LURGASHALL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held in the Village Hall on Thursday, 10 May 2007

Present: Mrs A Martin-Jenkins (Chairman – for agenda items 35 to 37/07), Mr R E J Cooper (Chairman – for agenda items 38 to 54/07), Mr K M Caird, Mr G D J R Sharp, Dr A H J Tate, Dr P J H Wilding and Mr P J Széll (Clerk).

Also present were seven members of the public.

35/07 - APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence had been received. The meeting was informed that Mr P W J Moffatt had resigned from West Sussex County Council on health grounds and that there would be a by-election on 7 June.

36/07 – DECLARATIONS OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

Each Member of the new Council signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office. The Clerk reminded Members of the requirement to complete and return to him a Register of Interests form within 28 days of their date of election.

37/07 – ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Mr R E J Cooper was proposed by Mr G D J R Sharp and seconded by Mr K M Caird. There being no other nominations, Mr Cooper was elected by 4 votes to 0. Before leaving the chair, Mrs Martin-Jenkins said how much she had enjoyed representing the Lurgashall as the Council's Chairman over the years and that she was sad to be leaving the post. Having signed the Declaration of Acceptance of the Office of Chairman of the Council for 2007-08 (see Annex A), Mr Cooper took the chair. He thanked Members for electing him and expressed his gratitude to the outgoing Chairman for all the years of service she had given the Council, a view that was subsequently endorsed by the other members of the Council.

38/07 – CO-OPTION OF MEMBERS

The Chairman noted that there were three vacancies on the Council and that these were due to be filled by cooption. He had received expressions of interest in these posts from five parishioners. In order to allow members time to assess their credentials and those of any other candidates, he proposed, and the meeting agreed, that this agenda item, as well as item 39/07, should be considered at an additional Annual Meeting of the Parish Council on 24 May 2007.

39/07 – ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN; APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND REPRESENTATIVES; SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

See agenda item 38/07, above. Pending a decision on the composition of the Planning Committee, the Council agreed that all current members of the Council would serve as the Planning Committee.

40/07 - CODE OF CONDUCT

The Clerk introduced the revised Code of Conduct for elected and coopted members issued by the Government on 4 April 2007 and which, subject to limited exceptions, had to be adopted by all local council, including County Councils, by 1 October 2007. The Standards Board for England and the CDC had strongly advised parish councils to adopt the revised Code, plus the General Statement of Principles annexed to it, without adding additional provisions so as to keep the Code as uniform as possible across the country. The Parish Council had an option to retain or

omit just two of the Code's provisions – paragraphs 7 and 12(2). Having considered the revised Code and General Statement of Principles as well as the various options open to parish councils, the Council decided to omit paragraphs 7 and 12(2), not to add any additional provisions to the Code and, thus, to adopt the revised Code of Conduct and the associated General Statement of Principles as set out in Annex B, below.

41/07 - MINUTES OF LAST MEETING
The minutes of the last meeting were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

42/07 – MATTERS ARISING
1. Waste skip. The skip hired for 28 April had been heavily used and left the village very full. The Council asked the Clerk to arrange another skip for the end of September.
2. Bottle bank. The Chairman reported that the bottle containers continued to be well used and that there had been no complaints about noise or litter. According to the District Council the facility was being used as heavily as the bottle banks in nearby parishes of comparable size.
3. Donations. Letters of thanks had been received from all five organisations to which the Council had sent donations in March.
4. Football field. Mr Caird said that there was no progress to report on the future of the Football Club or on its lease of the football field.

43/07 – OPEN FORUM
Four members of the public spoke to express their concern at the low-key way in which Mrs Martin-Jenkins's departure from the chair had taken place. As Chairman, she had given the Parish Council long and very loyal service over the years and appropriate note should be made of this fact.

44/07 – COUNCILLORS' REPORTS
The Chairman reported that on 14 March he had attended the joint meeting of the North-West Frontier and Rother Valley Forums. The main topics were home energy efficiency technologies and the new licencing laws. The frequency of future joint Forum meetings was also discussed.

45/07 – FINANCE
1. Draft accounts for the year ended 31 March 2006. Members considered the accounts for 2006-07 (see Annex C) and they were duly approved.

2. Annual return
Section 1 – Statement of Accounts. Members considered the figures set out in this section of the Council's annual return. The Clerk provided explanations of the variations from the previous year. Members were satisfied with the explanations and duly approved the signing of the section by the Chairman and Clerk.
Section 2 – Annual Governance Statement. Members considered all items in this section of the annual return, agreed that each could be responded to positively and duly approved the signing of the section by the Chairman and Clerk. In this context, the Council decided that, in light of the actions listed in Annex D below, its 2006-07 audit procedures had been adequate and effective.

