

## **ASHURST AND COLBURY PARISH COUNCIL**

### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2006 AT THE CHURCH ROOMS COLBURY**

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

**In Attendance:** Parish Clerk L. Griggs, County Councillor M Kendall, District Councillors L Puttock and D Tipp and 10 members of the public.

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed everyone to the last meeting before the summer break.

#### **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillor Holdsworth who was recovering from surgery.

#### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The Chairman made the following points:

A flower tub had been stolen from a house in Ashdene Road. This type of crime was more likely in the summer months so everyone needed to be watchful.

Concern had been expressed over the change to a roof in Rye Dale which had not been through the planning procedure. On inquiry she had been informed that there was no breach of planning regulations as an application was not required for this work.

Complaints had been received from a resident that the contractor cutting the grass had left a mess of cuttings. The Clerk was asked to write to NFDC.

The vegetation on the South side of Foxhills Close was covering the footpath. An email had been sent about that.

The Chairman then invited members of the public to speak if they desired.

Mrs Karen Oliver said: I wish to draw your attention to the article published in the recent edition of New Forest Post under the heading "Extra lights possible to curb village centre fumes". A suggestion has been made for alleviating unacceptably high levels of nitrogen oxide in Lyndhurst, caused by stationary or slow moving traffic, by placing new signage on the M27 encouraging drivers to leave the motorway at Junction 2 and enter Lyndhurst via Ashurst instead of exiting from Junction 1 along the A337. Also in this article is a statement that Lyndhurst has been designated an "Air Quality Management Control Area". Well what about air quality in Ashurst? Environmental Health Manager Carole Gallacher made the comment that "narrow roads and high buildings create a canyon effect that increases pollution" but as it was Lyndhurst's decision to further narrow the High Street and re-phase the traffic lights, I do not understand why they are complaining. Furthermore her other comment that "they are limited in what they can do other than being totally radical" is rather contradictory. They could solve their own problems by

returning the traffic flow and light phasing to how it used to be thereby ending the dreadful queues that are now endured by all who use the A35. Not radical really! When the right turn at Colbury was accepted, there was a promise made, I believe by HCC, that no new signage re-directing or leading to an increase of traffic through Ashurst would be erected on the motorway. It hasn't taken long for Lyndhurst to find another reason, this time under the guise of exhaust emissions, for Ashurst to be the scapegoat as far as relieving their traffic flow goes. We are supposed to be villages together in this newly created National Park but should this insufferable proposal be accepted and then prove to ease Lyndhursts' problem, any possibility of a by-pass – that is at the moment being so loudly extolled from the roof tops – would disappear without a trace. We are a residential area and this is yet another attempt by Lyndhurst to down-grade the A337 and re-route nearly all the traffic through our village without care or conscience. Madam Chairman and Councillors, what can you as a Council and we as village residents do about this?

The Clerk said that while everyone who had been involved in the “right turn” issue were convinced that HCC had given an undertaking not to change any signage on the M27 to divert traffic through Ashurst, he had looked at all the papers passed to him by the previous Clerk and where that statement was made it included the words “for the time being”. He could find no absolute undertaking in writing although from the unanimous view of residents it would appear that such an undertaking was given verbally..

District Councillor Les Puttock said that he understood that it was not a change to the signage but that the information boards on the motorway would carry a message when there is a hold up on the A337 giving J2 as an alternative.

Councillor Sopowski said the traffic flow around Lyndhurst could easily be improved if the pedestrian traffic lights in the High Street were phased to allow traffic to flow instead of being continually stopped for one or two pedestrians to cross. Also pollution could be reduced if signs asking drivers to switch off engines while stationary could be installed by the main traffic lights. This issue needed to be carefully thought through. Ashurst already had all the lorries and while we will take our fair share we should only be expected to take half of the traffic.

