

LURGASHALL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held in the Village Hall on Thursday, 12 November 2009

Present: Mr R E J Cooper (Chairman), Mr J S Bonnett, Mr N P Jowett, Mr G D J R Sharp,
Dr A H J Tate, Mrs R D Wood and Mr P J Széll (Clerk)

Also present: Mr C Duncton, Mr J Andrews and one member of the public.

The Chairman declared the meeting open at 7.35 pm.

76/09 - APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Mr K M Caird, Mrs A Martin-Jenkins and Dr P J H Wilding.

77/09 – CODE OF CONDUCT

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

78/09 – MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

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

79/09 – MATTERS ARISING

No matters were raised.

80/09 – OPEN FORUM

One of the village allotment holders, Mr J Harden, reported that arrangements for the new hedge at the allotments were progressing satisfactorily; the Fete Committee had agreed to meet the cost of the plants and Mr T Grace was planning to do the planting during the coming two months. (The Clerk added that the Leconfield Estate had formally agreed to the hedging scheme going ahead.)

81/09 – COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

- Mr Andrews's report appears at Annex A.
- Among the matters covered by Mr Duncton in his report were the following: (i) the continuing financial cutbacks at County Hall, (b) the outcome of the Blackdown Park Farm right of way application (see minute 85/09, para 1(b)); (c) the good news that St Richard's Hospital would, it seemed, continue to provide a wide range of services to patients; and the next WSCC's County Local Committee meeting (Lodsworth Village Hall; 8 December 2009).

82/09 – FINANCE

1. Current financial statement. The Clerk distributed:
 - (a) a statement of 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) figures setting out 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, below and agreed to transfer £1000 from its Capital Deposit Account to its Current Account to enable payment of its contribution towards the cost of kerbing between the Church and the Noah's Ark.

2. Old laptop and printer. The Council was informed that Mrs Jenny Stephenson was giving up editing the *Parish Newsletter* in December. Her replacement had her own laptop and printer so the question arose what should happen to the old equipment that Mrs Stephenson had used over the years. The Clerk said that the laptop dated back to 1997 and that the printer

was made in 2001. Dr Tate had reported that, in view of its age, the equipment would have little, if any, second-hand value. The Chairman understood that Mrs Stephenson would be interested in retaining the two items if no longer needed. After some discussion, the meeting agreed that they should be written off and sold to Mrs Stephenson for a nominal £1.

3. Village Hall. Mrs Martin-Jenkins, in her capacity as Treasurer of the Village Hall Management Committee, had written expressing the Committee's appreciation for the Council's grants of £3000 towards re-roofing the Hall and £1000 towards its running costs.

83/09 - PLANNING

1. Applications. In Dr Wilding's absence, the Clerk reported that seven planning applications had been notified to the Council since the last meeting, ie the application concerning Well House referred to in paragraph 2, below, and the six listed in this paragraph:

LG/09/04034/PLD: Hearn House, Petworth Road

Erection of three front dormers, one rear dormer and an addition to the roof over stairs to facilitate a loft conversion

LG/09/04303/LBC: Blackdown Park, Fernden Lane

Replace modern reconstituted stone balustrade on north side garden wall with painted metal park railing and box hedge. Remove modern stone ball finials on south side garden wall

LG/09/03499/DOM: Abesters, Quell Lane

Single storey extension at first floor level to west/south west corner of existing house, containing house, containing new ensuite bathroom facility to existing corner bedroom

LG/09/04381/FUL: Leigh Barton, Blind Lane

Erection of replacement dwelling and relocation of vehicular access (see para 3, below)

LG/09/03626/TCA: School House, Village Green

Notification of intention to fell 1 no. Ash tree

LG/09/03651/DOM: Blackdown Park, Fernden Lane

Removal of stone balls and pediments to existing stone retaining wall. Replacement of reconstituted, pierced stone balustrade with traditional metal estate fence and hornbeam hedge. Erection of a pair of pool houses adjacent to existing swimming pool and terrace. (Plain clay tiled roof and random coursed stonework to walls)

2. Decisions. Three decisions had been received from the District Council since the Council's last meeting:

LG/09/02673/DOM: Windfallwood Cottage, Windfallwood Common

Replacement shed. Lean-to tool shed/log store attached to carport PERMIT

LG/09/02896/COU: Lower Roundhurst Farm, Tennyson's Lane

Change of use from farm shop and cafe for the sale of an increased range of goods with increased range of goods and extended opening WITHDRAWN