3. Internal Audit and Auditor. Members noted that Mr J C King OBE, the Internal Auditor, had given the Council a clean report for the year ended 31 March 2007. He had indicated his willingness to continue as Internal Auditor for the year 2007-08 at a fixed fee of £70. Members confirmed that he should be reappointed. The Clerk was asked to contact Mr King accordingly.

4. Insurance cover and valuation of assets. Members were provided with details of the current valuations of the individual fixed assets owned by the Council and the insurance cover proposed by Cornhill Allianz for the coming twelve months. They decided that the insurance cover proposed was satisfactory and should be accepted.

5. 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 income and expenditure against the budget for the current financial year.

The Council approved payment of all the cheques listed in Annex E, below, as well as the payment of £273.00p to Mr M C Lillywhite towards the cost of reinstating parts of the village green damaged by cars during the winter months. It also decided to transfer £600 from the Capital Reserve Account to its Reserve Account (ie the Council's contingencies fund).

6. Bank mandate. Members decided to postpone consideration of this item till the additional Annual Meeting of the Parish Council on 24 May.

46/07 – PLANNING

1. **Applications**

Ten planning applications had been considered since the Council's last meeting – the applications concerning Springfields, Dickhurst House (2), High Hampstead Farm (2) and Old Hearne Farm which are referred to paragraph 2 and the four listed in this paragraph. The Planning Committee had comments and objections on two of these applications, ie those relating to Woodcraft Park Farm (two letters) and Springfields. Copies of letters to the District Council dated 20 March 2007, 3 May 2007 and 23 March 2007 setting out those comments and objections were circulated to those present at the meeting:

LG/07/00631/COU: Woodcraft Park Farm

3 no. fields to be used for camping for a maximum of 72 days per year

LG/07/01230/DOM: School Cottage, Roundhurst Lane

Two storey side extension (with undercroft) and front porch and associated alterations to cottage. Raise roof of outbuilding and associated alterations. Demolish and replace timber outbuilding

LG/07/01231/LBC: School Cottage, Roundhurst Lane

Two storey side extension (with undercroft) and front porch and associated alterations to cottage. Raise roof of outbuilding and associated alterations. Demolish and replace timber outbuilding

LG/07/01239/DOM: Lavant Hill Cottage, Hillgrove Lane

Two storey side extension and rear porch/garden room

2. **Decisions**

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

LG/06/04436/DOM: Jubilee Cottage, Lurgashall Green

Two storey rear extension PERMIT

LG/07/00212/DOM: Lower Roundhurst Farm, Tennyson's Lane

Demolition and rebuild garage in different location. New driveway to the house. Oil tank to be replaced by two bunded new ones PERMIT

LG/07/00440/FUL: Land South of Parkhurst House, Jobson's Lane

Application for planning permission for works to recreate a pond on land adjacent to Parkhurst House, and associated earthworks to form an earth bund to the eastern pond boundary. Proposed formation of silting pool PERMIT

LG/07/00578/LBC: The Hole, Blind Lane

Part single and part two storey rear extension PERMIT

LG/07/00579/DOM: The Hole, Blind Lane

Part single storey and part two storey rear extension PERMIT

LG/07/00997/FUL: Springfields, Hillgrove Lane

1 no. agricultural dwelling REFUSED

LG/07/00640/FUL: Dickhurst House, Petworth Road

Existing house to be divided into 2 units. New single storey link entrance hall joining existing house and outbuildings. New gable roof over existing door PERMIT

LG/07/00857/DOM: High Hampstead Farm, High Hampstead Lane

Proposed ground and first floor alterations including single storey utility room extension PERMIT

LG/07/00639/LBC: Dickhurst House, Petworth Road

Existing house divided into 2 no. residential units. Existing bedrooms altered to provide bathrooms. Existing rear entrance yard infilled; new roof and rooflight. New gable roof over existing door. New rear entrance doors. New terrace wall and garden/lawn planting PERMIT

LG/07/00853/LBC: High Hampstead Farm, High Hampstead Lane

Ground and first floor alterations including single storey utility room extension of a domestic dwelling PERMIT

LG/07/00953/FUL: Old Hearne Farm, Jays Lane

A mixed agricultural and equestrian development consisting of a stock building, 10 no. loose boxes, tractor barn, two storage barns and ancillary feed store, office and mess room WITHDRAWN

47/07 – HIGHWAYS AND FOOTPATHS

1. Lickfold Bridge. The Clerk reported that he had spoken again to the Highways Department about the continuing lack of action on the demolished bridge wall at Lickfold and lack of steps at its northern end of the raised footbridge. He understood that the former was in the queue for

repair and the latter was still being assessed. The meeting asked the Clerk to continue pressing the Highways Department on these matters.

2. Parish signposts. Regarding the cleaning and repair of the Parish's six black and white signposts, Mr Sharp said he planned to take action shortly.

48/07 - ALLOTMENTS

Maintenance. The grass on the unhired plots was getting long and the Clerk was requested to speak to the contractors about getting it cut as soon as possible.

