

## ASHURST AND COLBURY PARISH COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON 19<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2006 AT THE CHURCH ROOMS COLBURY

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

**In Attendance:** Parish Clerk L. Griggs, County Councillor M Kendal, District Councillor D Tipp, Rev. Tom Johns, WPC Lisa Woodcock and 11 members of the public.

**Apologies for absence:** Councillors S. Ardern and P. Sopowski, District Councillor L Puttock

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting especially the County Councillor and the District Councillor. It was very pleasing to have them attend our meeting when they had so many other meetings in their diaries.

#### **Minutes**

The minutes of the last Annual parish Meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2005, having previously been circulated, it was **RESOLVED** unanimously that they be approved and signed.

There were no matters arising.

#### **Report from WPC Lisa Woodcock**

WPC Woodcock presented a beat report covering the year and showing 118 Incidents in Ashurst. The larger numbers were:

26 Criminal Damage

15 Assaults

14 Burglary (non dwelling) and 14 Theft

12 Theft from vehicles

WPC Woodcock commented that most of the thefts from vehicles arose because items of value were left clearly on view. This despite all the publicity warning drivers not to leave valuables in the vehicle, or at least to put them in the boot. She said that anyone walking round car parks such as Longdown Farm could see that many items were on display inviting thieves to break in and steal. In response to questions she confirmed that:

- graffiti is criminal damage and if anyone observed such incidents they should ring the station and report it and
- parents are not responsible if their child breaks an ASBO
- owners of cars parked on or partly on a pavement and thereby causing an obstruction for pedestrians are committing an offence. If it is reported to the Police Station officers will be sent out to deal with the situation.

WPC Woodcock also said that she was moving to shift duties at Totton Station and so would not be seen on the beat in Ashurst. The Chairman said she was sorry to lose Lisa who had been a great help in reducing crime and improving safety around the village and wished her well for the future.

#### **Report from Reverend Tom Johns**

Reverend Johns said he was delighted that the Church had such a fine link with the Parish Council. Every Sunday morning during the 8am service all the Councillors are remembered by name. The Church is thriving and in a very lively mode at the moment. The Activity afternoon, held two weeks before Christmas, usually attracts about 30 children but this year 81 had turned up. The Youth Club attracts about 27-30 teenagers each week and the Church had a wonderful Easter with 30 more people this year than last plus of course we now have a new car park so no more muddy feet traipsing through the Church! He continued by saying he had been delighted at the even closer relationship with the Council which had developed during this special year when the Council celebrated its 20 years in existence. The Church had shared on all the celebrations and had lead a special service of thanksgiving which had been attended by Councillors from this and other parishes as well as other dignitaries. The Church itself was having a facelift in many respects. A new sound system had been installed and a legacy had provided a new organ which would be "sung in" at a special Songs of Praise on May 7<sup>th</sup>. The car park had been renovated and in the coming year new heating and lighting systems would be installed. The Registrar General is changing boundary rules which would enable people living outside the parish boundary to use the church for their wedding if they wished. The number of weddings conducted in the church was rising each year. Attendances were increasing, especially among the younger people, which was extremely pleasing and he looked forward to the future with confidence.

#### **Council Chairman Sally Arnold**

#### **CHAIRMANS REPORT APRIL 2006**

We are all conscious this has been a special year for this Parish Council.

20 years independency - 100<sup>th</sup> edition of our newsletter - Formation of the Parish Plan Committee.

These are the main leisure departments of the council which can also include the Hanging Basket Competition - The Pumpkin Carving - Spot the Strange, the celebration church service and at the end of the year we had the Carol service in the precinct. So at this level our Parish Council is very active for our village...

This is where local community spirit comes in and in this village we can **arrogantly** report we have plenty. None of the above events could take place without the volunteers and to this I give my heart felt appreciation.

