

ASHURST AND COLBURY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18th March 2008 AT 7pm in THE CHURCH ROOMS, COLBURY

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

In Attendance:, District Councillors L. Puttock and D. Tipp, locum Clerk Mrs S Clarke and 36 members of the public.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and said: I welcome Mrs. Sandra Clarke who has come from Hampshire Association of Local Councils to take the minutes for this meeting. As some of you know Len was taken ill and returned from hospital today. He wishes me to pass on his apologies for certain items that cannot be fulfilled tonight but he will give these matters his attention as soon as possible.

Apologies had been received from Councillor Holdsworth, who is still recovering after surgery, and Councillor Judd who was recovering from eye surgery

1. PRESENTATION "TRAFFIC CONTROL – USING THE A35

Cllr Arnold, on behalf of the Parish Council, welcomed John Sorrell from the New Forest Transport Strategy Office to clarify the next stages of the control of traffic through Lyndhurst.

Mr Sorrell reported: Hampshire County Council (HCC), in conjunction with the New Forest National Park Authority, would be introducing an Intelligent Routing Scheme to Lyndhurst, with the aim of reducing traffic queuing and improving air quality. This had come through the Local Plan, and was aimed at reducing congestion by managing traffic around Lyndhurst. A sub group had identified the scheme.

Two ANR cameras would be installed on the A337. These read number plates and assess journey times. If these times exceed a pre-set limit the control centre is automatically alerted. They can assess the problem, via CCTV, and can set variable message signs on large roads alerting drivers to the congestion and divert some of the traffic on to the A35. Time limit to be established a couple of months after installation.

Cllr Arnold said she would take questions one at a time from the audience, and requested the public state their names clearly to the Clerk before their question.

Mrs Jenkins raised a number of issues. She said the scheme would not resolve the problem of too much traffic in the area. The additional traffic would make the A35 busier, and the road was already difficult to cross with numerous and fast traffic.

Mr Sorrell acknowledged the problem. HCC try to encourage less cars, but the National Park attracts many visitors, many of whom arrive by car. HCC is setting up 30mph limits through villages, with Ashurst and Colbury listed for the first phase.

Cllr Sopowski said that the traffic management installed in Lyndhurst had caused its own problems. He asked if the timing on the traffic lights could be varied, and if they could recognise when there was no traffic in one direction.

Mr Sorrell answered that the lights were Intelligent and phased with traffic moving in the area. He would refer this suggestion back to Highways. He said other options were being implemented, e.g. cycle routes, but cannot stop traffic entering the area.

Bridget Crane asked if the scheme would 'fudge' the problem, and stated that the variable signs need to be set at Junction 2 on the M27, with specific instructions.

Mr Sorrell stated that HCC have to look at all alternatives before a By Pass can be authorised. Additionally, funding for a By Pass would not be available for at least

another 5 – 10 years. Alternatives need to be tried in the meantime, and may provide support for a By Pass. There was no data on traffic destinations, but there was a natural bottleneck at Lyndhurst. He acknowledged sign at Junction 2 would be useful. He said a survey showed that traffic on A337 likely to be reduced by only 6%. A resident queried the accuracy of surveys, as local surveys do not all agree with HCC surveys. Mr Sorrell said if 10% could be achieved this would lead to about 1,000 less cars per day through Lyndhurst.

Mrs Jenkins and D Honey asked about pollution monitoring, and Mr Sorrell said the air pollution at Lyndhurst would be monitored as part of the scheme. Air quality was bad there due to the enclosed nature of the area. Improved air quality should come from reduced congestion.

The residents raised a number of other concerns regarding other traffic problems in the area, but they were informed that this was not part of the scheme under discussion, and would need referral to relevant Highways department.

Cllr Bryant asked if the keep left lights to Cadnam would be on permanently, to improve traffic flow, and stated that the new footpath scheme does not have obvious edges, creating danger to pedestrians. Mr Sorrell advised that lorries need to pull across the road on A337 to turn left into Lyndhurst, hence the restriction, but alternative is being investigated. He said feed back to HCC from traders was that it was now easier to cross the road and trade had improved.

Mr Crane commented that it would have been useful to have a presentation of facts and proposals to create a more meaningful discussion. Mr Sorrell reported that the scheme had been approved and this was purely an update. He reported that County Cllr Mel Kendall had approved the scheme, which will assess the need for a By Pass. Cllr Bryant said the Parish Council had been involved in the trial to direct traffic through Ashurst, and had hoped for a bottleneck, which did not occur. He stated that situation needs to be monitored once scheme in place, and used to make a case for a By Pass.

Cllr Arnold reported that she had issued a press release, with support from Lyndhurst. She reiterated that any diversions will require better signs to divert the traffic.

