

LURGASHALL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held in the Village Hall on Thursday, 13 May 2010

Present: Mr R E J Cooper (Chairman), Mr J S Bonnett, Mrs A Martin-Jenkins, Mr N P Jowett, Mr G D J R Sharp, Dr A H J Tate, Dr P J H Wilding, Mrs R D Wood and Mr P J Széll (Clerk)

Also present: Mr C Duncton, Mr J Andrews and Mrs P Hardwick and 15 residents.

The Chairman declared the meeting open at 8.00pm.

28/10 - APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chairman informed the meeting that Mr K M Caird had sent the Clerk a letter resigning from the Council for personal reasons. The Chairman expressed his gratitude for Mr Caird's valuable contribution to the Council's work over the past three years. The Clerk was asked to take the necessary steps to publicise the vacancy.

29/10 – ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Mr R E J Cooper was proposed by Mr Bonnett 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).

30/10 – ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN: APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND REPRESENTATIVES; SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Members agreed to expand their discussion of this item to include a review of the structure and functions of its Committees.

İ Vice-Chairman. Dr A H J Tate was proposed by Mrs Wood and seconded by Mr Sharp. There being no other nominations, Dr Tate was elected by consensus.

İ Planning Committee. It was decided that the Planning 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, Dr P H J Wilding and Mrs R D Wood, with Dr Wilding as Chairman. It was further agreed that the Chairman of the Planning Committee should invite all members of the Council to participate in meetings at which the Committee was due to consider particularly contentious or sensitive applications.

İ Finance and General Purposes Committee. It was decided to amalgamate the former Finance Committee and General Purposes Committee and that the new Committee would be responsible (a) for making annual budget proposals to the Council, (b) for making recommendations to the Council on donations and grants as well as on risk assessment and (c) for acting on the Council's behalf with regard to matters requiring decision between Council meetings. The Committee would be composed of Mr J S Bonnett, Mrs A Martin-Jenkins and Dr P J H Wilding, with Mrs Martin-Jenkins as Chairman.

İ Village Green Committee. It was decided to replace the former Recreation Committee with a new Village Green Committee that would be responsible (a) for supervising, and for making recommendations to the Council on, the Village Green (including the pond and bus shelter) and, in particular, (b) for identifying ways and means of minimising damage caused by vehicles parking around the Green. The Committee would be composed of Mr J S Bonnett,

Mr R E J Cooper, Mr G D A R Sharp, Dr A H J Tate and two members of the public, with Mr R E J Cooper as Chairman.

Ī Special responsibilities. Special responsibilities were agreed as follows:

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| ^a <i>Systems audit</i> | Dr A H J Tate |
| ^a <i>Bottle bank</i> | Mr R E J Cooper |

Ī Representatives. It was decided that Mrs R D Wood would be the Council's representative on the Village Hall Management Committee and that Mr R E J Cooper would be its representative on the North-West Frontier Community Forum.

Ī It was further decided that any day-to-day matters concerning the Parish's highways, rights of way, playground and allotments that required action between meetings of the Council would be handled by the Clerk, guided as necessary by the Chairman.

31/10 – CODE OF CONDUCT

The Chairman reminded members of their responsibilities under the Code of Conduct.

32/10 – MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

On a proposal from Dr Tate, the meeting agreed that the phrase “ the pub garden opposite the pond” in line 10 of minute 24/10, paragraph 4(a), should read “the grassed area directly in front of the pub.” Subject to this modification, the minutes of the last meeting were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

33/10 – MATTERS ARISING

1. Waste skip. The skip hired for 24 April had been well used. The Council asked the Clerk to arrange another skip for Saturday, 25 September 2010.
2. Donations. Letters of thanks had been received from three of the seven organisations to which the Council had sent donations after the last meeting: Arun and Chichester CAB, Sussex Crimestoppers and West Sussex Rural Mobile Youth Trust (Purple Bus).

