LURGASHALL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held in the Village Hall on Thursday, 12 July 2007

Present: Mr R E J Cooper (Chairman), Mrs J Boxall, Mr K M Caird, Mr N P Jowett, Mrs A Martin-Jenkins, Mr M H Oakland, Mr G D J R Sharp, Dr A H J Tate, Dr P J H Wilding and Mr P J Széll (Clerk).

Also present: Mr C Duncton.

59/07 - APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
Apologies for absence had been received from Dr P Mackey.

60/07 – CODE OF CONDUCT
The Chairman reminded members of their responsibilities under the Code of Conduct.

61/07 - MINUTES OF LAST MEETINGS
The minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council and the additional Annual Meeting, held on 10 and 24 May 2007, respectively, were approved and signed by the Chairman as true records, subject to the last two lines of item 57/07, paragraph 1, being deleted and replaced by the following: "*Village Hall Management Committee* Mr R E J Cooper".

62/07 – MATTERS ARISING
1. Waste skip. A skip, plus qualified supervisor, had been hired for Saturday, 29 September 2007 from 10.00 am till noon at the Village Hall car park.
2. CPRE. The Council had rejoined CPRE and reserved two places at its planning seminar on 2 October in Pulborough. (The places had been allocated to Dr Tate and Mr Jowett.)

63/07 – OPEN FORUM
No matters were raised.

64/07 – COUNCILLORS' REPORTS
The Chairman introduced Mr Chris Duncton, Petworth's new County Councillor, who was attending his first Parish Council meeting. Responding to a question about the Petworth lorry ban, Mr Duncton said the County Council was currently working on improving road signs and satellite navigation systems with the aim of ensuring that articulated lorries in particular use the recommended bypass roads. Dr Mackey's report (see Annex A) was read out by the Clerk.

65/07 – FINANCE
Current financial statement. The Clerk distributed and explained:
(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 the budget for the current financial year.

The Council approved payment of all the cheques listed in Annex B, below.

66/07 – PLANNING AND HIGHWAYS
1. Planning and Highways Committee. The Council was informed that, at the Committee's meeting on 4 June 2007, Dr Wilding had been elected Chairman of the Committee.

(a) **Planning**

2. Applications. Dr Wilding reported that six planning applications had been considered since the Council's last meeting – the applications concerning Aldworth House, High Hampstead barns (the LBC application) and Kestrels which are referred to in paragraph 3, below, and three of the four listed in this paragraph. (The application concerning Leverton would be considered shortly.) The Planning Committee had major comments and objections on three of these applications, namely those relating to the High Hampstead barns (both applications) and King's Copse. Copies of the Council's letters to the District Council, dated 7 June 2007 and 10 July 2007 respectively, setting out those comments and objections were circulated to those present at the meeting:

LG/07/02213/FUL: High Hampstead, High Hampstead Lane

Change of use and alteration of barn to form holiday lets including use for vocational residential courses and owner's accommodation.

LG/07/02816/FUL: King's Copse, Hillgrove Lane

Replacement of residential mobile home with new dwelling and garage/garden store (revision to planning permission LG/04/03950/FUL)

LGFH/07/03048/DOM: Upperfold Farm, Lickfold Road

Alterations to existing ancillary accommodation. (Amendment to permitted proposal FHLG/02/01471/DOM)

LG/07/02858/DOM: Leverton, Fernden Lane

Creation of a tennis court to be cut into the hill to the south of the property

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

LG/06/04361/FUL: Jays Farm, Jays Lane

Change of use and alteration of existing 2 storey barn and associated single storey outbuildings into residential unit with annex. Replacement of existing dilapidated milking shed with 3 bay garaging/stores - covered way to link garage to main house PERMIT

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 PERMIT

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 PERMIT

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

Two storey side extension and rear porch/garden room PERMIT

LG/07/01356/FUL: Aldworth House, Tennyson's Lane

Oak framed detached barn PERMIT

LG/07/02215/DOM: Kestrels, Fernden Lane

Single storey front extension and change of use of part of garage to form front entrance and utility PERMIT

LG/07/02214/LBC: High Hampstead Farm, High Hampstead Lane
Alteration of barn to form holiday lets and owner's accommodation PERMIT

4. Other planning related matters. The Chairman informed the meeting that the Woodcraft Park Farm application (LG/07/00631/COU) was not in the Development Committee (North)'s list for consideration in July because the Woodcraft Folk had not yet submitted a report (requested by WSCC) on the transport implications of the proposed development.

