

ASHURST AND COLBURY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20th JANUARY 2009 AT THE CHURCH ROOMS COLBURY

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

In Attendance: Parish Clerk L. Griggs and 11 members of the public.

The Chairman said Good Evening and welcome. We have two speakers tonight and a full agenda. Time for questions and answers may be limited but please leave any unanswered questions with the Clerk and this Council will give its full attention.

Apologies County Councillor Kendall and Councillor Sopowski

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.

The Chairman then introduced Mr Gordon Richardson of Community Action Hampshire and Mr Chris Buchan-Hepburn of Hyde Housing Association and invited them to give their presentation.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr Richardson spoke briefly on the need for affordable housing in the area and said that the NFDC list of people wanting affordable housing in Ashurst and Colbury was 27. He then asked Mr Buchan-Hepburn to speak.

Mr Buchan-Hepburn gave Councillors four aerial photographs. The first highlighted three sites in Ashurst and the other three were close ups of sites at the Railway Station, off Knellers Lane and Foxhills. He said the Rural Housing waiting list showed that 30 people having connections with the village were looking for affordable housing. Of the three sites he said:

Railway Station

Its proximity to the railway track meant the environmental factors made it not such a good site. There would be significant vibration and other issues.

Councillors pointed out that plans had been submitted for a three storey block of flats on this site but following objections from the Council the developer had agreed to consider other possibilities but so far nothing had been forthcoming.

Off Knellers Lane

Although a large site NPA had indicated that they would not wish Knellers Lane to have high density housing making only a few houses possible.

Foxhills

An application had been upheld on appeal to build seven houses on the site to the rear of 36-40 Foxhills. The developers Drew Smith had worked with Hyde Housing before and together they had made an approach to NPA to see if the application could be changed to affordable housing for those connected with the village.. He explained that connected meant having within the last ten years lived or worked in the village, had family member in the village etc. In

response to a question he confirmed that the connection would be fully vetted before allocating any properties.

There were many questions raised and issues discussed before the Chairman said this was a matter to be raised with the Community Plan Group and the village as a whole. She said the Council would take soundings and invite both parties to return for a further meeting. It was noted that support from the Council was essential for these sites to be considered further

FITNESS TRAIL

Mr Jeffery introduced the subject and Dr. Alister Hutchin gave a short presentation showing the type of equipment proposed and the suggested locations. The cost would be of the order of £20,000 which he expected to be forthcoming from grants from bodies such as those promoting a healthy lifestyle. He highlighted the figures from the questionnaire which supported some new equipment in the park and also some specific comments supporting a fitness trail.

Residents present who live near the park strongly opposed the project on the grounds that it would exacerbate the unsocial activities which took place during the small hours of the night. They felt that the good work put in by the police to reduce such unsocial activities would be undone when the perpetrators found new things to fool around on and vandalise. The Chairman said she had been asked to read out a letter from a resident who was unable to attend which echoed those concerns. She added that 7 letters and emails had been received from residents near the park objecting to the proposal. Dr. Hutchin said the nature of the equipment meant it was solid and not likely to yield to vandals. He added that it might help those youths seen walking on the top rail of the swings to use their energy in safer and more productive ways.

After more discussion Councillor Bryant suggested that maybe some pieces of equipment could be installed in the trees to see how they were used and if the residents fears were well founded. He offered to meet with the residents present, and any others, to propose a few less visible sites to start the process in a small way. The residents agreed to consider that with Councillor Bryant. The Chairman said the Council would also consider how to consult with all residents.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A resident said that rubbish was again being dumped in the allotments area and the gate needed attention to prevent unauthorised people gaining access.

Councillor Kershaw said he would be attending a New Forest Passenger Transport Forum and if any resident had any issues on local transport they would like him to raise please let him know.

MINUTES

On a proposal by Councillor Sturgess, seconded by Councillor Bryant, the minutes of the meeting held on 16th December, which had been previously circulated to all Councillors were approved unanimously and signed by the Chairman.

HIGHWAY MATTERS

a) Barriers by the railway bridge

Highways had now advised that they would not wish to have any further vertical panelling added to the bridge due to the increased maintenance cost that would incur and the increased possibility of vandalism. They were however considering the possibility of ending the horizontal poles at the Woodlands Road end with a vertical pole to support the currently angled down pole provided that was acceptable from a safety angle. They would also give a costing for painting the metal poles either white or green.

b) SID on the A35

NFDC had advised the Clerk that they had not put the SID in place and it was of a design not to provide any details of vehicles exceeding the speed limit. NFDC had offered their own equipment, which did provide detailed information, to be sited where the Council wished, subject to police approval and a site survey but the Parish Council would have to bear the costs as NFDC funds for this year were exhausted. The Clerk advised that he had asked for the costs of providing a SID in Whartons Lane and also on the A35.

c) Councillor Bryant said he was pleased to note that in response to the Clerk's letter the resident responsible had mended the fence and cut back the hedge overhanging the footpath on Whartons Lane.

