LURGASHALL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held in the Village Hall on Thursday, 14 July 2011

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

Also present: Mr C Duncton, Mrs L Westmore and one member of the public.

The Chairman declared the meeting open at 7.35 pm.

60/11 - APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
Apologies for absence were received from Mr N P Jowett and Mrs P A Hardwick.

61/11 – CODE OF CONDUCT
The Chairman reminded members of their responsibilities under the Code of Conduct.

62/11 – MINUTES OF LAST MEETING
The minutes of the last meeting were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

63/11 - MATTERS ARISING
(a) Waste skip. A waste skip had been booked for Saturday, 24 September 2011.
(b) Archiving of Minutes. The Clerk had deposited the Council's minutes for 2001 to 2008, inclusive, at the West Sussex Record Office in Chichester (see Annex A).
(c) War Memorial. The Clerk had, as decided in minute 57/11, para. 5, been in correspondence with the PCC on whether (i) the Church's quinquennial review included assessment of the war memorial's condition and stability and (ii) its churchyard insurance extended to the memorial. The answer to (i) was no; an answer to (ii) was awaited.

64/11 – OPEN FORUM
No points were raised.

6511 – COUNCILLORS' REPORTS
- Among the matters highlighted by Mr Duncton in his report were: (a) the "massive" internal organisational changes that WSCC was continuing to implement; (b) the County's search for further volunteers to work on its public rights of way network; (c) the change from May Gurney to Balfour Beatty as the County's main highways contractors; (d) the availability of grants from WSCC for small-scale local projects; and (e) the vacancy that would shortly occur for a new Governor at Northchapel Primary School
- In Mrs Hardwick's absence, the Clerk presented her report. Its main points were: (a) housing development (Lurgashall was covered by the South Downs National Park Authority's (SDNPA) strategy but generally low levels were envisaged for the north-east of the Chichester District Council (CDC) area); (b) King Edward VII Hospital site (the new SDNPA Planning Committee had turned down the developers' proposals in this difficult case; an appeal was likely); (c) CDC's reception area (the number of organisations (eg HMRC and Shelter) using facilities at East Pallant House to promote their services continued to grow; (d) housing allocation (CDC's scheme had been amended to give greater weight to re-lets to applicants already resident or working in a given parish); and (e) wheelie bins (CDC was to start charging for replacements).

66/11 – FINANCE
1. Current financial statement. The Clerk distributed Annex B, below, ie:
   (a) a statement of the position of the Council's bank accounts, incorporating details of

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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.

On a proposal by Mr Hayhurst and seconded by Mrs Wood, the Council approved payment of the eight cheques listed in that Annex.

The Clerk informed the meeting that, in line with the Council's decision last year concerning inter-account transfers (see minute 37/10, para. 5), he had transferred £500 from the Current Account to Business Reserve Account II (ie its contingencies fund).

2. Bank mandate. In order to bring the number of Members permitted to sign cheques on behalf of the Council up to five again, the Council agreed that the names of Mr Bonnett and Mr Hayhurst should be added to its list of authorised signatories.

3. Insurance. As instructed, the Clerk had checked with the Council's insurers what increasing its public liability cover to £10M per incident would entail (see minute 47/11, para. 40). He was informed it would be unusual for a Parish Council to have public liability cover in excess of £5M per incident and that, in any event, it was not certain the insurers would agree to such an increase. The higher cover would increase the Council's premium by "in excess of £100".

4. Electronic payment by Councils. The UK banks had recently dropped their plan to abolish cheques by 2018 and so the need for the Parish Council to move to electronic methods of payment had disappeared (see minute 84/10, para.2).

67/11 – HIGHWAYS

1. Road safety at Gospel Green. After a recent bad motor accident near Gospel Green, a local resident had contacted the Highways Department suggesting that priority should be given to vehicles travelling to and from Jobson's Lane rather than, as at present, to those on Petworth Road. Mr Harden said he would prefer to see a partial one–way system around the triangle at Gospel Green with the short stretch directly in front of the cottage being restricted to vehicles travelling north. The Meeting concluded that, principally because of poor sight lines, Gospel Green was, and had for some years been, a dangerous road junction and that a workable solution to the hazard should continue to be sought.

2. Road safety at A283 junction. Mr Sharp pointed out that because of the recent heavy growth of hedges and grass on both corners at Lane End, the road junction had again become a traffic hazard for vehicles approaching from Lurgashall. Mr Duncton said he understood the hedges had been cut back quite recently but clearly the matter needed to be addressed again.

