

ASHURST AND COLBURY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9TH JANUARY 2007 AT THE CHURCH ROOMS COLBURY

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

In Attendance: Parish Clerk L. Griggs, District Councillor D. Tipp, and 14 members of the public.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the first meeting of 2007 and wished them all a very Happy New Year.

Apologies had been received from District Councillor Puttock.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The following points were raised:

Regarding the damage caused by a falling tree in Peterscroft Avenue raised at the December meeting, although the debris was finally cleared away a few days ago there was still no news from NFDC on repairing the fence and replacing the shrubs. The Clerk was asked to pursue the matter and Councillor Tipp was asked to do what he could with NFDC.

Regarding the planning application which was refused, went to appeal and now regretfully for Ashurst the appeal has been upheld. The original application was rejected by a total of 22 people either living in or knowledgeable of the area but on appeal the decision was made by one person who is not from the area and does not have any knowledge of the area or its history.

Unfortunately I fear this decision will have an influence now on destroying the character of Ashurst village in the foreseeable future. What a travesty the planning system has become within the New Forest National Park and the country as a whole. We feel that because of the way the system seems to work that we, neighbours, Parish Council members and District Councillors have wasted valuable time, effort and money to no avail. It just makes you feel like putting in a small planning application and building something totally different because you are likely to get away with it eventually.

Regarding the application to fell an oak tree in Whartons Close the decision should be reached within the next two weeks.

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 was none.

MINUTES

On a proposal by Councillor Sopowski, seconded by Councillor Kewley, and approved unanimously the minutes of the December meeting were approved and signed.

COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE

The following statement was given by Rosemary McKay

1. Rita very kindly at the last minute provided a venue for our January meeting.

2. Despite the gloomy time of year, we had an almost 100 percent attendance. Bryan is on his well earned annual leave at the moment but did find the time to send us a text, despite all the sun!
3. At the meeting, we all immediately dived into putting our beautifully printed questionnaire into envelopes, all 800 plus! Thank you again to Rita for organising who delivers where and writing lists for everyone to adhere to. As you know, the Neighbourhood Watch will kindly be helping us deliver but we do have other volunteers, and particularly our plan group will have quite a lot to deliver. We have agreed that the questionnaires will be personally picked up to help achieve a high return. Questionnaires will go out next week with pick up by 31 Jan. The Ashurst Post Mistress has very kindly offered to take in any strays after that date. This will be announced in the next newsletter.
4. Posters will be out and about from now on as we need to make the village aware of the questionnaire. If any one knows of a place to put one please see me after the meeting, I have a few spare!
The next stage after all this will be to produce the plan itself. This document will be based on the outcome of the questionnaire plus a historical content that Arthur Jeffery is currently working on. I've a feeling this part of the plan will be the most challenging and we will be seeking advice from Penny Velandar, as none of us have produced a Parish Plan before. We are also looking for further funding as if the questionnaire is anything to go by, there will be a lot to say and see and it would be great to do our village proud.

The Chairman thanked Rosemary for that update

HIGHWAY MATTERS

- a) Following the enquiry at the last meeting the Clerk read the following response from Highways. "Barriers will be safety barriers the type you see alongside motorways. This is to prevent vehicles ending up on the railway. This is work the council has to do because of the Selby Disaster and I am afraid safety will come before blending in with the environment". Further questions were raised as to the length of the barrier. Councillor Sopowski said he had attended a meeting regarding maintaining the environment and would give the Clerk details to use in responding to Highways on this issue.
- b) A35 crossing. Councillor Judd said that 75 people had supported the petition. Councillor Sopowski said he thought some people may not want to tear out the petition slip from the newsletter so he had prepared some slips which he had left with the Post Office and hoped that might bring a greater response. He then read a letter he had drafted to go to the schools from the Council. The Chairman asked him to email it to the Clerk who would deal with the matter.

RECREATION GROUND

- a) Councillor Bryant said he had inspected the park on several occasions.
- b) The Clerk reported that he had received two quotations by phone for clearance of the shrubs and removal of all the rubbish. One from NFDC £1,495 and one from the man from NFDC who was prepared to do the same work for £1,275. On a proposal by Councillor Ardern, seconded by Councillor Sopowski, the Council accepted the NFDC quote.
- c) Councillor Bryant said that in view of the further vandalism of the notice board the supplier was not prepared to carry out any further repairs.
- d) The Clerk tabled details of a Youth Shelter which had been suggested to him as a possible aid to deterring vandalism. Councillor Sopowski opposed the idea and said similar shelters in Southampton had brought complaints from nearby residents. Were these shelters for local young people or just anyone, had there been any request for a shelter from local young people, were

they vandal proof? A member of the public said that if proposals for the Ashurst Chapel were accepted that could be used by young people. Councillor Sopowski said that could only work if run as a proper club. Councillor Ardern suggested waiting until responses to the questionnaire were available as some questions addressed this matter.