LG/09/03914/LBC: Well House, Lurgashall Green

Internal alterations and refurbishment, including decorating exterior and installation of 2 no. rooflights PERMIT

3. Other planning matters

- Woodcraft Park Farm. The Clerk reported that the soft-sided swimming pool erected in a field opposite the Woodcraft Folk's Park Farm building in late summer had been taken down shortly after its presence was noted (see minute 70/09, para.3). The Clerk had, nevertheless, informed CDC's planning officials. They felt the organisation had not breached its planning conditions; subject to it being appropriately sited and reasonably used, a temporary pool could be seen as incidental to the reasonable use and enjoyment of a campsite for young people.
- Old Mill Farm. The Clerk reported that he had spoken to the Head of Planning Enforcement at CDC on 1 October 2009 about the lack of progress, or even feed-back, on the apparent change of use of outbuildings at Old Mill Farm - a concern first reported to her department by the Council as long ago as 20 January. Despite her undertaking to keep the Council informed of progress and a reminder e-mail to Chichester on 4 November, the Head of Enforcement had still not reported back to the Parish Council. Members commented that such delay was both discourteous and unacceptable and agreed that, unless a written response was immediately forthcoming, the Clerk should write to Mr Andrews requesting him to pursue the matter vigorously on the Parish Council's behalf.
- Leigh Barton. Mr Duncton argued, and Members agreed, that if Development Committee (North) was minded to permit this application, it was important that strict conditions were imposed strictly limiting the size of delivery vehicles going to the site during the construction stage so as to prevent the serious damage to the highway and adjacent hedgerows of the type that caused so much concern during the construction of King's Copse.

84/09 - HIGHWAYS

Signposts and road markings. The Clerk reported that after a number of unsuccessful attempts to get the relevant highways official at WSCC to act, or even to communicate with the Parish Council, about the black and white road sign at Gospel Green and deletion of the white line along Jobsons Lane (see minute 70/09), he had contacted one of her colleagues, Mr Richard Bennett, on 9 October 2009. As a result, a written response was received on 11 November. Regarding the road sign, Mr Bennett mentioned that there were certain disagreements between WSCC's main contractor and the sub-contractor that was doing the actual repair. This had slowed up work, one consequence of which was that at Gospel Green all that had happened to date was that the pole had been re-instated and painted black. He hoped the remaining steps would be completed shortly. As for the central white line, Mr Bennett wrote at some length about the technical difficulties that could arise from applying a second surface dressing or burning off white lines. He did not say it could not be done but it was clear that, despite the promise given by Miss Tracey Webb, the Highways Department was not inclined to press its main contractor to rectify matters. Mr Duncton offered to try again to get the department to deliver on Miss Webb's undertaking – the fault was, after all, the main contractor's so the cost of putting it right would not fall to WSCC. The Chairman welcomed Mr Duncton's offer and concluded that, if need be, this and reinstatement of the road sign, should be considered further at the January meeting.

85/09 - RECREATION

1. Footpaths and bridleways.

(a) Byway off The Quell. The Clerk had contacted Mr Bruce Middleton at SDJC about the hazard to horses and riders created by the poor quality of the recent repair work done on this byway (see minute 71/09, para.1(a)). Mr Middleton said that the problem had already been brought to his attention by various riders and that, subject to the tight financial restraints faced by SDJC, he planned to carry out some further repairs. The Clerk understood that to date the additional work had not been done. During discussion, Mr Bonnett stated that, for walkers like him, the repairs had bedded down well and the track was now good.

(b) Public Footpath 2025. The application to divert/close part of PF 2025 adjacent to Blackdown Park Farm (see minute 71/09, para1(b)) had – by a narrow majority according to Mr Duncton - been turned down by WSCC.

