

## ASHURST AND COLBURY PARISH COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2006 AT THE CHURCH ROOMS COLBURY

**Present:** Councillors S. Arnold (in the Chair), S. Ardern, D. Bryant, A. Holdsworth, R. Judd, W. Kewley, I. Oliver, P Sopowski.

**In Attendance:** Parish Clerk L. Griggs, District Councillor L Puttock, Mr S Trotter (NPA) and 22 members of the public.

The Chairman said Good Evening and welcome to the Annual General Meeting of the Ashurst & Colbury Parish Council. We also welcome Mr. Stephen Trotter who I hope will bear with us while some of the procedures for the AGM are completed. Stephen will be speaking to us on Conservation and Enhancement. He was appointed as the Director for this post with the National Park Authority and we look forward to hearing his talk later in the meeting.

Tonight we also welcome some friends of Ian and Karen Oliver all the way from France. I will try my best to welcome them.

Bon soir,

Ce soir nous avons les amis francais d'Ian et d' Karen Oliver a ecouter notre session du conseil. Bien Venue Eve et Susie.

#### **Apologies**

An apology was received from District Councillor Derek Tipp.

#### **Election of a Chairman for the ensuing year.**

The Clerk called for nominations and Councillor Oliver proposed, seconded by Councillor Ardern, that Councillor Arnold be re-elected. There were no other nominations and the proposal was carried unanimously.

Councillor Arnold thanked the Councillors for the confidence they had shown in electing her as Chairman again and pledged her continued efforts on behalf of the Council and the Parish.

#### **Election of a Vice Chairman for the ensuing year.**

The Chairman called for nominations for Vice Chairman. Councillor Arnold proposed, seconded by Councillor Bryant, that Councillor Sopowski be re-elected as Vice Chairman. There were no other nominations and the proposal was carried unanimously.

Councillor Sopowski thanked his colleagues for their confidence in him and pledged his support for the Chairman, the Council and the Parish.

#### **Chairman's Allowance**

Councillor Arnold withdrew from the meeting for this item.

The Clerk advised that the allowance for 2005/6 had been £300.

Councillor Sopowski said that he was sure the Chairman spent as great deal more than that and proposed an increase to £350. The proposition was seconded by Councillor Oliver and approved unanimously.

Councillor Arnold returned to the meeting and the Clerk advised her of the decision. Councillor Arnold thanked the Councillors.

### **Public Participation**

The Chairman wished to talk about the possible closure of Snowdon House as she knew there was considerable interest in the village on the issue. She had received a telephone call from a very worried villager whose husband was in Snowdon House which meant she was able to visit him. She is elderly and had no transport to visit him where he was before. On one of her visits she was told that Snowdon House would be closing in 3-6 months. The Chairman continued, I telephoned the hospital and spoke to a Sister who gave me a contact as she said that she was not able to speak about any new arrangements. On phoning the Public Relations, which I assume was the Western, I was told that they are only considering options. One was to move all staff and patients to the Western – therefore taking away the added stress for the patient and there would be no rehabilitation centre at Snowdon so that patients would receive a better service. My reply to this was “rubbish” as you could not get better service than they are receiving at Snowdon. I can speak from a patients view and site visits. However I was told there would be a public consultation in the future but the lady handling the case was not available, **but** and I emphasise the word **but**, the operator did say that Sheila Brook, Public Relations Officer, would attend the Parish Council meeting so I immediately booked her for June. Having been told nothing was happening and nothing would happen until after the public consultation I was very surprised to see the whole thing on BBC Television that same evening. To me personally this is a terrible crime and just another ploy to close small hospitals down and no added care or service.

Councillor Sopowski suggested that there may be a desire to develop the site but there should be no possibility of that.

District Councillor Puttock said it seemed that the PCT was trying to save money by a general closure of small hospitals. However there was no confirmation of any closure of Snowdon at the moment and he would keep the Council updated with any information he received on the matter.