34/10 – OPEN FORUM

Mr Joe Harden read a statement prepared by him and some other village residents about the parking problem on the Green (see Annex B). It highlighted the importance of involving the brewery, Greene King, in solving the problem. During the subsequent wide-ranging discussion, other points made and questions raised by residents included the following:

- What residents see when they look out of their windows is a car park occupied mainly by clients of the Noah's Ark. “Grasscreteing” along the verges would merely confirm the Green's status as a car park.
- The pub should “educate” its clients about the need for responsible parking (eg by printing “polite requests” on the bottom of their menus).
- Why were the successful “No parking” signs always being taken down?
- The Noah's Ark had yet to provide the promised parking places in its back garden. The poor condition of the old stables was no excuse; they should be repaired and their contents (currently in a container in the garden) put back.
- What enquiries had been made from, eg, Leconfield, the Diocese or Mr Anslow-Wilson about buying or leasing land in the vicinity for use as a car park?
- Parked cars were not the only cause of the problem; lorries going around the Green also did damage but the police did nothing to stop them arriving via, eg, Blind Lane.

In response, the Chairman made the following observations:

- The Village Green Committee, like the former Recreation Committee, needed to consider both long and short term solutions to the parking problem. Immediate problems (like repair of the verges between the pond and Jubilee Cottage) would have to be tackled in the Autumn. Longer term solutions should involve Greene King.

- Buying or leasing nearby land as a car park was, and had always been, a possibility but the Council was aware that complex issues were involved eg the willingness of owners to sell or lease, the price to be paid and conditions/rules to be observed.
- Erecting “No parking” signs at the eastern end of the Green merely displaced the problem with drivers parking elsewhere on the Green. Moreover, sometimes visitors to the village simply parked between the “No parking” signs. Without enforcement, “No parking” signs had no authority but enforcement powers were costly and bureaucratic.
- As Chairmen, he was already involved in discussion with the tenants of the Noah’s Ark as well as residents of the Green and other parishioners. He would also approach the brewery at a suitably senior level.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their contributions and said the issues and questions raised would be looked at by the new Committee.

35/10 – COUNCILLORS’ REPORTS

- Among the matters noted by Mr Duncton in his report were: (a) the limited funds the County Council was receiving from Central Government and the impact this would have on services; (b) the new buildings proposed for the Midhurst Rother Academy; (c) the continuing debate about the future of the Grange and the day care services provided there; (d) the need to increase the County’s high level of waste recycling (already among the highest in the land) and the threat this posed to the provision of waste skips for the collection of mixed waste; (e) the need for more cycleways, especially north of the Downs; and (f) the next meeting of the County Local Committee which would take place at 7.30 pm on 29 June 2010 at Loxwood.
- Among the matters addressed by Mrs Hardwick in her report were: (a) the District Council assuming responsibility for enforcing on-street parking restrictions in addition to its already-existing powers regarding council-owned car parks; (b) its new Planning Enforcement strategy introduced in January which set out timescales for investigating complaints: the Council’s Enforcement Team had been expanded to tackle the large backlog of old cases and the increase in the number of new complaints; and (c) the extent to which planning powers would be delegated by the new National Park Authority back to the District Council: the NPA was about to put a formal proposal on this to the District.

36/10 – FINANCE

1. Draft accounts for the year ended 31 March 2010. Members considered the accounts for 2009-10 (see Annex C) and, on a proposal by Mrs Martin-Jenkins which was seconded by Dr Tate, they were duly approved and signed by the Chairman and Clerk.

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, on a proposal by Mrs Martin-Jenkins which was seconded by Mr Jowett, 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, on a proposal by Mrs Martin-Jenkins which was seconded by Mr Jowett, 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 D below, its 2009-10 audit procedures had been adequate and effective.

3. Internal Audit and Auditor. Members noted that Mr James Tree, the Internal Auditor, had given the Council a clean report for the year ended 31 March 2010. The Council requested the Clerk to convey its gratitude to Mr Tree for auditing its accounts, for the speed and care with which he had done the work and for indicating his willingness to act as its Internal Auditor again for 2010-11.

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 Aon Limited 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 Annex E, below, ie:
- (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 the cheques listed in that Annex.

