

LURGASHALL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held in the Village Hall on Thursday, 13 July 2006

Present: Mrs A Martin-Jenkins (Chairman), Mr R T Baker, Mr R E J Cooper, Mr J R Court, Mr G Sharp, Dr A H J Tate and Mr PJ Széll (Clerk).

Also present was one member of the public.

59/06 - APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Dr P J H Wilding, Mr J P Wright and Mr P W J Moffatt.

60/06 – - CODE OF CONDUCT

The Chairman reminded members of their responsibilities under the Code of Conduct.

61/06 - MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The Clerk requested that a correction be made to the report on agenda item 49/06 (Allotments). The sum stated in the estimate for replacing the fence had been £652.20p (plus VAT), not “£572.20p (plus VAT)” as stated in the report. Subject to making this modification, the minutes of the last meeting were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

62/06 – MATTERS ARISING

1. Lodsworth Heartstarters. The Lodsworth Community First Response Scheme had written expressing its sincere thanks for the Council’s donation towards the cost of a third defibrillator.
2. Village Pond. The working party had cleaned out the pond and tidied up the area around it.
3. Skip. A waste skip has been hired for Saturday, 30 September 2006 between 10am and noon.
4. Village Green chestnut tree. Mr Neil Humphry of Leconfield Estates inspected the tree shortly after the Clerk had reported its recent loss of branches. His assessment was that, although the tree was clearly ageing, there were no problems requiring immediate action. He would, however, from now on make a point of assessing its condition at six-monthly intervals.
5. Football field. The Chairman was still awaiting news from the Diocesan Solicitors regarding the terms of the lease for the football field.
- 6 Affordable housing. The Chairman recalled Mr Austin Wade’s talk to members in March regarding affordable housing in rural areas and asked what should happen next. The Council agreed to discuss the subject at its next meeting with the possibility of setting up a working party if the conclusion was that it should be further investigated.
7. Parish Councillor vacancy. The Chairman reported that, despite her endeavours, no candidate had yet been identified.

63/06 – OPEN FORUM

In view of questions that had recently been asked within the parish, a member of the public requested confirmation of what had happened to the residual funds of the Lurgashall Youth Club when it was disbanded in 2002. The Council was happy to do this and recalled that at its meeting on 14 March that year, Mrs A Rogers, on behalf of the Club’s organising committee, had handed the Council’s Chairman a cheque of £1124.21p, explaining that the Club had ceased to operate a while before and that its organising committee had agreed that the Club’s unused funds should be given to the Parish Council on the understanding that they were expended on the children’s playground (see minute 21/02). The Chairman said that she remembered well the organising

committee's extremely generous gift and that the money had been fully used to help meet the cost of the Council's improvement programme for the children's playground.

64/06 – COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

Mr Moffatt's report (see Annex A) was read out by the Clerk.

65/06 – FINANCE

1. Current financial statement. The Clerk distributed Annex B (attached) which set out:
 - (a) the position of the Council's bank accounts, incorporating details of cheques that needed to be issued and for which approval was sought; and
 - (b) the Council's income and expenditure against its budget for the current financial year.

The Council approved payment of all the cheques listed in Annex B and confirmed that it was its intention, when considering at the May meeting the need to mow the football field (see minute 52/06), to approve payment for one mowing in time for the village's annual fete.

2. Village Hall. The second notice board for the Hall's exterior and the small addition to the existing board had now been erected. Members agreed that the cost of £188 (including VAT) should be paid as soon as an invoice was presented by Gerald Whittaker Signs, Hollycombe.

3. War Memorial book. The Chairman informed Members that Mr Michael Oakland's history of Lurgashall's war memorial and those whose names were recorded on it was nearing completion. Preparation of the book had involved a considerable amount of research, across the United Kingdom and abroad. Mr Oakland was hoping to obtain some financial support for the book's publication from a couple of sources but the project was still going to be a costly one for him. The Chairman suggested that, as the book's aim was to preserve an important aspect of the parish's history for the benefit of present and future generations, the Council might consider it appropriate to make a donation from its reserves towards publication. Members welcomed Mr Oakland's initiative, but felt a need to learn more about it (eg its total cost, print run and likely sales) before making any decision about a grant. It was decided that Mr Oakland should be invited to make a presentation to Members and answer questions about his project just before or after a forthcoming Planning Committee meeting. Clerk to speak to Mr Oakland.

