

LURGASHALL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held in the Village Hall on Thursday, 11 September 2008

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

The Chairman declared the meeting open at 7.30 pm.

58/08 - APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Mr G D J R Sharp and Mr C Duncton.

59/08 – CODE OF CONDUCT

The Chairman reminded members of their responsibilities under the Code of Conduct. The following Members declared a prejudicial interest in the subject matter of agenda item 65/08 (Village Hall roof repairs): Mr Bonnett, Mrs Martin-Jenkins, Mr Caird and Mrs Boxall.

60/08 – MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

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

61/08 – MATTERS ARISING

No matters were raised.

62/08 – OPEN FORUM

No matters were raised.

63/08 - COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

In Mr Duncton's absence, the Clerk read out his report to the meeting (see Annex A).

64/08 - 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.

2. Annual return. The Clerk reported that Mazars, the external auditors, had certified the Council's accounts for the year to 31 March 2008 and that, as required, the statutory notices regarding the audited accounts had been displayed on the Village Green notice board.

65/08 – VILLAGE HALL ROOF REPAIRS

- Mr Bonnett, in his capacity as Chairman of the Village Hall Management Committee (VHMC), had written to the Council's Chairman on 14 August requesting financial support from the Parish Council towards the cost of replacing the Hall's clay tile roof which was in urgent need of repair. Battens had rotted and there was a danger of tiles slipping. Patching was not an option. The VHMC had obtained three estimates and was budgeting for the work to cost £30,000. About £20,000 was already to hand in the form of VHMC reserves and grants. Around £5,000 more was

anticipated from various grants and fund-raising exercises. That left about £5,000 to be found and it was this amount for which Mr Bonnett was seeking support from the Council. Copies of Mr Bonnett's letter were circulated to all present at the meeting.

- In discussion the request, the following points were made by Council Members not on the VHMC:

- (a) it would be preferable to reuse as many of the roof's old clay tiles as possible rather than, as proposed by the VHMC, replace the entire roof with new concrete tiles, the appearance of which would be very different from the existing ones and not be as attractive. (About 75% of the existing tiles could be reused, thus leaving only 25% to be bought from reclaimed stock);
- (b) had consideration been given to leaving repair of the Hall's two gable ends (neither of which was leaking or in poor condition) for the future? By excluding replacement of the gable ends from the project, costs would be reduced significantly;
- (c) had the VHMC gone, or considered going, back to the firm that had provided the preferred quote to check what the cost would be (i) of repairing just the roof and not the two gable ends and (ii) of reusing the existing clay tiles rather than new concrete tiles? Given the impact of the recent economic downturn on the building trade, the firm might well be able to offer a keener price.

- In reply, Council Members who were on the VHMC said that:

- (a) the concrete tiles VHMC was planning to use would look very similar to the existing tiles and, moreover, they would come with a 30 year guarantee in contrast to the old clay tiles which were now 100 years old and whose remaining life was, therefore, limited;
- (b) the majority of the tiles on the south face of the roof were in good condition but a good number of those on the north side were pitted and could not be re-used;
- (c) whilst the tiles on the east gable were in a satisfactory state, some of those on the west gable were badly broken and should not be left as they are;
- (d) whether the cost of the project could be lowered was a matter best addressed nearer the time of awarding the contract. The VHMC could not afford delay. Experts had said the roof needed repair soon; heavy snowfalls this winter could well further damage the roof;
- (e) given the strict Health and Safety rules applicable to building sites and the cost of scaffolding, it made sense to do the whole roof in one go and not delay portions of it;
- (f) the Village Hall played a vital role in the community and the Parish Council, which represented the Parish as a whole, had a certain moral responsibility to assist it financially when other sources were insufficient to meet the cost of essentials such as re-roofing;
- (g) given that the VHML had already raised five-sixths of the estimated total, the Parish Council should, if need be, be willing to meet the remaining sixth, ie £5,000.