3. County boundary sign. Mr Hayhurst noted that the county boundary sign on Tennyson's Lane had disappeared a while ago (presumably stolen) and that a hand written sign was now in its place. Mr Duncton undertook to ask the Highways Department about erecting a replacement.

4. Flooding by Boundary Cottage. Mr Sharp reported that the problem of surface water running off land adjacent to Boundary Cottage across Northhurst Lane had been resolved through action taken by him and the owner of Boundary Cottage.

5. Northhurst Lane "pothole". The damaged utility trench in the road outside Boundary Cottage had been reported to the County Highways Department. It had replied that the hole would be repaired shortly. Action was still awaited.

68/11 –PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

1. Footpath barrier. The sheep hurdle fixed across the footpath adjacent to Boundary Cottage had been reported to the County Council but, despite the passage of six weeks, it had yet to be removed. Mr Oakland was continuing to press WSCC's local Access Ranger to act.

2. Repair of bridleways. The local Access Ranger had written to the Council indicating that some money might be available for repairs to one bridleway in the parish. He had suggested three possible candidates and asked for views on which was the most needful. A number of local riders and walkers were consulted as was Mr Oakland and, in the end, Mr Oakland notified WSCC that, of the three bridleways, Bullock Lane should be chosen.

3. Broken stiles. Mr Sharp reported that, together with Mr Oakland, he had repaired the broken stile on Mill Lane. He hoped to be able to repair the one near Boundary Cottage shortly. Mr Harden said there were other stiles that needed repair (eg by Mill Farm), adding that at some

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places the dog gates needed attention or, indeed, were too small to take larger dogs. He would prepare a list of defective stiles for the next meeting of the Council.

69/11 – PLANNING

1. Applications. Dr Wilding's reported that fourteen applications had been notified to the Council since its last meeting – the thirteen listed below, plus Southwater which is listed in paragraph 2. Three of the applications - ie Meadowside and the last two concerning Barfold Farm - had yet to be considered by the Planning Committee. The Planning Committee had registered objections to three of the remaining eleven applications (Barfold Farm (two) and Upper Blackdown House); copies of the letters sent to the District Council concerning these were distributed for information at the meeting

LG/11/01746/ELDNP: Barfold Farm, Tennyson's Lane
Use of former stables as unit of grooms' accommodation

LG/11/01771/ELDNP: Barfold Farm, Tennyson's Lane
Self contained grooms accommodation

LG/11/01685/DOMNP: Greenland Farm, Jobson's Lane
Two storey rear extension, enlarged ground floor link between dwelling and converted barn, addition of small rear dormer window, together with internal and external alteration to listed building

LG/11/01686/LBCNP: Greenland Farm, Jobson's Lane
Two storey rear extension, enlarged ground floor link between dwelling and converted barn, addition of small rear dormer window, together with internal and external alteration to listed building

LG/11/01842/FULNP: Leigh Barton, Blind Lane
Variation of condition 2 from planning permission for replacement dwelling LG/09/04381/FUL. Construction of basement to be included

LG/11/02153/PLDNP: The Chimes, Blind Lane
Proposed garden room

LG/11/01745/FULNP: Barfold Farm, Tennyson's Lane
Replacement stable block. New building to provide veterinary facility and residential accommodation for grooms

LG/11/02105/FULNP: Barfold Farm, Tennyson's Lane
Replacement of existing lodge to provide staff accommodation

LG/11/02227/FULNP: Upper Blackdown House, Fernden Lane
Demolition of existing dwelling with proposed replacement dwelling

LG/11/02195/FULNP: Barfold Farm, Tennyson's Lane
Estate office barn in lieu of permitted storage barn

LG/11/02359/DOMNP: Meadowside, Village Green
Retention of swimming pool and pool house

LG/11/02593/FULNP: Barfold Farm, Tennyson's Lane
Replacement of existing storage barn

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LG/11/02107/LBCNP: Barfold Farm, Tennyson's Lane
Demolition of existing lodge (and replace with new gate lodge)

2. Decisions. Seven decisions had been notified by Chichester since the Council's last meeting:

LG/11/01538/LBCNP: Noah's Ark Inn, Village Green
To carry out repairs and alterations to ensure outbuilding is structurally stabilised GRANT

LG/11/01592/LBCNP: Blackdown Park, Fernden Lane
Sub division of guest bedroom ensuite to form dressing room, refitting of bathroom
GRANT

