

## LURGASHALL PARISH COUNCIL

### **Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held in the Village Hall on Thursday, 11 March 2010**

*Present:* Mr R E J Cooper (Chairman), Mr J S Bonnett, Mr K M Caird, Mrs A Martin-Jenkins, 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 Mrs P Hardwick and 13 members of the public.

The Chairman declared the meeting open at 7.30pm. He welcomed Mrs Hardwick in her capacity as the recently-elected District Councillor for Plaistow Ward.

#### 15/10 - APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Mr N P Jowett and Dr P J H Wilding.

#### 16/10 – CODE OF CONDUCT

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

#### 17/10 – MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

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

#### 18/10 – MATTERS ARISING

Filming on the Green. The Clerk reported that, after the public meeting held on 21 January to consider the request to use the village as the principal location for the film *In With the Outlaws*, the producer had withdrawn his proposal because of the amount of set building involved, likely conflicts with summer village activities (eg the Fete and cricket) and the need to complete filming by autumn. The additional Parish Council meeting set for 10 February 2010 had, in consequence, been cancelled.

#### 19/10 – OPEN FORUM

Mr Joe Harden read a statement (see Annex A) outlining his worries about the deteriorating condition of the Village Green due to irresponsible parking of vehicles and calling for positive action to put matters right. Other members of the public echoed his concerns. During a lengthy discussion, the following were among the points they made:

- Vehicles driven by clients of the Noah's Ark were the main cause of the damage. Whilst it was lovely to see the pub so busy, it should not be at the village's expense.
- Damage to the verges between the pub and the Church had now largely been remedied, but the measures taken had simply pushed the parking problem, and the consequent damage to verges, further out around the Green.
- The pub's tenants and the brewers, Greene King, were the only people benefitting from all this. They could help ease the problem by making the garden behind the pub into a parking area.
- Consideration should be given to covering part of stretch between the pond and Jubilee Cottage with grasscrete or a similar unobtrusive hard surface.
- The temporary "No Parking" signs erected after the new kerbing was laid last autumn had been effective. Thought should be given to having more of them and making them permanent.
- If the parking problem was going to be successfully resolved, short and long term strategies, with detailed costings, should be drawn up and agreed with residents.
- It was recognised that the overall cost would be substantial, but various sources could and should be tapped for funding (eg County and District Council grants, charities, the landlord and tenants of the Noah's Ark and residents of the Parish generally).

- “Something should be done about the pub’s clientele using the hedge by the wall of the Old Rectory as a toilet,” said one village resident; he was aware the area had been misused in this way at least twice late in the evening.

Among the points made in reply by Mr Caird were the following:

- He welcomed the views of those who had spoken, not least because many of the concerns and possible solutions highlighted were very similar to those with which the Parish Council had been wrestling for the past two years.
- Unfortunately, there were no quick or easy solutions to the village’s parking problem and the harsh fact was that, with the creation of the new National Park, it could get worse before being finally resolved.
- Over the years, private cars had become bigger and heavier and had larger tyres leading to greater damage to road verges generally.
- For practical and financial reasons, the Parish Council had decided to tackle the problem step by step. Kerbing the area between the Noah’s Ark and the Church had been Stage I and it was seen as a success though admittedly it had led to an increase in parking elsewhere around the Green, especially in the direction of Meadowside.
- Like others, he had been pleasantly surprised at how effective the basic “No Parking” notices made by Mr Sharp had been in keeping vehicles off the recently repaired verges. There was clearly a case for making greater use of such signs.
- During the coming months, the Council planned (within existing funds) to level the verges between the pond and Jubilee Cottage as well as around the triangle and to contribute to the cost of the post and chain fence around the garden area in front of the pub. In addition, the pub had undertaken to paint white markings on the ground by the Church wall like those in the Village Hall car park to guide people to park tidily.
- It was hoped in Stages II and III to provide permanent answers to the annual problem caused by parking on the verges between the pond and Jubilee Cottage and on the triangle during the winter months. On the former, grasscrete could well be the way forward but it would be expensive and require a fund-raising strategy. As regards the latter, kerbstones, bollards and “No Parking” signs were all possibilities.
- Whilst the idea of converting the pub’s back garden into a parking area seemed attractive, there were various practical and safety obstacles and, besides, the change would produce only a handful of extra parking places. Efforts to get the owners of Park Lane to agree to removal of 50 metres or so of the hedge to allow pub staff to park alongside the lane had been unsuccessful.