- In addition, it agreed that, because in April the Council had received from WSCC's Real Hedge Fund a grant of £438 towards the cost of the new hedges planted at the village pond and allotments, it was necessary to refund forthwith to the Lurgashall Village Fete Committee the £350 it had granted in March for the allotments hedge.

- The Council also decided:

- (a) to transfer £500 from the Capital Deposit Account to its Reserve Account (ie its contingencies fund); and
- (b) that henceforth the Clerk should have delegated authority to make inter-account transfers as he found necessary.

37/10 - PLANNING

1. Applications. Dr Wilding reported that five planning applications had been notified to the Council since the last meeting (the four listed in this paragraph and the application concerning Southwater referred to in paragraph 2, below). The Committee had substantive comments on, and had lodged an objection to, the related applications regarding High Hampstead Farm. A copy of the letter it had sent to CDC, dated 12 April 2010, setting out its arguments was distributed to those present for information.

LG/10/00977/LBC: High Hampstead Farm, High Hampstead Lane

Attached traditional garden room orangery, single storey

LG/10/00975/DOM: High Hampstead Farm, High Hampstead Lane

Attached traditional garden room orangery, single storey

LG/10/01037/DOM: Springfield, Hillgrove Lane

Loft conversion. Replace conservatory. Change flat roof for pitched roof on garage

LG/10/00829/FUL: Old Mill Farm, Mill Lane

Retention of existing track to allow articulated vehicles access to the farm. Retrospective change of use of farm buildings to timber storage and joinery workshop

2. Decisions. Eight decisions had been received from CDC since the Council's last meeting:

LG/09/05005/DOM: Herne House, Petworth Road

Erection of three front dormers, one rear dormer and an addition to the roof over stairs to facilitate a loft conversion PERMIT

LG/09/04346/LBC: Blackdown Park, Fernden Lane

Dismantle and repair existing unstable stone parapet wall above billiard room at 1st floor level on north elevation. Reinstate parapet wall to original layout PERMIT

LG/09/05098/OUT: Barfold Farm, Tennysons Lane

Outline planning for access and layout for erection of 2 no. barns; one to be used within Class B1 as an estate office and home working offices and one for ancillary domestic and guest accommodation, plus erection of 4 stables
WITHDRAWN

LG/10/00280/FUL: Land west of Dickhurst House, Petworth Road

Removal of existing outbuildings. Erection of new detached dwelling and associated landscaping
REFUSE

LG/10/00518/DOM: Hookhams, Hillgrove Lane

Conversion of existing annexe including replacement of flat roof and tiled pitched roof PERMIT

LG/09/02497/LBC: Cotchet Farmhouse, Cotchet Lane

Addition of 2 conservation skylight windows to courtyard facing roof of garage PERMIT

LG/10/00762/DOM: Pheasant Hill, Hillgrove Lane

Relocation of permitted outbuilding closer to northern boundary (amendment to LG/07/06089/DOM) PERMIT

LG/10/00971/LBC: Southwater, Lickfold

Two storey extension and porch. Replacement of door with window on south-east elevation. Relocation of ground floor window on north-east elevation. Internal alterations, including removal of staircase. (Retrospective application) PERMIT

3. Other planning matters.

- Woodcraft Park Farm. The Woodcraft Folk's 2010 camping dates had been received and the list circulated to those principally concerned within the village.
- Greenfield Bungalow. After representations from Dr Wilding, the District Council had made a Tree Preservation Order on the large oak tree at the south-western corner of the Greenfield Bungalow site.
- Tanfield Copse. Dr Wilding had notified the District Council of a possible planning breach just outside the parish boundary at Tanfield Copse, Northchapel where a new track had been created with seemingly no consent or agricultural justification.

38/10 – HIGHWAYS

1. Gospel Green signpost. The Clerk reported that WSCC's work on repainting the post had now been completed.
2. Discarded tree branches. The Clerk had informed the County Highways Department of the Council's concerns about the mass of branches dumped by the roadside at Gospel Green and the impact this was having on already limited sight lines for motorists. WSCC's Highways Rangers had acted with commendable speed to cut back the overgrowth. The Clerk had written to WSCC to convey the Council's thanks for this and for completing the Gospel Green road sign.
3. Bollards by Glebe House. The Clerk reported that the Highways Department had written to the owners of Glebe House saying that some of the wooden bollards recently installed by their front gate were an encroachment on the public highway and must be removed.