County Councillor Kendall said the Lyndhurst problem was not a single issue, there were many things that could be done to ease the traffic flow and not try to depend on a by-pass which would be very expensive, would certainly be opposed by English Heritage and the Forestry Commission and would in many case be many years away. There is also no point in moving the problem from one area to another. Alternative solutions to the basic problem were required. When changes were proposed he wanted to have trials first to see how the change might work. He wanted to meet with Councillors and determine what trials should be undertaken.

The Chairman said that a meeting with HCC had been proposed to discuss re-routing and that was set for 25<sup>th</sup> July. She asked County Councillor if he meant that all Councillors could attend and on his confirmation she invited those present to join the meeting at Appletree Court at 10am on 25<sup>th</sup> July.

After considerable discussion the Chairman said that local views had been made clear to representatives of NFDC, HCC and NPA and we would continue to fight to prevent Ashurst and Colbury being swamped with traffic.

Mrs Blundell said that she was concerned that signs on the A31 and M27 for traffic heading for Lyminster were also directing traffic to use Junction 2

**DISCLOSURE OF AN INTEREST IN AN AGENDA ITEM.**

The Chairman announced that Councillor Judd had deposited a Form C indicating an interest in agenda item 8(a).

**MINUTES**

The minutes of the June meeting, having previously been circulated to all Councillors, Councillor Bryant proposed and Councillor Oliver seconded that they be approved. The proposition was passed unanimously. The Chairman then signed the minutes.

**ITEMS DEFERRED FROM THE LAST MEETING**

(a) The Chairman proposed the following resolution “To change the day on which the Council meets from the second Tuesday in the month to the first Wednesday in the month. That change to be effective from January 2007”. Councillors Kewley and Oliver seconded the resolution.

The Chairman said that in proposing this resolution she wanted to have the opportunity to visit other local councils who also held their meetings on the second Tuesday. She added that we were always very pleased to see our County and District Councillors at our meetings but this change would enable them to attend other council’s meetings more frequently. District Councillor Puttock confirmed that the other councils within his remit did meet on the same day as Ashurst and Colbury.

Councillor Sopowski opposed the resolution saying that he preferred to remain with the established date. Councillor Arden said she was currently committed elsewhere for Wednesdays. After a short discussion the Chairman called for a vote which resulted in a tie of 3 votes for and against. The Chairman said that she would not use her casting vote and the resolution was therefore lost. The Chairman deferred further discussion until Councillor Holdsworth was present.

(b) In regard to Councillor Kewley and her pending move outside the parish the Chairman said she was pleased to report that the new residence appeared to be within three miles of the parish so Councillor Kewley could remain a Councillor. In any case the rules allowed her to remain in office until the end of the current year.

(c) Snowdon House

The Chairman made the following comments:

It is my gut feeling that the transfer has already been arranged without any public consultation. My reasons are as follows. I emphasise the word ‘my’ as the feeling is mine and not this councils.

27<sup>th</sup> June I was told by Staff at Snowdon there would be no large meeting. I was also told to look on the website in two weeks and I could see when some meetings will be held, and there would also be space for comments. I was also told that a scrutiny meeting had been held on 26<sup>th</sup> June [the day before] with SPCT and their presentation had been accepted.

29<sup>th</sup> June Dawn Buck telephones and tells me that 3 consultation meetings were going to be arranged one in Brockenhurst, one in Hythe and one in Ashurst, but until the date in Brockenhurst was settled they could not arrange the others.

July 1<sup>st</sup>. Article in Echo – this mentioned the letter from Allan Amey that I read to this meeting last month but which they had several weeks previously. In the article it asked for readers to write in about the possible closure of Snowdon.

I now understand there is a meeting with the New Forest Health PCT on 19th July about the new birthing pool at Ashurst. To add to this I am aware of a Lady who is pregnant who already knows she will give birth in Ashurst.

### **PARISH PLAN UPDATE**

Prior to receiving the update The Chairman said she was pleased to advise that Bryan Pass had offered his time for the Village of the Year Presentation on 21st July. She added “I know this is a busy time for him but giving his time is greatly appreciated”.