The Chairman thanks everyone for their contributions and said the issues raised would continue to be taken forward by the Council and its Recreation Committee, including under agenda item 24/10, para. 4(a) (below).

#### 20/10 – COUNCILLORS’ REPORTS

- Among the matters covered by Mr Duncton in his report were: (a) the forthcoming suspension of adult services at the Grange in Midhurst; (b) the County Council (WSCC) plan to take back responsibility for the day-to-day supervision and management of the county’s rights of way from SALC; (c) the 2010-11 budget cuts imposed in WSCC; (d) the £50,000 available for refurbishing the county’s traditional black and white road signs; (e) the motion recently adopted by WSCC to impose blanket speed limits in village throughout the county (implementation subject, however, to availability of funds for the necessary road signs); (f) the 9,000 potholes across the county filled in by the Highways Department over the past month; and (g) the next County Local Committee meeting scheduled for 30 March 2010 at Capron House, Midhurst (main topic: charges for car parking on the Downs).
- Among the matters mentioned by Mr Andrews in his report were: (a) that, for practical purposes, he and Mrs Hardwick proposed to divide their participation in Parish Council meetings, with Mrs Hardwick attending Lurgashall and Plaistow/Ifold and him covering Loxwood and Northchapel. (He would, however, retain close contact with Lurgashall matters, principally through his membership of Development Control Committee (North)); (b) that the Parish Council’s concerns about the Leigh Barton planning application had been actively

pursued including via discussion with the property owner; (c) that council tax for 2010-11 would increase by 2.5%, in part reflecting a further decline in central Government funding; and (d) that Loxwood's Football in the Community – backed by Chichester District Council (CDC) - would take place at the Loxwood Recreation Ground on 8 April 2010 (all 6-15 year olds welcome).

- Mrs Hardwick added one point. CDC had recently conducted successful prosecutions against fly tipping. Significant fines had been imposed in 9 cases and more prosecutions were coming.

#### 21/10 – FINANCE

1. Current financial statement. The Clerk distributed Annex A, below, ie:

- (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 the cheques listed in that Annex.

2. Appeals for donations. Members decided to make the following donations totalling £140:

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| - Arun and Chichester Citizens Advice Bureau           | - £50 |
| - Sussex Crimestoppers                                 | - £15 |
| - Carers Support Service (Regis, Chichester and Rural) | - £15 |
| - Victim Support Sussex                                | - £15 |
| - West Sussex Rural Mobile Youth Trust (Purple Bus)    | - £15 |
| - Sussex County Playing Fields Association             | - £15 |
| - Sussex Association for the Blind (4SIGHT)            | - £15 |

#### 22/10 - PLANNING

1. Applications. In Dr Wilding's absence, Mrs Martin-Jenkins reported that eight planning applications had been notified to the Council since the last meeting (see below in this paragraph). The applications concerning Cotchet Farmhouse, Jays Farm and Pheasant Hill had not yet been considered by the Planning Committee but the Committee had comments on, and had lodged objections to, two of the other five applications, namely those relating to Barfold Farm and Land west of Dickhurst House; copies of the letters sent to CDC, dated 25 February 2010 and 5 March 2010 respectively, setting out its arguments were distributed to those present for information.

#### LG/09/05005/DOM: Herne 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/09/04346/LBC: Blackdown Park, Fernden Lane

Dismantle and repair existing unstable stone parapet wall above billiard room at 1st floor level on north elevation. Reinstate parapet wall to original layout

#### LG/09/05098/OUT: Barfold Farm, Tennysons Lane

Outline planning for access and layout for erection of 2 no. barns; one to be used within Class B1 as an estate office and home working offices and one for ancillary domestic and guest accommodation, plus erection of 4 stables

#### LG/10/00280/FUL: Land west of Dickhurst House, Petworth Road

Removal of existing outbuildings. Erection of new detached dwelling and associated landscaping

#### LG/10/00518/DOM: Hookhams, Hillgrove Lane

Conversion of existing annexe including replacement of flat roof and tiled pitched roof