The Chairman also advised the meeting that she had visited Southwood Grange for their open evening when they showed visitors their proposals for the site. The evening was to enable residents, particularly neighbours, to see what was planned. It would house up to eight post age 16 children suffering from autism or aspergers syndrome to help them move from a school environment to a home environment. There would be full time carers working on a shift system to help the children to learn the normal domestic skills they would need as they grew up to adulthood. Only minor extension work was planned at the rear of the property for which planning application would be made in due course.

The Chairman then invited members of the public to raise any points they had and the following issues were raised:

As you may have noticed, a bulldozer has taken up residence in the gardens of the railway cottages. A beech tree was chopped down yesterday so the new owners are quick to make their mark - hopefully with the village interest at heart. Does the Parish Council have any information for us? The Chairman replied that the Council would be talking to the developers shortly but could make no statement at the moment.

Was there any movement on the registration of the footpath near that site? It was even more important now to get that registered before the developers moved in. The Clerk reported that HCC were being chased on that issue but had been advised that their resources were

limited and registration involved a great deal of research. Subsequently the Clerk raised the issue with Mr. Trotter who said he would also chase HCC.

There had been considerable disruption at the cut through between Chestnut Close and the A35 recently and one person had been lying injured. Many police were involved. The cut through seemed to be used by those causing disruption in the park at weekends as a means of escaping when the police arrived. Was it possible to close the cut through? The Chairman thought that unlikely but wondered if more lighting may ease the problem. The Clerk was asked to write to Highways regarding possible lighting and to the police regarding the continued disruption around the park and the cut through at weekends.

He was also asked to inquire about the cost of CCTV equipment. Councillor Bryant noted that the police have new cycles to chase vandals where cars are unable to go and suggested we ask them to be used around the park at weekends. He also said they had mobile cameras units which could be helpful.

The Council was also advised that a wall had been vandalised and pieces spread over Whartons Lane. The Chairman deplored the ongoing vandalism and urged residents to report these things to the police and get an incident number. District Councillor Puttock endorsed that saying that only when incident numbers were given were the events included in police statistics. Without them it appeared there were no problems in Ashurst and Colbury and policing would be diverted to areas with more incidents reported.

The Chairman then proposed that items 5 and 6 (to appoint representatives on other bodies and to appoint members to committees) be deferred until the next meeting so as to give ample time for Mr. Trotter's presentation on the New Forest National Park Authority. The Council, agreed to that proposal and Mr. Trotter was asked to make his presentation.

**Mr Trotter then outlined the following:**

- The New Forest is the 8th national park in England (or 9th if you include the Broads Authority)
- First for nearly 50 years
- First in the developed lowlands of the south-east
- National Park status means greater protection on a permanent basis
- The New Forest National Park covers 220 square miles or 571 square kilometres, making it the smallest of England's national parks
- More than 34,000 people live within the New Forest National Park – a larger number for its size than in any other national park in England

**The 'statutory purposes' of a National Park Authority**

- To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park
- To promote understanding and enjoyment of the Park's special qualities

**And it has the duty to....** foster the social and economic well-being of communities within the Park

Being a National Park Authority puts the New Forest in the 'premier league' of UK and world landscapes.

**What difference will it make?**

- Tighter planning restrictions in some areas
- Special-purpose authority dedicated to the Park's twin purposes working with and through others
- Made up of experienced and expert local representatives

- More government funding for the New Forest
- Dedicated funding of £3.7m a year to help the National Park Authority achieve its purposes
- An extra £200,000 a year to encourage *sustainable development* projects in the National Park
- A listening ear for the diverse views in the Forest
- A single voice to champion the New Forest locally, regionally, nationally and internationally
- New requirement that other public bodies must take account of National Park purposes
- A Management Plan for the whole National Park in partnership with other bodies, setting out the long-term strategy for the New Forest

The New Forest National Park Authority is responsible for the right of access on foot to open country and common land. It will establish the joint statutory New Forest Access Forum with Hampshire County Council

It will help villages and communities

- Assist with village design plans
- Refining policies – on affordable housing for example
- Working with districts on community planning issues
- Providing design guidance
- Seeking to influence highways authorities – on HGV routes for example
- Promoting public transport

**In summary...**

- **Strategic** – taking a clear overview of the whole Park
- **Champions** of the Park's interests at all levels
- Bringing **new resources** – funding, members, staff
- An **'enabler'** – bringing interests together, seeking balance, producing policies for the whole National Park
- **Adding value** – building on the work of others, not taking it over

Our priorities from April 2006 will include:

- Conservation of the landscape, natural habitats and cultural heritage
- Supporting sustainable land-management and commoning
- Ensuring a joined-up approach to delivering National Park purposes by working closely with local communities and existing local authorities
- Providing information and education resources
- Promoting sustainable recreation

Longer term challenges...