Councillor Judd reported that the Community Plan Group met on 6<sup>th</sup> July and Penny Verlander, NFDC, had given constructive advice on the wording and layout of the questionnaire. The sub committee working on the questionnaire have arranged extra meetings to finalise it before the August meeting. Although there has been little feedback from the Newsletter article regarding the Cinema Evening it was thought they may try a one off as a social event. This may take place in October, time and venue to be arranged. Bryan Pass confirmed that he will be at the Church Rooms on 21<sup>st</sup> July when the judging of Best Village takes place.

### **HIGHWAY MATTERS**

#### **(a) Traffic survey**

The Chairman announced that following the last meeting the Clerk had asked that the question of additional remuneration for him for his work in connection with the survey should be dropped. While he appreciated the Council’s offer he felt that everyone else had been a volunteer and he would be embarrassed to be the only paid person.

The Clerk said the survey had shown there was a considerable increase in traffic flow through the village. The survey carried out by HCC in April 2005 had reported a throughput of 13,459 which they said was 2% down on the survey carried out in April 03, before the right turn at Colbury on the A326 was in place. Our survey showed that the throughput was 14,395 an increase of almost 7% on the 2005 figures. At peak morning and evening times there had been throughputs of almost 1500 vehicles per hour.

The variations between the traffic coming into the village at one end and going out the other were almost certainly due to things like parents coming in via the Cockley Down roundabout to drop children at school and then coming through the village to go either to Lyndhurst or Southampton.

It had been suggested that a limited survey should be carried out one Friday evening in August to see what the effect of holiday traffic was and this would be considered.

(b) The Clerk reported that he had received a copy of a letter written by a resident to the Road Safety Officer at HCC Winchester regarding the need for pedestrian lights by Colbury Memorial Hall where children crossing to go to school were endangered by the traffic speeding from and to the A326 junction. Last month the Chairman read a letter from a School Governor in similar vein. He had spoken with the people at Highways in

Winchester responsible for installing traffic lights They had agreed to look at the situation and come back to him in due course.

(c) NFDC had confirmed that the weed killer used around poles and borders was both animal and child friendly. Councillor Bryant pointed out that while it was alright to use the spray around posts where the mowers could not get close there had been indiscriminate spraying which had covered grass areas and they were now dying. A resident had also complained about the way the grass had been left everywhere. The Clerk was asked to write to NFDC on these matters.

(d) The Clerk reported that he had asked Highways for an accident report for the area just past the traffic lights at the Parade, going west, where there was a right turn. Councillor Sopowski had reported that there seemed to be a number of near miss accidents while he was carrying out the traffic survey caused by vehicles wanting to turn right.

(e) The Chairman said she wished to thank Ian and Karen Oliver, Roy Arnold and Rita Judd for the splendid work they did in cleaning the bus shelters. The Clerk noted that the Chairman had also been one of the clean up party.

### **RECREATION GROUND**

The Chairman said “I received a rather sick and sad telephone call on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> July in the week from a resident. She started the conversation that she was not making a complaint to the Council as she knows how we try to keep the Park fit for children to play and enjoy. However, her tragedy was that as her dog was elderly she was going to have to have it put down on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> July. However this had to be brought forward to the Saturday as she had taken the dog over the park and after sniffing around in the grass came out with her face covered in blood. This of course was the reckless and thoughtless people who had decided to have a party in the park and then smash their bottles in the grass. As she said it was not a complaint to this council but felt that we should be aware of it”.

Councillor Oliver reported that he had carried out inspections on 24<sup>th</sup> June and 7<sup>th</sup> July. The first inspection followed advice from a resident that glass had been deposited on the roundabout. On investigation it was the remains of broken bottles apparently left from the previous evening. He also reported that Wicksteed Leisure had carried out the Annual Inspection and he was pleased to report that apart from one or two minor points we had been given a clean bill of health. There was one matter which would require attention soon and that was the sunken soft pour by the climbing frame. In response to Councillor Bryant he said the ground beneath had sunk and the soft pour was sort of bouncy. It was something we would need to address soon.

