

ASHURST AND COLBURY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13TH JUNE 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 Councillors L Puttock and D Tipp and 42 members of the public.

The Chairman opened the meeting and said “Good evening and welcome to the June meeting. Item 1 on the agenda has now been cancelled as the new Police Officer has gone on leave. He has sent a report on the crime in Ashurst and Colbury which I will read to you later. The other matter before we get to the agenda is that I am delighted to report and pass on congratulations to one of our Councillors – Rita Judd. It is not often that Councillors get praise but I have received a letter from District Councillor Les Puttock and I quote: “Councillor Judd should be congratulated on the way she presented her views and the constructive questions at the recent Transport meeting”.

The Chairman added “we do not need to be told how proud we are of her but it is nice to hear it from other people. Thanks to you Rita, and to Les for giving us the encouragement that we all need from time to time”. A round of hearty applause followed.

There were no apologies for absence.

1. New beat officer

In the absence of PC Matt Parker the Chairman read out the Crime report. The details are

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|-----------------------|----|
| Non-dwelling burglary | 3 |
| Vehicle Crime | 3 |
| Domestic incidents | 1 |
| Assaults | 4 |
| Criminal damage | 8 |
| Public order | 2 |
| Theft | 12 |
| Deceptions | 3 |
| Bilking | 5 |
| Drug offences | 2 |

2 Public Participation

Mr Colin Bennett of 2 Dene Way read out a statement complaining about the contravention of planning issues in the work being carried out at 4 Dene Way and seeking the Council’s support in opposing the retrospective planning application now being considered. The effect of the current proposals could be seen from the pictures distributed to members of the Parish Council Planning Committee.

Councillor Sopowski, Planning Committee Chairman, said that the plans relating to the new application had just been received but the Committee was awaiting the Case Officers Briefing notes before meeting to consider the proposal. He also reminded everyone that while the Parish Council could express a view the final decision was made by NPA.

Mrs Safi of 4 Dene way commented that the original plans had a flat roof but problems emerged as building work started. The building would not be going out any further and the roof lines would not be changed. The present “view” was due to the scaffolding which sticks out so much because of the car port.

The Council noted the views expressed.

The Council was asked to note the bad state of roads following gas main work and take action. The Chairman replied that a “walk through” the village would be arranged with Rob Millar of Highways to deal with all outstanding highway matters.

A resident of Snowdon House asked if the Council would support action to prevent the closure of Snowdon House. The Chairman asked to defer that until after the presentation on the matter under item 6 of the agenda.

3 Disclosure of interest

The Chairman said a Form C had been received from Councillor Ardern in regard to item 13. She would remain in the meeting but not speak or vote on that item.

4 Minutes

The minutes of the May meeting were approved unanimously and signed by the Chairman.

5 Items deferred from the last meeting

The Chairman referred to her list of proposals for Committee Membership and Representation on Other Bodies which had been given to each Councillor, and requested that this item be dealt with en block. In regard to the Newsletter Committee, Bryan Pass was heavily involved with the Parish Plan and so no Chairman would be appointed, but a Chairman would be voted for at each meeting. There were no dissenters to the proposals which were then carried unanimously on a hand vote.

6 The Future of Snowdon House

Sheila Brook and other representatives from Southampton Primary Care Trust then gave a presentation on proposals regarding Snowdon House. The key points made were:

Snowdon House would not be closed

The services provided at Snowdon House would not be reduced but could be moved elsewhere

No staff would be made redundant nor would staffing levels be reduced by natural wastage

Options under consideration for the services currently provided at Snowdon House in order to keep costs within budget were:

1. Transfer the services and staff to Royal South Hants Hospital
2. Transfer the services and staff to Western Community Hospital
3. Retain the services at Snowdon House

If either option 1 or 2 took place Snowdon House would still be available for social events etc.

The Consultation would be with relevant groups and meeting dates and times would be well publicised. No decision had been taken yet and would not be taken until the Consultation exercise

was complete.

Following the presentation comments were invited from those present. A vigorous question and answer session then took place which proved that those present rejected the proposals for moving Snowdon House services elsewhere. The consensus of views was that the ambience and

surroundings which significantly contributed to patients recovery at Snowdon House, as evidenced by letters and comments from patients and carers present, could not be replicated at the Western or the RSH to say nothing of the difficulties of transport to and from the alternatives plus the lack of parking space at both the Western and RSH.

The Chairman thanked the SPCT representatives for coming to the meeting and explaining their proposals and stressed the importance of all councils in the area being kept fully informed in regard to consultation meetings.

7 Parish Plan

Rosemary McKay gave the Community plan update – June 2006

Another gathering of the community planners took place last week. Attendance has continued to be excellent which shows commitment and dedication to the village. Action taken this meeting included categorising housing and transport prior to compiling the questionnaire.