- In discussion of the amount the Council should pay by way of grant to the VHMC, Mr Jowett and Dr Wilding suggested that a sum in the region of £2,000 would be appropriate. Dr Tate proposed that the Council support the VHMC, in the form of a guarantee in case of a shortfall, to the sum of £5,000. His proposal did not win support from the other Council members not on the VHMC. The Chairman then suggested, by way of a compromise, and the voting members agreed, that:

- (i) in the event of the VHMC finding itself unable to meet the full cost of repairing the Village Hall roof from its reserves and other sources, the Council would be prepared to grant from its own resources a sum of up to £3,000 towards the shortfall, such payment to be made only after presentation to the Council of complete and up-to-date documentation regarding the cost of the roof repair project and the finance available to VHMC to pay for it; and
- (ii) if, notwithstanding payment of the sum mentioned in (i), the VHMC still had problems meeting the full cost of the project, it would be entitled to put a further request to the Council.

66/08 – PLANNING

1. Applications. Dr Wilding reported that ten planning applications had been notified to the Council since the last meeting – the applications concerning Pavilion and Signpost Cottage referred to in paragraph 2, below, and the eight listed in this paragraph. The applications concerning Plash Barn Farm (two) and Herne House had not yet been considered by the Planning Committee. The Committee had no major comments, concerns or objections with regard to any of the other seven applications.

LG/08/02776/FUL: Blackdown Park Farm, Fernden Lane

Works to existing building to provide enhanced ancillary accommodation at first floor level

LG/08/01626/DOM: 163 Bishops Holt

Single storey glazed rear extension

LG/08/03021/LBC: 163 Bishops Holt

Proposed single storey glazed rear extension

LG/08/03192/DOM: Pavilion, Jays Lane

Construction of a new garage following demolition of garage and summer house

LG/08/02665/FUL: Jays Farm, Jays Lane

Horse walker

LG/08/03251/LBC: Plash Barn Farm, off Jobsons Lane

Insertion of a window in the ground floor bedroom (west elevation)

LG/08/03269/LBC: Plash Barn Farm, off Jobsons Lane

Installation of a satellite dish on the south elevation

LG/08/03459/DOM: Herne House, Petworth Road

Replacement of first floor glazed structure with a traditionally designed alternative

2. Decisions. Seven decisions had been received from Chichester DC (CDC) since the last meeting:

LG/08/02146/FUL: Orchard Park Farm, Village Green

New agricultural building

PERMIT

LG/08/02152/DOM: Orchard Park Farm, Village Green

Demolition of existing utility room and pantry and construction of new kitchen/breakfast room, boot/utility room, tack room and farm/vet store

WITHDRAWN

LG/08/01998/DOM: Westminster Cottage, Hillgrove Lane

Erection of a single storey garden shed

PERMIT

LG/08/02553/DOM: Pheasant Hill, Hillgrove Lane

Single storey side extension to provide utility room and music/computer room

PERMIT

LG/08/02695/TCA: Old Barn, Village Green

Notification of intention to fell 1 no. Cypress tree

NOT TO PREPARE A TREE PRESERVATION ORDER

LG/08/02890/FUL: Pavilion, Jays Lane

Construction of new dwelling following demolition of existing

PERMIT

LG/08/03122/TPA: Signpost Cottage, Village Green

Notification of intention to fell 1 no. Silver Birch tree

NOT TO PREPARE A TREE PRESERVATION ORDER

67/08 - HIGHWAYS

Signposts. Mrs Martin-Jenkins commented that the Parish's six black and white signposts were looking tired and jaded. A number of them needed re-painting and several had minor damage that should be repaired (eg the broken finger post at Dial Green). All needed cleaning. Members agreed that the posts were an attractive feature of the Parish and that it was important to keep them looking good. More difficult tasks, such as re-fixing the roundel at Gospel Green should, they felt, be left to WSCC's Highways Department. As for carrying out more basic tasks (eg cleaning and repainting), a number of Council members volunteered to "adopt" individual posts.

68/08 – RECREATION

Mr Caird presented the report of the Recreation Committee meeting held on 13 August, updating it as necessary. Members added various comments. The Council took note of the report as updated and endorsed various decisions arising from it, as indicated in the following summary:

(a) Footpaths and bridleways. The Chairman had written to thank the South Downs Joint Committee (SDJC) for its prompt response to the Council's plea to complete the repairs to Bullock Lane. Whilst stretches of the lane still needed attention (a fact recognised by SDJC), its condition had been greatly improved. Also, the Clerk had written to Mr Michael Oakland thanking him for the representations he had made to get SDJC to act speedily on this matter. Regarding the byway at the top of the Quell, SDJC had told the Clerk it would be contacting the National Trust (owner of most of the land over which the byway ran) with the aim of getting it to help repair it. Till such work was done there was no point in erecting "No motorised vehicles" signs as the track was incapable of use by any wheeled vehicle.

