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Brafield in the Town – an 'urban extension' suburb to Northampton....?

...Great and Little Houghton are swamped by new housing. Lower End suffers the relentless noise of a new dual carriageway just behind Care's Orchard / Billing Road and continuing behind Horton Road, taking traffic from the A45 to a new junction on the M1. A great arc of dense housing stretches from the Aquadrome to Hackleton occupying all the space that used to form the green and pleasant land between Brafield and Houghton. All field paths going west from Brafield have to bridge the 'new road link' before leading through masses of new housing.

This vision of Armageddon to our quiet villages has been proposed. Read the nightmare for yourselves at the Joint Planning Unit's website –www.westnorthamptonshirepu.org. The 'West Northamptonshire Emergent Joint Core Strategy', published on line on 26 June, is recommending, as a 'preferred option' for the urban expansion of Northampton, 18,000 new houses in the land space between Cogenhoe and Hackleton with a dual carriageway to ensure the complete destruction of village life as we know it.

Your Parish Council has been watching closely the development of this Strategy. We have written to you before about the 4 areas that were being considered in Autumn 2007 as options for the Greenfield expansion of the town (the so-called Northampton Implementation Area), whose Borough Council has always had aspirations to grow and seek City status. Thankfully, and properly given the quality of our landscape, those options did **not at that time** include Brafield and the Houghtons.

Now, however, completely out of the blue – without any indication or warning and without any reasoned statement on what the thinking was on the 4 options (which received 1500 written responses) – this new proposal has become the 'preferred option' from hell. Quite apart from the scandalously undemocratic way that this strategy has 'emerged', the planning logic for this is woefully flawed.

It's likely that the root source of this is developer pressure. Developers favour the south as they have land banks and more potential profit from development. So, although there was strong argument to move development to the north of the town towards Corby and Kettering, the developers have had their choice proposal cut and pasted into this Strategy. However, any such proposal would simply cause more outward commuting to the south and not support the supposed objective of sustaining Northampton itself.

Representatives of the Parish Council attended a Call to Arms last week and have formed an alliance with all neighbouring Parish Councils to challenge the process by which this strategy has emerged and to destroy its credibility using planning arguments. If you have expertise in planning or PR matters and would like to contribute and lend a hand, then please get in touch with the Chair of the Council Gill Morgan and talk about how you might be able to help.

Whether or not you want to help the Council, you can make a difference. The more people that comment during the brief consultation period from 16 July to 27 August (the timing of which is an issue in itself), the better. It would help us all in challenging this proposal if you were to read the document yourself and write and comment. The Council will be commenting on how best to attack the 'preferred option' in a way that will count. Simply stating 'Not in our backyard' will not do. We need, for instance, to state why our backyard is an attractive and pleasant garden compared with other areas on the outskirts whose quality has already been compromised by development and should be sacrificed instead to more development.

That is what we will be seeking to do and ask for your help too. Brafield has been a village for over a millennium. That rural charm and ancient character, so evident to visitors during our recent Flower Festival, could be consigned to history as its core becomes embedded in urban sprawl.

Northampton General Hospital NHS Trust

Northampton General Hospital Governors' Council invites you to attend an open forum on **Wednesday September 23rd 2009 7pm-9pm at Towcester Town Hall.**

You will have the opportunity to meet Dr John Hickey, Chairman of NGH, and Paul Forden, Chief Executive. Dr Robin Kelso, elected Public Governor for Daventry & South Northants, will chair the meeting. He will be accompanied by his Governor colleagues from the area. The open forum will include a presentation about Northampton General Hospital, its priorities, performance and progress. This will be followed by a question and answer session with the Chairman and Chief Executive of the Trust and members of the executive team. You will also be able to meet members of the Governors' Council who represent your area, and find out how they can represent your views and concerns. Governors are unable to deal with queries relating to individual experiences of care at NGH, but will be able to pass on information about who you should contact and how.

Castle Ashby Cluster Summer Holiday Provision for young people.

A wide range of activities is available to young people during the summer holidays. Some of the most relevant for this area are shown below. Please book directly with the provider NOT your school.

