

Breckland Matters

October
2015



Welcome

to the October 2015 edition of Breckland Matters

It doesn't seem five minutes since I was writing the introduction to the last newsletter. It has been another busy month and there are welcomes and good-byes (one temporarily) to mention.

I would like to offer a welcome to Lisa O'Donovan, Assistant Development Management Planner, Kevin Beckwith in Building Control and Natalie Wicks as an apprentice within the planning service. I hope they enjoy their time here.

I would also like to welcome Sarah Robertson back from her four month career break during which time she has been travelling to far off locations. It will be good to see her, hopefully suitably refreshed and raring to go. Sarah will be helping with the work on the Local Plan and supporting Iain and the rest of the team.

We also bid farewell to Simon Pearce, Feng Li and James Platt. Their work here is greatly appreciated and we wish them all well in their new jobs.

Lisa Hendry will also be going on maternity leave next month, and we wish her all the best for the birth of her new child and look forward to seeing her back with us at some time in the future. Sarah Oldfield in Spatial Information is planning to return from maternity leave in early December.

I am extremely proud to announce that Shaun Farman has been confirmed as the LABC National Trainee of the Year and was formally presented with his award at a ceremony in London at the end of September. This reflects well on his manager, Julie Brown-Rigby, his workmates, the building control service, but most importantly it is a clear reflection of

his own ability, dedication and hard work, attributes which we see every day.

I am pleased to see that Chris Curtis has returned to work following an ankle fracture. I would like to say light duties only, but Chris being Chris there is no chance of that.



Simon
Wood

Interim Head
of Planning and
Business Manager

Breckland Matters

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- Major applications of significance
- Decisions of significance
- Appeal decisions
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Planning

Total planning applications registered in August 2014 and August 2015

	August 2014	August 2015
Major	4	8
Minor	35	33
Other	58	45
DOC	0	12
Other Types	13	13

Total applications determined in August 2014 and August 2015

	August 2014	August 2015
	98	89

Total Preliminary Enquiries / Informals received in August 2014 and August 2015

	August 2014	August 2015
	106	88

New Major Applications of Interest in August 2015

- > 3PL/2015/0967/F
SNETTERTON - Land to north west of A11 London Road
Erect factory, warehouse and office building for the manufacture and distribution of pet food
- > 3PL/2015/0919/O
NORTH ELMHAM Brookside Farm, Holt Road
Demolish Brookside Farm and erect residential development, new access, community car park and public footpath
- > 3PL/2015/1045/F
DEREHAM - Land west of Etling View
Residential development up to 62 dwellings and all associated works
- > 3PL/2015/0917/F
SWAFFHAM - Norwich Road
Erection of 185 dwellings

Decisions of Significance Issued

- > **3PL/2014/1204/F**
SCOULTON, Land at Norwich Road
Erect new crematorium, car park, access road, ancillary buildings and gardens of remembrance

Permission granted

Screening Opinions Accepted

- > **3SR/2015/0016/SCR**
DEREHAM Rose Farm
Residential development

Appeal decisions (for information)

- > **APP/F2605/W/15/3011876:**
BANHAM: Fen Farm, Fen Lane.

Appeal by Mrs. J. Coverley against the refusal to grant approval under Class Q of the General Permitted Development Order 2015 for change of use of an agricultural building to two dwelling houses.

Reference: 3PN/2014/0046/UC
Decision: Appeal dismissed.

Summary: The Inspector concluded that, based on information supplied indicating that the existing steel framework would be retained but with new external brick walls set just behind it, this work amounted to a new structural element which went beyond what was reasonably necessary to convert the building. As such the proposal was not permitted development under Class Q.
- > **APP/F2605/W/15/3005963:**
GRESSENHALL: 1 Rougholme Close.

Appeal by Ms. James against refusal of outline planning permission for a new retirement/starter bungalow.

Reference: 3PL/2014/1321/O
Decision: Appeal dismissed.

Summary: The Inspector concluded that the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area and would provide inadequate amenity space.

In the Spotlight

James Tipping



What is role within Capita?

Principal Development Management Planner.

Where did you study?

