

ASHURST AND COLBURY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17th MARCH 2009 AT THE CHURCH ROOMS COLBURY

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

In Attendance: District Councillor L. Puttock, Parish Clerk L. Griggs and 29 members of the public.

The Chairman opened the meeting and said "Good Evening and Welcome to you all. My first task tonight is to introduce to you all Councillor Max Coaker who was co-opted on to the Parish Council after an interview on 27th February.

Apologies District Councillor D. Tipp and Councillor Kershaw.

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. The Chairman reminded Councillors that if any item arose during Public Participation which warranted a Form C they should declare it immediately.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chairman said that there were a number of residents who wished to speak about the Fitness Trail so discussion on that subject would be deferred until that Agenda item was reached. She invited comments on any other parish matters.

A resident from Foxhills said they have a meeting tomorrow with representatives from Hampshire Highways following receipt of a letter telling residents to remove posts and other obstructions placed on the verges which were HCC Highways land. The posts were put there to protect the verges from drivers parking their cars on the verges. This was a problem during school run times and the meeting was to seek approval for the posts to remain in place Other residents added comments on the problems of double parking and vehicles causing obstructions during those times and large vehicles such as buses often had to wait for cars to be moved before they could get through ... *Another* resident said Limited No Waiting periods were being proposed for Foxhills and other roads. around the school with comments required by 19 April.

Councillor Puttock suggested asking for PCSOs to be deployed during the school run times. Another resident spoke of the bad signage on the change of speed limits and asked if Highways could be asked to improve them. Councillor Puttock said NPA wanted to reduce signs which they said were cluttering up the roads. Councillor Sopowski said it would be better if signs were placed on the opposite sides of the roads where they would be more visible.

MINUTES

On a proposal by Councillor Bryant, seconded by Councillor Judd, the minutes of the meeting held on 17th February, which had been previously circulated to all Councillors, were approved unanimously and signed by the Chairman.

AFFORDABLEHOUSING

The Chairman said

Knellers Lane site - NPA have indicated not to have high density in this area

Railway Site - Parish Council to consider this site

Foxhills - Traffic problems - seven houses accepted by NPA

At a meeting for service villages in the National Park' Mr. Gordon Richardson, Community Action Hampshire, confirmed what he had told the Clerk that Hyde Housing Association is suggesting erecting ten buildings but with the same total footprint as for the original seven houses

The Council discussed the options and would not oppose developing the railway site with a two storey building as previously discussed with the developer and NPA. However Councillor Judd stressed the need for proper parking for each residence. In regard to the Foxhills site the Council would not oppose the erection of 7 buildings as previously agreed by NPA but would oppose erecting 10. Subject in both cases to seeing and approving detailed applications.

FITNESS TRAIL

The Chairman introduced this subject and said as written in the February minutes Councillor Judd asked for a further notice to be put in the Newsletter saying it was the last chance to give opinions.

A summary of the results has been distributed to all Councillors before the meeting, so that they have time to read and digest to allow them to come to a just and open decision.

There were 37 residents in favour of the trail and the main reason specified: were

- Benefit to the Community
- Asset for the Village
- Healthy and freely accessible
- Usable by all ages

There were 180 residents against the trail and the main reasons specified were

- There are plenty of activity clubs in the area
- Maintenance using tax payers money
- Vandalism noise levels and litter
- Waste of money; will become a white elephant

The Chairman then invited Dr. Hutchin to read his statement Dr. Hutchin said

Madam Chairman and Councillors

I would be grateful if this could be minuted.

You are going to discuss and vote on the fitness trail/outdoor gym tonight Before you make you make your decision I would like to make some points. The Ashurst & Colbury Community Group [A&CCG] is a product of the village plan - which the council itself initiated. Now I should point out to you that as the Community Group lead on the fitness trail, I am only reflecting the requests that many villagers expressed in the questionnaire for the village plan.

