

Minutes 1 October 2007

LOXWOOD PARISH COUNCIL

An ordinary meeting of Loxwood Parish Council was held at 7.30 pm on Monday 1 October 2007 in St John the Baptist Church Room, Loxwood.

Present: Parish Councillors Alison Sanderson (Chairman), David Townsend (Vice-Chairman), Mirus Kuszel, Priscilla Phillips, Tim Spence, Scott Taylor, Howard Thomas and Charlie Whitmarsh.

Also in attendance: Peter Evans (Parish Clerk), 2 members of the public.

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

125/07 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Parish Councillor Jane Northam.

ADJOURNMENT: QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

No matters were raised.

126/07 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

Priscilla Phillips declared a prejudicial interest in planning application **LX/07/04686/TPA** – Badgers, 9 Pond Close as owner-occupier of the neighbouring property.

Scott Taylor declared a prejudicial interest in planning application **LX/07/03793/DOM** - Loxwood Cottage, Pigbush Lane, as owner-occupier of a property close to the site, and in **LX/07/04686/TPA** – Badgers, 9 Pond Close as an acquaintance of the applicant.

Tim Spence declared a prejudicial interest in planning application **LX/07/04686/TPA** – Badgers, 9 Pond Close as an acquaintance of the applicant.

Charlie Whitmarsh declared a prejudicial interest in land off Farm Close (minute 128/07(i)) as owner-occupier of a property close to the site.

127/07 APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Howard Thomas questioned the accuracy of minute 118/07(v), which recorded that the Parish Council had agreed not to ask the County Council to install a bike stand outside the butcher's shop. The Clerk consulted his contemporaneous note of proceedings at the meeting, and confirmed that the minute was correct.

It was then proposed by Priscilla Phillips, seconded by Mirus Kuszel and agreed that the minutes were a correct record of the ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on 3 September 2007. The Chairman signed the minutes.

128/07 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(i) Land off Farm Close (minute 118/07(iii)): the Chairman reported a response from a local landowner to the Council's approach about availability of land. The future use of the land was not clear (the landowner having repeatedly offered the land as a possible school relocation site) and the landowner could not therefore make the Parish Council an offer.

Charlie Whitmarsh said any proposal to use the site for a playground would need to be looked at seriously because of the possible effects on residents. The activities of skateboarders, who used the health centre car park late at night, were already disruptive. It was agreed to report this matter to the police, copy to the Health Centre. Furthermore, the Health Centre car park was in use as a public car park at weekends. It was agreed to refer the point to the Health Centre.

(ii) Children's playground (minute 118/07(iv)): repairs to the fence had been ordered. A number of contractors had been asked to quote for providing a new safety surface, and for repair and renovation of the equipment following the RoSPA inspection.

The question of delegating authority to the Recreation and Leisure Working Group would be considered under a later agenda item

(iii) Parish Councillors Guide (minute 119/07(ii)): copies were distributed to Members.

(iv) Land in Station Road (minute 118/07(i)): in response to Howard Thomas's question, the Clerk reported that he was due to meet a contractor later in the week to discuss the Parish Council's possible maintenance requirements, and prices for the work.

Howard Thomas then asked the Clerk for details of what he would be asking the contractor to quote for. The Clerk replied that he would be discussing prices for initial work to the hedge, ditch and verge, ground clearance, rotovation and reseeded of the site, ongoing maintenance thereafter, and tree surgery.

(v) Trees in Nicholsfield (minute 118/07(v)): in response to Howard Thomas's question, the Clerk reported that he would be arranging a site meeting with Martlet Homes shortly.

Howard Thomas was confident that County Highways, not Martlet Homes, were responsible for the land, and expressed concern about possible damage to the overhead electricity cables, the drive to his property and to his car because of the state of the trees. He did not wish to attend a site meeting.

The Chairman pointed out that as Martlet Homes had indicated that they might undertake the work, it was appropriate to explore this avenue before contacting County Highways.

(vi) Village Website (minute 121/07): in response to Howard Thomas's question, the Clerk reported that he had e-mailed the Webmaster to advise him of the Parish Council's discussion, and had subsequently had a conversation with him about continuity of site maintenance if the Webmaster were away from home or incapacitated. The Webmaster did not appear to consider that there was a problem of continuity, and once again reiterated that the Parish Council had no direct involvement in the Website. He was however more than happy to discuss Howard Thomas's concerns with him when an opportunity arose.

129/07 PLANNING MATTERS

(i) Planning applications: Members considered **new planning applications** affecting the Parish and after discussion made the following comments to the planning authority:

LX/07/04024/DOM - 8 Nicholsfield - Single storey rear extension (*Scott Taylor and Tim Spence both declared prejudicial interests as acquaintances of the applicant and left the room during consideration of the item*).

Parish Council – NO OBJECTION.

LX/07/04164/DOM - 12 Loxwood Place Farm - Conservatory to rear of property

Parish Council – NO OBJECTION.

LX/07/04112/DOM - Oaken Barn, Station Road - Close boarded gate in driveway

Parish Council – unfortunately the site plan and location plan supplied with the application are slightly confusing, as they refer to Oaken Barn, Station Road, and to Boardenhouse Barn, Loxwood Road. The

plans also include elevations of what seems to be a converted barn. Whilst the Council was clearly able to make assumptions as to the probable details of the application, as it stood it was felt that the lack of clarity could cause an incorrect decision to be taken. The Council had no objections to the design and appearance of the gate in itself.

