

## **Report of Wells/NNDC Beach Road Working Group**

**The Joint Working group has now met on four occasions.**

At the first meeting in **May** 2017 NNDC advanced their case for commercialising assets which had been transferred to them following the creation of the district in 1974. Central government support was disappearing and there was pressure for them to maximise the income from assets belonging to them. Among them were the Beach Road toilets. The representatives of the Town Council were unable to offer a view since WTC had not discussed the matter.

At the second meeting in **June**, issues relating to tourism and its economic value were discussed. Issues raised included the problems thrown up by tourists, including parking, traffic management, the impact of increased footfall on the AONB, and increased house prices which put housing out of the reach of many local people. As long ago as 2006 concern were being raised about the impact of tourism on the town.

At the third meeting in **July** planning matters were raised including the various NNDC documents dealing with the pros and cons of development. These included the Scott Wilson report, the Core Strategy document , the fact that the site was in a Conservation Area.

Meanwhile a questionnaire had been circulated to the people of the town raising questions about the desirability of developing the toilet site, the scale and style of any development, the uses to which any development might be put, any possible future location of the toilets and of the lifeboat memorial which stands on the site, alternative sites for development, and the desirability of any growth in tourism which the site might facilitate. The analysis of the report was given to the Town Council which discussed it on September 4<sup>th</sup>.

**The fourth meeting on September 28<sup>th</sup> considered the various consultations: from the town (as above) from local businesses and from other stakeholders. The view, expressed by the town council at the September meeting, that it “would accept a modest development, in keeping with the surrounding architecture, no bigger than two storeys, incorporating the toilets and the memorial” was put to the group. It was agreed after robust discussion that this view would be referred back to NNDC’s consultants, Gleeds of Nottingham, who had produced the original proposals. Among the issues raised were whether NNDC would be prepared to sell the site instead of developing and leasing it and whether it had considered alternative sites for development, what styles of building would be appropriate and what uses, and what might be the effects of our failing to come to conclusions. We were told that any sale would have to be on the open market and the idea of using the proceeds to purchase available property in the town presented too many difficulties. The closure of the toilets altogether owing to the impending financial constraints was one possibility put before us.**

**In order to give time to the consultants, (Gleeds) to offer possible designs and uses for the site, the October meeting was to be cancelled and the next meeting at which their opinion would be considered would take place on November 30<sup>th</sup>.**

Roger Arguile  
Acting Chairman  
Joint Working Group  
September 28<sup>th</sup> 2017