

## LURGASHALL PARISH COUNCIL

### **Minutes of the meeting held in the Village Hall on Thursday, 7 September 2006**

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

Also present were Mr P W J Moffatt and Dr P Mackey as well as two members of the public.

#### 76/06 - APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence had been received.

#### 77/06 – CODE OF CONDUCT

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

#### 78/06 - MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

#### 79/06 – MATTERS ARISING

Churchyard mowing. Mr Michael Pavia (PCC) had written acknowledging with gratitude the Council's grant of £350 towards the cost of mowing the churchyard.

#### 80/06 – OPEN FORUM

The members of the public present expressed concern that the football field might be leased by the Diocese to private individuals and so cease to be a resource available for the village as a whole, and especially for its young people. The field was one of only three amenity areas in the village (the others being the Green and the playground). The Parish Council should make every effort to ensure it was preserved for that purpose. Before it was too late, it should impress on the Diocese the importance of the field as a Parish facility. The Chairman noted the concern expressed and said they would be taken up under agenda item 89/06 (below).

#### 81/06 – COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

Mr Moffatt's and Dr Mackey's reports are attached as, respectively, Annex A and Annex B. During debate, the Chairman drew to Mr Moffatt's attention the concern of some residents on Blackdown about their inability to obtain access to broadband and requested that he give whatever support he could to bringing about a connection.

#### 82/06 - FINANCE

1. Current financial statement. The Clerk distributed Annex C (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 C. In addition, it decided:
  - (i) to increase its grant to the Village Hall Management Committee for 2006-07 by £188 and to pay the full £1000 outstanding to the Committee before the end of September; and
  - (ii) to authorise the Clerk to obtain insurance cover (impact only) from Cornhill Allianz for the new playground fence once erected (additional premium: estimated at about £20 pa).
2. War Memorial book. The Chairman reported that Mr Michael Oakland had made a presentation about his proposed book at the end of a recent Planning Committee meeting. The Members present at that meeting recommended (a) that the Parish Council should make a grant of

£250 towards the book's publication, subject to the work finally going ahead and (b) that it should write to County Hall in support of Mr Oakland's request for a contribution towards the cost of publication from one of the funds administered by the County Council. The Council adopted both recommendations and requested the Clerk to write to the County Council accordingly.

3. Annual audit. The Clerk reported that Mazars, the external auditors, had given a clean certificate to the Council's accounts for the year to 31 March 2006 and that, as required, the statutory notices regarding the audited accounts had been displayed on the village notice board. The Chairman expressed her thanks to the Clerk for his work on the accounts and to Dr Tate for his work as Internal Auditor.

#### 83/06 – PLANNING

##### 1. **Applications**

Four planning applications had been received since the Parish Council's last meeting. The first three listed below had already been considered by the Planning Committee; no comments or objections were made, except in the case of Kings Copse (letter sent to the District Council on 11 August 2006). The fourth application had yet to be considered by the Committee.

#### LG/06/02726/DOM: LAVANT HILL COTTAGE, HILLGROVE LANE

Small extensions at side and rear and new porch at front

#### LG/06/02738/OUT: PAVILION, JAYS LANE

Demolition of single dwelling and erection of single replacement dwelling

#### LG/06/02992/FUL: KINGS COPSE, HILLGROVE LANE

Replacement dwelling and garage. (Revision to permitted scheme LG/04/03950/FUL)  
This application was withdrawn by the applicant on 31 August 2006.

#### LG/06/03823/FUL: HIGH HAMPSTEAD FARM, HIGH HAMPSTEAD LANE

Conversion of existing agricultural barns from mixed use to single dwelling and office/workshop

##### 2. **Decisions**

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

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

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

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

Replacement garage PERMIT

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

Restoration of garden wall and insertion of new gate PERMIT

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

Construction of double garage and workshop PERMIT

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

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

#### 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  
PERMIT

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

Single storey garden room extension  
PERMIT

**3. Appeal decisions**

Two appeals had been decided by the Secretary of State since the last meeting:

LG/05/04365/DOM and LG/05/04367/LBC: PEAR TREE COTTAGE, THE GREEN

Erection of a single storey, timber framed, glazed conservatory and demolition of porch  
APPEAL ALLOWED

LG/05/02758/FUL and LG/05/02757/FUL: SODS FARM, HIGH HAMSTEAD LANE

Additional link A and, alternatively, link B to conversion of redundant agricultural buildings to provide live/work unit (Amendments to LG/04/03821/FUL)  
APPEAL DISMISSED

**4. Other planning related issues**

Woodcraft Folk. The Chairman updated members on recent developments. DCLA had granted the District Council's application for an Article 4 Direction (thereby bringing the Woodcraft Folk's Park Farm site back under the jurisdiction of the local planning authority) and for a supplementary Article 4 Direction (to ensure that any Certificate of Exemption granted to the Woodcraft Folk by DEFRA would take account of the main Article 4 Direction). DEFRA had yet to reach a decision on the request for a Certificate of Exemption. The granting of an Article 4 Direction had the effect of preventing the Woodcraft Folk's summer camp, although it was understood that the site had been in frequent daytime use during August and that the caravan adjacent to the organisation's barn had also been in use.

84/06 – HIGHWAYS AND FOOTPATHS

1. Road repairs. The County Council's Highways Department had informed the Clerk that, all being well, Roundhurst Lane/Tennysons Lane would be patched before Christmas and given a surface dressing next Spring. Temporary road closure would be necessary.
2. Highway and footpath signs. The Council noted that further damage had been caused to highway, footpath and private house signs throughout the Parish during the past two months. The Highways Department or the SDJC had been notified on each occasion.
3. Bridlepaths. SDJC had started clearing Bullocks Lane in preparation for major repair work, probably next year.
4. Gospel Green. The Clerk was asked to request the owners to cut back the yew hedge just south of the road junction outside Gospel Green Cottage because it was starting to obscure drivers' ability to see cars coming from the south.
5. Jays Lane. The Chairman drew attention to the number of wild boar recently set free by an animal liberation group from Jays Farm and to the consequent need for everyone to take extra care whilst driving, riding or walking in the north-west of the Parish.

85/06 – ALLOTMENTS

1. New fencing. The Clerk reported that the replacement rabbit-proof fence along the western side of the allotments had been erected on 1 September.
2. Mowing. The Chairman thanked Mr Baker for finding the time during the height of summer to top the grass at the allotments.

#### 86/06 – PLAYGROUND

1 New fencing. The Clerk reported that he had been officially notified on 11 August that the District Council had decided to make a sizeable grant towards the cost of installing a new fence along the Greengates frontage of the playground. The contractor (W L West & Sons of Selham) aims to carry out the work before the end of September.

2. RoSPA report. Mr Cooper presented the report and recommendations of the Risk Assessment Committee's (RAC) meeting held on 19 August which considered RoSPA's 2006 report on safety at the playground (see Annex D). The Clerk reported that the District Council had quoted £250 (+VAT) for providing and installing a plastic litter bin on a concrete base to replace the play area's existing metal bin and that Playsafe Playgrounds Ltd had been asked to estimate for the cost of dealing with all the high, medium and low/medium risks identified by RoSPA (save those relating to the fencing); no reply had yet been received. Having considered the options, the Council decided (a) that remedial action should be taken on all the matters at (i) to (v) of paragraph 3 of the RAC report; (b) that the formal risk assessment referred to in (vi) of its paragraph 3 should be carried out in 2007; (c) that a less expensive option should be sought for replacing the existing litter bin; and (d) that a decision on who should be invited to carry out the work should be decided in November when Playsafe Playground's quotation would be available.

#### 87/06 – AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The Chairman recalled Mr Austin Wade's talk to members in March on affordable housing in rural areas. She recommended, and the meeting agreed, that the matter should be put to one side for the present. Dr Mackey's planned initiative in the District Council regarding waiting lists and the allocation of empty properties in small rural areas might deal with the core of the problem where parishes like Lurgashall were concerned.

