

## LURGASHALL PARISH COUNCIL

### **Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held in the Village Hall on Thursday, 11 May 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, Dr P J H Wilding, and Mr PJ Széll (Clerk).

Also present were Mr P W J Moffatt and four members of the public.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

#### APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr J P Wright and Dr P Mackey.

#### MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting, held on 12 May 2005, were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

#### MATTERS ARISING

It was reported that the grass along the main path to the allotments had been cut during the past year.

#### CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Mrs Martin-Jenkins reported that the Council had met six times during the year. The attendance level of Parish Councillors was 94% whilst that of the Parish's County and District representatives was 50%. The Budget, Risk Assessment and General Purposes Committees each met once. The Planning Committee met as and when required but the number of planning applications received during the year had dropped to 21 from the previous year's record total of 51.

In August 2005, Michael Oakland retired as Clerk after six years' service, during which time he had been an extremely capable administrator and had left the Council's affairs in first-class order so the Council had much to thank him for. Patrick Széll took over this role and, due to the professionalism of both, the handover was achieved very smoothly.

Mrs Martin-Jenkins said she would not address the Council's finances as these would be covered in the Clerk's report. However, she commented generally that the finances were satisfactory.

The evergreen issues that had taken up most of the Council's time at meetings were planning and highways matters.

On the planning front, as mentioned earlier, it had been a much less busy year than 2004-05. In addition to the normal applications, the Woodcraft Folk's site at Park Farm had

been a very time-consuming issue both at District and Parish level and, at present, the District Council was applying to the Secretary of State an Article 4 Direction. If the application was successful, it would bring the site back under the jurisdiction of the local planning authority. In her capacity as Chairman, Mrs Martin-Jenkins had asked the local Member of Parliament to support the application.

During the year, the Council had asked the owners of the three properties round the Green that have not got listed building status whether they would be prepared to apply for listing to bring them in line with the others. Two owners had agreed, subject to carrying out some pending building work, and one had declined. The Council had made applications to English Heritage to get the Cricket Pavilion, the red telephone box at Gospel Green and the Victorian post box at Parkhurst House listed but all three applications had been refused.

The Council was also trying to establish who currently owned the derelict Blackdown Mission building and the adjacent shed at Shopp Hill. Progress had been made but there was still some way to go before enquiries were complete.

At its March meeting, the Council had an interesting talk by the District Council's Rural Housing Enabler on Affordable Housing and, as a result, the Council would be considering whether to carry out a survey in the Parish to assess the case for this type of property.

As reported in the local press (and not surprisingly) the draft Local Development Framework and South East Plan did not list any brownfield sites in the Parish and no housing target had been identified for it for the period to 2018.

Mrs Martin-Jenkins said she would not go into the detail of the numerous small problems that the Council had encountered with highways matters. As usual, they ranged from stretches of road in poor condition to stretches of road where surface water collected after heavy rain. Such problems were reported to the highways department of West Sussex County Council for them to deal with in due course. The growing number of heavy vehicle movements, their speed and the damage they caused to road edges and banks, not to mention the danger caused to other traffic, continued to worry many residents and to generate complaints.

A group of parishioners carried out a survey on road safety in 2005 to identify what might be done to try to restrict speed on the parish's narrow lanes. A public meeting was held, at which representatives from the County Council's highways department and the police were present, but the outcome was far from positive and no significant changes would be made.

The Council was consulted about speed restrictions in the Village centre under the Rural Speed Limit Programme. It was generally felt that the downside of having a restricted zone was that there would be a plethora of 30 mile an hour signs in the area of the Green, so the status quo would remain.

The Sussex Downs Joint Committee (SDJC) arranged for major repair work to be done on High Lane last autumn. This was carried out by SDJC employees, contractors and volunteers and the result was a great improvement. A further major job - re-ditching a stretch of Bullocks Lane – was planned for later in the summer as it suffered from very poor drainage in parts.

A substantial number of other repairs and replacements of footbridges and stiles had been carried out by the SDJC during the year and the Council was most grateful to the Rights of Way team for keeping the Parish's paths in pretty good condition.

The playground had been given a satisfactory report when RoSPA carried out the annual safety check and the Council was currently applying for a grant from the District Council towards the not-insignificant cost of re-placing the fencing on the playground's southern side.

More re-fencing of the allotments was urgently needed and, as this had not been allowed for in the coming year's budget, a decision would have to be taken as to whether to dip into the Council's reserves and get the work done sooner rather than later. Just over half the plots were currently let, and this left a large area requiring attention by the Council.

Discussions had been held over the future of the football field and there was concern about its appearance. Mrs Martin-Jenkins assured residents that arrangements had been made for the field to be cut twice in the current year. The cost of this work was likely to be shared between the Fete Committee and the Parish Council.

The Village Hall, under the guidance of its Management Committee, had been completely up-dated and refurbished and it now complied with current legislation on health and safety, disabled access, etc. This project could not have been undertaken without the hard work of the Hall's fundraising committee, the generosity of many residents and the dedication of those in charge of the renovations.

Other matters of interest included the continuing success of the twice-yearly visit of the waste skip. This service had been much appreciated by residents and the skip usually left the Village absolutely full.

There was currently a vacancy on the Council due to the resignation of Louise Sharp, and efforts were ongoing to co-opt a councillor to replace her.

During the past year, the Parish had taken the important step of going on line. Mrs Martin-Jenkins thanked Andrew Tate for all the hard work he had put, and was continuing to put, into developing the Lurgashall website ([www.lurgashall.org](http://www.lurgashall.org)). It was an excellent vehicle for spreading information about life in the Parish and the activities of the Council.

In closing her report, Mrs Martin-Jenkins expressed her appreciation to her colleagues and the Clerk for their support. They and many others in the Parish had done a lot during the year to try to ensure that Lurgashall remained a special place in which to live and they deserved thanks.

#### FINANCE

A summary of the Council's income and expenditure of the year ending 31 March 2006 was distributed to all Council members as well as to the public present. The Clerk explained the main items contained in the summary. The financial year had opened with balances totalling £8,866. During the year, the Council received income of £9,707 (of which £8,000 came from the precept). £8,697 had been spent, leaving available at the end of the year funds totalling £9,876.

#### PARISHIONERS' QUESTIONS

No questions were raised.

There being no other business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 7.22 pm.