(b) Playground. RoSPA's 2008 inspection had given the playground good overall ratings and has concluded it was a "well maintained site in good condition". On the basis of the Recreation Committee's detailed review of the inspector's findings, the Council decided that, whilst certain items identified by the inspector should be monitored over the coming year, no specific remedial action was necessary apart from treatment of any significant rust that those repainting the slide might find. Work on repainting the play area's metal equipment was under way, but the recent frequent wet weather had held up its completion.

(c) Allotments. The Council considered a quotation of £425 (+VAT) from Mr Philip Juniper for erecting a replacement fence along the access path to the allotments using materials provided free of charge by the Leconfield Estates. The Clerk had checked this figure with a Haslemere fencing firm which confirmed that it was very reasonable and that it would not be able to better it. The Council approved Mr Juniper's quotation and the Clerk was asked to get the work carried out as early as possible.

(d) Village Green.

- *Maintenance.* The Recreation Committee had discussed the quality and timeliness of work by Garden Escapes around the Village Green. No conclusions had been reached but it was agreed to address the issues when specifying next year's maintenance requirements for the Green.

- *Parking.* Mr Caird and the Chairman had met the tenants of the Noah's Ark and Greene King's Area Manager on 17 July to explore ways to resolve the problem of parking around the pub and the Church. The meeting was productive. The participants agreed on the following:

- (a) the pub and brewery agreed to partition a third of the pub's rear garden to provide some

extra parking places. (This would entail removing 50 metres of hedge along the track, erecting a fence across the garden and, above all, getting permission from Mr and Mrs Andreozzi for some form of right of way for pub staff and visitors over the first 50 metres or so of the track.)

(b) the area near the pond was particularly untidy with cars parking all over the place; the parking area should be defined by kerb stones and then the grass area around the pond re-seeded with, in addition, the planting of daffodil bulbs and perhaps a box hedge to replace the fence around the pond which was unsightly and could be deemed a hazard; and

(c) there should be some form of white line marking (as at the Village Hall car park) so that vehicles would park more efficiently.

There were no commitments as to cost or as to how the cost of such work should be shared. The pub and brewery had, however, indicated their willingness to contribute to the overall costs as long as they were not the sole contributors.

(e) Football field. Though not formally a Parish Council matter, the Recreation Committee reported that considerable progress had been made in returning the pitch to a standard acceptable for the playing of football. Northchapel FC promoted themselves by having a stall at the Lurgashall fete and had been very active in fund raising and doing work on the field.

69/08 – CORRESPONDENCE

The following were among the communications recently received by the Council:

1. DORIS bus. Because of funding problems, the DORIS bus changed on 4 August from being a pick up and stop service to a fixed route service. Its regular customers had been consulted about the new routes. The current timetable had been pinned up in the Village Green bus shelter.
2. Clean Neighbourhood Officer. CDC's recently appointed Clean Neighbourhood Officer had approached parishes with various initiatives, including a proposal for a "Big Tidy Up Day" during September.
3. Play Development Officer. CDC had also appointed a part-time Play Development Officer who had started her work by inviting parishes to complete a Play Audit questionnaire.
4. Flooding survey. CDC had again asked the Parish Council to contribute to its annual winter flooding survey. Members were asked to inform the Clerk of flooding incidents observed anywhere within the Parish from November to March.
5. Electric blankets. WSCC's Trading Standards Service had asked the Parish to publicise a series of events at which people's electric blanket can be safety tested free of charge. The full list of 2008 venues and dates had been pinned on the Village Green notice board. The nearest event to Lurgashall will be at the Grange, Midhurst on 14 October.
6. Forthcoming meetings. Action in Rural Sussex would be holding a workshop on Improving Village Access to Health and Well-being on 7 October in Lodsworth Village Hall. (The Chairman offered to attend on behalf of the Council). The next North West Frontier Forum meeting – a joint session with the Rother Valley Forum - would be on 22 October at the Grange, Midhurst.

70/08 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No matters were raised.

71/08 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Council would take place on 13 November 2008 at 7.30 pm.

There being no other business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.15 pm.

PJS:19/9/08