

ASHURST AND COLBURY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12TH SEPTEMBER 2006 AT THE CHURCH ROOMS COLBURY

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

In Attendance: Parish Clerk L. Griggs, County Councillor M Kendall, District Councillor D Tipp, Ms Lynne Croker (NFDC), Messrs. Harding and Pinnick (Wheatshield) and 25 members of the public.

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed everyone back to the meetings after the summer break. She also expressed the gratitude of the Council to all those who helped in achieving success in the Village of the Year competition and said that she would be accompanied by the Clerk to Winchester in October to receive the plaque and cheque. Rev. Tom Johns had agreed that the plaque could be sited in the Church Rooms. The Chairman welcomed Ms Lynne Croker from NFDC, with responsibility for affordable and social housing, and Mr Harding and Mr Pinnick from Wheatshield.

Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Kewley, who was unwell, and District Councillor Puttock.

PRESENTATION BY WHEATSHIELD

Mr Harding spoke of the aims and intentions of Wheatshield in regard to the site at 213-219 Lyndhurst Road (the site by the station). The existing properties had been refurbished and would be on the market in the next couple of months. A great deal of interest had already been shown in the properties. The whole site had been cleaned up and it was hoped to have an open day soon when local people could see what had already been achieved and what could be done with the site. While he would like to see the site used for building it would not be high density. Talks were taking place with NFDC and NPA but no application had yet been submitted and the Parish Council would be kept fully informed as to their intentions.

Councillor Sopowski said that the application from previous owners Kingfisher had been unacceptable because it was three storeys high and had an external staircase. Consideration should be given to keeping within two storeys, using the roof space and perhaps smaller gardens etc. Mr Harding said that many young people do not want large gardens or garages as they prefer to walk or use the train to get about.

In response to questions from the public and Councillors the following points emerged from Mr Harding and Ms Croker:

Access onto the A35 was an issue with vehicles travelling at speed in both directions and the bridge over the railway close by. Mr Harding said that was an issue for HCC Highways department and they had not raised any concerns over that in the previous application.

How affordable is “affordable housing”? Ms Croker said that was a difficult issue to answer directly as it depended on the size and style. However she wanted to work with Hyde Housing Association and they would provide a range of options on renting, part ownership and other possibilities.

How many houses would be built on the site? Mr Harding said they were still looking at possibilities but possibly 6 houses or 4 houses and 6 flats. Young people liked flats as did older people who were downsizing. It was a fantastic site for young professional people who could jump on a train to Southampton or London for work but could also walk into the New Forest for their leisure time.

Affordable Housing sometimes brings with it undesirable elements. What is Hyde HA reputation in removing unruly tenants, and if the properties are to be for local people what is “local”? Ms Croker said that Hyde HA had been selected from 25 HAs who had expressed an interest in the site. There was a very stringent examination of their aims and intentions and one of the criteria was management of the properties and the tenants. Hyde had a good record in that area. As regards “local” there are very strict rules in that regard. In addition to those currently living in the village it also includes, for example, those who have immediate family living in the village. Those who may have moved away because they could not afford to live in the village, or were downsizing and wanted to move back could also apply. Once the plans were known the criteria for applications would be made known. Research would be carried out to ascertain the needs for accommodation and that would help to keep NFDC, NPA, HCC and the developers happy and hopefully local people too.

Is consideration being given to social housing to rent and if so what about the social problems that often accompany it? Ms Croker replied that all possibilities were under review but one had to be very careful about the number of social houses built in any village to ensure integration and understanding of the local culture.

When was the application likely to be submitted? Kingfisher had put theirs in just before Christmas which was not helpful to those wishing to examine what was being proposed. Mr Harding said it was hoped to put some plans in within the next couple of months. It could be nearer to Christmas but they were not trying to hide anything and would keep the Council informed.

Councillor Sopowski finished the session by saying “Please talk to the Council before submitting any plans. This is a sensitive site and villagers are sensitive to what is going on. We do not want it to be an enclave but want to have an open view to the old cottages”.