There were requests for a fitness trail/park, and more for a gym; there were even more for more physical activity in general, expressed by all age groups. Many parents wanted more equipment in the recreation ground that could be used by older children. The fitness trail/park suggestion seemed to fit many of these criteria. It has the advantage of being easy to install, maintenance free, and vandal proof. Nor will it spoil the ambience of the recreation ground as it is designed to blend in with the surroundings and be unobtrusive. And it is more practical for Ashurst than the swimming pool, tennis court or indoor gym that were also suggested.

I was disappointed that in the last Parish Council Newsletter the fitness trail was not presented in a balanced way. The letters published were all against it though, as mentioned in Chairman's corner, there were some letters pro it - but none was published.

I need to correct some misapprehensions. The fitness equipment is not being financed by the councilor council tax. The money will come from a variety of sources that have money for this type of project.

The figure of 20 pieces of equipment was stated in the Newsletter. 20 has never been discussed - it was possibly going to be 11 or 15 but the final number had not been decided; and even your own diagram, madam chairman, prepared after our joint visit to the recreation ground, included only 12.

Whether it will be a white elephant is not possible to say. However the press has been reporting an increased interest in outdoor exercising as people resign from gyms, and I was interested to see an article in the latest National Trust magazine is all about green gyms and outdoor exercise and how the Trust has installed a fitness trail itself.

The recreation ground is not there as a nice green outlook for the people living nearby - it is there as an amenity for villagers to use - and if I may say so, not that much used, considering there are some 3,000 villagers. It does need more equipment to make it a place for a wider age group to enjoy.

As to vandalism and anti-social behaviour I can well understand the concerns that people have. It is a terrible experience and a very serious social problem. I can only tell you that where this equipment has been installed there has been a reduction in vandalism - possibly due to an increase in use of the area. But can a decision such as this one be decided by the anti-social vandals?

Certainly the equipment does not have to be in the rec. However there do not seem to be alternative suitable sites in the village. Putting more equipment in the recreation ground was one of the points that came out of the Village Plan questionnaire. The answers in the Village Plan represented a great number of people - hundreds - and many more than have bothered to write in. One has to bear that in mind.

When you vote on this matter I would like you to consider these points.
Thank you.

The Chairman then made the following comment on Dr Hutchin;s statement

A meeting was held with the Park Committee and Action Group on Saturday 25th October 2008 and the minutes of that meeting had been accepted by Dr. Hutchins. It stated that the action group were looking for 20 sections to be installed at an approximate cost of £20,000. The diagram that Dr. Hutchin refers to was not to scale [written on drawing] and the number of 'smilie' faces only indicated the positions of the proposed apparatus, and not the number of apparatus.

The Chairman then invited comments from residents.

There followed a spirited debate among members of the public after which the Chairman read comments and voting intention from Councillor Kershaw and then invited the Councillors to vote on the matter;

Two voted in favour (one voting for a smaller number of items initially)
Five voted against
One abstained

HIGHWAY MATTERS

- 1) Bridge works. The Clerk said he was still awaiting a quotation for painting the poles by the railway bridge.
- 2) Deployment of the SID
(he Clerk said that the deployment of the SID in Woodlands Road, Whartons Lane and on the A35 was now with NFDC.
- 3) The Chairman said the Clerk had been advised that painting the kerbs on the island refuges on the A35 is not HCC policy nor is putting reflectors on them as it is not considered effective and establishes another ongoing maintenance cost. The paint soon wears off as vehicles rub against the kerb and as soon as it rains the reflectors are covered in mud. After discussion with the Clerk, Highways agreed to get their own team to paint the kerbs this time but it is unlikely to be repeated.
- 4) Councillor Sopowski said the grass triangle at the junction of Woodlands Road and Peterscroft Avenue had been damaged by a lorry and asked the Clerk to notify Highways.