District Cllr Puttock reported that he and Cllr Arnold had attended a HATS meeting that day. The area had figured considerably in discussions. They are listening, but funds and resources need to be found to overcome the problems. The scheme is an attempt to reduce queuing at Lyndhurst, and CCTV cameras are being installed to help this review. Survey showing 6% traffic flow reduction took place in 2006. Five or six different measures are under investigation, trying to assess effects. Traffic cannot be stopped from coming to the New Forest, but NFDC are working with British rail and buses to the area to provide improved public transport. Bus priority lanes were another option. He said Mr Sorrell was only presenting the scheme, which was just one attempt to alleviate the problem.

Cllr Kershaw reported that it was planned to raise the height of the Empress bridge, at Lymington, to allow improved access for lorries. He was concerned as lorries would need to come through Lyndhurst to reach the bridge. He said HCC need to adopt an integrated strategy. Mr Sorrell reported that raising the height of the bridge was to allow access to Beaulieu, and the A337 already had lorry restrictions.

Cllr Sopowski asked that the suggestions for improvements that had been raised at the meeting be fed back to HCC for consideration, eg specific redirection signs, more intelligent traffic light system at Lyndhurst. Cllr Bryant said better signing for Christchurch is needed, as first sign from M27 directs traffic through Lyndhurst.

ACTION

Cllr Arden asked if monitoring would take place at Ashurst and Colbury, and Mr Sorrell assured her that it would.

The Chairman thanked Mr Sorrell for his presentation.

2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Craig Jones reported that HATS had looked at alternative routes of travel to Foxhills School. There was a presentation and discussion, with pros and cons to both routes. There was a proposal to support a pedestrian crossing slightly west of current siting, which was passed and is going forward for prioritisation. He thanked Clare Olson. He said funds were available for road safety issues, and schools need to engage. Cllr Arnold said it was a good presentation, gates to Colbury Memorial Hall would not need moving, but some railings may.

A resident reported that hedges in the Foxhills area were overgrown, forcing pedestrians towards the road. To report to HCC.

Mr Jeffery gave a report on the success of the Parish Plan Launch, with the good number of villagers attending, the interactive displays, and the Parish Council input together with the other community groups. The supporting groups were warmly thanked for their assistance.

The Chairman thanked the Community Plan Group for their hard work in preparing the Parish Plan and the Launch afternoon. She said that although the number of Plans which had been given out was not huge, it was a good afternoon which brought the village together.

A resident reported that near the steps at A35/Woodlands Road to station was a lot of litter . Problem already reported. Pavement to the campsite was being obstructed by overgrown brambles etc., to be reported.

Mrs Jenkins asked if Ashurst and Colbury could have brainstorming session with other neighbouring authorities, to be part of traffic changes, instead of being dictated to. Cllr Arnold said a representative of Lydhurst would have attended the meeting that night, but their Council meeting was taking place at the same time. A resident expressed concern that County Cllr Kendall was not present, and stated that the parish needed more information. He said that there were some sensible suggestions at the meeting and these should be forwarded to Cllr Kendall. He was informed that plans had been going on for years, it was out of Council's hands, and they could only forward points raised.

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST IN AN AGENDA ITEM

Cllr Arnold asked if before commencing the meeting any Councillor had the necessity to submit a disclosure of interest form for any item on the agenda. None were raised.

4. MINUTES

On a proposal by Councillor Bryant, seconded by Councillor Ardern, the minutes of the meeting held on 19th February 2008, which had been previously circulated to all Councillors, were approved unanimously and signed by the Chairman

Matters arising: None.

5. HIGHWAY MATTERS

- a) Update on the A35 crossing: given earlier in meeting.
- b) Speed Indicator Device. The Clerk had made progress with this item, but will defer until the April meeting.
- c) Whartons Lane at A35 end. Round drain cover lifted – speak to Highways.

- d) Pavement in Peterscroft Avenue very uneven and a nightmare for people with invalid chairs.
- e) Keep left sign on the A35 after lorry demolished the signs. Resident said the Police were involved so should have records of the incident.

6. RECREATION GROUND

Report from Councillor Bryant

- a) Clerk to write to Mr Whitehorn about grass cutting for the coming year..
- b) The Tree Maintenance Contract. NFDC are carrying out a pilot scheme with Ashurst, Hordle and Sway. Due to the lack of interest of other parishes this will be for one year at present. By June of this year the NFDC would like a presentation of how it has worked. The pilot scheme will run from April to March 2009. Twenty three Parishes had not replied to letters from NFDC about this proposal and the NAFLC Chairman was writing to them.