The Chairman thanked Mr Harding, Mr Pinnick and Ms Croker for giving their time to come and talk to the meeting. She added that they were welcome to come again when their plans were in place. She also asked that if an open day was held could she be

advised by the 18th of the month which was the deadline for the Newsletter entries. That would ensure the residents were informed by the beginning of the following month. The three representatives then retired. Councillor Sopowski also left the meeting.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chairman spoke first regarding the increasing vandalism in the village and in the recreation ground. Among other incidents the memorial plaque for the Queens Silver Jubilee by the Happy Cheese had been removed. She then asked Mrs Oliver, Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator, to speak. Mrs Oliver said it was vital that everyone in the village watch out for vandals and vandalism, report every incident to the police, get an incident number and, if the vandals were known, name them to the police. That could be done anonymously if necessary but it would help the police to catch those responsible. It was vital that everyone was on the alert and reported every incident. In response to a comment that it was a waste of time because the police never come and you have to wait 'hours' on the phone, Mrs Oliver said it was the village of us all and the only way to get the police interested in the vandalism here was to build up their incident list. The Inspector she had spoken to was surprised at her comments about vandalism because his incident report did not show Ashurst to be a problem area. Reporting every incident was vital.

It was agreed that the Council should replace the Silver Jubilee plaque and the Clerk was instructed to track down the original wording and get a price for a new plaque.

Concerns were expressed about the speed, particularly of lorries, through the village. The routeing change appears to have increased both the number and the speed of vehicles. Could the Council get the speed limit reduced and a speed camera installed. The Chairman said we were constantly talking to Highways on these issues and instructed the Clerk to send a chaser letter.

DISCLOSURE OF AN INTEREST

There were none.

MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 11th July having been circulated prior to the meeting, it was proposed by Councillor Bryant and seconded by Councillor Ardern that they be approved. That was agreed unanimously and the Chairman signed the minutes.

Matters arising.

Snowdon House. The Chairman said that everyone would know her views on this and nothing had occurred to change that view. The PCT had held the Open Day at the Church Rooms and were still insisting no decision had been taken. Recent information from staff at the Western Hospital confirmed the view we all hold that the Rehabilitation Department would be moved to the Western Hospital. The so called consultation was a farce.

Meeting dates. The Clerk said he was still awaiting returns from some Councillors so the matter would have to be left until next month.

COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE

Mr Brian Pass reported that considerable progress had been made on the questionnaire which was likely to have 18 pages. Professional advice had been received and all members were working hard on the project.

The Chairman reminded everyone that all members of that Committee were volunteers working for the future of the village.

HIGHWAYS – Routeing trials

The Chairman said she wished to make it clear to everyone that this Council had no choice in the matter of the trials. District Councillor Puttock spoke up well for us at the meeting but it was obvious that HCC and County Councillor Kendal were determined they would take place. She said that having been away she could not comment on the results so far but asked other councillors for their view.

Councillor Ardern said that while she had not observed any stoppages or queuing traffic in Ashurst there had been a significant increase in traffic volumes. It had also proved more difficult to exit from side roads on to the A35. Others concurred with that view. It had also been noticed that lorries were emerging from Woodlands Road having apparently taken a wrong turn off the A326. That was dangerous with traffic approaching fast over the railway bridge. Councillor Bryant said he felt that HCC were abiding by the agreement generally but he was concerned that Radio Solent was also advising drivers to use the A326 and Ashurst to get to Lyndhurst.

Following further discussion on various highways issues, the Clerk was asked to write to Highways/NFDC on the following:

- a) Time for the periodic “walk through the village”
- b) Litter on the A35 and the New Road corner litter bin request.
- c) Kerb stone dislodged outside the bungalow right hand side of Alldays
- d) Beech Road pavement sunken on both sides of road possibly caused by the workmen renovating the rest home.
- e) Replacement road signs for Cooper Road and Dene Way.
- f) Fly posting

RECREATION GROUND

a) Councillor Oliver said he had made inspections of the ground on 20th July, 4th and 21st August and 6th September in addition to removing glass and rubbish on several occasions. He also reported that the seat in the park was loose in its fastenings and requested that the Clerk arrange for it to be secured.

b) The Clerk reported that he was pursuing the use of a bye law for an alcohol free zone or Dispersal Order in and around the ground and was in touch with District Councillor Beck whose portfolio covered these things.