- How to provide further support for farming and commoning
- Affordable housing
- Back-up land
- Youngsters
- Income
- Forest Friendly Farming
- Traffic
- Traffic speeds
- Getting people to use public transport instead of the car

- Impact of pressure for economic development in the south-east: housing, traffic, facilities
- Related pressure for leisure and recreation: striking the balance between the Park's conservation purpose and its enjoyment purpose

We have committed to

- Continuing support for the New Forest Tour Bus
- Eyesores and clutter
- Coastal plans
- Climate change
- Impacts and adaptation?

How you can get involved

- **Read the Management Plan and follow new policies**
- **Attend Authority meetings and events**
- **Talk to members**
- **Talk to staff**
- **Learn about the Sustainable Development Fund**

**Please visit [www.newforestnpa.gov.uk](http://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk)**

That concluded the presentation and Mr. Trotter answered several questions from those present. The Chairman thanked Mr. Trotter for his excellent interesting and informative presentation and said the Council and the Parish would follow with interest the progress made on the plans and objectives outlined in the presentation. Those present endorsed those comments with a round of applause.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the last meeting have been circulated previously Councillor Oliver proposed, and Councillor Judd seconded, that they be approved. The proposition was carried unanimously and the Chairman signed the minutes.

### **Highways**

The Clerk confirmed that he chased Highways as necessary regarding various matters.

### **Recreation Ground**

Councillor Oliver reported that he had inspected the ground on 22<sup>nd</sup> April, 2<sup>nd</sup> May and 7<sup>th</sup> May. He had also removed graffiti from the play equipment.

The Chairman pointed out that vandalism continued, all the new signs had been destroyed and records showed that there had been 21 reported incidents at the recreation ground in the 12 months to March this year. Once again she emphasised the importance of reporting all incidents and obtaining an incident number. On the positive side she was able to report that due to the success of the event last year the children's Roadshow would visit our Recreation Ground on two occasions this summer being 3<sup>rd</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> August between the hours of 2 and 4pm.

### **Parish Plan.**

The Chairman said that the minutes of the Community Plan Group had been received and circulated to all Councillors. In the absence of Bryan Pass, Chairman, Rosemary McKay gave the following report:

As you may have read, Bryan has updated the residents via the newsletter – mainly highlighting the results of the “love it hate it” survey. We as a group are now discussing the results – there were 266 in total. To make it easier for us, we have grouped the results under various headings. Headings so far include (and not necessarily in order of preference)

CRIME AND COMMUNITY SAFETY  
SHOPS AND BUSINESSES  
EVENTS  
SERVICES AND FACILITIES  
YOUNG PEOPLE AND SCHOOLS  
COMMUNICATION AND NEIGHBOURLINESS

All these issues have several comments made by the residents attached to them – some very positive, others giving more cause for concern. More headings will be designated at our next meeting and then we will commence the questionnaire, which we feel may be in a ‘tick the box format’ (Easier!!!). We are however taking advice on this. It has also been interesting to view other parish plans surveys and how they went about it. Our approximate date to launch the questionnaire will be October. Finally, Rita has very ably taken charge of the accounts and various signatures are in place. This means we can apply for further grant funding from NFDC and others. All in all, progress is positive and we all remain a happy bunch! Long may that last.

The Chairman thanked Rosemary for that contribution.

### **Planning**

Councillor Sopowski reported on the planning issues which had been processed by NPA since the last meeting.

The Clerk was asked to contact County Councillor Kendal regarding the strip of land by Alldays. At the last meeting he said he would look into the ownership issue.

