LURGASHALL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held in the Village Hall on Thursday, 13 January 2011

Present: Mr R E J Cooper (Chairman), Mr J S Bonnett, Mr G J Hayhurst, Mr N P Jowett, Mrs A Martin-Jenkins, 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, Ms L Westmore and 2 members of the public.

The Chairman declared the meeting open at 7.32 pm. He welcomed Ms Westmore to the meeting in her capacity as the recently elected District Councillor for Plaistow Ward.

1/11 - APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
Apologies for absence had been received from Mrs P A Hardwick and Mr G D J R Sharp.

2/11 – CODE OF CONDUCT
The Chairman reminded members of their responsibilities under the Code of Conduct. The following personal interests were declared with respect to agenda item 7/11, paras. 3 and 4: Mr Bonnett - Village Hall Management Committee (VHMC); Mr Hayhurst – VHMC; Mrs Martin-Jenkins – VHMC and Parochial Church Council; and Mrs Wood - VHMC.

3/11 – MINUTES OF LAST MEETING
- Further to a proposal from Dr Tate, the meeting agreed that the phrase "…by suitably reinforcing the grass verges in the vicinity of the pond" in line 10 of minute 90/10, para. 1(e)(i), should read "…and suggested considering suitably reinforcing the grass verges in the vicinity of the pub". It was also agreed that the reference to "…Crossways; White's Green…" in line 12 of minute 91/10, sub-para. (iii), should more accurately read "…the lane from Crossways to White's Green (at Gatehouse Farm)…" Subject to these modifications, the minutes of the last meeting were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.
- Dr Tate asked why, in the digital age, the minutes adopted were those circulated by the Clerk shortly after the meeting, with any amendments to them being recorded in the minutes of the following meeting under "Minutes of last meeting." Readers of the minutes on the internet would assume that the minutes appearing there were in final form and would not check those of the subsequent meeting to see if any modifications had been made at the time of adoption. He felt the minutes presented for adoption should incorporate any changes that had been proposed and moreover that the minutes that appeared on the internet should have adopted amendments incorporated into them. The Clerk, whilst stressing that it was for the Council to decide how its minutes should be presented, observed that the Council's existing approach had been used for many years without causing difficulty or complaint. A new approach should be introduced only if the present one was found not to be working well. The new approach proposed could prove labour-intensive and would not necessarily curtail further discussion when it came to adoption of the minutes. The subsequent discussion proved inconclusive and, at the suggestion of the Chairman, members agreed that the issue needed further thought and, if necessary, the tabling of a firm proposal on which the Council could make a decision.

4/11 - MATTERS ARISING
1. Litter bin. Shortly after the last Council meeting, Chichester District Council (CDC) had replaced the litter bin at the top of the Green with a second hand covered bin. Members were invited to approve payment for this under agenda item 7/11, below.
2. Large scale maps. The Clerk reported that, further to the Council's decision in November (see minute 93/10 (b)), CDC had agreed to the Parish Council obtaining access to large scale OS maps and aerial photography of the parish under its contract and ParishOnline had processed the

Council's subscription request. Members were invited to approve payment of this subscription under agenda item 7/11, below.

5/11 – OPEN FORUM

One member of the public commented with regard to the Village Green that the triangle was currently so churned up that visitors to the village had taken to parking elsewhere around the Green, thus giving the lie to those who argued that there would be no point seeking to create a car park in the field behind the shop because people would not be prepared to walk that far to the church or pub. Personally he was not happy at the way in which the verge at the eastern end of the Green had been strengthened, but it remained important to keep reminding the pub what a favour the village was doing for it by carrying out such works. He circulated a plan showing how many parking spaces might be created on the eastern side of the Green under the Council's current approach. He remained of the view that it was not appropriate to use Village Fete funds for such purposes. The precept and, if necessary, individuals should be relied on. Also, loans might be made by parish organisations whose reserves were healthier than those of the Council. On a separate matter, he suggested that consideration be given to laying rumble strips on certain approaches to the village to deter speeding vehicles.

6/11 – COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

Among the matters addressed by Mr Duncton in his report were: (a) the severity of the financial settlement that had recently been imposed on the County Council; (b) the recent rise in the number of quad bikes using footpaths, bridleways and byways (particularly at Heyshott and Graffham) and the difficulty of policing such illegal behaviour; (c) the use of recycling bins instead of bottle banks for the collection of waste glass; (d) the next County Local Committee meeting in Petworth on 18 January which would provide updates on, amongst other things, the financial settlement and the new National Park; and (e) the new Chief Executive at County Hall.

7/11 – FINANCE

1. Current financial statement. The Clerk distributed Annex A, 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 to date against its budget for the current financial year.