(b) **Highways**

5. High Hampstead Lane. Concern was expressed about the number of builders' cars and lorries parked outside High Hampstead Farm whilst building works were being carried out and the problem this was causing for those driving along the road. The Clerk was asked to raise the matter with WSCC's Highways Department and the District Council's Planning Officers.

6. Potholes. Members drew attention to the potholes at the entrance to Greengates and on Jobson's Lane outside Southbridge and on the bends to the south of the track to Greenland Farm. The Highways Department was already aware of most, if not all, of these defects as well as of the blocked drain where Jobson's Lane meets the track to Greenland Farm, but the Clerk was asked to press them further to carry out repairs soon.

7. Lickfold Bridge. The Clerk reported that the damaged bridge wall at Lickfold had now been repaired, but the Highways Department had still not dealt with the problem about the lack of steps at its northern end of the raised footbridge. The meeting asked the Clerk to continue pressing the Department on this matter.

67/07 – RECREATION

1. Recreation Committee. The Council was informed that, at the Committee's meeting on 18 June 2007, Mr Caird was elected Chairman of the Committee and the Committee had agreed, in principle, to meet every other month, on the second Thursday of those months when there was no Parish Council meeting. Additional meetings would be convened if circumstances warranted it.

2. Committee's report. Mr Caird presented the report of the Recreation Committee's meeting on 18 June. Members made a number of updates and, after discussion, the Council took note of the report as updated and endorsed various decisions arising from it, as follows:

(a) Footpaths and bridleways. Mr Oakland had agreed to be responsible for supervising the Parish's footpaths and bridleways on the Council's behalf. He had observed that, apart from Bullocks Lane, nothing required immediate attention. (Bullocks Lane remained a concern but work on it could not take place till the South Downs Joint Committee (SDJC) had sufficient funds.) Various signposts needed minor repairs (Mr Oakland was in contact with SDJC about these), whilst appropriate steps were being taken to ensure that the footbridge bridge formed of planks at the southern end of the football field would not be dislodged again.

(b) Playground: Mrs Boxall had agreed to be responsible for supervising the play area. She reported that it was being mowed regularly. RoSPA's 2007 survey had just arrived: overall it found the play area to be in good repair and gave it high marks. The RoSPA report would be considered in detail at the Recreation Committee's meeting on 9 August. It was agreed that, for the time being at least, the playground should remain unlocked at night.

(c) Allotments: Mr Sharp had agreed to be responsible for supervising the allotments. Occupancy of the plots needed to be increased; currently it was about 50%. The fencing around the site was now all in good repair, but further work was needed to make the vacant plots more attractive to new plot holders. To this end, Mr Sharp was planning to stake out the unused plots clearly and to dispose of the garden waste piles placed on some of the plots.

(d) The Green: Mr Caird had agreed to be responsible for supervising the Village Green and its surrounds. As a result of continuing concern about *flooding at the bottom of the Green* last winter, the Clerk had a site meeting with WSCC's Highways Department to discuss the feasibility of improving drainage at the top of the Green so as to ensure that water coming from the Dial Green direction was diverted into the ditch in front of Meadowside and the Noah's Ark. The Highways Superintendent looked carefully at all the gullies, ditches, grips and drains concerned and concluded they were all working well and not leading to flooding around the Green. He would be happy, however, to look at the matter further if called out after especially heavy rainfall and, in any case, would be willing to consider inserting a drain adjacent to the south side of the road from in front of the cricket pavilion to the existing gully at the corner outside the Noah's Ark so as to reduce the amount of rainwater flowing onto the edge of the Green along that stretch. The heavily worn grass verges between the pub and the pond needed to be built up if they were to drain into the gully and the pond; laying grasscrete on both sides was another possibility, but would be expensive and could lead over time to yet more of the grass verge being used for parking. Mr Sharp agreed to dig out a grip on the pond side of the road to assist more surface water to drain directly to the pond.
It was recognised that the *bus shelter* needed regular attention if it was to remain in good repair and free from litter. There were no issues concerning the pond at present but the Committee would need to check later on whether the maintenance work organised for this year was sufficient and, if necessary, adjust the management contract in 2008.
It was agreed that the task of reviewing the question of *parking around the Green* (assigned to a working party in March 2007) should become a Recreation Committee's responsibility.
In Mr Jim Court's absence on health grounds, Mr Sharp volunteered to *strim* those areas around the Green where the grass had grown very long.