LG/11/01435/DOMNP: Glebe Park, Blind Lane
Three storey and single storey extensions and alterations PERMIT

LG/11/01473/DOMNP: Cotchet Farm, Fernden Lane
Alterations and associated works to facilitate use of existing detached garage as breakfast room and utility. Use of existing barn to provide ancillary accommodation. Revisions to LG/10/05056/DOM PERMIT

LG/11/01474/LBCNP: Cotchet Farm, Fernden Lane
Alterations and associated works to facilitate use of existing detached garage as breakfast room and utility. Use of existing barn as ancillary accommodation and recladding front elevation. GRANT

LG/11/01641/DOMNP : Victory Cottage, Hillgrove Lane
Replacement outbuilding PERMIT

LG/11/01734/LBCNP: Southwater, Lickfold
Proposed demolition and two storey extension, new entrance porch and chimney to garden room and internal alterations GRANT

3. Other planning matters
(a) High Hampstead Farm. The District Council had written to say that the enforcement action it had commenced last year alleging an unauthorised change of use of agricultural land at High Hampstead Farm had been dropped.
(b) Willow Spring Farm, Northchapel. There had been no change since the Council's May meeting. Mrs Westmore added that it seemed that CDC would shortly close the case.

70/11 - PLAYGROUND
RoSPA's report. The meeting took note of RoSPA's 2011 inspection report. It had given the playground very similar safety ratings to those achieved in each of the past three years but this time without the added comment "well maintained site in good condition". After considering report, the Council decided that, in light of RoSPA's slightly less favourable assessment, the time was right to get one or two specialist playground firms to assess and quote for any work that may need to be done. On a proposal by Mr Hayhurst and seconded by Mrs Wood, the Chairman and Mrs Wood were requested to take this matter forward, assisted as necessary by the Clerk, and to report back to the September meeting with specific proposal for action.

71/11 - ALLOTMENTS
Real Hedge Fund. WSCC's Trees and Woodlands Officer had written to the Clerk stating that the Council had failed to provide evidence by the agreed deadline that the hedges for which grant money had been provided in 2010 were well established and being properly maintained. She added warnings about clawing back the grant if the hedge was not developing satisfactorily. Photographs showing that the hedges were healthy were forwarded to Chichester and hopefully that would be an end of the matter.

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72/11 - VILLAGE GREEN

(a) Mr Hayhurst said that, as ever, the major issue was the problem of damage caused by parking on the Green. He recalled that, at the Council's May meeting, he had reported that the Village Green Committee had decided to investigate the possibility of marking out some parking spaces on the eastern section of the Green and on the tarmaced area by the churchyard wall in the hope of thereby creating extra parking spaces. Unfortunately the Leconfield Estate had refused consent. As a result, the Parish's options were now limited. The Village Green Committee had decided to see how the eastern section of the green coped this coming winter following the strengthening works carried out in November 2010. If those works proved successful, the Council could obtain quotations in spring 2012 for similar work on the long sides of the triangle.

(b) The Committee, continued Mr Hayhurst, was also considering some form of temporary post and rope barrier along the two long sides of the triangle to discourage parking there during the really wet months this winter.

(c) On other matters noted by the Committee, thanks to the personal efforts of some Members of the Council, the bus shelter, notice board and benches around the Green as well as the parish's black and white road signs were all in the process of being cleaned and refurbished and it was hoped work would be completed by the end of August. The village pond was leaking. It needed to be cleaned out and the leak fixed. On a proposal by Mrs Wood and seconded by Mrs Martin-Jenkins, the Council agreed that quotations should be sought for this work and also that up to £160 from the Council's reserves should be used to hire a digger to enable renovation of some of the ditches around the Green.

73/11 – LOCAL WINTER MANAGEMENT PLAN

(a) Mr Bonnett reported that, at his invitation, Dr Andy Tate had attended the recent meeting of the Winter Management Committee because of his detailed knowledge of the 2010-11 winter management scheme. The Committee agreed to request the Council to co-opt Dr Tate to the Committee in view of the practical and technical contribution he could make to its deliberations.

(b) The Committee had then reviewed the experience gained during winter 2010-11 and concluded that in general Lurgashall's Winter Management Plan had worked well. The 2011-12 Plan, due to be with WSCC by 1 October, was discussed in light of the lessons learned from last winter and taking into account WSCC's plans for the coming year as announced by Mr Richard Speller (WSCC's senior winter weather officer) at the meeting of parishes in Lurgashall on 18 May.