### **The Lengthsman**

Councillor Bryant said that he had received the quotation for a new notice board and the price was £570. If carved lettering with the name of the council was required there would be an additional cost doing that.

The quotation, being significantly lower than previous prices, was agreed and the Clerk instructed to proceed. The Chairman thanked Councillor Bryant for his help in obtaining that quotation. Councillor Sopowski added that it was supporting local businesses as other quotes had been from outside the parish.

### **Accounts**

The list of cheques issued since the last meeting had been given to all Councillors and Councillor Oliver proposed, seconded by Councillor Ardern, it be approved. It was approved unanimously.

The Councillors had also received an Income and Expenditure Statement together with a Statement of Assurance covering the year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006. The Chairman confirmed she had seen the year end bank statement and it agreed with the figures in the accounts.

Councillor Bryant proposed, seconded by Councillor Ardern, that the accounts be approved and sent for audit. It was agreed unanimously.

The Clerk reported that an invoice had been received from the New Forest Association for the annual membership subscription in the amount of £12. It was agreed to continue membership.

### **Grants**

No applications had been received.

### **Reports from Representatives on Other Bodies**

**Councillors Ardern and Judd** reported they had attended the April meeting of the Community Plan Group

**Councillor Holdsworth** reported that she had attended the Hampshire Age Concern AGM at Winchester and that the day centre was to install cameras to try to stop or catch the vandals who were continually breaking the windows and damaging the property.

**District Councillor Puttock** said he had been worried by a document he had seen about the A326 which was of course a major route through the New Forest. He would report more on that at future meetings.

The housing area near the station referred to earlier is set aside for affordable houses.

In regard to the problems in and around the park, other parishes had similar problems and they had to some degree been solved by having police patrols at varied times. He again stressed the importance of reporting all incidents and getting them logged with an incident number.

**Councillor Arnold** reported as follows. I attended the New Forest National Park Authority Meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> April. Ted Johnson was appointed Chairman and Mel Kendal Vice Chairman. The new Monitoring Officer was Kevin Gardner.

Agenda items included:

- Amendments to Standing Orders
- Financial Strategy and Budget for 2006/7
- Joint Core strategy of the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Development Framework
- Hurn Airspace Development Environment Consultation

The NPA agreed to fund up to £12,500 per annum for a three year period towards the lease-purchase of five vehicles for Agisters. The vehicles will carry the NPA logo.

The NPA are looking for premises in the National Park or by using Gateways when the lease at Efford House comes to a close.

In the afternoon I attended the first meeting of the NPA Planning Committee. The Chairman opened the meeting by stating that for the present they would be using the NFDC policies for planning. All conditions for planning are to be in place before Councillors take a vote. Factual questions can be put to the applicant but not after they go into debate.

One other important factor I also learned at that meeting is that all signs have only a five year grant on them. Which means that if a sign on a public building has been up for five years, an objection to the sign can be taken to the planning committee and, if upheld, the Committee may require the sign to be removed.

I also attended an open evening to review then proposals to adapt 137 Lyndhurst Road to make it suitable for post 16 autistic children and children with Aspergers Syndrome.

Finally I have been advised that what we have up to now called the Annual Parish Meeting is to be called the Annual Parish Assembly in future.

**Correspondence**

A list had been given to each Councillor. In response to a request from NFDC the Councillors gave approval for the inclusion of their addresses on the NFDC web site. With the exception of Councillor Judd they also agreed for their telephone numbers to be included on the web site.

**Items for discussion at the next meeting**

The Chairman asked that everyone consider if it would be possible to change the day of the monthly meeting. It was allowed under the standing orders and the reason for the request was that so many councils held their meeting on Tuesday that we could not attend their meetings and they could not attend our meetings. It could also relieve pressure on our District and County Councillors. As Mel Kendal had mentioned last meeting there are nine parishes within his area who meet on Tuesday.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.03pm. As the Chairman closed the meeting a member of the public said he appreciated the work of the Council in carrying out what was not an easy task.

**Signed S R Arnold Dated 13<sup>th</sup> June 2006**