On the community social front, a sub committee has been formed to look into the possibility of having a ‘rolling cinema’. A cinema of this kind visits Bramshaw on a regular basis with approximately 60 -80 villagers enjoying a recent movie for a small fee. An article about this in the newsletter will hopefully raise some interest amongst the villagers of Ashurst

Finally, a Community Planning timetable for the next year has been drafted, which includes the questionnaire being distributed in October and a big launch for the plan itself by this time next year.

The Chairman asked if any further help was required from the Parish Council. Mrs McKay replied not at the moment but the offer of help would be kept in mind.

8 Highway matters

- a) The Clerk reported that the cost of repairing the bus shelter opposite the New Forest Inn which had been damaged by a stolen car involved in an accident was £930.
- b) On behalf of the Council the Chairman thanked all the volunteers who sat out in the heat of the day and carried out a traffic survey for the village and added “without these genuine people many actions in the village would not happen”. She also thanked the Clerk for organising and planning the survey so well.
- c) Councillor Sopowski asked for help in eliminating the fly-posting that was taking place in the village. He asked everyone to keep their eyes open to note who was putting these things up so they could be identified and action taken.
- d) The Chairman read a letter from Ann Arscott (School Governor) addressed to Highways asking for a traffic light controlled pedestrian crossing to be installed on the A35 by Colbury Memorial Hall to safeguard children crossing there to get to and from school.
- e) Councillor Bryant said that while working near Whartons Lane he had noted that cars were speeding excessively along the lane, especially parents who had dropped off or collected their children from school. It was very dangerous and action ought to be taken to ensure the 30mph was observed.
- d) A resident reported that HCC had used weed killer on areas of the village but there had been no advice as to whether it was friendly to children or animals. The Clerk was asked to contact HCC for information.

e) Councillor Sopowski noted that while carrying out the traffic survey by the Parade he had noted during the course of one hour three “near shunts” caused by traffic leaving Ashurst but turning right into the turn off immediately after the petrol station. He asked the Clerk to ascertain from Highways how many accidents had been reported at that spot over the past year to see if further action should be taken.

Councillor Oliver then requested the Clerk to retire for a short time. On his return the Chairman said the Council had agreed that overtime should be paid to the Clerk for his considerable input to the Traffic Survey but that she would first approach HAPTC to ensure that it was within the Council’s powers to make such a payment.

9 Recreation Ground

Councillor Oliver reported that he had carried out inspections on 22 May, 5 June and 12 June. The Chairman read an email to the Clerk from Mr David Olsen who lives in Lakewood road regarding the Recreation Ground with ideas for dealing with vandals. The Clerk had responded and the Chairman said it was encouraging to get constructive ideas from residents. She also said that NFDC would be holding two Fun Days at the park on 3rd and 10th August. In conjunction with that the Council would be holding a “kids Olympics” on 3rd August. Many offers of help had already been received.

10 Planning matters

Councillor Sopowski reported on the Planning Applications and Decisions made by NPA since the last meeting.

11 The “Lengthsman”

The Clerk reported that a revised quotation was necessary for the Whartons Lane notice board as the size originally quoted was too small.

The Clerk was asked to write to HCC following a report from a resident that the area around the electricity generating station in Ashdene Road had not been cleaned for some time as the area was too small for the cleaning machine to manoeuvre into.

12 Accounts

The list of cheques issued since the last meeting was approved unanimously.

13 Grants

An application from CATS Youth Theatre for a grant to enable them to employ a Voice Coach for their annual summer workshop for youngsters was discussed. On a proposal by the Chairman, seconded by Councillor Judd, it was **RESOLVED** that a grant of £300 be made to CATS Youth Theatre.

14 Reports from Representatives on other bodies

Councillor Kewley reported that she had attended a meeting at NFDC with representatives of Wheatshield regarding the Station Cottages site development which the Chairman would report on later.

Councillor Judd attended a meeting of New Forest Transport Forum on 23 May which commenced with an extensive review of the proposals being considered for the whole of the New Forest area. Many of these will not affect our village but I will report on those which may make an impact on residents of the Parish in the future should they be implemented. It was reported

that due to high fuel costs and pressure to raise staff wages they are going to have to look for ways to save money to pay for these extra costs.

Items still under discussion but which will need to be resolved in the Autumn are as follows: Possible changes to No's 56 and 56A route from a 30 minute service to an hourly one, interlinked with the X34 and X35. Numbers 56 and 56A to connect at Lymington to a Bournemouth routed bus. They are also looking at a greater linkage between Southampton-Lymington-Bournemouth serving the new Lymington Hospital by means of a new Frontline 'Coast and Forest Link'. Pressure was put on the Passenger Transport Group, by many Parish Council representatives, to re-instate the evening services, particularly to cover visiting hours to Lymington Hospital, especially as parking at the hospital is strictly limited, due to the policy of encouraging the public to get out of their cars and use public transport.

