LURGASHALL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held in the Village Hall on Thursday, 8 January 2009

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

Also present: Two members of the public.

The Chairman declared the meeting open at 7.40 pm.

1/09 - APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
Apologies for absence had been received from Mr J S Bonnett and Dr P J H Wilding as well as Mr C Duncton.

2/09 – CODE OF CONDUCT
The Chairman reminded members of their responsibilities under the Code of Conduct. The following personal interests were declared: Mr Caird – Village Hall Management Committee (VHMC) and Lurgashall Cricket Club. Mrs Martin-Jenkins – VHMC and PCC.

3/09 – MINUTES OF LAST MEETING
The minutes of the last meeting were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

4/09 – MATTERS ARISING
1. Waste skip. A skip, plus qualified supervisor, had been hired for Saturday 25 April 2009 from 10.00 am to 12 noon at the Village Hall car park.
2. BT telephone box. Chichester District Council (CDC) had informed the Clerk that the box at Gospel Green was among those it was planning to propose for Grade II listing.

5/09 – OPEN FORUM
Mr John Andrews spoke about a problem he considered many householders - especially in rural areas – faced after signing up to using liquid petroleum gas (LPG) for their domestic cooking and heating. The storage tanks installed by the LPG provider had valves that were compatible with that provider's fuel alone and so he felt the consumer became locked into using that firm's fuel whatever the cost. Unlike other energy consumers, he was not free to shop around for the best available price deal on the market. A recent Competition Commission report had failed to object to what Mr Andrews considered to be a restrictive practice and he felt householders concerned – as well as Parish Councils – should write letters of protest to their MPs and others. He offered to forward papers to the Clerk for circulation to members if they were interested.

6/09 - COUNCILLORS' REPORTS
There were no reports.

7/09 - 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 A, below, and agreed that £1,000 should be moved from the Capital Deposit (ie savings) Account into its Current Account.

2. Budget for 2009-10. Mrs Martin-Jenkins introduced the draft budget prepared by the Finance Committee at its meeting on 26 November 2008 (see Annex B, below). Members considered its elements and, on a proposal by Mr Caird which was seconded by Dr Tate, the Council agreed by consensus to adopt it as its budget for the coming financial year.

3. Precept for 2009-10. Mrs Martin-Jenkins introduced the recommendation of the Finance Committee that the Parish's precept for the coming financial year should be £9000. Members considered this recommendation and, on a proposal by Dr Tate which was seconded by Mr Jowett, the Council decided by consensus that its precept for 2009-10 should be £9000

8/09 – PLANNING

1. Applications. In Dr Wilding's absence, the Clerkreported that no Lurgashall planning applications had been notified since the last meeting and hence there had been no meetings of the Planning Committee.

2. Decisions. Three decisions had been received from CDC since the last meeting:

LG/08/04134/TCA: The Old Rectory, Blind Lane
Notification of intention to reduce height (lopping top branches) back to the level of previous pruning on 1 no. Oak tree
DECISION NOT TO PREPARE A TREE PRESERVATION ORDER

LG/08/04079/FUL: Pavilion, Jays Lane
Construction of new dwelling following demolition of existing — PERMIT

LG/08/04325/FUL: Southwater, Lickfold
Erection of tennis court — PERMIT

3. Other planning matters. Members took note of questions that had been put to the Planning Committee about the nature of developments at a number of locations in the Parish, including Old Mill Farm, land immediately to the south of the Woodcraft Folk's barns, Aldworth, King's Copse, Blackdown Park Farm and High Hampstead Farm.

9/09 – HIGHWAYS

1. Signposts. In early December, the County Council's contractors had collected the finial that had broken off the top of the black and white signpost at Gospel Green but it had not yet been re-attached. On checking the position with the contractors on 6 January, the Clerk had been told (a) that a new spike would have to be welded onto the bottom of the finial; (b) that it would be necessary to dig the post out and weld the finial and spike back on in a workshop; (c) that WSCC had already been sent an estimate for the work entailed; and (d) that, on past evidence, obtaining WSCC clearance to proceed could take some time. Members agreed the Clerk should write to Mr Duncton asking him to seek early financial approval for this relatively inexpensive matter.

2. Flooding. Many roads and properties in the Parish had suffered during the unusually heavy and persistent rain that had fallen on 13 December. The matter should be covered in a general way in the Parish's contribution to CDC's annual flooding survey.

