

New homes plans refused amid fears of village 'strain'

Local opposition to plans for another development of new homes in Blofield has proved successful.

An application for 64 new homes on arable land off Wyngates was heard by Broadland District Council's planning committee on Wednesday. The application had been made by Norfolk Homes Ltd, which has owned the land since the 1990s, but planning officers had recommended councillors refuse the proposal and the committee agreed, voting unanimously to reject the plans.

That was after hearing objections from local residents, as well as Rob Christie, of Blofield Parish Council, and Susan Lawn, district councillor for Blofield and South Walsham.

The meeting followed a similar theme to last month's committee meeting, when a proposal for 75 homes at the Garden Farm site in Blofield was also refused.

Objectors cited the strain on infrastructure on the village, with Miss Lawn saying "the impact could be disastrous", as well as a Planning Inspectorate decision in March to allow 175 homes to be built on the Manor Park site to the north of Yarmouth Road.

Miss Lawn said people wanted Blofield to remain a village but that pre-existing permission for over 200 homes was already threatening that, saying: "They do not wish for it to be turned into a town."

That view was backed by Mr Christie, who said there are around 800 homes and 1,900 people already in the village and that school, health and traffic infrastructure was already at capacity.

He said: "If we add a further 64 houses we are going to be in trouble."

Terry Harper from Norfolk Homes Ltd said building work could start by the end of the year and emphasised that five acres of green space had been included alongside the 64 homes, despite the site having room for 130 homes.

Permits make first profits

Town bosses have justified a parking permit scheme in Great Yarmouth after it turned a profit for the first time.

Figures have revealed the Zone A scheme, which covers central Yarmouth, has made £8,003 surplus in 2012/13. This is up around £80,000 on the previous year, when it operated at a loss of £73,697.

The scheme was set up in 2006/07 by Great Yarmouth Borough Council and allows residents and businesses to buy an annual permit to ensure they can park in the area.

Last year the authority made the decision to keep the parking scheme in place, and to tackle the deficit from operating it, permit prices for residents and businesses were increased.

Council leader Trevor Wainwright said: "The council's decision not to do away with permit parking for the area has now been vindicated and we look forward to continuing to increase the surplus in the coming years."



MARKERS: Two new blue plaques were unveiled in Great Yarmouth on Sunday. The plaque pictured left was placed at Bijou Hall where the first moving pictures were screened in 1897.

Forgotten memories of town's past marked out



CHARITABLE HOME: The plaque unveiled at a private address for Mr Christmas, a philanthropist whose caring legacy keeps on giving.

By **LIZ COATES**
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More forgotten aspects of Great Yarmouth's time-lost history were sign-posted to locals and visitors with the addition of two more blue plaques on Sunday.

Members of the Great Yarmouth Local History and Archaeology Society were among those who gathered for the successive ceremonies, staged in approving sunshine, bringing the total number dotted around the borough to 57.

Dr Paul Davies, society chairman, said both unveilings had gone well, attracting plenty of interest.

At the Market Place, local historian and author Colin Tooke was joined by staff from Poundland to unveil a plaque marking the former Bijou Hall where the first moving pictures were screened to the astonishment of local folk in 1897.

The hall continued to show films, mainly flickering news reels and footage of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, until 1914 when it was demolished and the Central Cinema rose in its place in 1915.

By this time the town, a burgeoning resort, had proved its appetite for the new medium already boasting three other cinemas: The Regent, The Empire and The Gem - the country's first purpose-built picture house.

Earlier members had gathered for the unveiling of another plaque at 57 South Market Road - the home for most of his 86 years of Cornelius Harley Christmas, a philanthropist whose legacy just keeps on giving.

In 1881 he left the equivalent of £2m to help the poor at Christmas handing out bread, coal and cash awards.

The plaque was requested by Michael Jeal who wanted to recognise someone within his council ward, or as close as possible, who had helped the poor.

Mr Jeal is a trustee of The Christmas Fund, now amalgamated with other charities to form the Great Yarmouth Relief Need Trust which last year distributed £33,563.

Mr Davies said there were plenty more plaques in the pipeline honouring people and places that had made a contribution to the town's history.

In some cases they were to celebrate officials like concrete pioneer and architect JW Cockrill who drew his last breath at home in Euston Road - but whose legacy is written through the town's buildings in his trademark concrete and terracotta.

His signature buildings include Gorleston's Pavilion Theatre and the Art College in Trafalgar Road.

More obscure but of no less significance is Baron Alderson. Born in the 18th century in Great Yarmouth he defined the legal term "negligence" as we understand it today and was known for his ferocious cross-examination of railway pioneer George Stephenson.

Mr Davies is keen to champion the plaques as a way of recalling matters and milestones, however curious, helping councillor Barry Coleman to unveil 11 in his mayoral year. He is willing to consider suggestions from sponsors. Plaques cost around £60.