#### LG/09/02497/LBC: Cotchet Farmhouse, Cotchet Lane

Addition of 2 conservation skylight windows to courtyard facing roof of garage

LG10/00278/FUL: Jays Farm, Jays Lane

Change of use and alterations to existing two storey barn and associated single storey building to residential unit with annexe. Replacement of existing dilapidated milking shed with 3 bay garage and rural workers dwelling. New bat loft with storage at ground floor level. Covered way linking garage to main house. (revised proposal previously approved under LG/06/04361/FUL)

LG/10/00762/DOM: Pheasant Hill, Hillgrove Lane

Relocation of permitted outbuilding closer to northern boundary (amendment to LG/07/06089/DOM)

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

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

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

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)  
PERMIT

LG/09/03602/LBC: 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)  
PERMIT

LG/09/04782/DOM: Old Barn, Mill Lane

Erect summer house  
PERMIT

LG/09/07492/FUL: Upper Barn House

New pig housing  
PERMIT

LG/09/04760/TCA: St Laurence's Church, Lurgashall

Notification of intention to crown clean and removal of any rubbing and crossing branches on 4 no. oak trees (1, 2, 7 and 9), crown lift up to 3m and reduce off path (back to old wound points) on 1 no. yew tree (4), reduce height down to 3m on 1 no. mixed hedge (hazel/hawthorn/ash)(5).  
Fell 1 no. yew tree (3) and 1 no. ash tree (6)

DECIDED TO PREPARE A TREE PRESERVATION ORDER

LG/09/05024/TCA: School House, Village Green

Notification of intention to fell 1 no. willow tree  
DECIDED NOT TO PREPARE A TREE PRESERVATION ORDER

LG/09/05120/PNO: Blackdown Park, Fernden Lane

New barn  
WITHDRAWN

3. Other planning matters.

- Leigh Barton. The planning permission granted by CDC and the associated section 106 unilateral undertaking given by the property owner had taken on board the Parish Council's concerns that the development should not entail a net loss of pasture land to residential purposes and that, during construction, strict controls should govern the size and route of contractors' vehicles.

- Old Mill Farm. CDC's planning officials had written to the Clerk at the end of January to report that, following further investigations, the Council had written to the tenant of Old Mill Farm (copy to Leconfield Estates) requesting him to submit a planning application to regularise the change of use of his farm buildings to light industrial and authorise retention of the new access track. The tenant had been told that CDC had no record of planning permission having been received for these operational developments at Old Mill Farm – hence the need to obtain permission. He had also been advised that any unauthorised development on site was carried out at his own risk and that, in inviting the application, CDC was not committing itself to any particular decision.

#### 23/10 – HIGHWAYS

1. Gospel Green signpost. The Clerk reported that the fingerboards had, at last, been reinstated by the WSCC's contractors but repainting of the post itself had yet to be completed. This, he had been assured, would be done once the weather improved.
2. Bollards outside Glebe House. Concern was expressed by Mr Sharp and other Members about the sizeable wooden bollards recently erected by the entrance to Glebe House. It was felt they were not in keeping with the character of the village and, more particularly, the two nearest the highway were thought likely to be a hazard to passing vehicles. Mr Duncton commented that the positioning of bollards 2-3 feet from the highway was not a WSCC Highways Department responsibility unless it could be shown that there was actual interference with the highway; his understanding was that landowners erected such posts at their own risk. The Meeting agreed that the Clerk should inform the Highways Department so that its officials could assess the situation.
3. Discarded tree branches. Mrs Martin-Jenkins drew attention to the large number of tree branches recently dumped by the roadside near the Gospel Green telephone kiosk. Other Members said that there were other places in the parish where untidy dumping of vegetation took place but agreed the problem at Gospel Green was worse as the material dumped there increased the already restricted sight lines for motorists. The Meeting requested the Clerk to draw the situation at Gospel Green to the Highways Department's notice.

