

ASHURST AND COLBURY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16TH OCTOBER 2007 AT THE CHURCH ROOMS COLBURY

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

In Attendance: Parish Clerk L. Griggs, District Councillor L. Puttock, and 11 members of the public. County Councillor Kendal also attended for part of the meeting.

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed everyone with a special welcome to Margaret Bernard, Clerk to Fawley Parish Council who had come to give a presentation on Good Citizenship. Apologies had been received from District Councillor Tipp.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A resident asked what action the Parish Council could take regarding the infestation of rats in the village. After several visits from the Pest Control people NFDC were now saying they were assessing the situation but were providing no action. District Councillor Puttock said he could not give any direct response but he knew NFDC were very aware of the significant problem in many places and that consideration was being given to the matter. Councillor Sopowski said he had heard that the Water Board were no longer baiting the sewers which may contribute to the problem. The Chairman said there was an item on the agenda on the rat problem so there would be further comment later.

It was reported that access to a stile was blocked by a lorry parking by the entrance to the camp site. Councillor Sopowski said he had reported it to the Highways Authority on a previous occasion when the vehicle had been parked there as it was also dangerous as it blocked the view of people leaving the camp site. He thought that a letter to the Verderers might be helpful and the Clerk was asked to write accordingly.

A question was raised over the control of hedgerows and how to ensure their retention but not to allow them to become overgrown. Councillor Bryant said there was some protection for hedgerows but it depended on ownership and which of the many schemes was involved. Councillor Sopowski added that a meeting of the Consultative Panel had said it was up to parishes to develop their own plan.

PRESENTATION BY FAWLEY PARISH CLERK MARGARET BERNARD

Margaret said she had been Clerk at Fawley for only a few months prior to which she had been the Clerk to Marchwood Parish Council for 15 years and the scheme she was to talk about had been introduced there some 13 years ago. The idea was to work with Junior Schools to involve the children directly in activities related to Council matters or instances where the Council could sponsor things such as planting trees. Children were given a choice of projects from time to time and asked to vote on which project they would like to undertake and decide by giving them probably their first opportunity to exercise their democratic right to vote. Other activities included taking local representatives from village life to schools so that children got to know them and understand how they affected the life of the village. One of the great benefits was that children did not damage things they themselves had been involved in and over the years vandalism had greatly reduced. Margaret gave several examples and had a board full of documents and papers demonstrating the children's involvement. Finally she gave an example of the fruit of many years work when some 15 year old youngsters came to the Council requesting a skateboard facility and produced a document setting out where it should be and a specification. When the Council agreed to go ahead the youngsters were involved in design, tendering, selection of contractors etc. Although the cost was £60,000 the cost to the Council was only £500 as

grants and other support was gathered from many bodies. The facility has not been vandalised in any way as the users are those who saw the project through.

The Chairman thanked Margaret for her talk and a question and answer session followed.

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 meeting held on 18th September, which had been previously circulated to all Councillors, were approved unanimously and signed by the Chairman.

COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE

Community Plan member Laurie Anderson gave the following report:

The Community Plan group meeting was held on 9th October, and we were joined by Penny Velandar – Community Planning Officer, NFDC, and also Peter Gardner – our Parish Plan graphic/layout designer. Penny gave advice on some points in our current draft of the Parish Plan and the next steps to be considered. There needs to be a Reality Check regarding the Actions, which will be the ongoing part of the Plan. The reality check will start from a group meeting which we are holding on Thursday November 1st. It appears there will be some actions requested of the Parish Council and some requested of other local ‘bodies’ or groups. These actions may be short-term, 1-5 years; medium-term 5-10 years or long-term – ongoing. The New Forest District Council has a bridging process which may enable us to take some actions forward. Penny outlined that the Community Plan group will have completed their task when the Plan is printed and launched, but some members of the group may wish to join together and become a Community Action group - to continue, but with a different Constitution. Peter Gardner gave the group ideas of possible Parish Plan layout – with examples of design, and photography to be used. Some members of the group have given photos for Peter to include. The group members gave feedback on which sort of design they preferred and all agreed that the Plan will be an impressive document for the village.

Rita Judd spoke about the A35 crossing meeting, where parents were going to take the lead in any demonstration. (You may have seen something about this more recently in the local media.)

In response to comments in the questionnaire - A village walk and coffee morning has been arranged for 17th October (9.45am & 11am) – notice was given in the October Parish Newsletter.

