

ASHURST AND COLBURY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19th FEBRUARY 2008 AT THE CHURCH ROOMS COLBURY

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

In Attendance: Parish Clerk L. Griggs, District Councillors L. Puttock and D. Tipp and 33 members of the public.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and said: as you see on the agenda we have Peter Frost and Neil Sanderson who have come to give us an indication of the work proposed for Woodlands Road. There will be time for questions afterwards

Apologies had been received from Councillor Holdsworth, who is recovering after major surgery and Councillor Kershaw.

PRESENTATION

Mr Peter Frost and Mr Neil Sanderson outlined the work they proposed on the Costicles Area to restore grazing and complete the Life II Project. Mr Frost emphasised that this was work they had put together as a private activity but they hoped it would start the ball rolling again on the project that had been commenced but never finished. A lively question and answer session followed and the over riding issue among residents in Woodlands Road was the question of drainage of the ditches which were always clogged and never cleared. There was also the suggestion of moving the cattle grid further East and those present living in Woodlands Road were in favour of that.

The Chairman thanked Messrs Frost and Sanderson for coming to the meeting and wished them well in their endeavours on the project.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chairman said as there was an agenda item for the A35 Safe Crossing she would call Mrs Olsen at that time. There were no other items.

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 Sopowski, seconded by Councillor Ardern, the minutes of the meeting held on 15th January, which had been previously circulated to all Councillors, were approved unanimously and signed by the Chairman.

Matters arising. In response to a question from the Chairman, Councillor Sopowski confirmed that the milestone on the railway bridge which had been removed while the work was proceeding had been saved and was being reinstalled.

CO-OPTION OF A COUNCILLOR

The Chairman said:

Following the last Council meeting the Clerk at the request of the Councillors corresponded with Ms Ann Sturgess who had expressed an interest in being co-opted to the Council to fill the casual vacancy which has existed since the election last year. All Councillors have received a copy of that correspondence.

I therefore propose that Ms Sturgess be co-opted as a Councillor. Councillor Ardern seconded and it was agreed unanimously. The Chairman invited Ms Sturgess to join the Councillors and participate in the rest of the meeting. The Clerk confirmed that Ms Sturgess had signed the Acceptance of Office.

COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE

Councillor Ardern asked everyone to keep the afternoon of March 15th free as it was intended to formally launch the Parish Plan on that date subject to NFDC completing their Reality Check. Notices would be displayed shortly.

As page 16 of the Plan states an Annual update will be given to the Council it was agreed to omit this item from the agenda until April 2009.

HIGHWAY MATTERS

a) A35 Crossing.

Mrs Olsen reported on the Salient Points from the HAT meeting 19th February 2008

1. HAT meeting makes recommendations about the priority of cases not decisions on funding.
2. This meeting was to gather information. The next meeting on the 18th March is to look further at the priority for funding.
3. The outcome of the feasibility study was that a controlled crossing was feasible at the site but...
4. The overriding recommendation from the Environmental Dept (Stuart Reynolds) was that the alternative route should be explored fully first in view of the cost of the crossing.
5. The alternative route suggested is via Foxhills, through the subways, which we were told was a diversion of approximately 300metres?
6. There were lengthy discussions about this alternative including the subways and their safety, the dreadful traffic through Foxhills at school 'drop off' and 'pick up' times, the safety of the pathways along the route which can be quite lonely, and how to make the increased distance involved attractive. The current footpath would be fenced off at Colbury.
7. This raised the issue of the parking and traffic around the Foxhills site and the idea of 'no waiting' areas with policing, a one way system, and possible car park. A risk analysis in the area was suggested.
8. There is still an issue about the cycle path terminating at Colbury Hall/Scout Hut which are both fully used but the use of the crossing point is mainly by school attenders with fewer people using it during the day, therefore not supporting a controlled crossing due to numbers using it during the day. If the crossing is used infrequently concern was raised about drivers assuming the lights would be green and increasing the possibility of accidents at the site.
9. There is a possibility of another feasibility study to look at relocating the crossing further up the hill perhaps with a decreased speed limit. This was not considered in the previous study. Traffic calming measures were also discussed in conjunction with this item.
10. The schools own 'safe travel to school plans' were mentioned as there is possible additional funding from this pot?
11. My main concern is who is going to follow up on any of the above between now and the next meeting?
12. I think the Safe Crossing Committee should place a request to present again at the next meeting with a video of the problems at Foxhills, and perhaps evidence of risks associated with the alternative route that is proposed. An accurate assessment of the increased distance would be useful. I will need the support of other committee members to enable this to happen.
13. The schools need to be updated on the outcome of this meeting.