7. PLANNING

Report from Councillor Sopowski

- a) He read through the list from of applications and decisions made. There had been two refused applications with appeals allowed, i.e. land rear of 30 Foxhills (a bungalow) and land rear of 36-40 (7 houses), and summary of comments was given.
- b) Attending the NAFLC meeting the previous day Council was informed that from 6th April NFDC goes on line for planning, all letters for or against the application will show the writers name and address.

8. THE "LENGTHSMAN"

Rubbish and litter by the station, NFDC/HCC responsible. Should be cleared once a week.

9. ACCOUNTS

To approve list of cheques paid since the last meeting – deferred to next meeting. Three known payments issued, relating to newsletter. Cllr Arnold asked that if any Councillor and/or resident had a concern with this they could contact her after the meeting.

10. GRANTS

None to consider

11. REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES OF OTHER BODIES

Cllr Bryant had attended the Code of Conduct training at Fawley.

Cllr Ardern reported she had not only attended the Parish Plan launch but had also put in a lot of time and energy preparing for the event.

Cllr Sturgess had attended the Parish Plan Launch.

Cllr Kershaw had attended Planning and HATS meetings.

Cllr Sopowski had attended the Consultative Panel. Varying views on the flight path issue. Granted by the Ministry. Fighting fund set up. He asked if Council could support financially and/or physically. The Clerk advised that any financial payment would need to be covered by statutory powers. Regarding the Forestry Commission, Ministers to be asked for mandate to review in 2008 as originally intended, or in light of Management Plan. Council need to respond with time scale preference.

Cllr Arnold reported that she had attended the following:-

23rd February – Opening of the Scout Headquarters

6th March – Anti Social Behaviour, Criminal Damage and Alcohol related Disorder.

This had been an all day conference, and with a lot of paper work, if any one wanted to read these they should contact the Cllr Arnold.

11th March – Meeting with PC Andy White re: the recent court case of vandalism.

15th March – Launch of Parish Plan – The Parish Council were invited to produce a presentation.. She gave thanks to Councillor Ann Sturgess for her help.

17th March – Executive of NFALC. Ministers have agreed and given the go head for the new flight path. Alternatives for the closure of Post Offices have been a mobile van coming round weekly. The public are told that car tax and T.V. Licenses are much easier to purchase on line. She raised concerns that may be so for people who are computer literate, but it also takes away the personal side of walking into your own Post Office. Support still needed for village post offices.

18th March – GIS Mapping Meeting

18th March – HATS meeting re the A35 crossing. Excellently put together by the committee handling this situation.

District Cllr Puttock reported that Highways were reviewing the 30mph for villages and Ashurst and Colbury were in the first tranche, details in due course. Proposal to extend 30mph (from 40mph) to Longdown Farm was not agreed.

District Cllr Tipp reported on Crime & Disorder meeting. Invite to be issued to Parish Council later in year to attend event in Hythe on scheme dealing with youth.

12. LYMINGTON FERRIES

Councillor Kershaw reported that he had heard from Wightlink. NFDC involved in discussion on roads, but no consideration of effect of traffic on A35 through the parish. NFDC referred Council to HCC and the NF National Park Authority. HCC confirmed they are looking into it. Potentially about another 100 cars ph in peak periods.

13. CORRESPONDENCE

a) New policy at the recycling unit in Marchwood. Private vans and trucks being questioned to prevent commercial vehicles dumping rubbish for free. A permit can be obtained for 12 visits per annum if resident can prove for private use. Residents finding permits are not being issued if another car is available in the household. Size of trailer/van also relevant. Cllr Arnold read out a letter from a concerned resident in regard to her experience of trying to obtain a permit. Concerns raised that flytipping in the area will increase, and that the system will penalise honest residents..

b) Fluoride in the Water. Cllr Arnold read out a letter from a resident asking for Council's views on fluoride in drinking water. It was suggested that Council could ask a local dentist for the pros and cons, and discuss at the next meeting. One resident pointed out that since its introduction children have had a big reduction in dental caries.

c) Saving our Parishes – Petition to Downing Street. Councillor Sopowski to circulate by email.

d) Living Register – to record the meaning of local words, place names and sayings. To be displayed in the Post Office, and residents to be encouraged to make entries. Councillor Sopowski to process this.

14. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AT THE NEXT MEETING

None.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will include the Annual Parish Meeting, commencing at 7.30 p.m. on Tuesday 15th April 2008.

The Chairman thanked the following:-
Mrs Clarke for her services as locum Clerk;
Steering Group of the Parish Plan for their hard work;
Craig Jones for his work on road safety on A35.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.45pm.

Signed S. R. Arnold

Dated 5th April 2008