(e) Risk assessment: Responsibility for risk assessment was a collective matter for the Committee as a whole. The annual risk assessment of the spaces and equipment for which the Council was responsible would be considered in October, taking into account RoSPA's 2007 report and in good time for the Finance Committee's preparation of budget proposals for 2008/09.

(f) Among other issues discussed by the Recreation Committee was the *football field*. The field was not a Parish Council responsibility, but its status and use were matters of legitimate concern to the Parish community. If necessary, it would be appropriate for the Council to exert what pressure it could to ensure the facility remained accessible to the public. The Council agreed it would be appropriate if the Recreation Committee were to discuss in a preliminary way any football field issues that arise, on the understanding that any specific action identified would need discussion and authorisation by the full Parish Council before being acted on.

(g) The Clerk noted that the small, circular *1953 Coronation disc* fixed to one of the legs of the Village Green notice board by Mr Jim Court when making the board has disappeared - possibly stolen. In case the metal disc has merely been misplaced (eg thrown over a hedge), the Council agreed that the loss should be publicised.

(h) Some Members continued to be keen to replace the *circular seat around the new chestnut tree* despite the tree's possibly fatal disease; they argued that a seat made in two parts could be

dismantled and placed around any new tree. The Clerk was asked to check the position regarding liability, etc with Leconfield and, if appropriate, obtain revised quotes.

68/07 – BOTTLE BANK

The Chairman reported that in the first three months of the trial period, a total of 5½ containers of glass had been collected from the Village Hall car park bottle bank, with green glass accounting for the majority (3 containers). A District Council chart showed a slow, but steady, upward movement in the amount of use made of each containers month by month.

69/07 – CORRESPONDENCE

The following were among the communications received since the last Council meeting:

1. Planning White Paper. The Council had been sent a lengthy consultation document by SALC inviting it to provide it with comments on the Government's recent Planning White Paper.
2. Fuel poverty. Lurgashall had been selected as one of five parishes for WSCC's pilot project to highlight fuel poverty (defined as existing in any household where more than 10% of its income is spent on maintaining satisfactory heating).
3. Blackdown Conservation Plan. The Council was notified on 29 June of the Deputy Prime Minister's decision to consent to the National Trust's request to fence a large part of Blackdown so as to return it to heathland by means of managed grazing. The consent runs for 15 years.
4. West Sussex youngsters - discount cards. WSCC has asked the Council to publicise its new 3-in-1 discount card for youngsters. The card, which is free, gives young people from 5 to 19: (a) cheap bus fares, (b) discounts at various shops and attractions and (c) proof of age.
5. North West Frontier Forum. The next meeting of the Forum (a joint session with Rother Valley) will take place on 19 September 2007.
6. South Downs National Park. CPRE had written to parish councils urging them to write to DEFRA to ask for the six weeks for commenting on the recent alternative boundary proposals for the National Park to be extended to at least twelve weeks. Members agreed (i) that the Clerk should write supporting an extension, (ii) that, if an extension is granted, the Council should consider what, if any, submission to make at its September meeting; and (iii) that, if one is not granted, an additional Council meeting should be called before the 13 August 2007 deadline for the same purpose.

70/07 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Police Liaison. The Council decided to appoint a Police Liaison Focal Point, akin to the ones already operating in Tillington and elsewhere. Mr Oakland offered to take on the task. As Focal Point he would act as a front line of communication between the local Police and the parish on matters of common concern. Members agreed that Mr Oakland should establish contacts, especially with the new Neighbourhood Specialist Team set up by Sussex Police and make sure that his role dove-tailed with that of the Parish's existing Neighbourhood Watch team.

71/07 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Parish Council would take place on 13 September 2007 at 7.30 pm.

There being no other business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.50 pm.

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PJS: 15/07/07