#### 24/10 – RECREATION

Mr Caird presented the report of the Recreation Committee meeting held on 10 February 2010. Members added information and comments. The Council took note of the report as updated and endorsed various decisions arising from it, as indicated in the following summary:

1. Footpaths and bridleways. Mr Michael Oakland had written to SDJC about the continued failure of the landowner to correct the positioning of the fence across Footpath 2031 at the north-west corner of the Village Green despite various requests over the years. SDJC had agreed to make a further approach to the landowner but, if that failed, it might have to take remedial action itself.
2. Playground. It was noted that the owners of Bishops Holt had, as promised, repaired the loose fencing panel that had presented a risk – albeit a minor one – to users of the playground.
3. Allotments.
  - (a) Plot fees for 2010. Most plot holder had already paid their fees for 2010; £225 out of an anticipated £240 had already been received. One 2009 allotment holder had given up his plot; two others wanted (for the time being at least) to work just two, not three as before; and one wanted to work just one, not two.
  - (b) New hedge. Planting of the new hedge along the west and south sides of the allotments had been carried out by Mr Tony Grace during the second half of February.
4. Village Green.
  - (a) Damage from parking.
    - The kerbing installed by WSCC last autumn had cost less than budgeted for; additional topsoil had been provided free of charge. In consequence, the contingency sums included in the overall project cost had not been required. The Council agreed that part of this surplus should now be applied to

meet 50% of the total cost of £740 that the tenants of the Noah's Ark were planning to incur in installing a low level oak post and chain fence along the perimeter of the pub garden opposite the pond. Any remaining surplus could be used for low-level repairs over the coming months to the damaged verges at the eastern end of the Green. There was some reluctance to spend significance sums in this way not only because of the lack of available funds at the present time but also because, in the opinion of some members, surplus funds might better be left unspent and put towards the major remedial works that will inevitably be needed in due course.

- Minor measures alone would not, however, solve the village's growing parking problem. Long term solutions must be identified and presented to the Parish Council in the form of a fully costed strategy. Among the solutions to be considered were:

- (i) purchasing the football field;
- (ii) greater use of the football field for parking by sports teams, weddings, funerals, etc;
- (iii) "grasscrete" part of the area adjacent to the Old Rectory's wall;
- (iv) have an objective to get all motorised vehicles off the triangle;
- (v) erect small hedges or posts at the triangle's corners to stop vehicles cutting across; and
- (vi) erect permanent low level "no parking" signs.

(b) Pond. The quotation provided by Garden Escapes for laying a low, mixed native hedge in front of the pond had been within the amount budgeted for and had been accepted. They had already ordered the plants, canes and guards and undertaken to complete the work by mid-March. A grant towards the cost of the work had been sought from WSCC's Hedge Fund. Planting could be done regardless of when the existing fence was removed and the bottom of the pond was dredged. There would be a permanent access point for a digger at the Church end of the pond once the fence was removed. For environmental reasons, it was now probably too late to dredge the pond so the Meeting agreed that dredging should be held over till late autumn. A mechanical digger would be needed for the task but a suitable contractor to do the work had not yet been found.

(c) Bus shelter and notice board. Mr Sharp had kindly cleaned and repaired the notice board and had made spare keys for it. Minor maintenance of the bus shelter remained outstanding.

#### 25/09 – CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence that needed to be brought to the Council's notice.

#### 26/09 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(a) South Downs National Park. The Chairman reported briefly on a half-day meeting of the South Downs Advisory Forum that he had attended on 25 February. It was apparent that everything about the new National Park was still very much at the planning stage and that there remained many more questions than answers. This said, one thing was certain: given the difficult economic climate, the funds available for distribution by the new Authority were going to be restricted.

(b) Village signs. Mr Caird said he had noticed the new village signs erected at the two ends of Lodsworth and wondered if there was a case for Lurgashall erecting signs of its own. The Meeting agreed the Clerk should make some preliminary enquiries of Lodsworth with a view to finding out what would be entailed.

(c) Health and Welfare Fair. Mr Bonnett informed Members that the Health and Welfare Fair he had outlined at the Council's May 2009 meeting (see minute 46/09) would take place in the Village Hall on the afternoon of 26 May 2010 though in a considerably cut down form. Six different agencies would be present to provide advice to Parish residents and, as necessary, to direct them on towards other agencies that could better address their needs.

#### 27/09 – DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

The Annual Parish Meeting and the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council would take place on Thursday, 13 May 2009 with the former commencing at 7.30 pm.

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

*PJS:17/3/10*