49/07 – PLAYGROUND

Maintenance. The Clerk reported that the grass was being mowed at fortnightly intervals and that the re-turfed areas in the entrance and under the puppy springer were settling down well.

50/07 – VILLAGE GREEN

1. Damage to verges. Mr Caird reported the findings of the working party, composed of Mr Cooper, Dr Tate and himself, which had been set up at the March meeting to assess (a) the damage being caused by increased parking in the vicinity of the Noah's Ark, (b) the options for tacking the problem and the various bodies that should be involved putting matters right and (c) the likely costs involved. The working party had addressed these issues in a preliminary way. It was clear that, in addition to the seasonal and/or occasional heavy parking near the pub by ramblers and visitors to the Church (including for weddings and funerals), cricket and the annual fete, there was now a much increased demand for parking space from visitors to, and staff working at, the Noah's Ark. Possible ways of alleviating this demand whilst protecting the grass verges identified were: use of all or part of the garden to the rear of the pub; installing grasscrete (or similar) on the grass alongside the Old Rectory; expanding the existing space for parking by filling in the pond; encouraging more efficient parking by placing studs or lines on the ground; using a section of the football field; extending the ditches around the green to discourage parking on the grass; placing bollards – permanently or seasonally – around the triangle and at the corners of the Green. The working party recognised that each of these approaches had advantages and disadvantages. Moreover, some of them – such as use of part of the football field – were currently no more than long-term possibilities. The solution to the problem was likely to involve a combination of a number of short, medium and long term measures.

The following were among the points made by individual Members during discussion of Mr Caird's report:

(a) Provision of more parking to cope with the current perceived problem could, if the Council is not careful, create a situation that generates yet more parking in the village.
(b) The field behind the village shop might be more feasible as a car park than the football field.
(c) Actions such as filling in the pond, if acceptable at all, would make only a comparatively small contribution to solving the parking problem.
(d) Extending the ditches and banks around the verges of the Green would require the prior agreement of WSCC's Highways Department and the Leconfield Estate.
(e) Damage to the verges around the Green is a seasonal issue; the grass verges can take the cars when the ground was dry. The parking problem would best be solved by placing removable posts along vulnerable stretches around the Green.

Summing up, the Chairman said it was not going to be easy to find the best way of balancing the increased demand for parking near the Noah's Ark and the need to ensure that the appearance of the Green was not spoilt. The various points made by the working party and by Members would need to be considered further at the Council's meeting in July.

2. Broken bollards. The County Council had added replacement of the broken bollards near the Noah's Ark to its repair list in mid-January but the work had yet to be carried out. The Clerk was requested to continue to press the Highways Department.
3. Ash tree near Hazards. The Clerk reported that he had been told by the Leconfield forester that, as a joint goodwill gesture to the Parish, the Leconfield and Cowdray Estates had agreed to fell the unhealthy ash tree outside Hazards and to meet the cost between them. The Estates would not, however, be able to do the work till the autumn.
4. Chestnut tree. The Clerk reported that the Leconfield forester had reaffirmed his view that it would be inadvisable to replace the circular seat around the diseased chestnut tree at the eastern side of the Green till the tree's survival became clearer; the assessment could take some years.

51/07 – MEETING DATES FOR 2007-08
Meeting dates for the coming year were agreed as follows:

2007 -	12 July	13 September	8 November
2008 -	10 January	13 March	8 May (Annual Meeting of the Parish Council)

The Annual Parish Meeting will take place on 8 May 2008.

52/07 - CORRESPONDENCE
The following were among the communications received since the last Council meeting:
1. County Local Committees. WSCC had carried out an internal review of the performance of its 14 CLCs. Among the recommendations made, and subsequently adopted by WSCC, were that the number of CLCs should remain the same, that they should meet more frequently (6 times a year) and that more powers should be delegated to them.
2. CPRE. The Sussex branch's annual seminar on planning will be held in Pulborough on 2 October 2007 and will be geared towards those with little or no experience of the planning system. The Clerk was instructed to seek two places for Members and, in addition, the Council instructed him to take the steps necessary for the Parish Council to rejoin the CPRE.
3. Empty Houses Strategy. The CDC had requested the input of parish councils to its 2007-11 survey of empty properties (ie unfurnished, empty for over 6 months and not a second home). A nil return had been sent in for Lurgashall.
4. SALC. Details of the Association's courses for new councillors over the coming month had been received. The meeting decided the SALC list should be reviewed on 24 May after the cooption of new members.

53/07 - ANY OTHER BUSINESS
No matters were raised.

54/07 – DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS
The additional Annual Meeting of the Parish Council would take place on 24 May 2007 in the Village Hall at 7.00 pm. The next ordinary meeting of the Parish Council would take place on 12 July 2007.

There being no other business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.10 pm.

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PJS: 13/05/07