### **PLANNING**

(a) Councillor Sopowski gave details of planning issues which had taken place since the last meeting.

(b) The Chairman said that Wheatshield were coming to the September meeting to give a presentation of their project proposals. The meeting would commence at 7pm.

(c) The Clerk was asked to write to NPA regarding the alleged breach of planning at 8 Wingrove Road where clear glass had been installed instead of the obscure glass specified in the approval of the application.

(d) The Chairman reported that the retrospective planning application at 4 Dene Way comes before the Planning Committee on 18<sup>th</sup> July. She intended to go and speak at the meeting as she believes retrospective applications and breach of planning is getting out of hand and needs to be nipped in the bud. She asked the Council if they wished her to speak for the Council and it was unanimously agreed that she should do so.

Councillor Sopowski said retrospective applications make a mockery of the process. He added it was important however to stress it was retrospective applications which were the issue. He noted that the Parish Council Planning Committee had refused the application.

### **THE “LENGTHSMAN”**

The Clerk advised that the revised quotation for the Whartons Lane Notice Board was £800 to accommodate more notices and include the Council’s name carved at the top. The quotation was accepted.

Councillor Judd raised the following items:

Please could we ask for a replacement black post mounted litter bin by the bus shelter opposite Alldays. The present bin has been vandalised and has no lid.

Please can we ask for a new black post mounted litter bin to be fixed to the 30/40m sign on the south side of New Road junction with the A35. The lady living in the bungalow on this corner has an enormous amount of litter dropped inside and outside her garden and a litter bin may help to solve this problem.

I would like to ask the other Parish Councillors what their views are regarding the Council employing a Lengthsman for the village on a regular basis, i.e. perhaps two half days or one full day a month, to do jobs around the village such as washing bus shelters and cleaning their windows (perhaps one shelter every two months), washing road name signs, painting wooden seats, cutting back overhanging bushes, cleaning excess litter, removing graffiti, and generally doing the jobs which the Council report need doing. I feel if these jobs were done on a regular basis our village would look much more pleasant and I do not feel we should rely on voluntary work parties to carry out jobs which should be paid for out of the rates.

Councillor Sopowski said the Council had been here before and while he was sorry to oppose he felt that if the Council employed people, other than the Clerk, it can raise concerns. There are people in the village willing to help out on these tasks and only waiting to be asked. We pay Council Tax and these jobs should be done by District Council workmen.

Councillor Bryant said it was not easy to employ someone to carry out specialist task. You would have to provide them with the appropriate specialist equipment.

A member of the public said she would be very willing to help out on a rota basis.

It was agreed not to pursue the proposal to employ a Lengthsman.

## **ACCOUNTS**

The list of cheques issued since the last meeting had been circulated to all Councillors. Councillor Oliver proposed and Councillor Bryant seconded that the list be approved and it was approved unanimously.

The Chairman said she had three requests under this agenda item:

- (a) May I ask this council if they would agree a sum of money to pay for the refreshments for the Judges and the Exhibitors on 21st July. Approximately 30-40 people.
- (b) A cheque for £20.00 to pay for Tom McKinley and if possible a donation towards his lunch. This has been paid every year by the volunteers but I do think the Council could make a small payment.
- (c) The money raised from the fete – would the council be in favour of purchasing engraved badges of each past Chairman that can be pinned on the Chairman's chain of office. That way past Chairman can be remembered instantly and not pushed back in a filing cabinet.

Councillor Sopowski asked what sort of money was involved for (a) and (b) and the Chairman said not more than £100. Councillor Sopowski proposed and Councillor Kewley seconded that £100 be granted for those items and the **RESOLUTION** was approved unanimously.

The proposal for badges was agreed subject to cost and Councillor Oliver agreed to get a price.

## **GRANTS**

No applications had been received

## **REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OTHER BODIES**

The Chairman read the crime report received from PC Matt Parker and reported on the following:

14<sup>th</sup> June - The celebration of the Ashurst W/I's Birthday. This was a thoroughly enjoyable and entertaining evening. My thanks to Pat White and the rest of the ladies who organised the event.