#### 88/06 – BOTTLE BANK

The Clerk reported that he had spoken to five neighbouring Parish about their experiences with bottle banks. Only one of them – Northchapel – had one. It had had a few problems with broken glass and litter when boxes and bottles were left alongside, rather than in, the container. Mr Cooper said that those parishioners he had spoken to were interested in Lurgashall having a bottle bank. Members assumed that any such bank would be located in the Village Hall car park. The Village Hall Management Committee saw no problems with this. Whilst Members remained supportive to the idea of introducing a bottle bank, they agreed to delay a decision on the matter till the views of those living near the car park had been canvassed by Mr Cooper (orally) and the Clerk (in writing). The matter would be considered further in November.

#### 89/06 – FOOTBALL FIELD

Following on from the worries expressed under agenda item 80/06, above, the Chairman informed the meeting (i) that she understood the football club had paid the Diocese last year's rent for the football field but had held back payment for the current year because it was still awaiting a rent demand; and (ii) that neither the football club nor Diocese had yet tracked down a copy of the lease. She reported that the Diocese was concerned about the poor condition of the field and its fencing/hedges and that the football club was in abeyance. It was further mentioned that the Diocese was unlikely to sell the land but had indicated that it might be prepared to let it for grazing, subject to a tenant paying the going rate, undertaking to keep it in good order and making it available for Parish events, eg parking for weddings and the fete. The Diocese is in receipt of offers expressing interest in leasing the land. The Council felt strongly that the field should remain in the community's hands; as one Member put it, there is ample grazing land available for purchase or lease outside the village, but no comparable land in the village itself for use by the Parish as a whole. It was agreed that the Council should write to the Diocese registering its strong interest in leasing and managing the field, enabling it to remain available for

use by the community for recreational purposes, especially organised youth activities such as football and cricket nets as well as parking for the church and the village fete.

#### 90/06 - CORRESPONDENCE

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

1. Preventing falls. Age Concern (Chichester) had written asking for contact details of any groups in the Parish working with older people with a view to distributing to them a Falls Prevention Pack which suggests simple ways of reducing the risk of falls. (Age Concern has been put in touch with the organiser of the Village Lunch.)
2. Benefit take-up. The District Council asked the Parish Council to publicise a series of walk-in surgeries it is holding in Midhurst and Petworth to help people identify if they are entitled to Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit and, where appropriate, to help them make applications.
3. County Local Committee. The next meeting will take place at Fernhurst Village Hall on 12 September at 7.00 pm. Among issues on the agenda are youth provision in North Chichester and the proposals for a Petworth lorry ban.
4. North-West Frontier Forum. The next joint meeting of the Forum with the Rother Valley Forum will be held at the Grange, Midhurst on 20 September 2006 at 7.30 pm. Among issues on the agenda are the District Council's plans for community consultations on its Housing Strategy 2007-2012.

#### 91/06 - ANY OTHER BUSINESS

1. Vandalism in the village. Mr Cooper drew the meeting's attention to the increasing amount of minor damage that was being done to property in the village. The cricket roller had been damaged, a hedge and the front door of the Hall had been burnt and some new guttering and a drainpipe had been broken. The police had been contacted. Understandably, they said there was little they could do unless regularly told of such incidents. Members agreed that parishioners should be reminded of the importance of reporting all such vandalism to the police promptly.
2. Himalayan balsam. The Council had been informed that Himalayan balsam, an invasive weed under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, section 14 (2), was spreading rapidly in at least three places in the Parish – around the Lickfold bridge; adjacent to the pine wood south of Ramsfold Cottage; and in the wood south-west of Gospel Green. In the final analysis, if the weed is not disposed of, the police have power to prosecute the landowner. The Clerk was requested to contact the landowners concerned orally and/or in writing to urge them to take remedial action.
3. Parish Councillor vacancy. Members had a short discussion about identifying a candidate to fill the vacant seat.
4. Skip. Members were reminded that a waste skip was being provided for parishioners at the Village Hall car park on Saturday, 30 September 2006 between 10.00 am and 12 noon. Councillors were asked to attend if possible.

#### 92/06 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Council will take place on 9 November 2006.

There being no other business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.45 pm.

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*PJS: 12/09/06*