39/10 – RECREATION

The Chairman presented Mr Caird's report of the Recreation Committee meeting held on 8 April 2010. Members added information and 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 Clerk had contacted SDJC about various matters including: (a) cyclists using the public footpath that runs south across the football field; (b) the continuing failure of the landowner to return the boundary fence across footpath 2031 adjacent to the Greenfield Bungalow site to its correct position; and (c) a report that motor vehicles were still driving on the byway at the top of The Quell and concern about the continuing failure to repair the track so it could be used by horse riders. On (a), SDJC had erected a temporary sign and

information notice and said it would monitor the situation; on (b), it had suggested a site meeting to clarify the problem; and on (c), it had said that, now there was some dry weather, the planned remedial work on the track's surface would start within a matter of days.

- After considering a representation from Mr Mike Oakland about WSCC's plan to claw back its rights of way functions when SDJC ceased to exist and the implications this would have for SDJC's corps of local footpath volunteers (of which Mr Oakland was one), Members agreed that a letter should be sent by the Chairman to WSCC's Cabinet member responsible for the Environment and Economy (copy to the Chairman of the National Park Authority) stating that, whether or not the County Council took back its statutory powers for public rights of way, the Parish Council would hope and expect that the public rights of way in its area would continue to receive the same excellent level of care, expertise and commitment as that had been provided over many years by SDJC, assisted by its dedicated band of local volunteers.

2. Playground. No major points to report. The grass was being cut regularly. One of the plastic bungs on the adventure train was missing and needed replacing.

3. Allotments. 17 out of the 25 plots had been let and the rental for each had now been paid.

4. Village Green.

(a) Damage from parking. Members reviewed the discussion under agenda item 34/10, above. They supported the Chairman's strategy of making personal contact with those most concerned, including the brewery, and requested him to finalise the new Committee's membership so that it could start its work as soon as possible. Other matters noted were:

- that Mr Caird had obtained a quotation for laying grass pavers on the area between the pond and Jubilee Cottage and Fittleworth stone around two sides of the triangle. The Chairman had got an estimate for broadly similar work and Mr Sharp recalled that he too had obtained a quotation for a sandstone-based solution for the stretch between the pond and Jubilee Cottage. It was agreed the new Village Green Committee should consider these and other options and report back to the Council with specific recommendations.

- that Mr Caird had written explaining the obstacles to using the garden to the rear of the Noah's Ark to solve in part the parking problem in the vicinity of the pub. The pub's stable building, he said, had been condemned as unsafe and so could no longer be used for storage. As a result, the tenants of the pub were having to use a 20ft container which could only be placed in the rear garden. Besides, the rear garden contained an LPG tank that needed, for obvious reasons, to be sited well clear of motor vehicles.

(b) Pond. The unattractive post and chain-link fence around the pond had been taken down and, as agreed, Garden Escapes had planted a native species hedge in its place. The cost had been met in part by a grant from WSCC's Real Hedge Fund. Garden Escapes had advised that it would be necessary to keep the new plants regularly watered if the dry weather continued. Appreciative comments about the new hedge had been received from the public (though some had queried why a hedge was needed at all).

(c) Trees by the pond. Garden Escapes had informed Mr Caird that the cherry and hazel trees near the pond needed some pruning. Members agreed that Garden Escapes should be asked to take appropriate action in the autumn.

40/10 – CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence that needed to be brought to the Council's notice.

41/10 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No matters were raised.

42/10 – MEETING DATES FOR 2010-11

1. Meeting dates for the Parish Council were agreed as follows:

2010 - 8 July 9 September 11 November

2011 - 13 January 10 March 12 May (Annual Meeting of the Parish Council)

The Annual Parish Meeting would take place on 14 April 2011.

2. The Finance and General Purposes Committee would meet on 25 November 2010 whilst the Planning Committee and Village Green Committee would meet as need arose.

There being no other business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.55 pm.

PJS:17/05/10