15 th July	3.30 – 4.30	Grendon Village Hall	Dance & Drama (Free)	Louise Roberts 07853846589
16 th July	3.30 – 4.30	Cogenhoe Village Hall	Dance & Drama (Free)	Louise Roberts 07853846589
27 th – 29 th July	10 – 12 12.30 – 2.30	Denton Village Hall	Dance & Drama	Louise Roberts 07853846589
27 th July	10.30 – 12.30	Cogenhoe Primary School	Activity Zone	Northants C.C. 01604837647
3 rd – 5 th August	10 – 3	Wollaston Playing Fields	Multi Sports	Chris Perry 07842190755
10 th August	10.30 – 12.30	Cogenhoe Village Hall	Activity Zone	Northants C.C. 01604837647
10 th – 12 th August	10 – 12 12.30 – 2.30	Grendon Village Hall	Dance & Drama	Louise Roberts 07853846589
11 th – 12 th August	10 – 3	Cogenhoe Primary School	Multi Sports	Chris Perry 07842190755
13 th – 14 th August	10 – 3	Grendon Primary School	Multi Sports	Chris Perry 07842190755
19 th – 20 th August	10 – 3	Denton Primary School	Multi Sports	Chris Perry 07842190755
24 th August	10.30 – 12.30	Cogenhoe Playing Fields	Activity Zone	Northants C.C. 01604837647
25 th – 27 th August	10 – 12 12.30 – 2.30	Cogenhoe Village Hall	Dance & Drama	Louise Roberts 07853846589
25 th – 27 th August	10 – 3	Wollaston Playing Fields	Multi Sports	Chris Perry 07842190755
1 & 2 nd September	9 – 3.15	Cogenhoe Village Hall	Dance & Sports	Sporting Dreams 07813175444
3 rd & 4 th September	9 – 3.15	Denton Village Hall & School	Dance & Sports	Sporting Dreams 07813175444
Every Tuesday	1.30 – 3.30	Denton Playing Fields	Play Rangers	South Northants C. 01327 322322

Wollaston Sport Summer Camps	Wollaston Cricket Club	(Cricket Hockey Handball	Chris Perry 01933 663735 or
3 rd – 7 th August		(Rounders Multiskills	07834 197448
25 th – Thursday 27 th		(Football Dance	

Ashby Cluster Summer Camps	Cogenhoe Primary School	(Cricket Hockey Handball	Chris Perry 01933 663735 or
11 th & 12 th August	Grendon Primary School	(Rounders Multiskills	07834 197448
13 th & 14 th August	Denton Primary School	(Football Dance and many more	
19 th & 20 th August			

Musical Theatre Summer School
Five day performance project for young people aged 8+ years. For further details please contact Louise Roberts on 07853846589

Parish Paths Warden

Three sets of people have kindly volunteered to represent the village as Parish Paths Wardens following Helen Frostwick's 'retirement':- Jean and Richard Sheward, John Campion and Jo Stevenson. We are grateful to them all for their interest. Councillor Kevin Ward will shortly be arranging to meet them to discuss the requirements of checking our Rights of Way and the most effective way of co-ordinating their efforts.

Northamptonshire Probation Area Community Payback Initiative : Unpaid Workers

Unpaid work is a sentence available to courts. It is intended as a punishment for lower level crimes and it is also a means by which offenders can make amends to their community for the harm they have caused. The Probation Service organises this work which provides opportunities for communities to benefit from free labour for a wide range of projects that may improve community facilities, the environment, open spaces and local neighbourhoods, improving the quality of life for local residents. Brafield Parish Council is liaising with Northamptonshire Probation Service to enlist the services of a group of unpaid workers, initially to clear the grass creep along the Bridle Path and to cut back verges and hedges around the Billing Road bus shelter. It is likely that this will take place towards the end of August. A small team of unpaid workers will be supervised at all times by trained probation staff. All offenders on work groups now wear high visibility vests so that they can be identified by members of the public. They will use the village hall for supervised lunch and toilet breaks, and will work from approximately 10 a.m. to 3.30 p.m. on each day. If this proves to be a worthwhile venture, we hope to use their services for other community projects in the future.

New Bus Shelter cleaner

Terry Boon has come forward as a replacement cleaner for the three bus shelters around the village. He has now been provided with new equipment and materials and commenced this task on 1st July.

Police Matters

There has been a number of car related crimes around this area in recent weeks including break ins to cars, an attempted break in to a property to obtain car keys, and thefts of vehicle number plates. Licence plate theft can lead to you being accused of various criminal activities. For information on theft resistant number plates visit www.secureplate.com.

PLEASE do not leave valuables in your vehicles, consider fitting theft resistant number plates, and never leave car keys visible on window sills inside your house.

Village Events : for your information

Horticultural Show and Fete Saturday August 22nd
Saint Laurence Church 2 – 4.30 p.m. Secretary : Ray Henman : 890748

Next Parish Council Meeting:
Tuesday 15th September at 7.30 p.m. in the Sargeant Memorial Hall Brafield

Members of the public are most welcome to attend any meeting
At the start of the Parish Council meeting, time is set aside for public enquiries