Our treasurer reported we currently have a healthy bank balance – £100 of which is Prize money for the Photographic Competition. Further details on this will come soon.

(Bryan had been having busy days on the farm – watch out for a certain soup advert! Laurie had been lucky enough to bump into Nick Knowles!)

The Chairman thanked Laurie for that information.

HIGHWAY MATTERS

a) Councillor Judd gave the following update on the A35 crossing. Since my last report in September a Public Meeting was arranged and took place at Foxhills Junior School on Thursday 11th October. This meeting was well attended. After a report was given outlining the current situation, the Chairman asked by a show of hands for or against the holding of public action. When it was shown the public wanted to proceed with action, the Chairman explained that they would have to form their own committee and decide on their way forward. Seven members of the public volunteered, including Mrs. Clare Olsen who said she was happy to chair the committee. The public made excellent specific points giving their views on the way things should go forward. It was then agreed two demonstrations would

be held – the first on Monday 15th October between 8 a.m. – 9 a.m. The second - Friday 19th October between 3 p.m. and 4 p.m.

In just 3½ days the Committee organised Venue, Safety Issues, Programme, Media Coverage, and with the help of many residents of the village - local Publicity. A huge undertaking. The first Demonstration took place yesterday and was very well supported. The Demonstrators walked across and back over the designated school crossing on the A 35 several times taking the school pupils safely across with them, with an interval between each crossing to allow for traffic flow. Two members of the Committee, Mr. Craig Jones (Hampshire Constabulary) and Mr. David White were responsible for the safety; two members of the police were in attendance. Two or three committee members were briefed by their Chairman to deal with the media. The BBC Television and Press were present.

A short meeting of the committee has been arranged for tomorrow evening before the next Demonstration, to comment on Monday's organisation, and discuss forward planning. We now await the result of the feasibility study. I believe Councillor Kendal made a brief statement to the press yesterday.

I know so many people within the village have given everything to this campaign, but I would like to make a special mention of Mr. Espezel, Head Teacher of Foxhills Junior School, and Ann Arscott Chairman of Governors of Foxhills Junior School who have been absolutely outstanding in their support, and to the Cheer Leader on Monday, (I believe another Governor at Foxhills Junior School). To everyone who have given their support to this campaign for our children, an enormous "Thank you".

Please don't forget this Friday afternoon 3 – 4 p.m. Meet at Colbury Hall car park with your placards and banners.

Councillor Holdsworth proposed a vote of thanks to Councillor Judd for all her work in pressing the authorities for action. The Council responded unanimously.

The Chairman suggested Councillor Kendal speak after the remaining highway matters had been dealt with.

b) The Clerk advised that the proposals discussed at the last meeting had been submitted by Mott Gifford to the local Police for their comments. Although the responses from residents was 62% for and 38% against it was not representative as there were only 15 replies in all. He asked everyone to get their friends and neighbours to give a response so that the Consultants could see a true feeling from the village on the proposals whether for or against. A further note would be in the next Newsletter.

c) The Clerk reported that the Chairman had noticed that a field close to the school in Foxhills was having the new pipe line installed and was largely concrete at the moment. She had asked the Clerk to check with the Longdown Estate whether it would be possible for the school to lease the field as a parking area. Contact had been made and the Trustees would consider this at their next meeting. It was emphasised that this was a preliminary enquiry and so far no one else was involved. Councillor Ardern said this was one of the actions in the Community Plan. Councillor Holdsworth said parking at the school was an urgent issue. Councillor Sopowski said while it was worth considering it would need some firm action to ensure parents used the area and not park at the school or in surrounding roads. There was still too much emphasis on driving children to school instead of using public transport, cycles or walking. Councillor Judd said that if the project was able to go ahead it would help if a path could be made from the Knellers Lane directly to the school. Councillor Kershaw said there was only one entrance to the field which may cause a blockage with some cars arriving when others were leaving. It still involved crossing one road and there was a need to keep looking for other alternatives.

d) The Chairman reminded everyone that work on the barriers at the railway bridge would commence on 22nd October and last until February with a two week break over the Christmas period. The work will include repairs to the road and pavements but tree pruning will be kept to a minimum. Nearby residents have been notified by letter from HCC.

The Chairman then invited Councillor Kendal to speak.

