

ASHURST AND COLBURY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13TH FEBRUARY 2007 AT THE CHURCH ROOMS COLBURY

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

In Attendance: Parish Clerk L. Griggs, District Councillors L Puttock and D. Tipp, Police Sergeant Brian Goodall and 14 members of the public.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies had been received from Councillor Kewley.

The Chairman welcomed Sergeant Brian Goodall to the meeting. Sergeant Goodall explained that he was the Neighbourhood Manager based at Totton and dedicated to providing community policing across Lyndhurst and Fordingbridge designated the Rural North Area. The beat officer for Lyndhurst, Ashurst and Netley Marsh was PC Karen Wright who hoped to attend the meeting in March. The Chairman thanked Sergeant Goodall for his comments and for coming to introduce himself.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chairman raised the following points brought to her attention by residents:

- a) Complaints about workmen parking their vehicles on grass verges in Ashdene Road. The situation was the same as with the Gas Board last year and the verges would be restored when the work was finished.
- b) Rubbish had been tipped opposite the allotments in Foxhills but it had been reported and had now been collected.
- c) The problem with rats was increasing and residents must contact NFDC for the pest control officer.

Councillor Holdsworth had received a phone call regarding commercial vehicles parked outside a resident's house. She had advised that if no obstruction was being caused to the footpath or road then nothing could be done. If an obstruction was caused then the police should be notified and they would take action.

There were no other comments from the public.

DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST IN AN AGENDA ITEM

The Chairman asked if there was any item on the agenda which would warrant a Councillor submitting a Form C. There were none.

MINUTES

On a proposal by Councillor Bryant, seconded by Councillor Sopowski, the minutes of the January meeting, which had been previously circulated to all Councillors, were approved unanimously and signed by the Chairman.

COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE

The following statement was given over the telephone to the Chairman by Brian Pass
“The Questionnaire was a great success with a return rate of 77% which we feel is brilliant. Of those returned only 18 have been returned not completed which is not a problem as they have been returned. There are still some to come in but the people concerned have promised to send them.

As a group we are extremely grateful to all the volunteers – it is through their dedication and “bullying” tactics that we have achieved probably the highest return rate of any parish community plan questionnaire. Thanks must also go to all the people who not only completed the questionnaire but gave some very constructive comments to assist in formulating a realistic parish plan. Currently all the questionnaires are with Debbie Holmes at NFDC who is preparing the statistics and hopefully within a month or so we will be able to report back on them.

The Committee now have the uphill task of creating the parish plan.

If you still have a questionnaire or know of any person who has not sent back their questionnaires please advise them to take it to the Post Office as soon as possible.

Councillor Ardern said the deadline for questionnaires to be taken to the Post Office was 14 February. After that they should be given to Brian Pass, Chairman of the Community Plan Group.

HIGHWAY MATTERS

a) A35 crossing. The Chairman invited Councillor Judd to report on progress. Councillor Judd said:

“At the present time we have 95 signatures for the petition. We definitely need many more.

Letters have been sent to everyone who we think will support us regarding this matter. We have had replies from everyone to whom letters were sent, except one, giving support. I understand from our Chairman that HCC hope to take a further look at the situation shortly.

My only concern is from one reply which says, and I quote ‘The safety of pedestrians is a fundamental and overriding issue when considering requests for a formal pedestrian crossing facility. The justification for any pedestrian crossing must be that it makes crossing the road safer for all road users. However pedestrian crossings do not automatically make crossing the road safer and can actually detract from road safety. In particular if there are few pedestrians for most of the day drivers may tend to ignore the crossing and put pedestrians at risk in the occasions when they are using the facility’. How a case can be made for this is completely beyond my comprehension, when the Patrol Crossing Person who was employed for many years only worked at the commencement and end of school hours and saw the children safely across the road and vehicles stopped when requested.

I would like to see the Parish Council pursue this matter with extreme urgency, and if we do not get any positive feedback from HCC by the next Parish Council Meeting, I feel we should seek publicity through the Lymington Times and Southern Evening Echo to highlight this matter.

When collecting the Questionnaires some members of the Parish Community Plan Group were asked “how is the safe crossing petition going” which proves people in the village want to know what we are doing to rectify this very worrying situation.”

The Chairman thanked Councillor Judd for her report and all her efforts in this matter. She also advised that at a recent meeting of school Governors the Chairman of that meeting had pointed out that there was an alternative route which avoided crossing the A35.

Councillor Puttock said he had taken this matter up with HCC and had made a long telephone call on the matter. The main concern of HCC was the speed of traffic coming off the roundabout

and being suddenly faced with a pedestrian crossing. They also spoke of the alternative route using the underpasses.

It was agreed to continue pursuing this matter.

b) The Chairman said she had been asked to meet representatives from HCC at the railway bridge to clarify what was proposed regarding the new barriers. Photographs and a sketch plan were circulated among the Councillors and the public. The Chairman emphasised that these were initial proposals and a final submission would be sent through in due course. Considerable discussion ensued particularly in regarding to the wooden cladding which, it was felt, could be subject to graffiti and other vandalism, and the nature rail. It was agreed to defer further discussion until final proposals were received but the Clerk was instructed to write to HCC to ensure any plans were submitted to NPA as the planning authority for this area.

c) The Chairman noted that the laying of cables from Gosport road to Fletchwood was already underway.

d) The Chairman advised that Totton Glass had removed all the broken glass from the bus shelter and they had said that the next grade up in material was now the subject of attack with blow lamps. It was agreed not to replace the glass.

e) Councillor Bryant said that the cycle path would now be started probably in August. Agreement had been reached with SEB that they would lay their pipes first and the cycle path work would follow. This would avoid having two sets of temporary traffic lights in the same stretch of road at the same time.

f) Councillor Sopowski asked if sacks, gloves, grabbing tools etc could be made available by NFDC so that volunteers could clear the triangular patch of ground near Woodlands Road. The Clerk said the correspondence list included notification of the New Forest Litter Pick week and that could be part of that activity. Councillor Sopowski preferred that this be handled separately and the Clerk undertook to contact NFDC.

