LURGASHALL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held in the Village Hall on Thursday, 8 May 2008

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

Also present : Dr P Mackey and two members of the public.

The Chairman declared the meeting open at 8.00 pm. He welcomed Mr Bonnett to the meeting and congratulated him on his cooption to the Council.

28/08 - APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
Apologies for absence had been received from Mr N P Jowett and Mr C Duncton.

29/08 – ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN
Mr R E J Cooper was proposed by Mr Caird and seconded by Dr Wilding. There being no other nominations, Mr Cooper was elected by consensus and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office (see Annex A).

30/08 – ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN; APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND REPRESENTATIVES; SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITIES
Members agreed to expand their discussion of this item to include review of the structure and functions of its Committees.

- Vice-Chairman. Dr A H J Tate was proposed by Mrs Boxall and seconded by Mrs Martin-Jenkins. There being no other nominations, Dr Tate was elected by consensus.

- Planning Committee. It was decided that this Committee (a) would be responsible for considering, and commenting on, all Lurgashall planning applications on behalf of the Council and (b) would be composed of Mr N P Jowett, Mrs A Martin-Jenkins, Dr A H J Tate and Dr P H J Wilding, with Dr Wilding as Chairman. It was further decided that the Chairman of the Planning Committee would invite all members of the Council to participate in meetings at which the Committee was due to consider particularly contentious or sensitive applications.

- Finance Committee. It was decided that this Committee (a) would, in addition to making budget proposals to the Council, be responsible for making recommendations to it on donations and grants and (b) would be composed of Mr J S Bonnett, Mr K M Caird, Mrs Martin-Jenkins and Dr P J H Wilding, with Mrs Martin-Jenkins as Chairman.

- Recreation Committee. It was decided that this Committee (a) would be responsible for supervising, and for making recommendations to the Council on, the Parish's footpaths, bridleways, village green (including the pond and bus shelter), playground and allotments, as well as for making recommendations to the Council on risk assessment and (b) would be composed of Mr J S Bonnett, Mrs J Boxall, Mr K M Caird, Mr G D A R Sharp and Dr A H J Tate, with Mr Caird as Chairman.

- General Purposes Committee. It was decided that this Committee (a) would be responsible for acting on the Council's behalf with regard to matters requiring action between Council meetings and (b) would be composed of the Chairman of the Council, plus the Chairmen of the Finance, Planning and Recreation Committees.

- Special responsibilities**.** Special responsibilities were agreed as follows:

  - *Systems audit* Dr A H J Tate
  - *Bottle bank* Mrs J Boxall

- Representatives. It was decided that Mr R E J Cooper would be the Council's representative on the North-West Frontier Community Forum.

- It was further decided that any highways questions that required action between meetings of the Council would be handled by the Clerk, guided as necessary by the Chairman.

31/08 – CODE OF CONDUCT
The Chairman reminded members of their responsibilities under the Code of Conduct.

32/08 – MINUTES OF LAST MEETING
The minutes of the last meeting were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

33/08 – MATTERS ARISING
No matters were raised.

34/08 – OPEN FORUM
Mr Paul Read informed the meeting about recent developments regarding Neighbourhood Watch. Information was now coming to him as local co-ordinator from three or four sources. Much of it was computer-based and needed to be circulated quickly if it was to be really effective. Neighbourhood Watch reports would continue to appear in the *Parish Newsletter*, but other channels, eg the parish website, were needed as well. To this end, he was planning to hold a meeting of interested parties in the coming month to discuss ways of improving communication.

35/08 - COUNCILLORS' REPORTS
Dr Mackey drew attention to four matters: (a) the proposed changes to Northchapel Primary School and his letter to the Editor of the *Midhurst and Petworth Observer* on the matter; (b) the concerns voiced recently in Northchapel about the large increases in housing rents; (c) the poor state of the Parish's road surfaces, a matter on which he had been trying to lobby Mr Harry Smith, leader of the majority group on WSCC; and (d) recent planning issues.

36/08 - FINANCE

1. Draft accounts for the year ended 31 March 2008. Members considered the accounts for 2007-08 (see Annex B) 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 significant variations from the previous year. Members were satisfied with the figures and explanations and duly approved the signing of the section by the Chairman and Clerk.
Section 2 – Annual Governance Statement. Members considered the 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 C below, its 2007-08 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 2008. He had told the Clerk

that he felt that, after a number of years as the Council's Internal Auditor, the time was right for a change. He had kindly offered to suggest two or thee names of suitably qualified people who might be prepared to take on the role. The Council requested the Clerk to convey its gratitude to Mr King for auditing its accounts over the years and especially for the speed, care and courtesy with which he had always carried out the work.