London South Bank University, for both my undergraduate and post-graduate planning studies.

Favourite hobby:

Playing tennis (very badly).

Why did you choose to work at Capita?

I was interested in the varied planning work, and at a senior level, as well as the opportunity to work at different locations.

What work did you do previously?

I previously worked on strategic planning matters at a County Council. Before that I had planning positions dealing with minerals and waste monitoring and enforcement, including a District Council. My first planning role was at the Environment Agency over 10 years ago.

Chris Hobson



What are the key differences between planning in urban and rural districts?

Whilst the issues and conflicts can often be similar, the differing environments placing different needs and priorities on the communities that then shape policy objectives and decision making.

Where did you study?

Cardiff University, School of City and Regional Planning.

Favourite hobby?

Football, tennis and long walks.

Why did you choose to work at Capita?

The ability to work in different locations and in different regions.

What work did you do previously?

As a Principal Planning Consultant for Urban Vision, I have most recently been working with a number of planning authorities across Greater Manchester and the North-West including Salford, Rochdale, and Bolton.

What is your role within Capita?

Principal Development Management Planner

Enforcement

Staff update:

Chris Curtis the Enforcement Manager has returned to work full time after recovering from a fractured ankle.

Case comparison

August has seen a dramatic drop in cases received and also cases closed. The drop in cases received is unexplained and may just be a blip. Closures were held back this month to allow the Manager to review all cases on his return to work.

Cases of Note:

Billingford Lakes

This is a long running Enforcement case which has been subject to both Planning and Enforcement appeals, all of which have been dismissed.

The case concerns a very large unauthorised metal clad building in the countryside. Following non compliance with an Enforcement Notice requiring the building to be removed, authority was sought from Planning Committee to take direct action to remove the building. Such action was duly authorised. Sadly the owner of the Land passed away shortly after this decision.

We quickly established a relationship with his successors and the building was removed without having to resort to direct action.

Although there are other matters still to be dealt with, we will look to reinforce the relationship with the successors and work towards informal resolution.

Land at Top Farm, Fransham

This case concerns the unauthorised residential use of a caravan on agricultural land. We served an Enforcement Notice requiring the use to cease and for the caravan to be removed.

The Notice was appealed and subsequently dismissed. The caravan has now been removed and the residential use ceased.

	April 2014	April 2015
Complaints received	48	28
Cases closed	21	6

Planning Policy

Local Plan

Good progress continues to be made on the Local Plan by the policy team.

A report detailing the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and the calculation of the Objectively Assessed Needs was taken to Members at the September Cabinet, which included a presentation by the consultants. This will feed through into the setting of the housing target, spatial strategy and settlement numbers and allow progress to be made on the prioritising of suitable sites.

Following the acceptance of the study with regards to Breckland's overall Objectively Assessed Needs the next Local Plan Working Group will now be able to focus on finalising the emerging preferred direction for the spatial strategy and the distribution of growth. This is the final piece of the jigsaw in bringing the emerging consultation document together.

We would like to take the opportunity of thanking the Planning Policy team for all their hard work in bringing the Preferred Options together at this stage. A considerable amount of work as carried out to reach this stage which is advancing towards consultation later this year.



Attached policy team

Iain Withington - Policy Team leader
Melissa Kurihara - Principle Consultant
Feng Li - Senior Planning Consultant
James Mann - Planning Consultant

Although not in the photo, mention must be given to Martin Pendlebury and Duncan McQuordale for their invaluable input to the team's work.

Building Control

Local Authority Building Control (LABC) National Trainee of the Year

Congratulations to Shaun Farman



Congratulations to Shaun Farman one of our Building Control surveyors who has been awarded LABC National Trainee of the Year 2015. The presentation took place at the LABC's President's reception on 29 September 2015 in London.

The LABC represents all Local Authority Building Control teams in England and Wales. The winner of the prestigious National Trainee of the Year award is chosen in recognition of the trainee who has best demonstrated academic achievements, effort, enthusiasm and commitment, including active involvement in local or regional activities.