66/06 – PLANNING

1. Applications

Eight planning applications had been made since the Parish Council's last meeting. The first six listed below had already been put to the Planning Committee. No comments on, or objections to, the proposals were made. The remaining two cases had yet to be considered by the Committee.

LG/06/02150/FUL: PARKHURST HOUSE, JOBSONS LANE

Planning application for use of existing access and extension of existing track to serve dwelling house

LG/06/02173/DOM: THE HOLE, BLIND LANE, LURGASHALL

Replacement garage

LG/06/02220/LBC: BOXALLAND FARM, PETWORTH ROAD

Restoration of garden wall and insertion of new gate

LG/06/02269/DOM: NUTHATCH, TENNYSONS LANE

Construction of double garage and workshop

LG/06/02103/DOM: ABESTERS LODGE, ROUNDHURST LANE

Erection of garden shed (3540 x 2420 mm) and greenhouse (3020 x 2420 mm)

LG/06/02400/ELD: BLACKDOWN PARK FARM, FERNDEN LANE

Retention of dwelling house

LG/06/02009/FUL: GREENLAND FARM, JOBSONS LANE

Erection of 3 no. stables and 1 no. tack room on concrete base. Extension of existing drive to serve new stables

LG/06/02552/DOM: MILL FARM COTTAGE, MILL LANE

Single storey garden room extension

2. Decisions

Two decisions had been received from Chichester DC since the last meeting:

LG/06/01559/DOM: MEADOW COTTAGE, COTCHET LANE

Single storey side extension

PERMIT

LG/06/01859/DOM: PARKHURST HOUSE, JOBSONS LANE

Proposed pool pavilion within existing walled garden

PERMIT

3. Other planning related issues

1. Woodcraft Folk. The Chairman updated members on recent developments. No decision had yet been made by the DCLA on Chichester DC's application for an Article 4 exemption. In the meantime, the Woodcraft Folk had sought another Certificate of Exemption for the Park Farm site. The Chairman had written in support of the District Council's case to both DCLA and DEFRA, as well as to Mr Andrew Tyrrie MP. In preparing an item on the Park Farm site for its "World in Action" programme [broadcast 13 July], BBC Radio 4 had interviewed a number of parishioners, including the Chairman.
2. 46 Greengates. The CDC's enforcement branch had informed the Clerk that it had assessed the conservatory at 46 Greengates and found it to be within the limits of permitted development.
3. Dickhurst Lodge. The CDC's enforcement branch had informed the Clerk that it was satisfied that it was for Waverley BC to decide whether the new exit onto Rodgate Lane required planning consent.

67/06 – HIGHWAYS AND FOOTPATHS

1. Surface repairs. As promised, WSCC's Highways Department carried out surface dressing on various stretches of lane in the parish, including Northhurst Lane, at the end of May.
2. Village Green. The Clerk reported that he had drawn the Highways Department's attention to the dislodged setts at the corner of the Green near School House. The Department had told him it would reset the kerb stones in due course.
3. Sussex Pathwatch. The Council noted that, under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, it had since 2 May 2006 not been permissible for motorised vehicles (including motorbikes and quad bikes) to use High Lane and the byway at the top of the Quell. At about the same time, WSCC and SDJC introduced a system under which the public were encouraged to report to the police or SDJC instances of use of public rights of way by motorised vehicles.
4. Road signs. The Clerk had notified the Highways Department about the disappearance of three road signs, including the county boundary sign, from the vicinity of Boxalland Farm in mid-March as well as the dislodging of a number of signs near Gospel Green and on Northhurst Lane on 7 or 8 July. The Department had undertaken to replace/re-erect them all in due course, whilst stressing that the border sign would have a low priority since it did not relate to road safety.

5. New WSCC highway contractors. The Highways Department had notified the Council that, for the coming five years with effect from 1 July, the county's highway maintenance (other than grass cutting) would be done by new contractors, May Gurney Ltd, in place of Minerva Accord.