The Council approved payment of the five cheques listed in that Annex as needing payment.

2. Lurgashall Cricket Club. Mr Malcolm Caird had returned the Council's cheque for £481 towards a sinking fund for a new mower when the present one eventually needs replacing. The Club had, he said, not yet drawn up a scheme for financing a replacement.

3. Budget for 2011-12. Mrs Martin-Jenkins introduced the draft budget prepared by the Finance and General Purposes Committee (F&GP Committee) at its meeting on 8 December 2010 (see Annex B, below). Members considered its elements and, on a proposal by Mrs Martin-Jenkins, which was seconded by Mr Jowett, the Council agreed by consensus to adopt it as its budget for the coming financial year.

4. Precept for 2011-12. Mrs Martin-Jenkins introduced the F&GP Committee's recommendation that the Parish's precept for the coming financial year should be £12,000 (see Annex B, section C). Mr Jowett suggested that, given the depleted state of the Council's reserves, it would be reasonable for the precept to be higher than this. He proposed that it should be set at £13,000. Mr Hayhurst seconded his proposal and, after a short discussion, the Council decided by consensus that the precept for 2011-12 should be £13,000.

8/11 – HIGHWAYS

1. Flooding. Mrs Martin-Jenkins said that, during the recent heavy rain, Jobson's Lane at Jack Fisher's Brook had again been severely flooded and Mr Jowett noted there was a similar problem by Great Brockhurst Farm. The Clerk was instructed to request the County Highways Department to rod through the culverts at both places.

2. Potholes. Dr Tate felt the County Highways Department deserved congratulations for repairing a large pothole on Hillgrove Lane with 24 hours if him reporting it. Mr Duncton commented that, in the case of minor roads like Hillgrove Lane, the chances of getting speedy repairs were increased if individual residents took the initiative and reported defects directly to the Highways Department.

9/11 –PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

Byway off The Quell. The Clerk reported that the South Downs Joint Committee (SDJC) had as promised (a) spread additional light covering on the higher, more boggy, side of this byway to improve access for walkers and (b) erected "No Motorised Vehicles" signs at its own expense at each end of the byway, but it had still not done (c) - ie run a short length of pipe along a key stretch of ditch and covered it with hardcore to allow riders safe access to the lower side of the track. Unfortunately, someone had already ripped the sign at The Quell end of the track out of the ground and thrown it into the undergrowth. The Clerk was asked to report this vandalism to Mr Mike Oakland and to mention to him the continuing lack of action on (c).

10/11 – PLANNING

1. Applications. Dr Wilding's reported that six planning applications had been notified to the Council since its last meeting (see below). The Planning Committee had significant reservations on those concerning Woodcraft Park Farm, Cotchet Farm (2), Jays Farm and Victory Cottage; these had been set out in four letters to CDC, dated 26 and 29 December 2010 and 2 and 9 January 2011. In addition, the Council had sent further written comments to CDC on application no. LG/10/04432/FUL (garage compound at Greengates) in respect of which revised plans had been submitted. Copies of all these letters were distributed to those present for information.

LG/10/04849/COU: Barfold Farm, Tennyson's Lane

Use of land for mixed use of agriculture, forestry and equestrian (polo) purposes

LG/10/05095/COU: Woodcraft Park Farm

Three fields to be used for camping for a maximum of 60 days per year

LG/10/05056/DOM: Cotchet Farm, Fernden Lane

Alterations and associated works to facilitate use of existing attached garage as enlarged kitchen and utility. Use of existing barn to provide ancillary accommodation

LG/10/05057/LBC: Cotchet Farm, Fernden Lane

Alterations and associated works to facilitate use of existing attached garage as enlarged kitchen and utility room. Use of existing barn to provide ancillary accommodation

LG/10/05213/FUL: Jays Farm, Jays Lane

Change of use and alterations of existing two storey barn and associated single storey building into residential unit with annexe. Replacement of existing dilapidated milking shed with 3 bay garage and storage above. New bat loft with storage at ground floor level. Covered way linking garage to main house

LG/10/05377/DOM: Victory Cottage, Hillgrove

Proposed double garage and ancillary accommodation

2. Decisions. One decision had been notified by CDC since the Council's last meeting:

LG/10/04176/DOM: Herne House, Petworth Road

Erection of three dormers to front of main house, two dormers to rear of side wing and french doors and terrace to rear of main house. Remodelling of roof over stair to afford access to loft, and a new round window in either gable of main house PERMIT

11/11 – RISK ASSESSMENT
Members considered and approved the F&GP Committee's conclusions as set out in Annex C, below. They noted that the various assessments in the report were in line with those it had adopted last year and that when the time came to renew the Council's insurance premium consideration would be given to increasing its public liability and defence litigation cover.

