

ASHURST AND COLBURY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 17th SEPTEMBER 2013 AT THE CHURCH ROOMS, DEERLEAP LANE, COLBURY

Present: Cllrs S. Arnold (in the Chair), M. Coaker, C. Hubbard, K. Kershaw, P. Sopowski and A. Sturgess

In Attendance: County Councillor K. Mans, District Cllr D. Tipp and 45 members of the public.

Apologies: Cllr D. Bryant, District Cllr L. Puttock and the Parish Clerk

The Chairman said due to an unexpected family bereavement our Clerk is unable to be with us tonight. I have contacted five Parishes for their help but all have previous commitments. I will try my best to take notes – so please be patient if I ask you to repeat your statement.

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.

Cllr Kershaw declared an interest in a Tree Planning application under Agenda item 6.

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 not on the agenda

None

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chairman said with the Councillors agreement I will split public participation in two parts. For those residents wishing to raise a question other than buses I will take first, if there are any residents who wish to speak about the buses, their views will be listened to after the report by Cllr K. Kershaw.

The Chairman said a resident has noticed that the black plastic litter bin which is a post mounted one situated between the seat and the bus stop just north east of the Co-op in the village, has been vandalized and only a burnt out lid is remaining. This is completely beyond repair and will need replacing.

Residents have reported that they feel the Oak Tree in Dene Way is being damaged, as several of the branches are dying. **The Chairman** said she would ask the Clerk to write to the Tree Warden.

There being no other issues **The Chairman** asked Cllr Kershaw for his report.

Cllr Kershaw made the following report

Number 6 Bus Statement 17th September 2013

Following continued disquiet on the part of some Parishioners, regarding the Bluestar bus service through the village the Parish Council published a request for general comment on the service and the feedback on a compromise idea in both the August and September 2013 Newsletters. The compromise idea was for some buses to be diverted from the Ashdene and New Road route to the A35. If this idea found good support from Parishioners there may be a need for the Parish Council to reconsider and change its existing policies on the bus service as determined in early 2012.

As a result of the Parish Council request some 170 individuals have responded.

Of these approximately 20 supported the compromise idea or some other change to the service. The remaining 150 or so have indicated they wished no changes be made to the current service. As a result of the overwhelming wish that no changes are made to the existing bus service it is recommended that the Parish Council reaffirms its existing policies to:-

Gives continued support to the bus service passing along the Ashdene route in both directions.

The Chairman requested that those speaking forward their reports to her due to the unforeseen circumstances surrounding this Council this evening.

Residents made the following comments:-

- it was asked that a statement is made in the next newsletter to correct some misinformation as to the exact nature of the friends of New and Ashdene Road group campaign which was not to stop or drastically alter the village bus service.
- single deckers are not big enough and had to stand until she got to Totton on several occasions.
- there are inaccuracies on the 'Fixmytransport' web site
- it is inaccurate to claim that Julian Lewis backs changes being made to the service. Julian Lewis has written to over 60 residents and his position is that he will support the majority view.
- the statement that buses go thundering past is inaccurate
- in response to a question as to whether the 170 individuals had written individual letters or had co-signed one letter Cllr Kershaw responded that it was a mix of both but that over 100 individuals had counter signed one letter.
- a solution is needed to the vibrations. The Friends of New and Ashdene Roads should work with the Parish Council to achieve this.
- In 2012 five residents were of the view that Ashdene Road is not wide enough and that buses are a hazard to families.
- I tried to get a bus when using the single decker and it was full, had to walk home to Ashurst.
- Buses needed to get to Lymington Hospital and on a Saturday buses were always full. They are also used for Brockenhurst students. If they are on the bus you need double deckers.
- I have a bus stop outside my house and when service reduced 2 years ago people were left Standing when Blue Star used single deckers. Wanted clarification about what exactly is the issue?
- referred to the number of lorries running through the estate.
- commented on the age of the buses – more modern buses would be quieter and more efficient. Mercedes bus has been used but has a long wheel base [No.9 bus] Bus procedures will be considered next year
- could we have 'Velvet Bus Company' as the provider?
- what is the difference between vibration and noise between single deckers and double deckers? Can we address this?
- I can see both sides and am sitting 'on the fence.' I do experience vibration but use buses frequently. Since the roads have been repaired there has been an improvement, also when buses drive at 20 mph there is a significant/noticeable improvement. Also quality of driving- accelerating and braking.
- I cannot get to Colbury Memorial Hall and Church rooms by bus.
- The majority of the double-deck buses that were being used by the Go-Ahead group on Route 6 were first registered 20 or more years ago and were conspicuous by their noise and rough riding. They are mainly the Optare double deckers. They were also noted as having worn suspension. This issue was probably the main concern for the objectors. One of the solutions would be to consider asking the bus company to provide the route with more modern buses. Go-Ahead do run Volvos and Mercedes buses both a mixture of single deckers and double-deckers on other routes, although the modern buses do have a longer wheel base which may not be suitable for the sharp corners in turning in New Road and possibly the junction for Ashdene Road. Obviously the current economic situation new vehicles may not be viable. However, in my opinion the old single-deck Optare Solo's only hold 27 seated passengers and would not be suitable for the majority of runs on the route.
- The speaker asked Councillor Kershaw if an approach could be made to the bus operator for a

change in vehicles, perhaps replacing some which would give some partial relief to the concerns of the New Road and Ashdene Road residents.