(c) *Strategic Route*. The basis of the Plan was that, in the event of a heavy snowfall, each parish should have a "Strategic Route" that would allow the emergency services to get to the most populated parts of the parish and enable a majority of residents to get out to a major road. The Committee considered that Lurgashall's Strategic Route should run from the Village Hall, around the Green, along Northhurst Lane, then (i) north along Jobson's Lane to Gospel Green and past Boxalland Farm to the county boundary and (ii) south along Jobson's Lane to Lickfold Bridge to link with any clearing done by Lodsworth. The location of salt supplies and any clearing by snowploughs should primarily be directed to facilitating the movement of vehicles and pedestrians along the Strategic Route.

(d) *Hippo bags*. WSCC would deliver salt in 'hippo' bags in advance of winter to one location in a parish but the Committee did not feel there was anyone who could subsequently distribute the bags sites around Lurgashall and so it concluded that the Council would again have to request delivery of bulk bags to the 11 locations in the parish selected for last winter's deliveries.

(e) *Salt bins*. WSCC would, however, fill salt bins in advance of winter so the Committee decided to recommend that the Council purchase 2 bins. The bins (preferably black or green, not yellow) would be located – landowners permitting - beside the Village Green bus shelter and outside Southbridge Farm. If permission was refused, 2 more bags should be added to the 11 mentioned above. The cost of two bins (400 litre capacity; lockable) was likely to be around £300 plus VAT.

(f) *Snowploughs*. The Committee was not aware of any Lurgashall farmers with the capacity to clear snow properly and reliably. The Parish would, therefore, need to rely again on WSCC's

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contractor, ACS from Midhurst, though this winter with improved coordination with the Council. ACS would be encouraged to clear the Strategic Route only if the snow was 6 inches or more deep. Less than that, most 4x4 and emergency vehicles could get around.

(g) *Liability*. Continuing lack of certainty on the legal position of volunteers spreading salt and clearing snow, which was not clarified by WSCC at the May meeting, meant that at most the Council should announce that salt bags and bins would be placed at key points in the Parish and that people were at liberty to use that salt to clear the highway and public footpaths. There should be no suggestion of coordinating or appointing volunteers to clear specified sections of the Strategic Route.

(h) On a proposal by Mrs Wood that was seconded by Mr Sharp, the Council agreed (i) to co-opt Dr Tate to the Winter Weather Committee and (ii) that the Strategic Route should be as set out above. In addition, on a proposal by Mr Hayhurst that was seconded by Mr Bonnett, the Council agreed to the purchase out of its reserves of two salt bins up to a maximum cost of £350 + VAT and subject to landowner permission being obtained.

74/11 – NEW CLERK

- The Chairman reported that there had been two applicants for the post of Clerk to the Council. Both were strong candidates but in the end he and Mr Bonnett had concluded that Mr Mike Oakland's long, proven track record told in his favour. Not only had he been an excellent Clerk to the Council from 1999 till 2005 but also he was very committed to Lurgashall as witnessed by the numerous parish activities he had been involved in over the past dozen years. Before finally deciding to propose Mr Oakland's name to the meeting, he and Mr Bonnett had written to all Members seeking their views on the candidates. All had replied saying they felt Mr Oakland was the more suitably qualified of the two candidates for the post.
- On a proposal by Dr Wilding that was seconded by Mr Bonnett, the Council decided by consensus that Mr Oakland should be invited to take up the post of Clerk to the Council with effect from 16 August 2011.

75/11 - STANDING ORDERS - AMENDMENT

Mr Harden tabled proposals for two new Standing Orders the effect of which would be to limit to five the number of consecutive years for which anybody could hold the post of Chairman or Vice Chairman of the Council (new 12A) or be the chairman of a Committee (new 12B). Mr Harden said he had refined his proposal in the light of various helpful comments and suggestions put to him prior to the meeting by fellow Members. After Mr Hayhurst had drawn the meeting's attention to Standing Order 80 (on adding new Standing Orders), Mr Bonnett seconded Mr Harden's proposals and they will be considered at the Council's September meeting.

76/11 – CORRESPONDENCE

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

77/11 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No matters were raised.

78/11 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Council's next meeting would be held on Thursday, 8 September 2011 at 7.30 pm.

The Chairman and Mr Sharp paid tribute to Mr Patrick Széll, the outgoing Clerk, and thanked him for all his work for the Council over the past six years. Their comments were endorsed by the other Members of the Council.

There being no other business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.05 pm.

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