

ASHURST AND COLBURY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20th NOVEMBER 2007 AT THE CHURCH ROOMS COLBURY

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

In Attendance: Parish Clerk L. Griggs, District Councillor D. Tipp, and 20 members of the public.

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

Apologies had been received from Councillor Holdsworth, who is unwell, and District Councillor Puttock.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A resident expressed concern over the planning application relating to 84 Lyndhurst Road which asked for Condition 5 of the original 1980 application to be removed. Councillor Sopowski read out Condition 5 and said the application had already been reviewed by the Parish Planning Committee and had been opposed. It was important to note that the Parish Council could only make a recommendation; the decision was taken by the NPA. The present owner of the site, Blackberry Homes, had purchased the site with knowledge of the Condition and should be held to it. While he understood the need to provide for the elderly there was also a need to provide accommodation for the younger people who were keen to remain in the village but were being priced out of the village. What view the NPA would take he did not know.

Another resident said there was a 30 year tradition of providing for the elderly on the site and, apart from the legal situation, it was morally wrong to make a change to conditions established for that purpose.

In regard to the proposal for lower speed limits through the village a resident pointed out that while crossing the railway bridge he had realised the limited space on the road for the big lorries which thundered across at speed. It was very frightening to walk on the pavements within inches of the vehicles. He asked that, despite Mott Gifford's statement that there were insufficient houses to warrant a 30mph there, the Council press for the 30mph on the western end of the village to be extended as far as the camp site entrance.

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 Ardern, seconded by Councillor Bryant, the minutes of the meeting held on 16th October, which had been previously circulated to all Councillors, were approved unanimously and signed by the Chairman.

Matters arising. The Chairman asked if the Verderers had made any comment regarding the lorry regularly parked by the camp site entrance? The Clerk said that having looked at the situation he found the lorry was parked on Highways ground so the Verderers could not be asked to take any action. He had therefore not written to them.

COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE

The Chairman said the Councillors had all received a copy of the draft plan and congratulated the Community Plan Group on the time and effort they had given to produce such an excellent document.

She was particularly interested to note that although the Council had only just seen the document some of the proposed actions had already been put in place by the Council.

Community Plan member Laurie Anderson then gave the following report:

Following a meeting with Penny Verlander (NFDC Community Planning Officer) we have followed her suggestion of agreeing who will be the lead person from our group on each of the forty two actions. Some actions will involve close liaison with NFDC. For each action linked to NFDC the named person has the paperwork (Community Plan Project Profile Form) which will help us find out which NFDC department will work alongside us to achieve what the village has asked for. For actions not linked to NFDC we also have a member of our group who will be a named contact in the plan for other people and organisations to liaise with.

The Ashurst and Colbury Parish Clerk was emailed a copy of the Draft Parish Plan one week ago. We understand the Clerk has sent this out to Councillors, together with a letter from the Community Plan Group Chairman Bryan Pass, and a form asking for responses by 30th November. We look forward to all Councillors working alongside us to achieve what the village has asked for.

The process of working out who is responsible for achieving what will take a while! The NFDC will do their reality check – this could take up to two months so we must wait for any decisions from them.

We have tentatively booked the launch of the plan for March 2008 and are investigating sources of funding for printing costs. Café Ashurst has enjoyed two walks with good attendance at both and are looking to extend the range and location of walks.

The Chairman thanked Laurie for that report. She said it may be difficult for the Council to provide a meaningful response by 30th November as it had only been received very late on 13th November and that only allowed 17 days to read a detailed document and give due consideration to which of the forty two actions delegated to the Council they considered to be within its powers and financial capability. Following discussion among the Councillors it was agreed to meet on November 29th, the first available date suitable for all councillors, to discuss the document.

HIGHWAY MATTERS

a) A35 crossing.

