

It's been a quiet few weeks around Christmas with only two incidents/topics to report on. Firstly, I'm slightly encouraged by Simon Jupp MP's interest in the potential Taylor Wimpy planning application in Feniton, which will have implications for Buckerell. However, the points raised with them seem to be falling on deaf ears. It's my opinion that we are going to have to fight hard to make the points covered in the super inquiry of 2014.

Secondly, having gone through the recently published NPPF hoping to find some material changes that could protect our communities. I am profoundly disappointed to find none of the changes to planning promised by Gove. We were promised that there would be much more input from local communities into the process in order to get the kind of developments they needed, rather than having development imposed on us. Instead the 'presumption to approve' developments remains in place making it harder to refuse. As a result, I am seeking a meeting with the head of planning at eddc to see how he feels this new document affects our local planning policy going forward. I am also instigating changes to our local constitution to bring it in line with other districts. For example at present any member of the planning committee who does not attend a site visit is precluded from voting. I have argued that this is a ruling that is not applied by all districts, and that the information provided by officers should be sufficient to make a decision with or without a site visit. This is now being actioned. Also I have asked for the powers to summon officers from the EA, highways and the water companies to planning meetings, to be applied. This should allow members to question statements made by these consultees and raise the level of accountability. I have also asked for the ability to defer decisions on applications if these consultees do not attend.

I appreciate some of the points may appear aspirational, but other councils appear to do it so there's no reason why it cannot be adopted by eddc. I will keep you informed as to how these changes pan out.