68/06 – ALLOTMENTS

1. New fencing. The County Council had made a generous contribution of £500 from its Parish Initiative Grants fund towards the cost of the new fencing along the western side of the allotments. Mr Philip Juniper was due to carry out the work in the second half of July.
2. Mowing. Mr Baker indicated that he would arrange for the grass to be cut as soon as feasible.

69/06 – PLAYGROUND

New fencing. Chichester DC had told the Clerk informally that the Parish Council's application for a 50% grant towards the cost of replacing the playground fence fronting onto Greengates had been successful. The Clerk was asked to get the works done as soon as possible after official notification by the District Council.

70/06 – FORMER BLACKDOWN MISSION (NATIONAL TRUST)

The Clerk read out a letter from the National Trust which stated that it intended to serve notice requiring the present occupier of the former Blackdown Mission site to remove his possessions from the property and enquiring whether the Parish Council would object to the Trust demolishing what remains of the Mission, given that the building was in a serious state of disrepair, was not listed and served no useful purpose. Members had no objection to the Trust's proposed action and instructed the Clerk to write to it accordingly.

71/06 – BOTTLE BANK

The Clerk reported on his discussion with Chichester DC regarding the provision of a bottle bank for the village. There would have to be three bins – for clear, green and brown glass. Requirements included that the bins must be on a hard standing, not near to trees or a living room, and allow easy access for weekly emptying by a pick-up lorry. It seemed that insurance and supervision would be the Parish Council's responsibility. A key question for the Council would be to balance the use likely to be made by parishioners of the bins against the noise and inconvenience they would present to those living in their vicinity. The Council felt it should, before reaching any conclusions, check the views and experiences of others (eg, the Village Hall Management Committee and Northchapel Parish Council). The subject should be considered further in September.

72/06 – BLACKDOWN CONSERVATION PLAN (NATIONAL TRUST)

The Chairman described the action already taken by the National Trust and the further measures it was proposing in its quest to return a sizeable proportion of Blackdown to heathland by means of enclosure and managed grazing by cattle. The stated aim was to improve the overall appearance of the area and to enhance it ecologically. The Trust was talking extensively to people living in the area to explain its thinking and in the hope of receiving written support for its application to DEFRA for authority to enclose much of the common land at Blackdown; some Members of the Council had been on a guided tour of the Trust's conservation work on Blackdown on 15 June led by Dave Elliott (NT Warden). The Council supported the Trust's plan, noting that it made provision for retaining plentiful stretches of woodland of diverse age and type, for leaving a reasonable acreage of Blackdown for coppicing and as scrub and for giving a high priority to the interests of users, both walkers and riders. After careful consideration of the issues, the Council agreed that a letter should be sent in support of the Trust's application. Clerk to write accordingly.

73/06 – CORRESPONDENCE

The following were among the communications received since the July meeting:

1. Village Markets. Action in Rural Sussex offered to give publicity to any regular village-based farmers markets and similar activities aimed at promoting local produce.
2. BBC National Village Show. BBC/TV is running a series of programmes celebrating British village life and its producers sought suitable local people to take part in the first show to be recorded at Petworth House on 23 July. The invitation was publicised widely around the parish.
3. Gardens Competition. Chichester DC requested publicity for its first annual Residents' Gardens Competition. The event was advertised on the village notice board and at the shop.
4. North-West Frontier Forum. The topics addressed at the Forum's June meeting included the SDJC's draft Management Plan, the new Sussex Pathwatch system and Chichester DC's rural street cleaning system. Next Forum meeting: 20 September 2006 at the Grange, Midhurst.

74/06 - ANY OTHER BUSINESS

1. St Richard's Hospital, Chichester. It was agreed that the Council should write a letter in support of the Campaign to prevent key units at St Richard's being shut or cut back. Clerk to write.
2. Bus shelter. The Council expressed its gratitude to Mr Court for repainting the village bus shelter, inside and out.
3. New bench. Further consideration was given to the placement of the bench offered by Mr Stephen Farthing in memory of his mother. The most favoured location was on the west side of the Green.
4. Damage to trees. Concern was expressed about the damage being caused to the old chestnut tree on the Green and the ash trees alongside the School House.

75/06 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Council will take place on 7 September 2006.

There being no other business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.50 pm.

+++

PJS: 23/07/06