1. The Chairman reported she had met with Peter Fox of HCC at the site of the proposed crossing where he was carrying out a feasibility study. The following observations had been made by Mr Fox:

i) There were concerns for such a crossing with traffic entering and leaving Colbury Memorial Hall and Pound Lane.

ii) Suggestions of a crossing further up Hunters Hill are not feasible as traffic will have accelerated up the hill at that point.

iii) To make a crossing feasible the entrance to the Hall will have to be changed.

iv) The study will be submitted to the Committee this month for funding in the next budget.

v) Suggested plans will be forwarded to the Council

vi) Suggestion will be for a signal controlled crossing and staggered as it crossed the central reservation.

vii) Mr Fox asked for details of the Land Owners, the Charity Commission and the Chairman of the Memorial Hall Trustees which the Chairman had provided.

The Chairman had drawn a rough plan showing the proposal, a copy of which was given to Mrs Clare Olsen of the A35 Safety Action Group.

2. Craig Jones of the Action Group gave the following update report:

The second very well supported demonstration took place on 19th October and we were fortunate to have representations from both Councillor David Harrison and Councillor Les Puttock. The radio station, Wave 105, gave us coverage in the news bulletins in the morning and the Echo followed up with a personal comment from Clare Olsen the following week.

The Committee has invited County Councillor Kendal to visit the area to be given a guided tour of all the possible routes to school in order that he is well aware of the problems of using the alternative routes he suggested. Although the letter has been acknowledged we are still awaiting confirmation of his visit.

We must patiently await the outcome of the risk assessment and the feasibility study promised by HCC by the end of November.

No further action is planned at the present but we may need to take the petition to Winchester if the outcome is not favourable. I would like to thank the Council and all the parishioners for their superb support.

3) Councillor Judd reported that the feasibility study had been carried out and was broadly favourable to the idea of a crossing.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Judd, Mrs Olsen and all those on the Committee for their tremendous efforts to get a safe crossing area.

b) The Clerk reported that some more letters, emails and web site entries regarding the proposed speed limits changes through the village had been received. Most were in favour of reduced limits but some were opposed to any change.

c) The Clerk reported that he had emailed Rob Millar regarding the outstanding maintenance work and Mr Millar had emailed that he would chase it up. Councillor Sopowski reported that the surface near 70 Woodlands Road had broken up and vehicles were throwing out loose stones which were dangerous to passers by. The Clerk was instructed to contact HCC. Councillor Bryant reported that someone was knocking down the safety fences at the railway bridge during the night. He asked that anyone seeing or having information should report it as it left a very dangerous area unfenced.

RECREATION GROUND

a) Councillor Bryant reported that there had been vandalism and the small see saw had been broken. It was the first problem for some months but anyone noticing any bad behaviour should report it to the police. The Chairman had recovered the broken part, reported it to the police and obtained an incident number. He also said it may be necessary to obtain another contractor to carry out work for which the present man was not equipped to do.

b) The Clerk reported on the NFDC Tree Group. Following several meetings NFDC had been able to propose that any land leased by Councils from NFDC could have the trees on that land managed under the NFDC tree contract which provided a mapping of all trees, surveys periodically in accordance with the state of the trees and contractors to carry out any necessary work. Because the contract was managed by NFDC they were able to ensure that everyone was properly qualified to carry out the work and their existing software system would keep all the data required to substantiate the trees were being properly managed. Under new legislation it was likely any Council would be liable for any damage to property or persons without that record and it is unlikely to be covered by insurance. The initial administration cost to this Council was only £210 and the schedule of costs of any necessary work showed costs which were very reasonable as confirmed by Councillor Bryant.

After some discussion Councillor Arnold proposed, and Councillor Sopowski seconded, that this council should participate in the scheme. It was agreed unanimously and the Clerk was instructed to advise NFDC accordingly.

PLANNING

a) Councillor Sopowski gave a report on planning issues since the last meeting. He pointed out that the list included an application just received which was for three pairs of cottages similar to the existing ones at the station.

b) The Chairman referred to a letter from the Chairman of Brockenhurst PC on planning issues and said: I have spoken with Mr. Masefield and suggested that he takes it to NFALC and I will take to Heads of Department meeting on Monday. I have since spoken with the Chairman of NFALC and he wishes to put it on the next agenda.

c) The planning committee have been placed in a difficult position this month with one planning application. It refers to an application for a single storey rear extension at 7 Pine Close. An application was granted on 30th July but the new application was produced which had no indication that it was a retrospect. No indication came from the National Park that this was a retrospective application. This was very unsatisfactory particularly as the list given by Councillor Sopowski shows it has already been approved by NPA.