#### ***PLANNING***

The Kingfisher Associations dreams of a mass block of affordable homes at the railway station was withdrawn. This at the present time is in the hands of the new owners but understand this area is still earmarked for affordable housing. But of course we are now under the National Park Authority judgment and their views may differ from New Forest District Council.

Brimpton Mead caused a few fears but pleased to see that it is still a nursing home but now more accessible for disabled people.

Concerns were raised about the application from Alldays but the outcome was a refusal by New Forest District Council.

Questions have been asked about the difficulty with NFDC who no longer gave notification of tree work. They will take action against unauthorized tree work but of course this could be too late for the tree. This matter is going to be raised at the next New Forest Association of Local Councils and Heads of Department.

I thank Councillor Sopowski for chairing the planning committee and the rest of the planning consortium.

### ***RECREATION GROUND***

New play equipment has been purchased and installed. This was covered by a grant from New Forest District Council. Unfortunately access to the park is limited. We did make reasonable effort to allow wheelchairs easy access but this was then abused by Motor Bikes and young ladies on horse back.

New posts have been purchased for the dog walk along with new signs. Unfortunately they have already been vandalized.

A grant from our District Councillors is being used for the renewal of the Notice Board. Thanks go to Councillor Oliver who regularly inspects the Park and to all the committee members.

I must add also that it is due to the vigilance of neighbours who help to keep this park as safe as possible for everybody.

### ***HIGHWAY MATTERS***

The cycle path from Ashurst to Lyndhurst is now out to tender, which should include our logo on a5 barred gate.

The Lyndhurst By Pass according to local press appears to have been placed on hold. This must have been an upset to Lyndhurst Parish Council as they had put so much work into this project, but as I stress the right hand turn was never a relief road for Lyndhurst.

The traffic flow carried out by New Forest District Council was felt to be unreliable as it had been conceded after the school holidays. A traffic flow survey will be arranged in the near future by volunteers from the village.

At a Traffic Management Control meeting I asked for the speed of 40 mph to start from the Colbury Roundabout – this I was told is possible and will be linked with the commencement of the cycle path from Ashurst to Lyndhurst. They were also reminded of their promise for our gateway sign to be included in this work...

The long term parking in the Parade is slowly ceasing as the new Traffic Warden system has Ashurst on its list of problem areas.

Thanks to our Clerk Len for chasing up all the problems we receive and for the alertness of Councillors and villagers who bring these matters to our attention.

### ***PARISH PLANS***

It was started almost three years ago, but was beginning to take the form of a gazetteer.

After several meetings with Penny Verlendar, the coordinator for this project, it was decided to launch the Parish Plan at the 20 year on Fete. It had a very good response and could see that majority of the complaints were the noise and the speed of the A35.

However due to other commitments Councillor Oliver and I decided to stand down and a new committee was formed. They have gone from strength to strength and when the plan is completed it should make very good reading.

Thanks to Councillors Ardern and Judd who represent the Council on this committee and to all the other volunteers.

## **REPRESENTATIVES ON OTHER BODIES**

### ***AGE CONCERN***

The foot care clinics which had been introduced during Councillor Holdsworth's period as Chairman for Age Concern were receiving more calls than ever and a new clinic would be opening in Hythe and more are needed. She has been re elected as Trustee for Hampshire for the Age Concern, a honour that is justly deserved for all the time and effort she gives to the Age Concern.

### ***CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU***

At the New Forest Management Committee it was decided that further discussions were needed before any decisions are taken on merging the various New Forest Management groups. A **NO** vote was taken at the end of the debate the feeling being that the management structure will be more remote, and that the service at each office will be weakened. There is a need to recruit more people to train as advisers  
Appreciation goes to Councillor Judd who attends on our behalf and brings back such excellent reports.

### ***NEW FOREST CONSULTATIVE PANEL***

This panel is made up from all Councils, the National Farmers Union, Verderers, Caravan Clubs and other bodies with an interest in the New Forest representatives from the National Park Authority proposed that they need not be on the panel.

