LURGASHALL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held in the Village Hall on Thursday, 12 March 2009

Present: Mr R E J Cooper (Chairman), Mr J S Bonnett, 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: Mr C Duncton, Mr J Andrews, Mr B J Hooton and two members of the public.

The Chairman declared the meeting open at 7.30 pm.

16/09 - APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
Apologies for absence had been received from Mr N P Jowett.

17/09 – CODE OF CONDUCT
The Chairman reminded members of their responsibilities under the Code of Conduct.

18/09 – MINUTES OF LAST MEETING
The minutes of the last meeting were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

19/09 – MATTERS ARISING
No points were raised.

20/09 – OPEN FORUM
A member of the public, speaking about the proposal to replace the diseased horse chestnut tree between the Malt House and Old School with a flowering cherry (see item 25/09, para 4(d), below), commented that a problem with flowering cherries was they were not long living. This said, he agreed any replacement tree should not grow so big as to blot out the Malt House's view of the Green.

21/09 - COUNCILLORS' REPORTS
• In a wide-ranging report, Mr Duncton spoke about the County Council's 2009-10 budget (a 3.25% increase), Foundation Day at the Midhurst Rother College, the poor condition of the County's roads after a particularly wet winter (insufficient funds to deliver all the repairs necessary), the County's new recycling facility (opening in April, it will ensure West Sussex remains the country's top recycling county), the completion of major road works in Petworth and his visit to Hillgrove to see for himself the impact on the Lane of the Kings Copse development (see item 23/09, para. 3(b), below). In addition, he reminded Members that one of the small tasks with which the County's Highway Rangers could help the Parish was to give its six black and white signposts an annual cleaning.
• Mr Hooton spoke about the District Council's 2009-10 budget (the lowest increase in West Sussex and the fourth lowest in the south-east) and the provision of concessionary fares (insufficient thought had, he felt, been given by the District Council to the cost implications).
• Mr Andrews's report covered the Local Development Framework, discretionary grants and the District Council performance vis-à-vis other councils (see Annex A)

22/09 - 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 B, below, and in addition authorised payment to Garden Escapes of up to £150 - the contracted amount - for its work on cleaning out the village pond.

2. Appeals for donations. Members decided to make the following donations, totalling £155:

- Chichester and District Citizens Advice Bureau - £50
- Surrey Air Ambulance Fund - £50
- Victim Support Sussex - £20
- Sussex County Playing Fields Association - £15
- Sussex Association for the Blind (4SIGHT) - £20

23/09 – PLANNING

1. Applications. Dr Wilding reported that five planning applications had been notified to the Council since the last meeting – ie the application concerning the horse chestnut trees by the Village Green referred to in paragraph 2, below, and the four listed in this paragraph. The application concerning Springfield had not yet been considered by the Planning Committee. The Committee had no comments, concerns or objections with regard to any of the other four applications.

LG/09/00178/LBC: 163 Bishops Holt
Amendment to planning permission LG/08/03021/LBC for a single storey rear conservatory

LG/09/00179/DOM: 163 Bishops Holt
Amendment to planning permission LG/08/01626/LBC for a single storey rear conservatory

LG/09/00358/FUL: Pavilion, Jays Lane
Construction of new dwelling following demolition of existing

LG/09/00296/DOM: Springfield, Hillgrove
Loft conversion. Replace conservatory and change flat roof for pitch roof on garage

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

LG/08/05113/PNO: Hobstevens Farm, Jobsons Lane
Three bay open hovel building PRIOR APPROVAL NOT REQUIRED

LG/09/00101/TCA: Lurgashall Village Green
Notification of intention to crown reduce by up to 30% and remove all major deadwood and damaged branches on 1 no. Horse Chestnut tree (Tree 1). Fell 1no. Horse Chestnut tree (Tree 2) NOT TO PREPARE A TREE PRESERVATION ORDER

3. Other planning matters.

(a) Woodcraft Park Farm. The Wimbledon Woodcraft Folk had notified the District and Parish Councils of the planned dates and numbers of campers for its Park Farm site in 2009. At the same time it had requested the District Council's view on whether all camping at the Park Farm site had to be organised by the Wimbledon branch or whether the Woodcraft Folk's national organisation, which now had an exemption, could use the site and make its own bookings. Members recognised that this was potentially a sensitive issue and requested the Chairman to discuss it with the Chief Planner at Chichester DC and report back.