14. It is proposed to seek the views of the community when the Parish Plan is launched in March with a desk at the opening as proposed by Rita Judd.

Councillor Judd said that Mr & Mrs Olsen had given an excellent presentation to the HATs Committee and “had done the village proud”.

b) 30 mph Speed Limit Initiative. The Clerk read the following from an email received from the Consultants Mott Gifford. We would advise you that the Village 30mph scheme as a whole has been delayed, caused by the differences of opinion during consultation between the Police and Hampshire County Council. Most villages including Ashurst may not now be completed until July 2008. We attach an updated plan showing revised proposals for Ashurst following the aforementioned consultation and welcome your comments before we prepare a Traffic Regulation Order. Please note that Colbury does not have a sufficient number of properties to meet the village frontage criteria for a 30mph limit. Also, it has not been possible to reduce the existing 50mph speed limit on the two lane dual carriageway section of Hunters Hill (although we are led to believe that a pair of controlled pedestrian crossings are to be installed across the A35 near Knellers Lane as part of a separate scheme) but we have been able to extend the existing 40mph limit to cover the Whartons Lane and Deerleap Lane junctions. The western end of the proposed 30mph limit also now encompasses the uncontrolled pedestrian crossing between the camp site and the Woodlands Road junction (A detailed design drawing showing signs and road markings will be forwarded for your consultation in due course.) Given Hampshire County Council’s high priority for this scheme, we would be very grateful if you could reply with your support/comments by Friday 22 February 2008 in order that we can progress to advertise the Traffic Regulation Order before Easter.

After discussion it was agreed that the Clerk write accepting the revisions but also saying that the 50 mph on Hunters Hill was still not acceptable to the Council.

c) The Chairman said that Councillor Holdsworth has great concern over the parking on both sides of the road in Beech Road. There is no room for an ambulance or any other service to get through. While the Council noted her concern it was felt that short of having double yellow lines there was little the Council could do.

d) The Clerk reported that Minstead Parish Council was willing to share the costs of a SID but the other Councils had not so far responded. After discussion it was agreed that if nothing was heard in the next two weeks a SID should be ordered and Minstead advised accordingly.

RECREATION GROUND

Councillor Bryant said it had been relatively quiet since the last meeting.

The Clerk reported that the proposed Tree Care system to be provided by NFDC would not now be available as several large Councils had withdrawn. However NFDC were trying to put some scheme in place for the smaller Parish Councils who were interested. The Chairman added, as a member of NFALC I have contacted the Chairman and he had not heard of this Tree Management Contract; however he is prepared to mention this at the next NFALC meeting.

PLANNING

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

b) The Appeal Hearings re development at rear of 36-40 Foxhills has been heard but no decision was yet available.

The Chairman reported on the following three items:

c) Meeting at the National Park – Mandatory local requirements for the National Park area.

Briefly the Government are introducing a set of standardised national planning and related application forms. This means that after 6th April the NPA will not be able to accept any applications that have been submitted using the old application forms.

d) Most of you will have seen the inappropriate signs at the end of Wood Road and corner of the A35 . The owners Blackberry Homes have now had to submit a planning application as the signs break policy rules. What I would like to point out is that a similar application was dismissed by Officers and on Appeal on 8th November 2007 and 30th January 2008 respectively. So if the NPA are to be seen as consistent in their policies there should be some hope for this Parish

e) The National Park has employed a Compliance Officer, which enables the authority to pro-actively manage new developments. Her task is ensuring that new developments are built in accordance with the approved plans and that the conditions subject to which the development was granted have been complied with.

LENGTHSMAN

Nothing to report

ACCOUNTS

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

The Clerk said with regard to the Christmas Lights a quotation had been received for replacing the existing metal box with a new one capable of housing the transformer thus making it more secure. The quotation included all the updates required by new regulations and making all wiring running from the box 12v and removing all old wiring. The price quoted was £965. After discussion it was agreed to accept the quotation.