The Council agreed to leave this matter for the time being.

e) The Chairman reported that the glass in the bus shelter by the camp site had been broken again. It was agreed not to replace it.

f) The Chairman reported that five road name signs had been vandalised. The Clerk was asked to notify NFDC.

PLANNING

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

LENGTHSMAN

Councillor Bryant reported he had contacted a possible new Lengthsman and would report at the next meeting.

Councillor Judd said that some residents had told her that the area in front of Alldays was very slippery and suggested the owner be asked to sweep away the leaves. The Clerk was asked to deal with the request.

ACCOUNTS

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

The Council noted that the collection at the Carols in the Dark raised £96.42 which had been donated to Age Concern.

GRANTS

A request from New Forest North CAB was considered. The Chairman reported that confirmation had been received that it was in order for the Council to make such a grant. After some discussion Councillor Sopowski proposed, and Councillor Arnold seconded, that a grant of £200 be made. The proposal was approved unanimously.

The Chairman asked if the Council would consider making a grant to St John Ambulance who attended the Carols in the Dark and always responded to any request from the Council to attend any function. After discussion it was agreed to make a donation of £50 for attending the Carols in the Dark, and indicate to them that the Council would be happy to consider a request from them for a grant.

REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES OF OTHER BODIES

Councillor Kewley had helped with the judging of the Lyndhurst Best Dressed Shop

Councillor Judd had attended the Community Plan Group meetings.

Councillor Sopowski had attended the meeting of the New Forest Consultative Panel when the NPA were considering the style and materials for their signs. He also reported that there had been unanimity in opposing the proposed Laser Gateway lights in Southampton. The Chairman asked for a show of hands from those present and everyone voted to oppose the lights. Councillor Tipp said he would be attending a meeting on the issue and would report the unanimous view of this meeting.

Councillor Sopowski also said HCC Access Forum and NF Access Forum had produced plans and diagrams of footpath walks in this area. He had copies which anyone was welcome to take and display.

Councillor Ardern had attended the Community Plan Group meetings.

Councillor Holdsworth reported that in the first issue of Hampshire Now, a magazine for older citizens, was a statement that 1000 pairs of slippers were available free to older people. She had been asked to provide accommodation, tea and biscuits for an unspecified number of people to facilitate the distribution of the slippers. She had booked a room at the Hythe Community for 1st March.

Councillor Arnold reported the following:

16th December along with Councillor Kewley and Margaret Griggs judged the Lyndhurst Best Dressed Window Competition.

19th Carol Concert for the Village.

And of course the numerous times I was called to the park through vandalism and noise.

District Councillor Tipp reported as follows:

1. The South Hampshire sessions of the SE Plan Inquiry will be at Chichester on 23rd-25th January, at the Chichester Park Hotel, Westhampnett. All of the participants statements can be read on the EiP website at www.eipsoutheast.co.uk/participants under sections 8Bi, 8Bii and 8Biii. SHUV [South Hampshire Unheard Voices] has a seat at the first two of these sessions, and will be promoting the opinions in their submissions i.e.

- 80k dwellings is too many for South Hampshire
- The area has significant environmental constraints
- A high proportion of this is for in-migration which will take any skilled jobs, leading to an increase in inequality for the already deprived
- The trickle-down approach of economic wellbeing is not the most likely outcome
- Infrastructure must come first (not just promises of infrastructure)
- Regeneration must come first (and be education led, not housing led)

2. The proposed Laser Gateway beam from the Southampton City Centre Clock Tower is being discussed at NFDC Economy and Planning Review Panel meeting on Wednesday 17th January at 9am.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Chairman asked if any Councillor had responded to the Future Matters questionnaire. Some had.

All Councillors had a list of the major correspondence received which was available at the meeting.

The Chairman asked the Clerk to explain the request from HAPTC to support an amendment to the Local Government Bill. The Clerk explained that the Bill provided powers to enable any Unitary Authority to abolish a town or parish council without consultation. Currently the Secretary of State had to consider and consult on any such action. HAPTC believe this proposed power would be used by Portsmouth City Council to abolish Southsea Town Council where there was a history of problems with the relationships.

After discussion it was agreed that the proposed power was undemocratic and the Clerk was asked to write a letter to the local MP requesting him to seek an amendment to the bill.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AT THE NEXT MEETING

It was agreed to keep the A35 crossing on the agenda.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.50pm.

Signed S. R. Arnold - Chairman Dated 13th February 2007