

## ASHURST AND COLBURY PARISH COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 20<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2011 AT THE CHURCH ROOMS COLBURY

**Present:** Cllrs S. Arnold (in the Chair), D. Bryant, M. Coaker, P. Frost, K. Kershaw, P. Sopowski and A. Sturgess.

**In Attendance:** Parish Clerk L. Griggs, County Cllr K. Mans, District Cllrs L Puttock and D. Tipp and 10 members of the public.

**Apologies** Cllr Hubbard

**The Chairman** apologised for the absence of lights. The Electricity Board had promised that the power would be restored by 6.30. However candles had been provided by the Church for which she was most grateful and she hoped to be able to get through the agenda.

#### 1. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST IN AN AGENDA ITEM

The Chairman reminded Councillors that if there was any item on the agenda which would warrant a Councillor submitting a Form C they should do so now.

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

#### 2. MINUTES

The minutes of the last Meeting, which had been circulated to all Councillors, were approved and signed.

##### **Matters arising**

None

#### 3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A resident complained about loud music, over zealous security, road closed by barriers, even the road leading to his own cottage during the recent three day event at the Happy Cheese over the Bank Holiday period. There was support from other residents on these issues particularly on the security guards who were intimidating for children passing through the area. The Chairman noted that the Council was not allowed any input to the process of granting licences for such events, the decision being entirely the prerogative of NFDC and the Police. It was not known by residents whether the road closures had been authorised as they were public highways which would require permission from HCC.

After discussion it was agreed that the Clerk should write to the Licensing Officer at NFDC pointing out the issues raised by residents and requesting that Councils should have the right of input to licence requests for events in their area.

**Cllr Sopowski** suggested residents affected by the road closures may wish to check themselves on the legality of those closures.

#### 4. HIGHWAYS MATTERS

a) Rats problem. The Clerk had received no further complaints from residents.

b) Parking at the Happy Cheese. A resident had complained about restrictions on parking in the area behind the happy Cheese which had recently been introduced.

The Clerk reported that the land was owned by the Forestry Commission and leased to the Happy Cheese for use as a car park. The proprietors of the Happy Cheese were therefore entitled to restrict parking to their own customers. It was also noted that there had been similar restrictive notices some years ago which had fallen into disuse but this did not constitute any granting of rights to non customers to park in the area.

**Cllr Sopowski** said the terms of the lease would clarify the issue and recommended the resident to look at the lease to ensure the lessees were acting lawfully.

**Cllr Bryant** suggested that the whole issue of parking in the Parade, the NFDC Car Park in front of the Hospital and the strip of land opposite the front of the Happy Cheese should be addressed to deal with the abuse of these amenities. The area was too small for proper policing by Traffic Wardens and unfair usage was causing problems for local residents. While he did not want to introduce charges for parking it seemed that would be the only way to deal fairly with everyone. He therefore proposed a four hour limit in the NFDC Car Park, and two hours in the other areas with the first 30 minutes being free. That would avoid those shopping in the area from any parking cost.

After discussion it was agreed that the Clerk write to NFDC accordingly.

c) Community Emergency Plan.

**The Chairman** said the proposal for a plan with the skeleton draft came from Hampshire County Council to encourage local councils to write their own emergency plans. It is not a statutory requirement but it is good practice to identify possible major catastrophes which could occur in our village.

**Cllr Sopowski** said volunteers were required first as without them any plan would not work and suggested an article in the Newsletter asking for volunteers.

**Cllr Mans** said this was not intended to be a heavy document but dealing with simple issues like contact details for doctors, places for minor casualties to rest, etc. Clearly the emergency services would arrive quickly but this was to cover the immediate needs and the subsequent local support such as refreshments for casualties and emergency crews.

The Chairman asked if any Councillor would take responsibility for preparing a draft for the Council to consider. In the absence of any volunteers the Chairman said she would prepare a draft.

## 5. RECREATION GROUND

a) **Cllr Bryant** reported that the Friends of the Park project was underway but he would comment more separately. NFDC had appointed a new Tree Officer, Andy Wakefield, and he had been asked to look at issues raised by a resident bordering the park.

b) **Cllr Coaker** (Chairman of the Friends of the Park) reported that the NPA representative had inspected the work done so far on the path and was satisfied with the route and tree safety matters. Levelling was under way. There were issues to be clarified with the Recreation Ground Committee and they would be dealt with at a meeting of the Committee.