On behalf of our own Parish Council I raised the following points:

- 1 Could a bus route be considered to link the Forest area with Romsey?
- 2 Would it be possible to divert the 56A in a short loop from the Foxhills/Cockleydown roundabout via the slip road to drop off or pick up from Colbury Hall and then return via the other slip road back to the roundabout to continue on the usual route. Also to do the same in reverse to pick up. This would enable the public from the Ashdene Road end of the village access to Colbury Hall by public transport.
- 3 Suggested that the Bus Transport Committee, when liaising with the Railway to promote tourism in the Forest, remember Ashurst Station and not just Brockenhurst, as our station is right in the Forest, and is also on a bus route. Good publicity could help to reduce cars coming to the New Forest.

The HCC Transport Manager took note of the suggestions but he was not too hopeful about a service to Romsey. We are fortunate in Ashurst to be on what they call a 1st Tier (Frontline) Route but we must encourage the residents of our village to use public transport as often as they can, otherwise it is possible in the future to be a case of 'use it or lose it'.

Councillor Holdsworth had attended the meeting with Wheatshield and also meetings of Age Concern and would be attending a meeting of Age Concern In Hampshire tomorrow.

District Councillor Puttock advised that the handling of planning issues by NPA were still a problem. He was not kept as well informed as he had been with the NFDC planning team. However if anyone had any planning problems they should contact him or District Councillor Tipp who would help wherever possible.

He also commented on the number of rats in the parishes within his remit. People were not always reporting rat sightings and they must do so to keep NFDC informed. Otherwise the infestation would only get worse and spread out of control. The charge for NFDC staff to attend was still £32 but that was not for one visit but until the problem was cleared.

The Chairman reported she had attended the following meetings:

May 15th Leisure Committee to discuss the Ashurst Olympics and Fun days

May 22nd Meeting of NFDC Heads of Departments and NAFLC Executive (report below)

June 5th New Forest Access Forum

June 6th Meeting with Wheatshield and Hyde Housing (report below)

June 12th Ashurst and Colbury Traffic Survey

Report on the meeting of NFDC Department Heads and NAFALC Executive

High on the agenda was the new system that NFDC are trying to bring in for planning and electronic mailing. Chris Elliot has now said that he intends going for consultation in the Autumn of this year and all parishes will have the opportunity to raise points.

Liz Crocker gave a report on affordable homes and suggested that parishes invite Debbie Rhodes of Community Action Hampshire to speak at their meetings.

For those interested in statistics:

- Council owned stocked = 5,300 dwellings
- Housing Association stock = 2,390 dwellings
- Homeseach Register = 3,771 applicants
- Number of families rehoused = 337 (05/06)
- Shortfall of new affordable homes = 986pa
- Completions of new affordable dwellings = 127 (05/06)
- 157 homeless applications (85 accepted)
- 266 families in temporary housing

Money from council houses sold has to be shared 25% to local council and 75% to central government.

A new order called Empty Property Management Order that came into being on 1st April this year hopes to encourage owners of neglected property to join the housing scheme. This will only be at the owners choice.

Report on the meeting with Wheatshield and Hyde Housing

At the meeting were representatives of Wheatshield Ltd, Hyde Housing Association Ltd, Lynne Croker (Housing and Strategy Development Manager NFDC), District Councillor Les Puttock, Parish Councillors Sally Arnold, Ann Holdsworth and Wendy Kewley.

This was an informal meeting to outline plans for the site known locally as the Station site. The National Park Authority was not represented, as this meeting outlined plans for affordable housing which is still handled by NFDC although planning permission will be undertaken by NPA. We can now make public that the four railway cottages are to be preserved and refurbished and that one has already been sold and a deposit placed on a second.

What Wheatfield would like to develop is six two-storey houses to be built to the rear of the cottages, four with two bedrooms and two with three bedrooms. To the side of the cottages (nearest the station entrance) a two and a half level building containing three two-bedroom flats. As the work for the affordable houses is still in its early stages, and will need to be taken to NPA for approval, I have arranged with Wheatshield for them to give a presentation at our September meeting commencing at 7pm.

All parties are willing to listen and take in the needs and requirements of the villagers and you can email them or contact them at any time.

15 Correspondence

A list of correspondence received has been given to all Councillors and is available at the meeting. The Clerk apologised about item 8 on the list which should read "Letter from Hampshire Constabulary regarding Newsletters they wished to send us.

16 Day/Dates for Meetings in 2007

The Chairman advised that she had received no comments on this proposal. She would prefer to meet on a day other than Tuesday as other councils met on Tuesday which meant County and District Councillors had to select which council to attend. Also she would like the opportunity to visit other Council's meetings to see how they carried out their business. After some discussion it was agreed to leave this matter until the next meeting.

17 Items for discussion at the next meeting

- a) Councillor Kewley was moving house and could be outside the parish boundary, therefore the Council would need to consider a replacement. Bearing in mind the cost of an election and the fact that elections for all councillors would be required next year, care was needed in considering this matter. Councillor Kewley said the timing of her move should be known by the July meeting.
- b) The Wheatshield project should remain on the agenda for the time being.

There being no further business the Chairman thanked everyone for their patience during this long session and closed the meeting at 9.29pm.

Signed S. R. Arnold Chairman Dated 11th July 2006