GRANTS

None to consider

REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES OF OTHER BODIES

Councillor Bryant attended the Parish Plan meeting.

Councillor Ardern had attended the Parish Plan Steering Group meeting and the Newsletter Committee meeting

Councillor Judd had attended the Parish Plan Steering Group meeting

Councillor Arnold had attended the following:

17th January – Meeting with Police Constable Andy White – re outcome of court case of the vandalism in the park. He said that unfortunately the Police get used to this sort of thing. They never send to court anything that they are not sure about but still they find that the magistrates drop the case.

18th January – Meeting with the Parish Plan Committee along with Councillor Bryant and the Clerk to check wording and proposed actions.

28th January – School Governor meeting - to discuss the possible use of a field for parking, The Parish Council had made an effort to try and ease some of the traffic problems connected with the school, but the Governors/ Head of School were not in favour of the proposal.

13th February – Goff Beck Crime & Disorder Portfolio Holder. Thanks to District Councillor Tipps quick reaction about the court case concerning the vandalism in the Village it has been reported to the Chief Inspector of Police and to our local Inspector. The Youth has gone quiet for now, however his name has been flagged up and they will keep an eye on the situation. If anything else develops his name will be referred to the ASB Panel for consideration

18th February – Newsletter Committee meeting. This was called as the Parish Plan Committee had indicated some possible changes that had arisen from answers to the questionnaire.

CORRESPONDENCE

The list of correspondence had been circulated and copies were available at the meeting. The Clerk also reported on items received subsequent to preparing the list. In particular a letter from the Scout Group inviting everyone to the opening of the New Scout Hut.

LYMINGTON FERRIES

The Council noted that the first of the new ferries had been launched.

WITHDRAWAL OF FREE SCHOOL BUS

Nothing to report

PLASTIC BAG FREE ASHURST

The Clerk read from a report received from Mr Barnett the key elements of which were: The project has been featured in the Southern Echo (article on its Green Pages) and the Lymington Times. Both papers have asked that they be kept up to date with progress as the project continues. BBC South has expressed an interest in filming at Foxhills School (see below). The South Today reporter Chris Coneybeer will be covering the topic.

Foxhills Junior School has been very proactive. A session has already been held with the schoolchildren taken by one of the New Forest Rangers. The topic was the impact of plastic bags and other litter on the environment and wildlife of the Forest. Further sessions are planned including the creation of a mural depicting the pollution aspect of plastic in the context of marine life.

The competition for the logo to go on the 'Ashurst & Colbury Bag' will start at the end of February. The intention is that the school will create a shortlist of entries for a final panel to judge sometime around the end of March. I would very much welcome a representative from the Parish Council on the panel and would ask that a nominee is agreed so that I can liaise over dates etc. The bag will include the Parish Logo as well as that of the school and the National Park Authority.

I have taken the opportunity to write individually to all the retail businesses informing them of the project and seeking their help. I will follow this up with personal visits. Meanwhile Richard Dance, Proprietor of Alldays, has given me his full support. He is keen to help and has volunteered to donate a prize for the Foxhills competition should this be felt appropriate. He has also agreed to be a representative for the traders on the judging panel.

I hope to have the bag design agreed by early April 2008. The bags should be then available for delivery around the Parish by late May 2008. By this time I will have spoken with all the traders and will know the level of their engagement with the idea.

SCHOOL PARKING

A letter had been received from the Chair of the Governors saying that they and the school could not support the initiative from the Council to ease the parking problems at the school

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AT THE NEXT MEETING

Councillors and Public please note that the March meeting will commence at 7 p.m. John Sorrell from New Forest Transport Strategy will be coming to talk and inform us about the new CCTV cameras that will be fitted in Lyndhurst. These will enable HCC to divert traffic off the M27 motor way through Ashurst when they have a build up along the A337 Cadnam Road. The meeting will also be advertised in the newsletter and it is hoped that many residents will attend to seek to protect our village from the offload of Lyndhurst's traffic problem.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.14pm

Signed S R Arnold - Chairman

Dated 18th March 2008