

ASHURST AND COLBURY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 19th NOVEMBER 2013 AT THE CHURCH ROOMS, DEERLEAP LANE, COLBURY

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

In Attendance: District Cllr D. Tipp, Parish Clerk Len Griggs and 7 members of the public.

Apologies: District Cllr L. Puttock and Cllr Bryant

The Chairman welcomed Mr Charles Marchetti, the co-opted Councillor, to the meeting and looked forward to his participation and contribution to Parish matters.

1. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST IN AN AGENDA ITEM

Councillors are required to declare any interests they may have in relation to items on the agenda for this meeting.

When verbally declaring interests, (including during Public Participation) members are also required to complete the Disclosure of Interests at Meetings Form.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the last Meeting, which had been circulated to all Councillors, were approved and signed after amending the word Ambridge in item 5 to Ampress.

Matters arising not on the agenda

None

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

4. HIGHWAYS MATTERS

Buses. **Cllr Kershaw** had nothing to report.

5. RECREATION GROUND

The Chairman said she was sorry that Cllr Bryant was absent as on behalf of the Council she wished to offer congratulations on his marriage but at the same time to announce with regret that he had found it necessary to resign from the Council at the end of this month after more than 20 years service to the parish. She asked it to be minuted that he will be sorely missed but deserved great thanks for the time and work he have given to the village.

In his absence **the Chairman** reported that during the storms of 27th October a large branch came down from a tree in the recreation ground and fell across Whartons Lane damaging another tree in, and the fence of, the field opposite. Our tree surgeon was quickly on hand and dealt with both trees. We await the bill for repairing the fence. Also the Notice Board in the recreation ground has been vandalised. The polycarbonate front had been pushed in breaking off the inner beading and preventing the door being opened. The Clerk is dealing with that matter.

The Chairman added on hearing of David's resignation I asked Councillor Coaker if he would take over as Chairman of the Recreation Ground Committee and he agreed.

6. PLANNING

The Chairman reported on recent planning applications and decisions. She added that attendance at both the parents and the residents' evenings on the Barker Mill proposal were well attended and many questions were put to the Turley Associates representatives. They were now awaiting all the Feed back forms to add to

the points already put to them and we would get the summary when the deadline for feed back was reached. She added that this was still very much a proposal, nothing was set in stone and there was no fait accompli. Further discussions and consultations would take place before any formal application to NFNAP was considered by Barker Mill.

7. FINANCIAL ISSUES

a) The cheques issued since the date of the last meeting were approved.

b) The Clerk advised that from an interview short list of eight Mrs Penny Luscombe had been appointed as Parish Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer and would take up the post on 2nd January 2014.

c) The Clerk reported that the model Code of Conduct produced by NALC had been adopted by the Council in June 2012. A revised version, updated with appendices, had now been circulated to all Cllrs and no request for change had been received.

It was proposed by Cllr Arnold and seconded by Cllr Sopowski that the document be adopted by the Council. The proposition was passed unanimously.

d) The Clerk announced that following a presentation by NFDC, and based on the latest information received by NFDC from central government on the council tax grant for 2014/5, there was not likely to be any significant effect on this council from the revised council tax benefits being proposed by NFDC officers. If there was any significant change in central governments grant the situation may change. The matter may need to be further considered after the Councils precept meeting

8. REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OTHER BODIES

Cllr Hubbard attended the Remembrance Service and both Barker Mill presentations

Cllr Coaker attended the A&CCG meeting

Cllr Sopowski attended both Barker Mill presentations

Cllr Sturgess attended both Barker Mill presentations

Cllr Arnold attended:-

- the AGM of Hampshire Association of Local Councils
- meeting at NFDC on Council Tax Benefits Reduction effect on local councils precepts.
- meeting with Simon Hayes – Hampshire Police and Crime Commissioner discussing the security of patients at Tatchbury Mount.
- parents evening for the Foxhills Development proposals with Barker Mill Estates

Cllr Tipp reported that the proposed scheme for Council Tax benefits for 2014/5 included a reduction in the level of benefit to 7.5% from the current 10%. The likely increase in income to NFDC was difficult to calculate as while there was significant difficulty last year in collecting council tax from those on benefits it was said to have improved this year. Until the figures for the current year were available no forecast could be reasonably made. The maximum level of savings allowed to those on benefits claiming the 92% reduction benefit on their Council Tax bill had been reduced from £16,000 to £6,000.