18<sup>th</sup> June - Winchester Cathedral to celebrate the Queens 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday.

28<sup>th</sup> - June Antique Evening arranged by the Netley Marsh Conservative Party. The speaker was not only a collector but an assessor and to think that thrown in the back of our car we have Roland Rat who is worth £45.00. Many thanks to Les and Derek and of course their wives for putting on such a splendid evening.

29<sup>th</sup> June – AGM of NFALC. The executive committee were voted in again for another year. Disgruntled views about the possibility of plans being relayed by email. As was pointed out not every Clerk has the right facilities to do this. It will be a debate that will not rest.

6<sup>th</sup> July - New Forest Consultative Panel – I know Peter will speak about this. I went just as a member of the public and I must say it was one of the most packed and informative meetings that I have ever attended. I strongly recommend to Councillor Kewley as our second representative for this council goes along for the next meeting in September - in

fact any councillor who is interested in the Forest and our Village will find it very beneficial.

Councillors Ardern and Judd advised that they had attended the Community Plan Group meetings.

Councillor Oliver advised that he had taken part in cleaning the bus shelters in addition to the recreation ground activities previously reported.

Councillor Sopowski had attended the New Forest Consultative Panel meeting and advised that he was now more optimistic that the new cycle path will not be a blot on the landscape as he had previously feared. However the commencement of the work had now been delayed until after December. He also advised that the Ashurst Camp Site run by Forest Enterprise who had now gone in with the Camping and Caravan Club. Councillor Bryant intervened to say it is actually run by Forest Holidays which is a partnership of Forest Enterprise and the CCC.

County Councillor Kendall said HCC had allocated £60m to set up ten nursing homes in the County. He had also attended the Local Councils Association Conference where Sir Keith Lyle reported on his review on the balance of local funding. The proposals he made would greatly reduce the burden of Council Tax on pensioners. Government Ministers had been present and David Millibrand had reported on global warming and domestic waste removal and Ruth Kelly had said she had set up a task force to see how to reduce beauracracy. All the proceedings were reported on the net.

District Councillor Puttock said there was a meeting of the New Forest Consultative Panel on 19<sup>th</sup> July at 6pm in Appletree Court.

District Councillor Tipp advised he had attended a meeting with a group of people on the South East Plan. The group was led by SHUV, South Hampshire Unheard Voices, and PUSH, Protection of South Hampshire. The group were concerned that the report speculated that maybe instead of 28,000 houses being built there should be 46,000. This could be a ploy so that when Inspectors considered the issue they may be tempted to take a number in the middle thereby pushing up the number of houses to be built.

## **CORRESPONDENCE**

A list had been circulated and the correspondence was available at the meeting.

## **ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AT THE NEXT MEETING**

The Chairman reminded everyone that the next meeting would be on September 12<sup>th</sup> and would start at 7pm because it would include a presentation by representatives from Wheatshield on their proposals for the site by the Station.

The Chairman also advised the following dates for diaries:

November 25<sup>th</sup> is the switching on of the lights

December 19<sup>th</sup> will be the night of the Christmas Carols.

July 19<sup>th</sup> Judging of The Hanging Basket Competition

21<sup>st</sup> July Judges for the Village of the Year Competition at Ashurst and Colbury

3<sup>rd</sup> August The Ashurst Olympics in the Recreation Ground followed by NFDC Fun Day

10<sup>th</sup> August NFDC Fun Day in the Park

Pumpkin Carving Competition in October.

Just going back to the Village of the Year Competition

We have made it to the last ten so all we have to do is impress the Judges on that day. But what I want to say is how heart warming it is to see the majority of the villagers going out of their way for this presentation. I can't tell you how much I appreciate everybody's work. One day I may be able to repay you all but until then you have my trust, my belief and my faith in our village to do the very best for you all.

Goodnight, God Bless You All and see you in September.

The meeting was closed at 9.06pm

Signed S R Arnold Chairman

Dated 12<sup>th</sup> September 2006