At this point County Councillor Kendal joined the meeting.

RECREATION GROUND

a) Councillor Bryant said he had inspected the park but not as often as he would have wished.

b) The Clerk reported that he had confirmed acceptance of the quotation from NFDC for clearing the shrubs and now had the name and address of the person to whom the acceptance letter should be addressed.

c) Following discussion on the vandalised notice board it was agreed to dismantle it to prevent further damage. Councillor Bryant undertook to organise the removal of the board and the posts. The Chairman asked if he could also remove the remaining post on the original board in Whartons Lane.

d) The Clerk advised that at long last he had quotations for all elements of the CCTV proposal. Together they amounted to £6,301 plus VAT but of course the Council could recover VAT. The main quotation for the CCTV equipment may be amended if the matter was pursued as it was several months old. Councillor Sopowski queried if it was value for money as vandals were unlikely to be identified if their faces were covered. Marchwood had found it better to pay for a PCSO to patrol the area. The Chairman said that would cost £6000 annually without any guarantee they would be in our area at the appropriate times. Councillor Ardern said the questionnaire contained a question on CCTV in the village and it may be worthwhile waiting till the response to that question was known. It was agreed to defer this item indefinitely.

PLANNING

Councillor Sopowski gave a report on planning issues since the last meeting.

LENGTHSMAN

Councillor Bryant reported he had not yet been able to contact the possible new Lengthsman and would report at the next meeting.

Councillor Sopowski asked if the new Lengthsman could be asked to regularly check the recreation ground for broken glass.

Councillor Judd asked if the Lengthsman could be asked to clean the road name signs which, in some cases, were hardly readable. Councillor Bryant said NFDC were responsible for that work and the Clerk was instructed to write requesting they be cleaned and also that the Knellers Road sign be replaced.

ACCOUNTS

On a proposal by Councillor Bryant, seconded by Councillor Sopowski he list of cheques issued since the last meeting was approved.

GRANTS

There were no applications this month.

REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES OF OTHER BODIES

Councillor Ardern had attended the Community Plan Group.

Councillor Holdsworth advised that the Age Concern Annual Award Ceremony would take place at Marchwood Village Hall on 27th March.

Councillor Judd had attended the Community Plan Group meeting and also the New Forest Transport Seminar. She gave a report on proceedings.

Councillor Arnold attended the Heads of Department meeting on 5th February when Penny Verlander gave an update on Community Plans and Chris Elliot gave an update on building regulations. She also attended the Transport Seminar with Councillor Judd.

District Councillor Tipp said the Rural Assistance Grant was still available and normally he and Councillor Puttock divided their portion between the three councils they covered. If the Council had any project they needed funds for he would be pleased to consider it.

District Councillor Puttock said he had been asked at a previous meeting about glass recycling. In 2006 NFDC had recycled over 4200 tons of glass for which the collection costs of £180,000 was about the same as the income received. Recycling was important and if residents could increase the recycling by a few percentage points NFDC would be achieving the targets set by government and the EU. He also said that good housekeeping and prudent budgeting meant that the NFDC portion of local council tax would increase by between 2 and 3% for the next financial year.

Councillor Tipp added that NFDC provided bins free of charge to pubs in order to encourage recycling of bottles.

County Councillor Kendal said the government had proposed a speed limit of 30mph through all villages except for 'A' roads. HCC felt not all villages needed that but they supported the principle. HCC were also co-sponsors of the voluntary 20mph speed limit near schools. Posters designed by children would be put on the existing school signposts to encourage lower speeds. HCC hoped to have resources to work with Speed Safety Partnerships to fund police monitoring of accident areas. He also hoped the new proposal for Fenwick hospital would enable it to remain open possibly as a centre for diabetes.

In response to a question from the Chairman he said the trials to relieve congestion through Lyndhurst had shown that when the M27 signs were illuminated there was a reduction in traffic on the A337 but no increase on the A35 through Ashurst. The question then arose what happened

to that traffic? HCC were not satisfied with the figures and further analysis was to be undertaken. The Chairman said that residents in Ashurst would not accept that there had been no increase in traffic on the A35. Experience had shown that the traffic volume had increased significantly. Councillor Bryant mentioned that the A337 will be closed for two weekends which meant that lorries would all be using the A35 as the ban on lorries through Lyndhurst had been lifted for those weekends. He felt the work could have been so arranged that traffic would still be able to use the A337. Councillor Kendall said there was no alternative to closing the road in view of the work that needed to be done at weekends.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Chairman said she had received notification that Hampshire PCT Estates were now using the Ashurst Chapel as offices.

The Clerk said a list of the major correspondence had been circulated and some important items had been copied to each Councillor. He asked any Councillor intending to go to the HAPTC Fairtrade morning to advise him after the meeting as the list of attendees had to be in by 19th February.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AT THE NEXT MEETING

Allotments.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.10pm.

Signed S R Arnold - Chairman

Dated 13th March 2007