10/09 - RECREATION

Mr Caird presented the report of the Recreation Committee meeting held on 11 December 2008, 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:

1. Footpaths and bridleways

The restricted byway at the top of the Quell continued to give concern. Walkers were using the woods on either side to avoid the byway's very uneven surface. Motor vehicles were still using the track. The Police had been informed and had agreed to monitor it as well as High Lane which, despite the signs recently erected, was still used by the occasional motorbike.

2. Allotments

(a) Rent review. Members agreed to the Leconfield Estate's proposal to increase the allotments rental to £150 per year from 25 March 2009, with the understanding that a review of the new figure would not be sought within 3 years (ie before 25 March 2012).

(b) Plot fees for 2009. Members decided that the cost for a full plot in 2009 should be increased to £15 and for a smaller plot should go up to £7.50p. This was the first fee increase in over a decade and was justifiable because of successive increases in Leconfield's rental charge, higher water charges and bigger maintenance costs.

(c) Cost of running the allotments. Notwithstanding the extra income generated by increasing the annual fees, the Recreation Committee had noted that the cost of running the allotments would still exceed income by some £300 pa. It was agreed the Committee should look into ways of further mitigating these costs.

(d) Replacement fencing. Mr Philip Juniper had carried out the work of replacing the old fence along the access path to the allotments in December. Letters of thanks had been sent to him and to the Leconfield Estates for providing the materials.

(e) Overgrowth along access path. Members agreed that Garden Escapes should be invited to quote for the one-off task of clearing and burning the brambles and general overgrowth on the village shop side of the path and to the rear of the shop and provided the cost was reasonable to agree to it doing the job as soon as possible.

3. Village Green

(a) Parking. The state of the Green had worsened during the autumn, particularly on the lower side. As in 2007, this was entirely due to vehicles parking and turning on the grass verge. The work carried out at the top of the Green in 2007 had had been a success in that there was now no "ponding" on the lower side of the Green. It was disappointing that there had been no progress on the Council's recent initiatives (ie installing setts and/or painting narrow white lines on either side of the roadway between the pub and the pond to encourage tidy parking; obtaining a right of way over the first 50 metres of Park Lane to enable a small car park to be opened up; and getting financial support for such improvements from the brewers, Greene King). Further discussion with all concerned would be needed in an attempt to rekindle interest.

(b) Bus shelter. The Recreation Committee should obtain a quotation for creosoting and replacing a number of broken tiles on the bus shelter.

11/09 – FREEDOM OF INFORMATION - MODEL PUBLICATION SCHEME

- The Council resolved to adopt the new Model Publication Scheme (MPS) drawn up by the Information Commissioner's Office under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The Scheme was in two parts – the Model Scheme itself and a list of the information available from the Council (see annex 2(a) and (b), below). The original MPS had been adopted by the Parish Council – as well as by all other local authorities in the country - in 2002. The new MPS developed and improved on the original Scheme's commitment to provide information to the public routinely and proactively.

- In welcoming the new MPS, the Council expressed the view that its business over the past six years had been transacted in an open way and that it had been proactive in enabling access by the public to its records and documentation, especially through the creation of the Parish Website and

the regular reporting of its activities and decisions on the Village Green notice board and in the *Parish Newsletter*. The new MPS would assist the Council to continue to function in this transparent manner.

- In adopting the list of information available (ie annex 2 (b) below), Members corrected one error in the Class 7. In the fourth entry under that head (Parks, playing fields and recreational facilities) the wording in the second and third columns should read "Hard copy – contact Clerk. 10p per sheet", not "N/A".

12/09 – COOPTION OF NEW MEMBER

The Chairman informed the meeting that no election had been requested to fill the vacancy left by the resignation of Mrs Jackie Boxall and that, therefore, the Council was now required to coopt a new member. Notices had been placed on both Parish notice boards as well as in the January *Parish Newsletter* inviting expressions of interest in filling the post. One parishioner had indicated that she was willing to be considered for cooption. It was agreed that she should be invited to submit a written statement indicating her willingness to stand and that the Council would consider it and any other applications when deciding on a cooption at its March meeting.

13/09 – CORRESPONDENCE

There were no communications that needed to be drawn to the Council's notice.

14/09 -. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Karen Bonnett. The Chairman voiced the Council's great concern at the news of Mrs Bonnett's ill health and expressed the hope that she would make a full and speedy recovery.

15/09 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Council would take place on Thursday, 12 March 2009 at 7.30 pm.

There being no other business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.00 pm.

PJS:13/01/09