2. Playground. No matters were raised.
3. Allotments.
 - (a) New plot holder. The Clerk reported that one of the vacant plots had been assigned in October, bringing the number let to 21 out of a total of 25.
 - (b) New hedges. See minute 80/09, above.
 - (c) Unworked plots and margins. The experiment of hiring an all-terrain mower to tackle the tough grass on the unworked plots and around the edges of the site was considered a success by those who had visited the allotments. But the cost of hiring such equipment three or four times a year was sizeable (currently about £120 a time, including labour). The Council agreed that the Finance Committee should consider the options further when drawing up the draft 2010-11 budget.
 - (d) Clearing the margins. The Clerk reported that Garden Escapes had not applied weed killer to the heavily overgrown strip along the fence adjacent to the football field hedge (see minute 71/09, para.3(d)) because the chemical had arrived too late in the season to be effective. They proposed to apply it in early spring instead.
4. Village Green.
 - (a) Damage from parking. The Council noted with satisfaction the excellent work done by WSCC's contractors in early November in setting kerb stones along the road between the Church and the Noah's Ark and of tidying up and reseeding the adjacent verges. This opened the way for the next stage of the project, ie landscaping around the pond, including replacing the surrounding fence with a suitable hedge. One note of caution was expressed, however. Whilst the kerb stones were already successfully discouraging irresponsible parking between the Church and pub, they were leading to greater parking problems elsewhere around the Green.
 - (b) Notice board. The Chairman reported that Mrs Martin-Jenkins had written saying the notice board on the Green looked neglected and that it needed fairly urgent attention. She had suggested the Recreation Committee should either find a volunteer to clean it down, re-oil the wood, re-paint the outer "wings" and clean the glass or get a quotation for the work from a professional. The Chairman's reaction to this was that, although the board had over the years acquired quite a lot of lichen, it was still very solid and serviceable and had a rustic appearance that was, in his view, appropriate for a village setting. This said, he concluded – and Members agreed – that at its next meeting the Recreation Committee should consider what, if any, action ought to be taken to clean and repaint the board.

86/09 – CORRESPONDENCE

Among the communications received by the Council since its last meeting were:

1. Affordable housing. HydeMartlet had written to the Council on 10 November with a proposal for redeveloping what it called the "under-utilised garage court area" at the south-eastern end of Greengates. Copies of its letter were circulated to those present at the meeting. The proposal, which had been worked up with CDC officers, was for 4 units – 2 three-bed houses, one 2-bed flat and 1 one-bed flat - plus 6 car parking spaces. Adjacent residents would, said HydeMartlet, be informed in writing of the proposal. The Council's comments and support were invited. After a short discussion, the Meeting agreed that the Chairman should reply to HydeMartlet to the effect that, whilst not in principle against the proposed development, the Council was concerned that insufficient thought had been given to the problems of access and parking. Even now, emergency vehicles, sewage lorries and delivery vans had difficulty parking and turning around at the south-eastern end of Greengates and the proposal would make the problem even worse.
2. National Park Authority. The Sussex Association of Local Authorities had sent details of a further briefing session (Rogate Village Hall; 20 November 2009, 7.30 pm) for parish councillors interested in being nominated to the new South Downs National Park Authority Board. There will be 2, or possibly 3, parish council representatives from West Sussex on

the Board and, in the event of there being more nominations than seats, eligible parish councils, such as Lurgashall, would be entitled to vote in a postal ballot.

3. Parish Newsletter. The Chairman said he had just received from the new editor a number of mock-ups of how the *Newsletter's* appearance might be revamped. There had not been time for him, let alone for any Council Members or the PCC, to consider what was suggested. He would respond in due course.

87/09 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

1. Waste skip. The skip hired for 26 September had, as usual, been well used. Members agreed to a further skip being booked for Saturday, 24 April 2010 from 10.00 am till noon.

2. Possible filming in the village. The Council had recently received a note from the TV and film producer, Nicholas Sercombe, proposing the use of Lurgashall village as the principal location for a forthcoming low-budget film – a comedy western set in 1869. As with any such proposal, there were plusses and minuses. For about seven weeks, disruption to the village would be “substantial” (two weeks preparing, four filming and one clearing up). It would be necessary to erect temporary house facades and sets, close roads and accommodate transport, catering, generators, animals, etc in local fields. In return, there would be a “substantial” location fee, local people would be used as extras and the village would receive good publicity and hopefully long term economic benefit. In discussing the proposal, Members said that much more detailed information was needed before the Council, and Lurgashall as a whole, could say yes or no to the proposal. The next step should be for the General Purposes Committee (GPC) to meet Mr Sercombe in the village to establish exactly what would be involved (including on matters such as road closures, timing and fees). In light of what it learned, the GPC should, if it thought appropriate, convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council or organise an open meeting at which parishioners could consider the proposal with, perhaps, Mr Sercombe in attendance to answer questions.

3. Bottle bank. Mr Jowett noted that on one occasion recently the green glass container had been full to overflowing with the result that a sizeable number of bottles had been piled on the ground alongside it. The Chairman replied that the problem, which was unprecedented, had been reported to CDC as soon as it occurred. In his view, unless such heavy use became a regular occurrence, there was no case for having a second green glass container.

88/09 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Parish Council would take place on Thursday, 14 January 2010 commencing at 7.30 pm.

There being no other business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.30 pm.