr J B Elliot (District Cllr), Mr M Lamb, Mr R J Markby, Mr I McCowen, Mr A McMillan, Mrs M G Mowat, Mr J Nairn (Regional Cllr), Mrs F Purves, Mr F Seed, Mrs C Watt, Mrs M Weir, Mr R Wilkinson.

19 members of the public were also present

Before the meeting opened Mr Seed withdrew because of his potential interest in the matter under discussion.

1. APOLOGIES no apologies had been received.

2. ITEM FOR MEETING CALLED

The chairman invited Mr Markby to state his reasons for calling the meeting. Mr Markby felt strongly that the reporter of the public local enquiry had not been given the right impression by those who objected to the zoning for development for the village in the local plan. He identified 4 groups of people objecting. First:- the elderly, who had no interest in the long term needs of the community. Second:- absentees, whose interest might not coincide with the interests of the village. Third:- New-comers, who may not have had time to understand the needs of the village. Fourth:- those whose view might be spoilt, with whom he had some sympathy, but felt their opinion was secondary to the good of the village as a whole. He supported development on the grounds of providing employment and bringing new blood into the village. He hoped for a younger element to support the various village organisations. He asked that anyone present be given a chance to question him on these points.

The chairman invited Mrs Purves to state her reasons for calling the meeting. Mrs Purves said that the views of the community had not been properly represented at the public enquiry and that all the residents of Gavinton should be allowed to express an opinion about further development.

The chairman read out the regional council's letter of 21st July inviting objections to the modification of the local plan. He asked if any member had in fact written to object. He went on to repeat suggestions made to him that there a referendum of those resident within the village boundries would be the only way to determine exactly the mood of the village.

Mr Lamb joined the meeting and the chairman him invited him to state his reason for calling the meeting. Mr Lamb said that those objecting to the zoning proposals produced at the public enquiry evidence stating nearly all the households in the village had been canvassed by them. He personal had not been canvassed and knew of others who had not. He could not see why there should be any objection to the zoning proposal.

The chairman then invited the views of the public.

Suggestions from the floor included those welcoming a ballot, and those who considered it unnecessary. A warning was sounded that in view of the low turnout at district council elections (30-40%) if a ballot produced a similar percentage the turnout would have to be taken into account. It was suggested that a ballot might not reach all it should because people were still away on holiday, but it was pointed out that the schools would be back by the time a ballot could be organised. The question of voting by proxy was raised. It was suggested that there should be a physical ballot in the village hall. A point was raised about a failure of the council properly to represent the views of the community and a request that copies of all correspondence between the community council and the district, region and Scottish Office be sent to every household. Doubts were cast on how representative of the views of the village were those of the objectors at the public enquiry. Attention was drawn to the community council's rejection of a planning application in 1990 and a protest was made at the treatment of the village over this issue in a recent article in the Berwickshire News.

The general mood of the public appeared to be in favour of a ballot of some sort.

The chairman thanked the public for their contribution and returning the debate to the council, whereupon Mr Wilkinson proposed that a referendum be held to establish the views of the village of zoning as in the regional plan (seconded Mr Markby).

Mrs Mowat proposed an amendment to Mr Wilkinson's motion that the motion was unnecessary (seconded Mrs Watt). The amendment was rejected by a majority of votes. Mr Wilkinson's motion was then carried by a majority of votes.

Mr Wilkinson then proposed that the referendum be in the form of an open ballot in the village hall, but it was felt that, despite the cost, a postal ballot would have the best chance of ensuring a high turnout. It was decided that those eligible to vote would be all on the electoral roll residing in Gavinton village.

*see 1
26.9.94* The secretary proposed a draft form of ballot paper and rules under which the ballot be conducted which after considerable amendment was adopted (in the form appended in the archive copy of this minute).

It was agreed to form a sub committee, consisting of Mr Sinclair, Mrs Weir and Mr Markby to oversee the conduct of the referendum. The secretary was instructed to approach the district council to furnish an independent officer to count the ballot papers and oversee the count. He was also instructed to produce the necessary paperwork, which the sub committee would be responsible for posting. The secretary was instructed to ensure that the draft plan etc was deposited at the village post office.

There being no other business the chairman called the meeting to a close.

Chairman:-



Date:-

26.9.94.

Gavinton, Fogo & Polwarth Community Council

GAVINTON BALLOT

11th August 1994

In the interest of the community as a whole the community council has decided to ballot all on the electoral register resident in Gavinton village as to whether it would be desirable to have the location to the west of the village, south of Main Street (ie between the Fogo road and the playing field) zoned for residential development or not. This ballot paper has been sent to the 156 residents on the register.

The documents relevant to this proposal are Berwickshire Local Plan 1992 and the reporter's modifications to the local plan following the public local enquiry. They can be viewed at Duns Public Library and the District Council offices, Duns. It is planned to have a copies available for view at Gavinton Post Office from Monday.

Please tick one of the two boxes below and return it in the stamped addressed envelope to reach the District Council offices by mid-day Wednesday 24th August. The envelopes will opened at 7.00 pm that evening in the village hall and the result counted by a District Council officer. The result will then be passed on to the Regional Council.

1. The location to the west of the village, south of Main Street (ie between the Fogo road and the playing field) SHOULD BE zoned for residential development.

2. The location to the west of the village, south of Main Street (ie between the Fogo road and the playing field) SHOULD NOT BE zoned for residential development.

RULES

1. The community council has appointed a sub committee of 3 consisting of:- Roy Sinclair, Mary Weir & Ron Markby to oversee the ballot.
2. A ballot paper will be sent to each resident in Gavinton village who appears on the current electoral register and the ballot papers will have no mark to distinguish by whom it has been returned.
3. Each ballot paper will be accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope with the electors Elector Number written on it.
5. The returned envelopes will be kept at the District Council offices and will not be opened until the time of the count.
6. The sub committee will be present at the time of the count and any other members of the community council and the public who wish to be present. The Elector Number on returned envelopes will be checked by an independent party against the electoral register before being opened by him/her and found to contain the correct number of ballot papers.
7. When all the returned envelopes are open and checked the independent party will count the ballot papers and announce the result as soon it is known.