

ASHURST AND COLBURY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21st OCTOBER 2008 AT THE CHURCH ROOMS COLBURY

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

In Attendance: Parish Clerk L. Griggs, District Councillor D. Tipp, County Councillor M. Kendal and 5 members of the public.

Apologies: Councillor A. Sturgess and District Councillor L. Puttock

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed in particular the Beat Officer, P. C. Andy White, together with the new area PCSO Lisa Quinn.

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. None were offered. The Chairman reminded Councillors that if any item arose during Public Participation which warranted a Form C they should declare it immediately.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

PCSO Quinn introduced herself and said she was responsible for several villages including Ashurst and Colbury and was keen to get to know the area and its people.

PC White said that following complaints about noise late at night representations had been made to one Pub in the area and the landlady had voluntarily changed the closing time from 1 am to midnight which seemed to have solved many of the problems.

Councillor Sopowski asked if Police were involved when notice boards were placed on roads or pavements. PC White said only if it was a hazard or caused an obstruction. The Police worked closely with other bodies who had direct responsibility for notices and boards in public places.

Councillor Sopowski asked who had authorised the Press Release relating to the NPA Draft Plan which had been issued jointly by the Councils of Sway, Brockenhurst, Lyndhurst and Ashurst. He said he had never seen the document, which verged on the political, and he had not given his approval to a document prepared and issued by another Parish Council on our behalf without asking this Council to approve the document. He wished to disassociate himself from the document.

Councillor Judd said she had been approached by the Chairman and felt that villages acting together were likely to be better than one acting alone.

The Chairman said she had spoken to Councillors on the phone about it and 5 were in favour which represented a majority.

Councillor Sopowski said he had not seen it. He had no problem with part of it but wished to disassociate himself from the political part. He again asked how this press release had become authorised by this Council when he had not seen it?

The Chairman said she had spoken with all Councillors except Councillor Kershaw who she had been unable to reach by phone and followed that up with an email asking for people to respond. She had then received approval from five Councillors but had not received any response from Councillors Kershaw and Sopowski. Councillor Sopowski repeated that he had not received any email and wished to distance himself from the political section of the Press Release which he had not seen and had not been authorised by this Council.

The Clerk interjected to say that while he fully accepted Councillor Sopowski's right to disassociate himself from the document, the Council operated on a simple majority principle so that if there was a majority

supporting the issue of the Press Release then the Chairman was properly and lawfully entitled to give approval for the issue of the document on behalf of the Council. As the Chairman had received that confirmation from four Councillors plus herself it was clear that with only seven Councillors in office it was supported by a majority.

Councillor Sopowski again said he had not seen the Press Release and wished to disassociate himself from the document and asked who had approved it Councillor Holdsworth said she was more than happy with the document and had given her approval when spoken to by the Chairman.

Councillor Kershaw said at the meeting in the Scout Hut to discuss the NPA Plan it had been agreed that Ashurst was different to the other three service villages. He said it was unfortunate that we were now grouped together in the Press Release. The final section, in particular the comments attributed to George Bisson, was political and he wished to disassociate himself from them.

Councillor Sopowski said he had never seen the document and he wished to disassociate himself from it. He said the Press Release was never sent to him and added if you can show me evidence that you did send it to me I will retract. I did not agree to it and I find it appalling that the Press Release was issued without me seeing it.

The Chairman was incorrect in rushing it through, Councillor Bryant said he did not agree with documents being issued by email. If it had been put through Councillors letter boxes this issue would not have arisen. He had been given the Press Release over the phone by the Chairman and he had given his agreement to it. The Chairman said enough time had been given to this issue and she wished to move on to the next agenda item.

Councillor Sopowski asked the Clerk to record in the minutes that he wished to distance himself from the Press Release which was a political document with which he disagreed and which had not been authorised for issue by the Council.

MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 16th September, which had been previously circulated to all Councillors, were approved unanimously and signed by the Chairman. The Chairman asked if there had been any response to the request in the Newsletter for information on the accident on the A35. The Clerk said he had not received any responses. The Chairman said that at a meeting of NAFLC she had raised the issue of the noise on the resurfaced A35 and had been told it was due to a waterproof surface being added to the structure which would eventually settle down and be less noisy.

HIGHWAY MATTERS

a) Barriers by the railway bridge

The Clerk advised that the quotations for the work had been discussed by the Council at its Precept meeting but Councillor Sopowski was opposed to carrying out any additional work so the matter had been referred to this meeting for a decision. Councillor Sopowski said it was a difference of style, one old and one new. The metal poles were probably dangerous and he had been at a car crash where one pole had driven through the car nearly going through the driver. He did not see the need for the Council to spend money on further work. What was there was there and the bushes would soon overgrow the barriers anyway. Councillor Bryant suggested that a site meeting would probably be the best way of deciding if any work should be carried out as all could see what was proposed and relate the costs to it. Maybe it would be better to plant some wild flowers to brighten it up and cover the barriers. The Clerk was asked to organise a site meeting.

b) Noise on the new surface of the A35

Councillor Sopowski said he was waiting to put the issue to the New Forest Consultative Committee. He would be asking why chippings were used when the aim should be to make the forest a quiet and tranquil place.

c) Green and silver barriers at the bridge.