(b) Kings Copse. Residents of Hillgrove had been voicing a lot of concern about the damage being caused to the Lane and its verges by large lorries going to and from the Kings Copse building site. Dr Wilding reported that the developer had now agreed to repair the road on a regular basis

and to place stakes and cones at vulnerable points as a warning to truck drivers. Under an Action Plan, his site foreman would inspect the state of the road's each working day.

24/09 – HIGHWAYS

1. Signposts. Despite further approaches to the County's Highways Department, the finial on the Gospel Green signpost had still not been reattached by their contractors. Members invited Mr Duncton to press for this relatively inexpensive matter to be dealt with quickly.
2. Flooding. The heavy rain and storms throughout the winter had resulted in frequent flooding on the parish's lanes as well as new potholes and damaged verges. The £77,000 allocated by the county for repairs – principally to Jobsons Lane – would bring about some improvement but the condition of Lurgashall's roads was no worse – and in some case rather better - than that of many other parishes. (WSCC currently had a backlog of 9,500 potholes to repair.)
3. 2 Greengates. The Chairman had held a site meeting with the District Council's land drainage officer to assess what could be done about the run-off of water towards 2 Greengates whenever there was exceptionally heavy rain. He agreed to press Leconfield to keep the ditch across the road properly dug out and would also speak to the occupants of 3 Greengates about erosion of the ditch outside that property by motor vehicles which, he felt, contributed to flooding at No 2.

25/09 - RECREATION

Mr Caird presented the report of the Recreation Committee meeting held on 12 February 2009, 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.

(a) The Quell to Roundhurst. SDJC had recently created a deviation on this bridleway (path 3288) so as to enable a very boggy stretch at the Roundhurst end to be avoided. The work had involved felling some large trees and digging out part of the new track.

(b) Bullock Lane. SDJC had inspected Bullock Lane and were satisfied that the remedial works undertaken last year were working much better than expected. Further work was, however, still needed especially at the Hookhams end of the lane.

(c) The Quell to Leverton. Mr Bonnett returned to the matter of motorised vehicles using this byway. He had, he said, seen fresh tyre tracks and asked why "No Motorised Vehicles" signs could not be erected as on High Lane. Members noted that signage is only as good at the policing available. They encouraged Mr Bonnett to speak to Mr Michael Oakland to see if SDJC might install bollards at either end of the byway.

2. Playground. There was nothing to report.

3. Allotments.

(a) Plot fees for 2009. Most allotment holders had already paid their fees for 2009; £180 out of an anticipated £285 had already been received. It was noted that there had been no criticism of the increase from £10 to £15 per plot.

(b) Water spillage. There had been some spillage from one of the water taps in January. Mr Sharp had dug around the area where the problem was (it had been caused by moles) and made necessary repairs to the underground communication pipe. He had also successfully arranged with the Leconfield Estate for replacement taps to be fitted.

(c) Overgrowth along access path. The Recreation Committee had (as authorised by the Council in January) agreed Garden Escapes' estimate of £120 for clearing the brambles and general overgrowth on the access path. The work had not yet been carried out.

(d) Horticultural Club. The Recreation Committee had agreed to a request from Mrs Iola Christian for the names and addresses of the allotment holders for the purpose of inviting each of them to join the Lurgashall Horticultural Club.

4. Village Green.

(a) Parking. The Council noted that the state of the verges around the Green had deteriorated due to excessive and unnecessary vehicle damage during what had been a very wet winter. The general feeling was that there was little that could be done to alleviate the parking problem so long as (i) the owners of Park Farm remained reluctant to allow vehicles to have access to park in part of the garden to the rear of the Noah's Ark (a measure to which the brewery had agreed), (ii) WSCC's

Highways Department failed to provide a specification or funding for installing setts to mark the edge of the parking area adjacent to the pond and (iii) the lease for the football field remained to be renegotiated thereby making it impossible to consider using part of the field for overflow parking.

(b) Water spillage from Greenfield Bungalow site. The Chairman had held a site meeting with the District Council's land drainage officer to identify the cause of the constant stream of water onto Northhurst Lane from this site and thence, because it could not flow into the ditch in front of Meadowside, onto the Green. At times of heavy rainfall, this water resulted in even greater damage by vehicle to the verges near the pub. It was clear that, in part, the stream was caused by a broken tap on the Greenfield Bungalow site but the amount of water involved suggested there might also be a fractured pipe under all the builders rubble on the site. The land drainage officer undertook to write to the developer requiring him to check the situation and carry out necessary repairs.