RECREATION GROUND

- a) Councillor Bryant said things were generally in good order but until the weather improved work on the trees and path round the park could not get underway. Chippings had been placed on the wet part of the dog walk path
- b) The Council discussed the options proposed by Councillor Judd and agreed to buy one Avenue Wood and Metal seat for the Alldays site and a Southampton seat for the bus stop by the Whartons Lane junction ...

PLANNING

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

ACCOUNTS

- a) The list of cheques paid since the date of the last meeting was approved. "

GRANTS

None

REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OTHER BODIES

Councillor Holdsworth reported that she still awaited a response from Hampshire PCT on funding for a foot clinic at Fenwick 2.

N.B. The day after the meeting Hampshire peT notified their agreement to fund this project ...

Councillor Puttock said he always enjoyed these meetings and today felt the debates had been interesting and informative. However he wished to comment that these are changing times and places such as the Recreation Ground were meant for residents to use and enjoy and it was important to move with the times. He reminded the meeting that with money being tight due to the recession those aged under 16 and over 60 who wished to register for free swimming should do so now. He reported that

he had been appointed Chair of the Licensing Committee and that Committee had now licensed stretch limousines so that they were properly regulated and controlled.

Fenwick2 had received a grant from Hampshire PCT to fund a daycentre for early onset dementia patients which opens on 25 March

- he is trying to obtain funding for a locally based day centre for stroke patients

Councillor Arnold had attended the following:

26th February - Planning issues at NFDC seminar

- Electronic applications for a period of 12 years
- Interactive House Guide on NFDC web site
- Building regulations for the disabled.
- Permitted development rights

2yth February- Interview of prospective Councillors

4th March - Service Village and Housing Working Group with NPA 9th March - Executive of New Forest Association of Local Councils

The most interest from this meeting was the A326 Improvements Plans to carry out major safety improvements - which are:

- Resurface Twiggs Lane and Staplewood crossroads
- Light control crossing at Twiggs Lane
- No right hand turn into The Priory
- Certain lay-bys' closed
- Reduce speed to 50 mph from Y junction North to Dibden Roundabout.
- Staplewood Lane and Twiggs Lane to be 40 mph
- Street Lighting on junctions
- Anti skid surface at junctions of Twiggs Lane and Staplewood Lane.

11th March - Traffic and Transport within the NPA.

HCC will not follow the path of road pricing they do not support this. Need more effective forms of transport A31 is the major barrier. NPA will look at underpasses that fit with the environment. More cycle tracks could ruin the tranquillity of the forest limits.

1yth March - Meeting with Community Action Network - Tourism 18th March - Meeting with Parish Plan - Directory Pack.

CORRESPONDENCE

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

The Chairman said at the last meeting the Youth Bus was mentioned. I emailed the communications consultant on the 11th February for more information as Netley Marsh Parish Council indicated an interest but have had no reply .

There are the usual springtime problems with bonfires again - there is an article in the newsletter.

We received notice from Margaret Weston the Editor of the newsletter that she wished to relinquish her place as Editor to spend more *time on* other activities. We understand her reasons and thank her for all her support over many years. The Newsletter Committee has been fortunate to find a replacement, Daniel Webb, and he will be editing the April newsletter.

COMMUNITY PLAN

The Chairman reported that no response had been received from NFDC so far to finalise the revised document. However Chris Treleven the Portfolio holder believes the draft schedule put forward by Ringwood Town Council addresses the concerns of Councils in that they should not be marginalised and emphasises the dominant role of elected councils.

POLICE COMMUNITY RESPONSE VAN

The Clerk reported that the Police had indicated that an evening time for a presentation and a look over the van was more suitable to them than a Saturday morning.

It was agreed that the Clerk should seek a date during week commencing 18th May to allow time to publicise the event.

VILLAGE FAIR

Councillor Sturgess said she was planning a village fair on the recreation ground on Saturday 5th September and would welcome any assistance.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AT THE NEXT MEETING

None

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.22 pm .

Signed S R Arnold

Dated 21st April 2009