12/11 - PLAYGROUND
No matters were raised.

13/11 - ALLOTMENTS
Plot fees for 2011. The Council agreed that the cost of a full plot in 2011 should remain at £15 and for a smaller plot should stay at £7.50.

14/11 - VILLAGE GREEN
- The Chairman reported that there had been little activity regarding the Green during the past two months. He noted that the invoice had arrived for the remedial work carried out in November at the eastern end of the Green, that the Village Fete Committee and the tenants of the Noah's Ark had sent the Council their financial contributions towards the total cost of the work and that, at the present meeting, the Council had agreed to send Landbuild a cheque for the work done.

- Anyone looking at the bottom end of the main Green at present could, he continued, see how Mr Sharp's suggestion to open up the old ditch would alleviate much of the problem of rainwater lingering in that area. It would clearly be sensible for this work to be done in the Spring when the weather was better. He agreed the triangle was once again looking a mess but felt there was little point in trying to do anything about it whilst the weather remained so wet.

- During the heavy snow in December, an irresponsible driver or drivers had driven across the Green, thankfully without doing much damage. He asked anyone who saw such behaviour – whether or not there was snow – to take the vehicle's number and report it to him.

- The Village Green Committee would meet again in the coming two to three weeks to consider next steps on the parking issue. Constructive suggestions – preferably in writing – would, said the Chairman, be welcomed by the Committee.

- Among points made and decisions taken during discussion of the Chairman's report were the following:
(a) The Council agreed that Mr Hayhurst should take over the chairmanship of the Village Green Committee (see minute 30/10).
(b) The Council authorised the Village Green Committee to approach some owners of land in the vicinity of the Village Green to enquire about the prospect of buying or leasing land from them to use for car parking.
(c) Mr Jowett drew attention to the deplorable state of the small triangle at the north-west corner of the Green which was a consequence of the many builders' vehicles parked around the Greenfield Bungalow site during the past three months. The Chairman agreed. The triangle's state was very sad, especially given the extensive repair work Mr Sharp had carried out on it last summer, but the developer had told the Clerk that he would ensure the plot was returfed once the Greenfield development was complete – expected to be by the end of January.

15/11 – LOCAL WINTER MANAGEMENT PLAN
- Mr Hayhurst reported on the Winter Management Plan Committee's experience to date with the parish's Plan. It felt that the Plan, which had been submitted to the County Highways Department in November, had been a qualified success. There had been two substantial falls of snow on 1-2 and 17-18 December. Unfortunately WSCC did not manage to get the promised bags of salt to the parish prior to the first of these falls though it did so in time for the second. Thanks to the sterling efforts of some local volunteers on the second occasion, large stretches of

roads in the Parish were kept passable. In addition, the Parish had been visited by a County-approved snow plough on both occasions.

- This being the first winter of operating the Plan, everyone concerned was on a learning curve. The Parish Council would shortly be submitting a request for delivery of further bags of salt, in some cases to locations different from those identified for the first delivery. Selecting the most appropriate locations for the bags was a matter of judgment given that it was not possible to allocate a bag to every potentially hazardous spot in the parish. The Committee's present understanding was that the County Highways Department would not deliver further bags unless and until further severe weather was expected.

- The Committee planned to publish via an interactive map on the Council's website the location of the salt bags and, where possible, the locations for the next bags to be delivered.

- In conclusion, Mr Hayhurst said that the Committee felt the Winter Management Plan was succeeding in making Lurgashall more accessible during severe weather than it would otherwise have been but there was no room for complacency - it was important for the Committee to strive to make the Plan even more effective for the future.

- During discussion of Mr Hayhurst's report, Mrs Martin-Jenkins expressed concern that the snow plough had left the parish's lanes more, not less, dangerous. This was partly the result of the speed at which the driver rushed along the roads and partly because the snow-clearing attachment was set too high above the road, presumably to avoid damaging the surface or the blade. Mr Hayhurst replied that there were a number of unclear and unsatisfactory aspects about the way in which the snow plough system was operating (eg the parish was meant to vet the operator's invoices before they were submitted to WSCC but was not in a position to do so in a meaningful way). This was likely be one of the matters the Committee would address in its report back to WSCC's Highways Department.

16/11 – CORRESPONDENCE
There was no correspondence that needed to be drawn to the Council's notice.

17/11 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS
No matters were raised.

18/11 - DATES OF NEXT MEETING
The Council's next meeting would be held on Thursday, 10 March 2011 starting at 7.30 pm.

There being no other business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.10 pm.

PJS: 16/1/11