One issue is the division of recreation land into small parcels on which sheds etc were then built. This was not acceptable and we all need to watch out for this sort of movement. Councillor Sopowski is our representative here so I am sure that nothing will slip past.

### ***NEW FOREST EAST SPORTS COUNCIL***

In December 2005 this sports council was disbanded. At our recent meeting Councillor Bryant had attended the winding up of the New Forest East Sports Council and heard that New Forest West group was also being disbanded. This is a sad loss for all concerned. Appreciation is given to you David for the many years you have attended on our behalf.

### ***PARISH WEB SITE***

For those that have the opportunity our web site is full of information and links with other web site holders. Councillor Oliver attended a seminar on instruction for web site but the main body is Councillor Sue Arden who keeps us all updated with the magic of technology.

Congratulations and sincere appreciation from us all.

### ***NEWSLETTER***

As I said at the start this last year we saw the 100<sup>th</sup> edition and we have one person to thank for this. That being Margaret Weston the Editor. Her professionalism in placing awkward sized advertisements and data to produce our newsletter each month on time is justly a great credit to her

Thanks go to her and the rest of the newsletter committee, and I must not forget all the volunteers who deliver these papers to your door no matter what the weather.

### ***NEW FOREST DISTRICT ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS***

This is where I do my small smidgen. This group is a stepping stone to reach the heads of departments at New Forest District Council and also the National Park Authority. It is very much valued by Parish Councils and can resolve some problems as a body that do not appear to be resolved by individual councils. The crisis in confidence for planning is just one of the many issues that had the tenacity to take on New Forest District Council's planning department and succeeded.

### ***NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH***

A very quiet but successful group led by Karen Oliver. We are very fortunate to have these volunteers in our village and again it is a sign of community spirit that belongs in a village such as ours.

Congratulations to all the team, I am sure we would have more problems if you did not provide this excellent service.

Vandalism although decreased is still present in the village, and without the vigilance of residents this would increase.

I now thank our County Councillor Mel Kendal and District Councillors Derek Tipp and Les Puttock for all their help and guidance. I realize that Mel wears many hats and has difficulty in attending our meetings but I know he is always at the end of a telephone if we have problems or need advice. With our District Councillors you all know we have one if not two at every meeting. This is an honour for our Council and we appreciate the time you give us here at Ashurst and Colbury.

On a personal level being elected Chairman again this year was a privilege that I never thought possible, and I thank this council for having the confidence in me to lead our Parish from strength to strength. This Council is regarded highly for what we achieve and this can only be realized from working as a team.

Last but not least to the Parish Clerk – stepping into another persons shoes is never easy, but Len with his professionalism and knowledge has kept this Parish to a high standard. We all thank you Len and look forward to more years working together.

### **REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR MEL KENDAL**

First of all let me congratulate you and your Council for all the excellent work you do and your residents for supporting you and regularly attending your meetings. This is my first opportunity to talk to the APM because there are nine parishes which hold their meetings on a Tuesday!

Hampshire County Council has been rated an “excellent Council” by the Audit Commission in their annual report on the Council's affairs. Although the budget for the year is over £600m there will be an overspend of some £10m due mainly to adult social care where Government transferred services to Councils, thereby saving it money, but not giving the Councils any funds for the service they now have to provide. As an example, NHS have shifted some of their work on care services to “care in the home” and that has to be paid for by Councils. So while Government can say they have reduced costs by £400m

they do not say that Councils will now have to fund the service! That cost is rising exponentially and while the service provision is good how will it be paid for? The NPA is now in existence. £3.5 m was provided to set it up and £3.5 to get it underway. It will bring many benefits to the area in the coming years. Ten years ago Project Integra was formed to integrate waste disposal and recycling. Currently there are 3 incinerators in the HCC area which means that whereas 70/80% used to go to landfill sites it is now less than 20%. The District Council is looking into more sustainable recycling like the garden waste scheme and, as mentioned in the previous meeting, there will be a referendum on the Wheelie Bin issue. The Lyndhurst by-pass would cost over £1m for the initial environmental impact study and we have to remember that English Nature have already opposed any such scheme because they believe there are alternatives which do not impact on the forest. The Council is still studying the matter.