The key factors that have won Shaun the award include:

- Outstanding academic achievements since joining Capita in 2012, including gaining distinction in his BTEC National Diploma in Construction and the Built Environment.
- Achieving excellent results during his first year at university (jointly sponsored by Capita and an LABC bursary)
- His commitment and enthusiasm in a voluntary role as East Anglia LABC Secretary
- Receiving positive feedback from customers about his professional work ethic when inspecting building control work on site
- His promotion from trainee to Building Control Surveyor in less than just 3 years

Introducing our new Building Control surveyor

Kevin Beckwith



As we said farewell to Darrell McConnell, Kevin Beckwith joined us at the beginning of September. Kevin introduces himself below:

Why did you choose to work at Capita Breckland?

I had been looking for a local working arrangement for the previous two months prior to my employment. With a young family, being able to come home in good time is essential. This was not my incentive for working here, but working with a forward thinking team hand in hand with the local environment seemed interesting.

What work did you do previously?

I had a Limited Building consultancy business which worked hand in hand with both Local Authority and Private sector providers.

What work did you do previously?

Senior Building Control Officer.

Where did you study?

I studied over many years, from 3 dimensional design and graphics to building studies at various levels at Bury St Edmunds West Suffolk College.

Favourite holidays / hobbies

What are holidays? Mainly local with family and to parents in Wales. Hobbies are painting, writing, playing musical instruments, but firstly spending time with my wife and children.

	August 2015	August 2014
Building Notice	33	35
Full Plans	26	29
Partner Authority	3	4
Dangerous Structures	1	3
Inspecting Authority	2	4
Approved Inspectors	7	5

Street Naming and Numbering

Over the past few months we have generally seen an increase in the number of address problems which are now conflicting with other similar addresses (eg; Little Barn and Little Farm) and properties/flats numbered as part of a larger complex which now duplicate actual street numbers (eg; a property numbered 7 Low Road Cottages, Low Road and the property 7 Low Road).

In order to prevent future problems being created, the policy is being reviewed with the intention that any grey areas are clarified.

The Street Naming and Numbering policy was last updated, and agreed by General Purposes, in January 2014. Following the review we hope to take the policy to Committee.

Land Charges

Infrastructure Act 2015 – update

Planned migration

Land Registry (HMLR) continue to move forward with their plans to hold a single national register. The consultation on secondary legislation for Local Land Charges (LLC), originally planned for Autumn 2015, has been rescheduled to 2016. It is likely that definitive rules and fees will be included in the secondary legislation.

The timetable for commencing the migration of the LLC service to Land Registry is planned for the second half of 2017, and well beyond this date for some local authorities.

The planned programme is:

- 70% of Local Authorities' Land Charges registers to be operated by Land Registry by April 2020
- 80% of Local Authorities' Land Charges registers to be operated by Land Registry by Dec 2020
- 100% of Local Authorities' Land Charges register to be operated by Land Registry by July 2023

We understand that individual Local Authorities will be given several months notice of their migration date.

Migration options are currently being considered with HMLR's final decision being made in discussion with their chosen digital partners.

LA Local Land Charge service responsibilities

Each LA is statutorily bound to continue to maintain, keep and provide official searches and access to the Local Land Charges register until the data for their authority has been migrated to HMLR.

At this stage it is thought likely that each Land Charges team will continue to update the LLC register for their LA area post data migration.

There are currently no published proposals to take the CON29 Enquiry service away from local authorities. The need for a fully resourced Local Land Charges Service in each LA will remain, at the very least, until full data migration (for that LA) has taken place and very likely beyond.

Local Government Association (LGA)

The LGA is fully engaged with this project and, we understand, has recently sent communications to LGA Members via Chief Executives, providing an update on the project and some advice and information regarding New Burdens preparation.

In order to allow accurate burdens payments to be considered for each LA. It is understood that a New Burdens Working Group will be established to provide transparency and direct input from key stakeholders.

HMLR have visited the Council on a number of occasions to keep the team updated on proposed plans and collect more detailed information regarding the format, quantity, quality and location of the data comprising the Council's Local Land Charge Register. The information collected will be utilised to estimate the work involved in digitising datasets.