He added that the manhole cover on the A35 near Whartons Lane was becoming more dangerous and asked the Clerk to contact Highways on that and also the painting of the island refuges.

RECREATION GROUND

Councillor Bryant said the work on the disabled access gate was now complete and the tree work was an ongoing matter. Repairs had been carried out on the slide but he was not satisfied with the work and would take it up with the firm.

The Chairman said the New Forest has seen an out break of a disease called Sudden Oak Death. Fortunately it does not pose a risk to the British Oak; however, there is evidence that other species such as beech and ash are susceptible. Mike Seddon of the Forestry Commission said the public can continue to enjoy visiting the Forest but ask that in the infected areas stay on the footpaths, keep dogs on leads and don't take any cuttings. The symptoms of this disease include oozing lesions on the trunks of infected trees, dieback of leaf tips, wilted stems and lesions on infected shrubs. If members of the public do notice any of these signs please make contact with the Forestry Commission or our Tree Warden who is Councillor David Bryant.

Councillor Bryant added that the disease had been brought into the forest by spores from infected rhododendrons. The spores were airborne which made it more difficult to contain hence the need not to disturb infected areas and stir up the spores.

PLANNING

In the absence of Councillor Sopowski the Chairman read the report on planning issues since the last meeting.

She added I refer you to the Consultation for NPA Planning at present in its draft state indicating Ashurst & Colbury as one of the four service villages. In the local papers it has been stated that a private school at Lyndhurst is seeking land after its New Forest home was

earmarked for demolition. The school have secured the use of mobile modular classrooms but as yet have nowhere to put them. The schools founder hopes to take advantage of National Park guidelines which suggest that learning facilities can be set up on suitable land within the boundaries of Lyndhurst, Ashurst, Sway and Brockenhurst. I just mention this as it could be the start of the four services villages getting everything including all the affordable homes passed on to them.

ACCOUNTS

- a) The list of cheques paid since the date of the last meeting was approved.
- b) The Chairman said the collection taken at the carols evening amounted to £80.73. I would like to ask Councillors to donate the collection to St. Josephs for their free hospitality at the History Exhibition or to St. Johns who always attend the Carols evening in case of any need arising .I am happy of course for other suggestions if that is the wish of this Council. After discussion it was agreed to donate the money to St Johns.
- c) The Clerk asked if the Council wished to renew its membership of the New Forest Association at a cost of £17 p.a.. It was agreed to continue the subscription.

GRANTS

The Clerk had circulated the financial information received from Victim Support but pointed out that the Hampshire & Isle of Wight branch was in members Voluntary Liquidation in a move to transfer all its assets and programmes to the central organisation. Since the Council policy was to use grants to support activities which were local did the Council wish to consider this grant? The Council decided not to make any grant.

CO-OPTION OF A COUNCILLOR

The Clerk advised that three applications had so far been received and asked the Councillors to agree a date to meet with the candidates. The evening of February 27th was agreed and the Clerk said he would notify Councillors and candidates of the venue when that had been confirmed.

REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OTHER BODIES

The Chairman said, before I ask for Councillors reports, two items have come to my attention since the last meeting.

[1] A representative is required for the Newsletter Committee

[2] A representative is required for the Community Plan Group

I have asked two Councillors if they wish to be nominated and they have both agreed.

Are there any other nominations?

There were no other nominations.

The Chairman continued, I put to this Council that Councillor Ann Sturgess represents Ashurst & Colbury Parish Council on to the Newsletter Committee and Councillor Ken Kershaw represents Ashurst & Colbury Parish Council on to the Community Plan Group. The nominations were approved unanimously.

Councillor Arnold had attended the following two meetings

19th December – Carol Concert

5th January – Heads of Department NFDC and Executive of NFALC

CORRESPONDENCE

The list of correspondence had been circulated and copies were available at the meeting. The Chairman said please read the list of correspondence given by the Clerk and inform him if any of you wish to attend the meetings /workshops listed.

WEB SITE MANAGEMENT

The Clerk asked all Councillors to look at the new site and make any comments before it was finalised and launched.

LOCAL COUNCIL PUBLICITY CODE

The Council was asked to consider its position on this consultation document the options being:

Do you wish to reply?

Do you wish for individual responses or do you wish to respond as a Council?

Do you wish to respond at the next meeting or at a separate meeting?

The Council decided not to reply to this consultation document.

COMMUNITY PLAN

The Council considered the Draft Information Sheet 1.4 and asked the Clerk to prepare and circulate a document for the Council to consider before making a formal response, That document to be considered at the February meeting

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AT THE NEXT MEETING

None suggested

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.20 pm.

Signed S R Arnold - Chairman

17th February 2009