## 6. PLANNING

a) **Cllr Sopowski** gave a report on planning activities since the last meeting.

b) Licensing applications. **The Chairman** said I have put this item on the agenda as it has been put forward that Parishes and Town Councils should have the opportunity to put forward their views to the New Forest District Council before the Licensing Officers grant permission for late night opening hours also the sale of alcohol in

premises other than public houses. This would also apply to events and music licences. At the moment the only people who can comment are the Police. She then asked for Councillor's views. **Cllr Puttock** said that he had recently seen a three page document from central government which was proposing to remove the need for music licences which seemed foolish when most complaints currently were about loud music. **Cllr Mans** added that with so much talk about localism it was a strange move on such issues where the local people know best.

After discussion it was agreed that the Clerk should write to the Licensing Officer and request that local councils be asked for their comments before granting licences.

## **7. ACCOUNTS**

- a) The cheques issued since the last meeting were approved.
- b) The Council noted the clean audit certificate from the Audit Commission.
- c) Grant applications from the Citizens Advice Bureau and Forest Edge were considered. After consideration it was agreed to grant £200 to the CAB but to refuse the request from Forest Edge.

## **8. REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OTHER BODIES**

**Cllr Coaker** had attended two meetings of the Friends of the Park committee, three meetings of the Fete Committee, a meeting of the A&CCG and the presentation to the Royal British Legion all of which are reported elsewhere.

**Cllr Bryant** had attended the New Forest Consultative Panel meeting which had been very disappointing. The Environmental Agency did not turn up to talk on flooding nor did the HCC representative. The Forestry Commission annual tour would take place on 12 November departing Lyndhurst at 11.30am.

**Cllr Sturgess** attended the presentation to the Royal British Legion of a cheque for £2,900 being the net proceeds of the annual fete and three meetings of the fete Committee and a training session on planning organised by the NPA.

**Cllr Kershaw** had attended the A&CCG meeting.

**Cllr Arnold** had attended

Quadrant Meeting for NPA at Landford Parish Hall

Friends of the Park Committee Meeting and AGM

Official Opening of the Allotments

Village Design Statement meeting with the National Park Authority

Village Fete Committee meetings

Meeting to discuss changes in Planning procedures proposed by the NPA

Hampshire Highways meeting where it was announced that grit Lorries now have electronic connections direct to their base which record how much grit has been laid, where it has been laid and the time it was laid

**County Cllr Mans** commented on inaccurate reports in the press of the reserves held by HCC. The reports failed to note that the Council had taken advantage of low interest rates to borrow money and when that was taken into account the picture was very different. He also said that some problems had arisen with the Verderers where grit bins had inadvertently been placed on their land. Councils were being asked to ensure that any bins placed on non Highways land had the permission of the land owner..

**District Cllr Puttock** congratulated all those involved in the Fete which had been a great day out for the whole community.

The Chairman advised that **Cllr Hubbard** had attended the Official Opening of the Colbury Rifle Club on 10<sup>th</sup> September and the Presentation to the Royal British Legion on 13<sup>th</sup> September.

**District Cllr Tipp** reported that the House of Lords had made some recommendations in regard to Standards Committees and there was now every possibility that the NFDC Committee would remain in place.

## **9. COMMUNITY PLAN**

a) **Cllr Coaker** said the Committee offered congratulations to the Council on an excellent fete and it looked forward to receiving a copy of the revised Welcome Pack.

b) The Clerk reported that following his letter of 30 June regarding the Review of the Parish Plan required under Protocol 1.4, he had not received any reply so sent a reminder on 26<sup>th</sup> August. Mr Pass, Chairman of A&CCG, had sent a reply saying he would reply in due course. **Cllr Coaker** said the sticking point was having an independent Chairman as the A&CCG would be happy with two representatives from them and the Council. **Cllr Bryant** suggested going ahead with the Councils two members plus the Chairman and A&CCG could join in if they wished. **Cllr Kershaw** said the Chairman was only relevant if a dispute arose and recommended going ahead without a Chairman otherwise the review would not take place at all. **Cllr Bryant** responded that if both the Council members were happy to go ahead without a Chairman he would accept that.