Cllr Kershaw responded to some comments as follows:-

20mph – this has been Council Policy since the Spring of 2012.

The Council flagged the problem of the Otare “RFX” buses to Bluestar about 6 months ago. HCC have offered a free structural survey to residents concerned that the bus vibration has damaged their property.

The Chairman read a letter from Bluestar to Julian Lewis which he had forwarded to her.

We have received a copy of the surveyor’s report from Mrs. Stratton and replied to her on 2nd August. The report indicates that the cracks are caused by “thermal movement” and not buses. Our position is unchanged, in that the larger buses are required in order to accommodate all those wishing to travel. Although the buses are not full at Ashurst, they are at other points along the route at certain times of the day. To use smaller buses, we would need to divert the main service away from New Road and run a new additional service for that area. Unfortunately that service would not be viable. The only other option would be to withdraw the service, which would bring hardship to our customers and is not something we are prepared to do.

The Chairman read from the attachment from Julian Lewis that came with these letters saying “I think this is as far as we can take this topic.”

She went on to say that the Parish Council had given a lot of time on this Agenda item and as the Council’s consultation has shown that the vast majority of people who responded require no change she would now move on with the rest of the meeting.

The Council unanimously agreed the proposal contained in **Cllr Kershaw’s** report

4. HIGHWAYS MATTERS

- a) Buses had already been covered
- b) Cycle path proposals

Cllr Kershaw proposed that the Parish Council formally adopt the proposal for a cycle path. The proposition was carried unanimously

- c) Fill in ditch

It was noted that HCC have been advised that a ditch in Foxhills has been filled in.

- d) Overgrown bushes

It was noted that HCC were advised on 20th August 2013 that the trees and hedgerows at the back of Ashdene Road facing Foxhills need trimming back.

(5) RECREATION GROUND

In the absence of both Cllr Bryant and the Clerk this matter will be deferred until October.

Cllr Coaker commented that on the subject of RADAR keys no further action will be taken, the current procedures are adequate.

The Chairman reported that equipment was damaged by vandals. Some of the Timberline circuit was broken, a picnic bench and seat were uprooted, and a slide was damaged. The slide has been repaired but we are waiting for the parts for the Timberline equipment. The incident was reported to the Police by a resident. A crime number has been registered.

On Wednesday 18th September a group of Community Service Workers will be in the Park under supervision to clear footpaths, sweep play area, tidy everywhere particularly the area to the back of Chestnut Drive.

(6) PLANNING

Cllr Sopowski reported on recent planning applications and decisions.

(7) FINANCIAL ISSUES

- a) The cheques issued since the date of the last meeting were approved.
- b) The conclusion of the Audit by BDO LLP

The Chairman said that although the Annual Return and Governance Statement were approved at our April meeting together with the Internal Audit statement, BDO LLP require that we again approve them with the External Audit statement duly noted. We have a clean report.

Cllr Sopowski proposed and **Cllr Hubbard seconded** that the Annual Return for the year ended 31st March 2013 be approved and accepted. The proposition was approved unanimously.

(8) REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OTHER BODIES

Cllr. Hubbard attending the meeting of the Fete Committee

Cllr Coaker attended meetings of the Fete Committee and Community Group

Cllr Sturgess attended meetings of the Fete Committee, the NE Quadrant and NFALC

The Chairman attended the following:-

.NE Quadrant Meeting. There were four very good topics.

Family friendly cycling in the New Forest – recent government award of £3.6 million

Relaxation of planning controls – changes to permitted development rights

Update on Landscape Action Plan and Landscape Character Assessment

Affordable housing – feedback from recent bus tour.

I do have a full report on this quadrant meeting if any councillors wish to have a copy, please contact me after the meeting. The next meeting for the quadrant will be January 2014... One subject suggested for this meeting is Flooding in Hampshire. It is up to all Councils to suggest topics, and the NPA will raise any current information.

NFALC.

One item that will affect Ashurst is a request by Alison Hoare Marchwood Parish Council to have the cycle path from Ashurst to Lyndhurst covered with tarmac.

Seven Lugg from HALC spoke of the possible merger of Denny Lodge Parish Council with another Parish.