LENGTHSMAN

Nothing to report

ACCOUNTS

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

GRANTS

None

REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES OF OTHER BODIES

Councillor Ardern said she had attended a meeting of the Community Plan Group.

Councillor Sopowski had attended the New Forest NPA Consultative Panel meeting and there had been two major matters discussed. The first was the proposed new flight paths for Bournemouth and Southampton airports. It was reported that the consultation procedure was flawed. The airlines are being told it is for expansion but NPA are being told it is for safety. He would report again following further discussions. The other was the £2 million fund available from the Lottery Fund and Life In Common were suggesting that village history projects could utilise this money to ensure their history was preserved for all time by sending it to the New Forest Museum. Funds were available to digitise the data which would then be available to everyone in perpetuity.

Councillor Judd attended:

- the New Forest Passenger Transport Forum on 17th October but attendance was poor due to poor communication and muddle over the venue. Proposed improvements to the Brockenhurst/Lymington rail service and improved travel information for Bus services were discussed.
- the Transport Meeting for Parish Council representatives at Winchester 17th November. The Rail Report by the County Rail Officer had only one item of note to Ashurst and Colbury, which was the loss of the Eurostar service from Waterloo. Other items of note to residents from the meeting were:
- all stations are to be fitted with 24 hour CCTV
- bus transport usage has grown by 6%
- bus operating costs are rising and some operators are deregistering and handing back their contracts.
- Government is proposing to make running buses to time a duty with penalties for lateness
- texting for times of buses using a code will become operational soon
- a new park and ride service for Winchester will be available in 12 months time
- the Concessionary Bus Pass National Scheme is to be reviewed

Councillor Arnold had organised the History of Ashurst & Colbury Exhibition and had been delighted that over 320 people had attended. A History Committee had been assembled to continue the work of recording past and present village events and activities for the benefit of visitors and future residents.

CORRESPONDENCE

The list of correspondence had been circulated and copies were available at the meeting.

LYMINGTON FERRIES

Councillor Kershaw reported that the meeting schedule for October had been deferred and he had been unable to make the revised date. Nevertheless he had obtained the paperwork and relevant pages had been circulated to all Councillors. He noted that the document referred to roads based on a 1992 survey which was hardly appropriate and the increase of 76% in the displacement figure led him to suspect the new ships suggested were designed to carry more lorries rather than more cars as Wight Link had claimed. He asked for the Councils approval for him to act in the following areas:

- a) To continue to monitor the situation for the Council
- b) To be authorised to ask questions of Wight Link on behalf of the Council
- c) To consult with other local Councils likely to be affected by the Wight Link proposals.

In response to a question from Councillor Bryant he said that while technology was always progressing, in his opinion it would be possible for Wight Link to continue to maintain the ships to the necessary standard for the foreseeable future.

After some discussion it was agreed unanimously that Councillor Kershaw be authorised to act on behalf of the Council as he had requested.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Kershaw for all his work on this matter.

SPEED INDICATOR DEVICES

The Clerk gave details of the costs of SIDs and Speed Limit Reminder Signs and associated equipment. After some discussion it was agreed to ask NFDC for a SID to be sited in Woodlands Road, Whartons Lane and Foxhills.

CHRISTMAS

The Chairman reminded everyone of the following:

- The tree lights would be switched on at 6pm on 29th November
- Carols around the tree would be at 7pm on 19th December.
- Christmas meeting 18th December when she hoped everyone present would again attend.

She also said: In the past 6 years since the Council has been arranging the Carol Service we have donated the collection money to several organisations around the village. Being as many members of St. Josephs help to arrange this event I would like to propose that this year the collection goes to St Josephs. That was agreed.

RAT INFESTATION

The Clerk read a response from NFDC on the infestation of rats in the village. It indicated that action was already in hand around the ditches along the A35 although it was pointed out that with forest land opposite the infestation may well recur. In regard to areas within the village precise locations were requested so that the Pest Control Officer could see what action was required.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AT THE NEXT MEETING

None as it was the Christmas meeting.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.00pm

Signed S R Arnold 18th December 2007