A four member committee was agreed by all and the Clerk was asked to write accordingly to the Chairman of the A&CCG.

## **10. VILLAGE DESIGN AND CHARACTER APPRAISAL**

**The Chairman** reported that the document was with NPA for comment.

## **11. ALLOTMENTS**

### **Official Opening**

**The Chairman** said the Official Opening of the allotment gardens had been an exciting time for all Councillors involved. Mr Tim Jobling, trustee of the Baker Mill Estates, addressed residents present and planted a tree to commemorate this great occasion. Once again may I thank the Clerk for the endless hours he spent with this project, and not forgetting Councillor Bryant for his invaluable assistance and knowledge of the land. I would just add that I have received some encouraging letters from Alison Barnes [Chief Executive National Park Authority] Tim Jobling and Simon Barker [Barker Mill Estates] and Andy Brennan [NPA Sustainability Fund]. I must also add my grateful thanks to Andy for all his assistance on the day; not many Officers would give up their Saturdays just to help a small village.

## **12. ANNUAL PARISH FETE**

**Cllr Sturgess** reported that the fete had been a great success and she had received many good reports on the event. Good weather, great events and excellent crowds had made it possible to present a cheque for £2,900 to the Royal British Legion. She gave thanks to all who had helped in any way and especially to Cllrs Coaker, Kershaw Sopowski and Bryant for their great work on the day.

**The Chairman** said I would like to add that we do work as a team for the village, but special thanks most go to Councillor Sturgess for her dedication to this project. However what is most important is that every Councillor took part in some form or another which I believe is unique only to this village.

## **13. ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS IN THE NEW FOREST**

**The Chairman** said Councillor Sturgess and I are the Parish Councils representatives on this association, but any member of the Council may attend. If there are any points this Council wishes the representatives to put to the meeting and possibly obtain the backing of the 37 Parishes then please see either myself or Cllr Sturgess after this meeting.

#### **14. LOCAL SUPPORT FOR COUNCIL TAX IN ENGLAND**

The document from NALC was noted and Cllrs were asked to submit any comments to the Clerk by the end of the month.

#### **15. COMMUNITY BUYING PROJECT**

The document was noted and it was agreed to remain a member as no payment was involved.

#### **16. OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DEEMS IMPORTANT**

**The Chairman** raised the following points

a) I received a request to consider having an input to a television documentary programme about Parish Council work and the conduct of their business. I have spoken to the gentleman and provided some information but he now is requesting to sit in on one of our meetings to see exactly how matters are handled. Of course our meetings are open to the general public but I thought before I agreed to his request I should seek the view of the council. Personally I can see no reason to say no to this request but can I take it that you are all happy about that? The Council agreed.

b) Blue Bus Service. At the request of the Chairman **Cllr Kershaw** reported that he had contacted HCC to re-energise the discussions and requested a meeting but the response was that the officer did not have time. He was now contacting Blue Buses directly as there is a new timetable coming out in October which will halve the number of buses through the village. He had received no feedback from the consultation process on noise and vibration issues which was most disappointing.

**Cllr Mans** asked to be copied on this issue.

c) Audio equipment. The Chairman said that following the successful use of equipment borrowed for the Opening of the allotments she would like to propose purchasing such equipment. It was battery/mains, provided capacity for three microphones, was portable and could be used for council meetings as well as for all outdoor events. The cost was £523 including carrying bag. **Cllr Sopowski** said he had equipment for which he had no further use and would bring it to the next meeting to try it out.

#### **18. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AT THE NEXT MEETING**

The Chairman said she would like to discuss the Householder Appeals Service. This is for appeals when an application has been refused by any planning authority. From what I have read it is an independent consultancy for a quick turn around within 4-5 weeks. We and the NPA have no input and I feel that it is undemocratic and a breach of the rights of people.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.59 pm

**Signed S. R. Arnold – Chairman**

**Dated 18<sup>th</sup> October 2011**