### **REPORT FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLOR TIPP**

The main local issues this year have been planning, traffic and local housing. Both Les and I have fought against the infill development proposals which have been made in Woodlands Road and in the village estate itself. The result has been mixed, often with initial success with the District Planning Committee, but with many appeal decisions going the other way. With the Government keen to see much higher levels of house building, it seems that opposition to development is becoming harder to sustain.

The South-East Plan has now been submitted to the Government and is to undergo a final examination in public during this summer. Although the very highest proposals for housing of 32,000 per year were rejected by SEERA, they have proposed 28,900 of which at least 60% are to go to previously developed land. 122,000 of the total of 578,000 are to be built in Hampshire, 4,138 of them in the New Forest. The numbers for Ashurst itself may be small, but the effect on our district over the next 20 years will be significant with increases in traffic in particular.

The proposals to develop affordable housing near Ashurst Station led to significant opposition from many residents. I objected to the proposals on the grounds that the density was too high and parking not adequate. The developer has since sold the site and we must wait to see what a future application will be.

Now that the National Park has taken over responsibility for planning, protection of the area against over-development will hopefully be maintained. We read this week that spending on the NPA is to be increased to £4.8m this year. Luckily this comes from central taxes and not the council tax. Currently the Government are preparing a Bill to reorganise local government which is to be published in June. That Bill may result in major changes locally, such as your District Council being replaced by a unitary authority. I believe that would be a severe blow to local democracy and would result in additional expense, as re-organisation usually does.

The District Council has been given a number of additional responsibilities by the Government, though often insufficient funding to carry them out, such as when liquor Licensing was transferred from Magistrates to councils. Despite this I am pleased to report that due to diligent house-keeping the District Council's council tax increase for a band D property is just £3.78 a year, in other words less than 8p per week.

Construction of the cycleway between Ashurst and Lyndhurst is due to begin before the end of the year, maybe by September. The work will take about 26 weeks and will mean that temporary traffic lights will be in operation. Material cannot be stored on the verge in case of damage to ecology or wildlife, so it has to be on the carriageway!

Car parking has been an issue of concern to all motorists, and in recent years planning guidance has tried to reduce provision to a minimum, particularly for new homes. The latest consultation from Government indicates that it may be possible for councils to be more flexible and allow developers more scope to provide more spaces up to a maximum. Perhaps they are starting to realise that cars do not just vanish, but simply end up parked somewhere else.

Once again the District Council's rural grant scheme has enabled Les and I to support the Parish Council in the village. This year our combined total of £333 has been put towards replacement of Parish Notice Boards.

Finally I would like to thank the Chairman, Clerk and all Parish Councillors for their excellent work and support throughout the year.

## **REPORT FROM MRS ANN ARSCOTT, MINOR AUTHORITIES GOVERNOR OF FOXHILLS JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Mrs Arscott was unable to be present so the report was read by the Clerk.

### **FOXHILLS JUNIOR SCHOOL BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

#### **REPORT TO PARISH COUNCIL APRIL 2006**

#### **Background**

New DfES legislation concerning the constitution of governing bodies became effective on January 1<sup>st</sup> 2005, changing governor representation of the main stake holders namely the Local Education Authority, parents, teaching and non-teaching staff, and the local community. Hitherto the local Minor Authority (Ashurst and Colbury PC) was responsible for nominating one governor, this requirement was removed by the new legislation. However, the Board of Governors felt very strongly that it should maintain a formal link with the Parish Council, and agreed that one Community governor should be nominated by the council. I am pleased to be that representative.