The Chairman asked if there had been any progress on this issue. The Clerk reported that he had not received any further response.

d) Resident in Pine Close and access via Rye Dale.

The Clerk reported that NPA advised that no planning application was necessary for making a new access as it

was not a classified road. Highways also reported that approval had been given for a dropped kerb on the same basis. Filling a ditch with scalplings was acceptable as the water could flow through them.

e) A3 5 Crossing

County Councillor Kendal advised that the planning application to change the entrance to Colbury Memorial Hall had gone to NPA and the owners had agreed to the change. Money had been allocated to the project in the 2009/10 budget but he was still trying to get money from under spends elsewhere so the project could get underway in the last quarter of this financial year. The Clerk asked if the plans had gone to NPA as he had not received any information from NPA. Councillor Kendal said that Highway matters would not necessarily come to the Parish.

Councillor Kendal said that he had some funds left in his HCC devolved budget for community projects and asked the Council to publicise the availability of this money for small capital projects. Grants of between £500 and £2,000 could be available subject to the application forms being completed and approved.

Councillor Sopowski asked if this covered say building up a reserve fund to replace playground equipment and Councillor Kendal confirmed it was.

f) Lyndhurst Traffic Management Steering Group

Councillor Kendal said this group had been set up to consider all the options to reduce the traffic congestion and air pollution in Lyndhurst. The Group included representatives from HCC, NFDC, the Councils of Lyndhurst, Brockenhurst, Copythorne and Ashurst, Lyndhurst Trade Association, Lyndhurst Residents Association, New Forest Association, New Forest HAT, New Forest Friends of the Earth and the NPA. The first meeting in May had considered many options and taken some for further consideration and information.

The September meeting had received more detailed information on those options but had rejected them all because they all degraded the through flow time at the High Street 'canyon' area and there was only marginal improvement in the nitrous oxide levels. The Bus Lane option had been approved and the summer trial period had just ended. It had shown that buses were able to move more quickly cutting up to 20 minutes off of journey times. Consideration was being given to keeping the left turn green arrow on the traffic lights in the High Street on for longer periods during the day with some form of telemetry so that when large vehicles approached the junction the light would be red to avoid any accidents as large vehicles turned left while traffic was still emerging from Romsey Road.

There was also the possibility of moving the traffic lights back to an area by the Church Cemetery and the Inn that is before the 'canyon' area, so that once the traffic moved over the lights it would flow straight on through that area thus reducing the NO2 problem. Over 400 people had used the free bus services from Brockenhurst and Ashurst Stations into Lyndhurst. The vast majority had been on the Brockenhurst/Lyndhurst run and very few on the Ashurst/Lyndhurst run. Councillor Sopowski asked if any consideration had been given to having traffic lights at the Shrubbs Hill/High Street junction. Councillor Kendal said that had been considered but had not shown any benefit in the areas under consideration. Councillor Arnold said that the open top buses came from Eastleigh but did not pick up people until they reached Lyndhurst. Could they not start to take passengers when they entered Ashurst?

Councillor Judd said that she was very grateful for the introduction of the priority bus lane which had transformed the bus service times. In regard to the shuttle bus would it be possible for the bus to pick up at the eastern end of the village rather than the station? The normal bus service on Sundays was very poor and the shuttle bus could provide a useful service if it started by say Colbury Hall. Councillor Kendal said he would get the safety team to look into those issues. Finally Councillor Kendal referred to recent articles on councillors pay. He said that many increases recommended by the Pay Review Panel had in fact been refused by Councillors.

g) The Chairman reported that the road surface was breaking up around the manhole cover at the top of Hunters Hill on the North side. She asked the Clerk to contact Highways.

RECREATION GROUND

Councillor Bryant said he had just received the latest Inspection Report which showed only minor works were

required. Most of the tree work had been done by the main contractor and a local man had dealt with the minor issues. The work was ongoing.

He would be meeting with members of the Community Plan Group on Saturday to consider what additional equipment might be possible for older children and would report back at the next meeting. Bearing in mind the report from the NFDC Tree Manager the Council needed to consider felling some old trees and replanting. He did not want to install equipment which then had to be moved to allow felling of trees. The Council needed to take a fifteen year view on the tree issues.

Councillor Judd said that at the Precept meeting she had asked if funds could be made available for matters the Community Plan Group may require in the park. The Clerk had asked her to approach the Community Plan Group to request details of what they would want in the park. When asking the group she had been told they were already in discussion with the Council through Councillor Bryant. Why had he not advised the Council of that?

Councillor Bryant said the discussion so far had been general as there was no point in the Council discussing things at great length until there was clarity on what may be needed and where it might go.

PLANNING

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

Mr Hay commented on the appeal made by the owners of 44 Woodlands Road following the refusal by NPA of a planning application for development of the site, and said he would speak further with Councillor Sopowski

ACCOUNTS

On a proposition by Councillor Sopowski, seconded by Councillor Kershaw, the list of cheques paid since the date of the last meeting was approved.