Councillor Kendal outlined the demands on budgets and gave statistics on accidents around schools which showed that people were safer by a school. He also said that experience had shown that sometimes the installation of crossings on roads with 50mph limits like Hunters Hill resulted in a higher incidence of accidents than prior to the installation, due to cars skidding to a stop and crashing into pedestrians. Councillor Kershaw pointed out that the actual speed of vehicles along Hunters Hill was significantly in excess of the speed limit and he would like Councillor Kendal to compare the actual speed on that stretch with other areas where HCC had installed crossings. Councillor Kendal did not have those figures but added that in the case of Ashurst there was a substantial island between the carriageways so that people could concentrate on one direction of traffic to get to the island and then concentrate on the other direction to cross the next section. That made crossing the A35 safer than crossing a dual carriageway with no such island. He said while he was sympathetic to the parents concerns there was a limit on how many crossings could be installed as there were over 500 schools where crossings were requested. Councillor Kendal also claimed that police forces would not seek to enforce speed limits if they felt they were unreasonable.

Many points were made by Councillors and others present in support of a crossing and contesting points made by Councillor Kendal.

RECREATION GROUND

Councillor Bryant reported that he had inspected the ground several times and he had just received the quote from Wicksteed for repairing the sunken soft fill by the slide. It was for £1,235 and while that seemed expensive the work needed to be done. The Clerk was asked to see if he could get another quotation but it was agreed that Councillor Bryant and the Clerk be authorised to make a decision on behalf of the Council so that the work could be authorised quickly.

PLANNING

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

LENGTHSMAN

Councillor Bryant said if any Councillor or member of the public noticed any items belonging to the parish that needed attention please let him know as the Lengthsman was now back from holiday.

ACCOUNTS

- a) On a proposal by Councillor Ardern, seconded by Councillor Holdsworth, the list of cheques issued since the last meeting was approved.
- b) On a proposal by Councillor Bryant, seconded by Councillor Kershaw, the Precept for 2008/9 amounting to £22,750, which had been discussed at the Precept meeting, was approved unanimously.
- c) The Clerks move to Spine Point 18 for the year 2007/8 and increase in hours was agreed and it was also agreed that when the discussions between NAFLC and SLCC were finalised any change would be implemented without further discussion.

GRANTS

The Clerk advised that financial information had been received from It's your Choice and copies given to all Councillors.

After considering the information received the Council agreed to make a grant of £250.

REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES OF OTHER BODIES

Councillor Holdsworth reported that the AGM for Age Concern Hampshire had taken place and a Liberal Democrat MP had given a talk on Ageism.

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

District Councillor Puttock said he had been given the task of reporting on street lighting in some areas of Ashurst.

Councillor Arnold had attended the following:

26th September – NAFLC Executive Meeting

3rd October – The A35 Crossing meeting

5th October – Opening of the cycle path by Dr. Julian Lewis

10th October – Police Surgery – she added that this looks like another of those “if you don’t use it you will lose it” situations. She had met with PC Andy White who had only seen one resident in the two hours that he was there.

11th October – Public meeting for the A35 crossing

CORRESPONDENCE

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

LYMINGTON FERRIES

Councillor Kershaw said the proposal was to introduce new ferries capable of carrying 65 cars as against the 50 cars carried on existing ferries. However there were three ferries currently and there would only be two of the new larger ferries. Many bodies were opposed to the proposal and he said he would monitor the situation and report to the Council on developments.

VILLAGE AMENITIES

a) The Clerk had circulated the response to the request for GP and Pharmacy facilities to be made available at Ashurst Hospital. The answer was detailed but resulted in a NO to both requests.

b) The Clerk said all members had a copy of the quotation from Prokil for dealing with the rat problem. Councillor Sopowski said in view of Councillor Puttock’s comments about the NFDC position, and his own view that this was a NFDC issue, he would like to leave the matter until the Clerk had asked NFDC to deal with the problem. Other Councillors agreed with that position and the Clerk was instructed to write accordingly.

c) The question of Christmas lights for the tree was discussed and the Clerk had distributed copies of prices and style. On a proposal by Councillor Kershaw, seconded by Councillor Holdsworth it was agreed to purchase LED lights at a cost of £2,949.

SPEED INDICATOR DEVICES

In view of the time it was agreed to leave this item until the next meeting.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AT THE NEXT MEETING

None.

The Chairman reminded the meeting that the History of Ashurst and Colbury Exhibition would be held in the Church Rooms on Saturday and hoped everyone would attend.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.40pm

Signed S. R. Arnold (Chairman)

20th November 2007