LA Contact

Each authority has been asked to provide the LGA with a nominated contact who will act as the lead contact liaison and contact for receipt of LGA information.

Searches received in August 2014 / 2015 and turnaround time

	August 2014	August 2015
Total Full Searches Received	154	146
Personal Searches Received	107	115
Average turnaround	10 days	8 days

Other Matters

Ocella

Ocella, the Council's database system used by Planning and Building Control, is being transferred over to a browser based system to make it more user friendly and provide better links to websites such as Breckland.gov.uk and the Planning Portal.

Over the past year, two Capita staff have had 4 days training by Ocella, enabling them to become key users who are able to update the system, solve basic problems and maintain reports/letters within the new system.

The work that the key users carry out equates to approximately one third of their working hours. Other planning, building control and technical officers, together with Ocella staff, are also involved in the development of the modules.

Key Users and other representatives attend regular user group meetings in London.

The user group meetings are run by Ocella and provide an opportunity to watch and discuss presentations relating to proposed enhancements and network with other Ocella users across the country.

Once the new systems are installed, the modules will enable mobile working on site with the use of tablets. When implemented at a future date, the system will also link with our mapping system.

At present we are at the following stages:

- > **LLCB – Local Land Charges Browser**
Installed and in full use since 2012.
- > **POEM – Planning Officer Enforcement Module**
Installed March 2014. System modified as used, Breckland website submission form upgraded to link to browser, currently awaiting Mobile facility to be set up.
- > **LAM – Legal Agreement Module**
Installed and currently being used and modified accordingly.
- > **TSM – Technical Support Module**
This is the system that provides initial registration of applications for the modules below. It is currently being developed by Ocella.

Other modules of the system, as listed below, are at varying stages of development. Some are almost complete, some re-implemented in line with TSM and others still in early stages.

- > **POM – Planning Officer Module**
- > **PMM – Planning Manager Module**
- > **BCOM – Building Control Officer Module**
- > **BCMM – Building Control Managers Module**

- > **TPOM – TPO (Tree Preservation Order) Planning Officer Module**

It is hoped that all systems will be implemented by approx March 2016 followed by staff training on the new modules.

Learning and Development

Capita actively promotes, and invests in, the learning and development of its staff to ensure professional development is kept up to date and relevant. Apart from ongoing internal training the table below details staff training during August / September.

Training provider	Course Title	Location	No. of staff
Anglia Ruskin University	Building Surveying (BSc)	Chelmsford	1

Compliments

We received many messages of thanks/compliments in September of which 4 are highlighted below:

Enforcement:

“You asked me to let you know how things have panned out since you took some proactive action to resolve the concerns we have had in both Hoe and Worthing regarding haulage from a new-build site in Swanton Morley. I think I need to underscore our gratitude because I have checked with our residents and those affected in our surrounding parishes: frankly they are delighted as it would appear you have resolved the difficulty. I know you started from a position where you had little power to sort this out but you have done it with some professional tact; thank you.”

*Chairman Hoe and
Worthing Parish Council*

Building Control:

Solicitor’s e-mail to client:

“I spoke to an extremely helpful lady, who was a pleasure to deal with, and if you have any queries I am sure she will assist.”

Leathes Prior

“Just wanted to send thanks for the excellent service provided by your Building Control office. Calling at ten to five on a Friday in search of a completion certificate, I didn’t really expect to get through to anyone. When I did get through it turned out that the reference number the search provider had given was incorrect. I received a call back within a few minutes and an email with the document a few minutes later.

This level of service is far above what I and colleagues have previously experienced with other councils.”

*David Appleby,
Property Lawyer*

Planning

“I would just like to thank you for all your help and guidance over the past few months. I am sure this is a project that you will never forget.”

Applicant

Complaints

We received five complaints in August. One complaint related to the Street Naming and Numbering IT system being unavailable for over 13 weeks, three related to enforcement issues involving mud on the road, the use of slate tiles and the siting of a building.

The fifth complaint related to information requested regarding previous use of land. All the above have been addressed and reviewed.

All documentation relating to compliments and complaints is available to view should further information be required.