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 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 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 D, below. It also decided to transfer £600 from the Capital Reserve Account to its Reserve Account (ie the Council's contingencies fund).

6. Bank charges. The Clerk informed members that the National Westminster Bank had written stating that from 2 June 2008 the Council would be charged for all transactions involving its current account. He would need to contact the bank to establish the extent of the charges and also SALC to find out how other Parish Councils were reacting to such changes. Members felt that, in the current economic climate, the introduction of charging was probably inevitable, but nevertheless considered the Council should check whether there were any realistic alternatives given that the accounting rules under which local councils operated prevented a move away from cheque-based banking. Dr Mackey offered to raise the matter with District Council officials.

37/08 – PLANNING AND HIGHWAYS

(a) **Planning**

1. Applications. Dr Wilding reported that seven planning applications had been notified to the Council since the last meeting – the application concerning Hearn House referred to in paragraph 2, below, and the six listed in this paragraph. The application concerning 163 Bishops Holt had not yet been considered by the Planning Committee. Of the remaining five applications, the Committee had objections to, and comments on, three of them – namely Orchard Park Farm and the two applications concerning Greenfield Bungalow. Copies of the letters to the District Council, dated 12 April, 31 March, 18 April and 24 April 2008, setting out those objections and concerns were circulated to those present at the meeting for information:

LG/08/00998/DOM: Greenfields Bungalow, Northhurst Lane
Replacement garage and associated landscaping

LG/08/01202/FUL: Orchard Park Farm, Village Green
New agricultural building

LG/08/01282/FUL: Greenfields Bungalow, Northhurst Lane
Alternative proposals to planning permission LG/07/04239/FUL for the demolition and removal of existing dwelling and ancilliary buildings and construction of replacement dwelling and associated landscaping

LG/08/01240/DOM: Dial House, Dial Green
Two storey side extension to replace existing single storey side extension

LG/08/01252/LBC: The Green, Village Green
Removal of internal wall, blocking up of a doorway and minor internal and external refurbishment to match existing

LG/08/01602/LBC: 163 Bishops Holt
Single storey side extension.

2. Decisions. Five decisions had been received from Chichester DC since the last meeting:

LG/07/05827/LBC: The Malt House, Village Green
Replace window to bedroom no. 5, remedial works in basement, alterations to kitchen, utility room, cloakroom, store, bedroom no. 1, bedroom no. 2, bedroom no.3, bedroom no. 4, bathroom, loft stair and rooflight to stair no. 2
GRANT

LG/08/00681/LBC: Boxalland Farm, Petworth Road
Addition of solar water heating collectors to provide a non polluting sustainable energy source and associated screening
GRANT

LG/08/00701/DOM: The Hole, Blind Lane
Erection of replacement garage building. Amendment to planning permission LG/06/02173/DOM
PERMIT

LG/08/00825/DOM: Pear Tree Cottage, Village Green
Single storey double garage
PERMIT

LG/08/00928/FUL: Herne House, Petworth Road
To construct new 40m x 20m all weather arena including new timber stable block for private use
PERMIT

3. Other planning related matters. Concern was expressed about the increasing quantity of builders' waste piled up in the entrance to Greenfield Bungalow alongside the unsightly large metal container that had filled the access space for the past few months, especially since no work seemed to be taking place on the site. The Clerk was asked to write to the owners' agents pointing out how detrimental the rubbish and container were to appearance of the Conservation Area.

(b) **Highways**
1. Speed checks. The Clerk reported that he had spoken to Inspector Jim Bartlett of the Police Neighbourhood Specialist Team about speeding vehicles and the scope for using the Speed Indication Devices (SIDs) recently bought by Sussex Police to combat the problem on certain lanes in the parish. The reply was not encouraging. SIDs (with their range of warning messages such as "Slow Down") worked where there were specific speed restrictions – eg 30 or 40 mph limits - but there were no such restrictions in Lurgashall.
2. Potholes. The County Highways Department had filled in many of the potholes that were causing concern but, as they had only been patched, Members felt they would soon reappear.

3. Jobson's Lane. Mrs Martin-Jenkins drew attention to the recent sudden increase in the number of huge lorries using Jobson's Lane. They were clearly not delivering to local properties and, she suspected, were a by-product of the major road-works in the vicinity of Petworth and the detours recommended by WSCC.