#### **I summarise the school's activities since my last report in April 2005 as follows:**

Total number of pupils in September 2005, 230 Boys, 197 Girls, 427 pupils in all  
We employ a total of 57 staff

Pupils come mainly from Foxhills and Eling Infant schools, but also from other infant schools in Totton and the Waterside

In our 2005 Standard Attainment Tests (SATs) we were close to our targets, and in line with similar schools

We continue to concentrate on consolidating and raising standards in the core subjects of English, Maths and Science.

We continue to review and develop cross curricular links e.g. use of good English to describe scientific procedures, write recipes and letters

We have been working towards 'Healthy School' status

We are in the expensive process of installing interactive whiteboards; these enable teachers to use computer and internet facilities for classroom teaching. A recent keep fit Aerobothon organised by the School Association, raised funds for interactive whiteboards throughout the school.

We continue to use field studies to support the curriculum, both locally and further afield in Devon and Normandy, France. One recent new study looked at the geography of the Lymington River, visiting its source in Ocknell Wood, its midpoint near Brockenhurst, and culminating with a boat trip from Lymington to the river estuary.

Theatre groups and children's authors visit the school, the latter in association with Book Week

The school's recent production 'Annie' attracted appreciative audiences, and was a tribute to the hard work of pupils, teachers and other helpers

Extra curricular clubs and sporting activities involve the majority of children

The annual Charity Week was well supported by children (and their tolerant parents) who devised ingenious ways of raising money for their favourite charities.

The Willow Dome, planted last year, has been extensively used in environmental and other studies, as are the pond and Nature Trail.

Parents' support is vital to the school through School Association fundraising activities, helping in school, and encouraging their children to make good use of the excellent facilities and teaching in Foxhills.

### **The Board of Governors is comprised of:**

Three LEA governors appointed by the local County Councillor

Four governors representative of the local community (one appointed by the Parish Council)

Five governors elected by parents

Two governors elected by the teaching staff

One governor elected by non-teaching staff

The head teacher and deputy head attend all meetings

### **During the last year governors have undertaken the following activities:**

Attended five meetings of the governing body

Shared committee work, including performance management, budget setting, health and safety, and special responsibilities such as governor for Special Needs, and for Able Children

Attended training sessions run by HCC Governor Services

Helped in the classroom, and on school visits and sports days

Set up a Book Finders Club  
Revised and updated the School Prospectus  
Written the School Profile. This is an on line document which replaces the  
Governors' Annual Report to parents, and outlines key school activities and results  
Reviewed school policy documents  
Appointed a gate warden to oversee vehicular access to the school site, and safety in  
the school drive

### **Traffic in Foxhills Lane**

The governors are well aware that the twice daily traffic problems in Foxhills Lane impinge on local residents, as well as presenting a hazard for children going to and from school. Following advice from Cllr. Sally Arnold, we contacted the Parking Office at Lymington, and a parking attendant visits when possible. The police have fined parents for parking on the zigzag lines on several occasions. New Forest Council is considering our request to implement a limited parking restriction on the north side of Foxhills Lane in the vicinity of the school entrance. This would improve safety for children, maintain clear access through Foxhills, and spare residents the problem of cars parked on the grass verges.

We frequently remind parents of the need to drive and park safely in Foxhills lane.

### **Finally....**

I would like to thank the head teacher, Mike Espezel, all the staff, pupils and their parents for making Foxhills an interesting and exciting school in which to learn.

Ann Arscott  
11<sup>th</sup> April 2006

### **Matters raised by electors of the Parish**

No matters were raised by those present.

The Chairman thanked everyone for coming to the meeting, and added that the village was well served and linked together by the Church, Schools, Councillors – Parish, District and County - but most of all by you, the residents who support us so well.

Thank you and Good Night.

The meeting was closed at 9.20pm

**Signed S R Arnold Chairman      Dated 10 April 2007**