For information **the Chairman** advised that NFDC have scheduled a meeting for the 31st October 6pm to review the discretionary grant arrangements for 2014/5. I would advise all Councillors to attend this meeting as it will affect our precept.

Cllr K. Mans commented on discussion/public participation on buses. Has taken notes on the feelings of residents. He cannot speak about a 20mph speed limit until after the trial run at Hythe It does not require humps or pinch points.

Broadband. A map will be produced showing provision and certain speeds for Broadband in Hampshire. Plans are to have 95 mega bites which will help education and business.

Road works [operation resilience] are well under way.

Grants available for groups please look at the HCC website.

Cllr Tipp reported as follows:-

Parking charges – clock price will remain unchanged, but meter prices will rise. Disabled parking charges have been put on hold

Council Tax 8.5 % charge for those on benefits. Those who didn't pay were taken to court

From 2014 Council tax changes may affect the Parish precept.

PC White gave the beat report for August. 29 calls of a communal nature.

He was asked for a better location for the Beat Surgeries.

He made reference to the beat surgeries currently held outside the Welcome Store on 1st Wednesday of the month and it was agreed to put a reminder in the Parish Newsletter

(9) A&C COMMUNITY GROUP

Cllr Coaker reported on the recent meeting and made the following points:-

Moviola - decline in numbers now running at a loss. Needs support.
Request for Welcome Pack to go on web site. He felt this was a good idea, would be useful for current or long standing residents to have access to relevant information.

Cllr Kershaw agreed.

The Chairman commented that she handed out the Welcome Pack to newcomers to the village. It makes it personal, gives a chance to talk to them and answer any questions. While the web site may be visited by non residents we would not want the welcome pack to become an impersonal document by referring people to it rather than the current personal touch. Up to the present day I have delivered 86 welcome packs to new residents.

As the Council was two Councillors short and others made no response, the Chairman suggested that the decision would be deferred to the October Meeting. This was agreed.

(10) VILLAGE FETE

Cllr Sturgess thanked those who had helped on the day especially those residents who helped in setting up early in the morning. Total money raised will be discussed at the final Fete Committee meeting and announced shortly. She asked for suggestions of any changes for next year.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Sturgess for all her hard work.

(11) 70th ANNIVERSARY OF D DAY ON 6TH JUNE 2014

The Chairman reported that the date of the celebrations is Saturday 7th June 2014, a day after the actual anniversary. I have hired Colbury Memorial Hall, and a 34 piece Brass Band and would be grateful for any ideas people have for this event. I am also making progress with Marchwood Army Camp to join us at this anniversary.

(12) ELECTION FOR THE NE QUADRANT REPRESENTATIVE ON THE NFNPA

Councillor Sopowski announced that Councillor Arnold had been elected the North East Quadrant Parish Council representative on the New Forest National Park. As it is likely she will be appointed to sit on the NPA planning committee she has stood down from the Parish Council's planning committee to avoid any conflict of interest.

(13) RURAL HOUSING

Cllr Kershaw requested that Catherine Kirkwood, Rural Housing Enabler of Action Hants, be invited to attend a future meeting to give a presentation to the Council.

This was agreed by the Council.

The Chairman said that the October meeting will commence at 7 p.m. to allow time for the speaker.

This will be entered into the newsletter

(14) NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The Chairman said this plan will have more power than a Village Statement and the Parish Plan.

These two documents will become redundant if we achieve a Neighbourhood Plan. There has to be public consultation and an independent examination.

Just a word of warning according to the New Forest National Park one neighbourhood plan has already been taken to the High Court and challenged.

The plan will have to conform with National Park policies.

A neighbourhood plan could allocate sites for building, and could create new policies and the National Park has a legal duty to assist.

It is possible for a Parish Council to receive a grant for a neighbourhood plan.

It was decided to hold this agenda item over to the next meeting.

(15) ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DEEMS IMPORTANT

a) Hampshire County Council has commissioned a firm called 'Aster Living in Hampshire' to provide a subsidised handyperson service right across Hampshire for anyone over the age of 55 or anyone

disabled including families with disabled children. The aim of the service is to provide value for money and trusted handymen to get those jobs done around the house.

The cost of this service is £12 per hour if the customer has been means tested and £18 if not. All materials are charged at cost.

It was agreed by the Council to put an article in the newsletter.

b) Just to confirm the meeting to meet the co-option candidates will be on Friday 20th September in the Colbury Room at Colbury Memorial Hall. 6.45pm to get organized and receive the first candidate at 7 pm.

(16) ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AT THE NEXT MEETING

a) Neighbourhood Plan

b) Welcome Pack on the web site

There being no further business the Chairman closed meeting at 9pm

Signed S R Arnold - Chairman

Dated 15th October 2013