4. Tennyson's Lane. Mr Bonnett expressed concern that Lower Roundhurst Farm was recommending vehicles visiting its shop to travel via Tennyson's Lane rather than Jobson's Lane. Tennyson's Lane was narrow and had blind bends. It was not suitable for the quantity of traffic generated by the shop. The problem would become worse when holiday lets started at the Farm. In discussion, it was noted that many of the vehicles going to the Farm came from Haslemere and would see Tennyson's Lane as the logical route and that, when seeking planning permission for the holiday lets, the owners of the Farm had said they would be recommending clients to use their Jobson's Lane entrance. In conclusion, the Chairman said that the situation needed to be monitored and that, if serious problems arose, a letter could be sent to the owners.

38/08 – RECREATION

Mr Caird reported on the Recreation Committee meeting held on 10 April and updated it as necessary. Members added various comments. The Council took note of the report as updated and endorsed a number of decisions arising from it, as indicated in the following summary:

(a) Footpaths and bridleways. Because of financial constraints, work on Bullocks Lane had advanced as far as it could for the moment; SDJC aimed to complete the task this financial year.

(b) Playground. Repainting the play area's metal equipment would be start later this month.

(c) Allotments.

- *Fencing along access path*. Regarding the fence along the west side of the path leading to the allotments, Leconfield had written saying they were prepared to supply all the necessary materials free of charge (ie oak posts, larch rails, wire, nails, staples, etc) and deliver them to the site, if the Parish Council would provide the labour to erect it. Members agreed the Council should take up this offer though it had been under the impression that the full cost would fall to Leconfield. The Meeting instructed Mr Caird and the Clerk to obtain a couple of tenders for the labour involved in time for consideration by the Recreation Committee at its meeting on 12 June.
- *Boundary line.* Leconfield has proposed a meeting in June to clarify the precise line of the allotments' northern boundary.

(d) Village Green.

- *Ditches*. Though work on cleaning out the ditches was completed some week ago, the area outside the Malt House remained rather wet due to the frequent heavy rain in April.
- *Trees.* The wild service tree planted at the Green's southern corner seemed to be thriving.
- *Parking*. Mr Sharp was concerned about the lack of progress on dealing with the parking problem near the Noah's Ark. The Parish Council should not continue to pay out money to repair the verges whilst the pub, which was almost entirely the reason for the damage, continued to do nothing to help solve the problem. During discussion, a number of possibilities for tackling the problem were recalled, including (a) the pub's tenants making the land behind the premises available for parking and (b) landscaping around the pond. Members agreed that the time had come for the Chairman and Mr Caird to hold a meeting with the pub's owners, Greene King.

(e) Football field. Mr Caird reported that he and the Chairman had taken part in a meeting of the revived Football Club committee on 7 May. The meeting had considered the terms of the club's lease from the Diocese, the club's existing funds and various organisational and financial arrangements for its future, such as (a) the need, at an appropriate moment, for discussion with the Diocese and (b) the establishment of links with Northchapel Sports and Football Clubs.

39/08 – WASTE SKIP

The amenity skip hired for 26 April had, once again, been a big success. It was very heavily used and left the village completely full. Members noted that a similar service provided in Petworth might be withdrawn by WSCC on environmental grounds (ie dumping in such skips means that different types of waste go to landfill unseparated). No such message had, however, yet been sent to Lurgashall so the Clerk was asked to book another skip for September.

40/08 – MEETING DATES FOR 2008-09

Meeting dates for the coming year were agreed as follows:

2008 10 July 11 September 13 November

2009 8 January 12 March 14 May (Annual Meeting of the Parish Council)

The Annual Parish Meeting will take place on 14 May 2009.

41/08 - CORRESPONDENCE

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

1. Doris Bus service. WSCC had informed the Council that, due to lack of funding, the Doris Bus service would change in August from being "demand responsive" to operating on a set route. Regular users of the service were being consulted on what would be the best route.

2. WSCC-Parish Council Partnership. The County Council was planning to consult parishes on the content of its Statement of Partnership with Local Councils, now 25 years old, at a meeting in Fernhurst Village Hall on 3 June 2008 at 6.30 pm.

3. Other meetings. WSCC's North Chichester County Local Committee would meet at Leconfield Hall, Petworth, on 20 May 2008 at 7.00 pm. The meeting would be preceded at 5.30 pm by a session on the West Sussex Strategy Partnership, the aim of which was to provide a vision for the County for the next ten or so years.

42/08 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Northchapel Primary School. As agreed, the Chairman had written to the Cabinet Member responsible for schools at WSCC stressing the importance of keeping Northchapel as an all-through school for children from 4 to 11. Mrs Martin-Jenkins commented how grateful the School had been for the Parish Council's support. A decision on the school's future was likely before the end of June.

43/08 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Council would take place on 10 July 2008 at 7.30 pm.

There being no other business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.50 pm.

PJS:11/5/08