9. A&C COMMUNITY GROUP

Cllr Coaker reported that the last meeting had discussed two major items, both reported in the Newsletter, which were the success of the Apple Press day and the cessation of Moviola due to cost increases. **Cllr Kershaw** had advised the meeting that he had made two unsuccessful approaches to HCC on the issue of the cycle paths but believed he now had got to the right person. It was a work in progress

10. 70th ANNIVERSARY OF D DAY JUNE 2014

The Chairman reported that she had reserved a band, choir and Colbury Memorial for the event. She would be pursuing grants now and report again next year.

11. NFNPA DRAFT STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The Chairman reported that the Clerk had received no comments from Cllrs therefore the Clerk would respond along the lines suggested by **Cllr Kershaw** at the last meeting that the present procedures seemed to work well and the Council saw no need for any change.

12. RURAL HOUSING

The Chairman asked now that the Barker Mill proposal is under consideration would it not be sensible to wait for that to be decided before taking any further steps? **Cllr Kershaw** said while it was good that Barker Mill were consulting widely it takes a lot of time and we did not know if Barker Mill would ever submit an application. Even if they did it would probably only have 7 affordable properties and the need was for 41 according to the NFDC waiting list which continued to grow. He therefore proposed that the council state its support for additional affordable housing in the village and a Committee comprising himself and Cllrs Hubbard and Sopowski be tasked with taking the matter forward and reporting to the Council at its monthly meeting. He added that the other Cllrs had agreed to join the Committee.

Cllr Sopowski said the Committee would seek to find land in appropriate places as otherwise other less suitable areas could be imposed on us. If we did not have more affordable housing the village would have an ageing population as youngsters had to live elsewhere. **Cllr Coaker** expressed some concern about the possible scope and size of the exercise adding that whatever we could achieve in our village did not satisfy the NPA requirements within its area. **Cllr Sopowski** said Bramshaw had a nice small development which was well sited and any similar development here would almost certainly be for young families. **Cllr Sturgess** thought it would be a good idea to have a plan in place.

Cllr Kershaw then formally proposed that "this council supports additional affordable housing in the village and a Committee comprising himself and Cllrs Hubbard and Sopowski be tasked with taking the matter forward and reporting to the Council at its monthly meeting". The motion was carried.

13. ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DEEMS IMPORTANT

The Chairman said:-

Before I make a statement I wish to advise the Council that I sought advice on confidentiality on this matter from NFDC but they refused to tell me whether I should treat this matter as confidential or not. I am appalled that the people who are handling this matter can act in this way.

My statement is, in the interest of transparency and openness I wish to advise you that a member of the Ashdene/New Roads group has made a complaint to the NFDC Standards Monitoring Officer that I have not complied with the Councils Code of Conduct. I have replied to the Monitoring Officer rejecting the accusations and am waiting to hear if the matter will be taken further.

The Clerk asked to make a statement which read:-

I have been served with a complaint against the Council sent to the Information Commissioners Office. It appears that while the person concerned can bandy words around about the Council, they themselves are protected by law so I am unable to tell you the details in this meeting nor allow the members of the public to learn about the matter.

This Council operates in a totally open and transparent way in all its dealings and consults with all residents in considering issues where differing views may pertain. Its meetings are public, and minutes are reported on the web site, but this transparency carries with it the opportunity for some people to try to make mischief. Therefore the papers have to be handed to you with the caveat to keep them confidential or run the risk of more references to the ICO or NFDC.

The Clerk then handed copies of the papers from the ICO to all Cllrs.

14. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AT THE NEXT MEETING

Barker Mill proposals for a development in Foxhills

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.15pm

Signed S. R. Arnold – Chairman

17th December 2013