PLANNING

The Chairman reported that at the last meeting retrospective applications for work carried out in contravention of the approved plans was discussed. Two such retrospective plans were refused by the NPA Planning Committee and we feel it is important that the NPA gets a grip on retrospective applications and breaches of planning rules.

In the absence of Councillor Sopowski the Clerk read the report on Planning Issues.

THE LENGTHSMAN

The Chairman said that as the notice board in Whartons Lane had been the target for vandals would it be sensible to site the new one in Lakewood Road? She accepted that it would not have the same impact but said that if it saved money in repairs and replacements she was in favour.

It was agreed that it should be sited on the Lakewood Road side of the ground, close to the fencing, on the Ashdene Road side of the entry gate so as not to obscure the picnic table.

The Clerk advised that installation should be in about two weeks.

ACCOUNTS

- a) The Council approved the list of cheques issued since the last meeting
- b) The Chairman thanked the Council for funding the expenditure on the Hanging Basket, Village of the Year and Ashurst Olympics, and asked if the Councillors would bear in mind the expenditure on leisure activities when considering the precept for 2007/8. In previous years the costs had come out of people's own pockets. All the events had been successful and the children particularly had asked for the games to be repeated next year.

GRANTS

No applications had been received.

REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OTHER BODIES

Councillor Judd had attended a meeting of the New Forest North CAB Management Committee and the Ashurst Olympics.

Councillor Oliver had attended the Hanging Basket first round and judging, the Ashurst Olympics, and a meeting of the Newsletter Committee.

Councillor Holdsworth said that two additional foot clinics were to be held in Hythe to cope with increasing demand. There were now 14-16 clinics each month. With other Trustees she will be seeking more information relating to the closure of Stocklands, including the Day Centre. Concern had been expressed regarding the possible relocation to the Tatchbury Mount Site. Response to the Consultation Document ends on 20th October.

She had attended the AGM of Age Concern New Forest East on 27th September and the New Forest Patient and Public Involvement Forum on 11th September. There was to be a reconfiguration of the PPIFs in Hampshire on 1st October. New Forest PCT will cease along with many other PCTs throughout Hampshire although Southampton and Portsmouth PCTs will remain. There was also a presentation by a GP from New Milton on the Common Health Record and an update on consultations on the future of Birthing Centres. Finally she would be attending the quarterly meeting of Age Concern Hampshire on 13th September.

Councillor Ardern had attended meetings in regard to web sites, the Community Plan Group and the Newsletter Committee.

The Chairman had attended functions and meetings as follows:

July – Birthday Anniversary of the Ashurst Women’s Institute, Hanging Basket first round and judging, NPA Planning Committee, and the re-routeing meeting at NFDC.
August – Ashurst Olympics, meeting with Inspector Moore at Totton Police Station
September – National Park Leisure Committee, Newsletter Committee, New Forest Consultative Panel, meeting of NALC Executive.

District Councillor Tipp spoke of the Leisure Review Panel’s consideration of the provision of sun beds.

County Councillor Kendal spoke of the cycle path between Ashurst and Lyndhurst. He said that after the plans had been agreed with the two Councils the specifications were prepared. When the specification was received it was apparent that the scheme had been over engineered. From experience it seems the tenders are likely to be around £600,000 and officers are working on the specification to try to reduce the likely cost. However if the cost is still around £500,000 the scheme would fail the Value for Money test which would mean he would be unable to recommend it to HCC. One possible alternative may be to carry out the work in sections. He still felt the cycle path was important because apart from local use, with Ashurst having a station and Lyndhurst being a tourist area it may well encourage visitors to use cycles instead of cars.

CORRESPONDENCE

A list of the main items of correspondence received by the Clerk had been circulated and copies were available at the meeting. The Clerk asked that if anyone wished to attend the HAPTC AGM meeting they advise him so he could complete the necessary return.

HAMPSHIRE ETHICAL GOVERNANCE SEMINAR

The Clerk advised that he had been specifically asked to draw this seminar to the attention of all Councillors. He had distributed details and if anyone wished to attend they should advise him.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AT THE NEXT MEETING

No items were proposed.

The Chairman reminded everyone that the next Council meeting would be on October 10th at 7.30pm.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.46 pm.

Signed S R Arnold Dated 10th October 2006