PRECEPT

The Clerk said a meeting of Councillors had decided to hold the precept at the current level and sought formal approval for a precept of £22,750 for 2009/10. Councillor Judd proposed and Councillor Sopowski seconded the proposal which was agreed unanimously.

NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY DRAFT PLAN

The Chairman said enough had already been said on this matter for the time being.

GRANTS

No applications for as Grant had been received.

The Chairman reported that she had received a very generous offer of financial assistance with the Christmas lights from the Moviola Committee. She said 'it is very kind and good to see that residents are keen to keep the Christmas lights functioning but I have one question - should the money come to the Council or be given back to the people who support Moviola, i.e. the residents?'

The amount involved is £200.'

After some discussion it was proposed by Councillor Sopowski that the Chairman suggest to the Moviola Committee that the Council would gratefully accept £100 and suggest that the remainder be used to provide reduced admission or free refreshments to attendees at the performances just prior to Christmas. That proposition was agreed unanimously.

REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OTHER BODIES

Councillor Arnold had attended the following:

- 18th September - NFALC meeting
- 27th September - Meeting with PC White and Community Officer Lisa Quinn
- 29th September - Heads of Department and Executive of NFALC
- 29th September - Meeting with Council -agenda NPA

- 3rd October - Meeting with Lyndhurst/Brockenhurst/Sway
- 9th October - Meeting at the Malting Centre Alton - Working in Parishes
- 14th October - Precept meeting
- 15th October - Two meetings with connections to the History Exhibition

Councillor Tipp had attended a meeting on the NPA Plan. Unfortunately they had not been given the Recreation Management document so they only discussed the plan. Some strong recommendations had been made and were being considered by Cabinet.

NFDC was suffering from the economic downturn. Fewer large planning applications had left a short fall of £300k against budgeted income and the associated fewer searches had shown a shortfall of £130k. With shortfalls in leisure centre income and other areas there was likely to be a total shortfall of some £700k. While NFDC had some reserves it will be looking to make savings against some budget items.

Councillor Sopowski asked what reserves NFDC held but Councillor Tipp did not have an accurate figure and thought it would be about £2m. Councillor Sopowski said there had been newspaper reports that there will be redundancies and cuts in services with staff only receiving 2.45% pay award. Councillor Tipp said he was not in a position to say what exactly what would have to happen as it had not been decided but noted that not all newspaper reports were accurate.

CORRESPONDENCE

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

JUBILEE TREE PLAQUE

The Chairman said this item has been mentioned many times at Council meetings and I feel that it must be brought to a conclusion. Councillor Bryant has done his best to find documents about the wording but unfortunately has been unable to trace any. As I see it we have four options

- [1] Do we wish the plaque to be replaced?
- [2] Can we compile the words as accurate as possible?
- [3] Use the newsletter once more for resident's views?
- [4] Leave it as it is and remove from agenda?

After discussion it was agreed that Councillor Bryant make one more effort to find the original wording and report to the next meeting for a decision to be made.

SEERA PLAN FOR ACCOMMODATION FOR GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS

The Chairman said that as a matter of interest - Whilst researching for the History Exhibition I came cross a book published in 1986 called Gilbert Smith Man of the Forest - a well known conservationist and lived for 22 years in Church Place Cottage, Ashurst as a Beat Keeper.

The Forestry Commission set aside seven sites throughout the Forest with several families in each compound. Each family was issued with a permit and it was the keeper of the area's job to see that they behaved. If they didn't then they would be turned out and the only place for them then were such places as an old gravel pit or such like on the perambulations of the Forest. In the 1960's it was decided to remove the gypsies from the Forest and into Council houses. Responses for this consultation must be returned by 21st November.

What SEERA say is that by 2016 in the South East region they will need 1064 new places for Gypsies and Travellers and 274 for Show people. My point here is if SEERA decide to compose a plan for accommodation for gypsies and travellers will this come back to the four service villages laid down in the NPA plan?

It was agreed to meet on 6th November at 7pm to decide on a response. Venue to be advised by the Clerk.

WEB SITE MANAGEMENT

At a meeting to discuss the NPA plan this Council agreed that we should change site for our web pages and that any item to be placed on the web site must go via the Clerk for his approval. Councillor Kershaw was

hoping to be involved in the web site but does not have time currently but that option remains, but even then all items will pass to the Clerk before being directly placed on the web site. The Clerk will speak about the financial implications but I can assure this council that TLC [Talk Listen Communicate] have been thoroughly recommended by Lyndhurst Parish Council and Ringwood Town Council who site is managed by TLC have just been awarded web site of the year. The Clerk said the costings had been circulated to all Councillors and there was no long term contract involved. It was agreed to use TLC as our web site manager.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AT THE NEXT MEETING

None

The Chairman gave the following reminders:

[1] History Exhibition 13th December from 10.30 a.m. - 4 p.m. - any willing helpers would be gratefully received.

[2] Carol Service - 19th December with the New Forest Brass Band.

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

SignedChairman 18th November 2008