(c) Bus shelter. A quotation for renovating the bus shelter had yet to be obtained.

(d) Replacement tree.

- The Leconfield Estates had recently obtained the District Council's agreement to fell the diseased horse chestnut tree between the driveway to the Malt House and Old School (see item 23/07, para. 2, above) and had invited the Council's views on a suitable replacement. On 2 March, the Chairman and Mr Caird had met Mr Neil Humphris (Leconfield's Head Forester) to consider the options. Their initial conclusion was that a flowering cherry would be a good choice in terms of height, shape and attractiveness, but they recognised there were other possibilities and wanted to know what Members, and parishioners generally, felt. To this end, the matter had been mentioned in the *Parish Newsletter* and each household around the Green had been sent a note.
- Some Members were content to have a flowering cherry. Others were opposed, particularly to the variety with pink blossom, and said a white flowering cherry would be comparatively short lived. In an indicative vote, the majority of Members supported having a native tree, eg a hornbeam. The argument that such a tree would eventually grow very tall and hinder the view of the Green from the Malt House was, in their opinion, misplaced because (a) the horse chestnut that was being replaced would itself have grown very big and (b) the position for the new tree would be a number of yards further away from the Malt House than the present one.
- In concluding the discussion, the Chairman said he would report the meeting's views to Mr Humphris and find out if, notwithstanding the conclusions of the 2 March meeting, Leconfield would be prepared to agree to a native English tree such as a hornbeam and what the cost would be to the Parish Council. The Chairman would then report back to the Council with a view to getting an early decision on the matter.

5. Village maintenance contract. The Recreation Committee had considered a detailed quotation from Garden Escapes for work on the playground, allotments, village green and pond in the year commencing 1 April 2009. It was noted that, in the past, Garden Escapes had billed the Council only for work actually needed and done as opposed to what had been estimated for and it was expected that this practice would continue. Overall the Committee was satisfied with Garden Escapes' estimates and the Council endorsed its recommendation to accept the quotation which totalled £1,525 (against the Council's 2009-10 budget forecast of £1,510).

26/09 – PARISH ACTION PLANS

The Chairman recalled that, whilst Lurgashall had drawn up a Design Statement in 2004, it had never prepared a Parish Plan. Parish Plans went wider than Design Statements in that they did not focus merely on development concerns but rather set out a set of actions and goals for all the organisations and activities in a parish. Many West Sussex parishes had already drawn up a Plan; Lurgashall appeared to be in a minority in not having one. During a short exchange of views, Mr Bonnett volunteered to enquire into how other parishes had gone about the task of preparing their Plans, how long the exercise had taken them, how labour intensive it had been and, above all, how useful they found the end product to be in practice, and to report back to a future meeting of the Council. Members welcomed Mr Bonnett's offer.

27/09 – COOPTION OF NEW MEMBER

Mrs Rita Wood has submitted a written statement indicating her willingness to be co-opted to the Council to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Mrs Jackie Boxall last November. After a

brief discussion, Mr Caird proposed and Dr Tate seconded a motion that the Council co-opt Mrs Wood. The motion was agreed by consensus.

28/09 – CORRESPONDENCE

1. Revised Local Development Framework. The Clerk had received a letter informing the Council that there would be a delay in producing a revision of the District Council's long term planning strategy. The strategy was principally concerned with housing provision in the area over the coming decade. The delay was caused because two statutory bodies – the Highways Agency and Environment Agency – had said they were unlikely to be able to support the District Council's revised proposals until major infrastructure problems concerning roads and sewerage had been resolved.
2. Dog Control Orders. The District Council had invited comments from parishes and others on three new Dog Control Orders it was proposing to make. These laid down criminal offences for (a) failure to remove dog faeces, (b) failure to keep a dog on a lead when directed to do so, and (c) permitting dogs to enter certain categories of land. Only (a) would apply to Lurgashall and even then only to the Village Green and the Parish's few pedestrianised areas such as the footpaths outside the shop and in Greengates. The Council had no comments to offer.

29/09 -.ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No points were raised.

30/09 – DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

The Annual Parish Meeting and the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council would take place on Thursday, 14 May 2009 with the former commencing at 7.30 pm.

There being no other business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.35 pm.

PJS:17/03/09