LX/07/04686/TPA – Badgers, 9 Pond Close - Re-Pollard 4 no. Lime trees (marked on the plan as 1-4) and 1 no. Horse Chestnut tree (marked on the plan as 5). Removal of lowest northern limb and remove deadwood from 1 no. Chestnut (marked on the plan 7). All 6 no. trees are within Area A1 subject to TPO/1 and 3/LX

Parish Council – NO OBJECTION.

LX/07/04538/DOM - Courtyard House, Pigbush Lane - First floor extension and single storey link extension. (*Having earlier declared a prejudicial interest Scott Taylor left the room during consideration of the item*).

Parish Council –concerns over the size and scale of the extensions, which appear to increase the footprint of the dwelling by around a third. The dwelling is one of three forming a single block of buildings; provided neighbours have no objection, neither does the Parish Council.

Members also noted recent **determinations**:

LX/07/03258/DOM & LX/07/03259/LBC - Garton House, High Street - Single storey garden room to rear and replacement of existing rooflight with 3 no. new roof lights to rear of existing building.

REFUSED

LX/07/03496/DOM - Old House Farm, Roundstreet Common - two-storey side extension to provide family room and forming a bedroom and ensuite on the first floor. Two-storey rear extension to provide larger kitchen/ breakfast area.

REFUSED

LX/07/03540/DOM & LX/07/03545/LBC - Oakhurst Cottage, Oakhurst Lane - Demolition of an existing conservatory and replace with a single storey link provide entrance and two storey kitchen and breakfast area with bedroom above.

PERMITTED

LX/07/03564/DOM - Cob Cottage, Nicholsfield - Erection of a boundary fence.

REFUSED

The planning authority had asked the Parish Council if its Members could recall when the fence at the neighbouring property, Belltrees, was erected. Members suggested that it was between 2 and 3 years ago.

LX/07/03811/FUL - Ifield Park, Loxwood Road Alfold Bars - Retention of car park for approved (05/04295/FUL) retail building and residential flat.

PERMITTED

130/07 FINANCIAL MATTERS

(i) **Financial Report:** the report had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Members noted the Parish Council's payments and receipts in September 2007, and summary transactions and account balances at 30 September. It was proposed by Howard Thomas, seconded by Tim Spence and agreed to approve the total payments of **£1,233.02**.

(ii) **Request for financial assistance:** Caterpillars Toddler Group had asked the Parish Council if it would meet the cost of the Group's rent of North Hall for the financial year 2007/8, as it had done in the previous year. Members recalled that the Council had paid £714 in total for the Group's hire of North Hall for the period April 2006 to April 2007. They were sympathetic to the Group's request, and agreed in principle to provide financial assistance.

It was then proposed by David Townsend, seconded by Scott Taylor and agreed to ask to see a copy of the Group's accounts before considering their request further.

In response to Howard Thomas's question about Loxwood PCC's request for a contribution towards the cost of churchyard maintenance (*minute 116/07(iii), Parish Council meeting 3 September 2007, refers*) the Clerk reported that he had written to the PCC Treasurer, with a copy to the Rector, requesting a copy of the latest available PCC accounts: and that he had subsequently discussed the matter with one of the Churchwardens. A substantive response from the PCC was awaited.

131/07 CORRESPONDENCE

(i) Closure of bridleway: part of the bridleway adjacent to the canal on the western side of the main road, opposite The Onslow Arms, would be closed for 21 days from 1 October.

(ii) Road closure: the B2133 would be closed at The Onslow Arms for 5 days, with restrictions on access for a further 10 weeks. Originally due to be closed from 8 October, the date had slipped to the end of the month.

(iii) Other correspondence: Members were reminded of the following correspondence, details of which had previously been circulated to them:

- Chichester District Council's questionnaire on crime and disorder priorities in the area, and a SALC questionnaire on "Connecting the public with policing", were referred to Jane Northam, who had earlier offered to take an interest in police matters on behalf of the Parish Council
- AiRS were offering assistance on preparation and review of parish action plans. The Chairman suggested it might be premature to go through the full process again, but it might be useful to look at the recommendations at the end of the year to see what had been achieved. Priscilla Phillips and Howard Thomas, as members of the Parish Action Steering Group, would consider the point and report back.
- Crawley Council for Voluntary Service (CCVS) sought help to find a site in the Village for the Preschool. Priscilla Phillips offered to meet the CCVS representative.
- SALC subscriptions for 2008/9 would be 26.93p per registered elector, increasing the Parish Council's subscription to around £300. This would be taken into account when the Council set its 2008/9 budget.
- Chichester District Council asked for help to complete a flood survey for winter 2007/8. David Townsend offered to study the paperwork.

No further matters were raised.

132/07 RECREATION GROUNDS, HEDGES, TREES, OPEN SPACES

(i) Land in Station Road (minute 118/07): the landowner's reply to the Council's request for further details was awaited.

The District Council solicitor regretted that he was unable to carry out the necessary legal work for the Parish Council should it decide to purchase the land. The Clerk had therefore approached a firm of solicitors recommended by SALC, and their response was also awaited.

Members then considered the pros and cons of reconstituting the Recreation and Leisure Working Group as a Committee of the Council, to allow it to take delegated decisions on behalf of the Council. Some Members thought this would enable the Council and Committee to act more expeditiously, while others preferred decisions to be taken by full Council following a report of the Working Group.

After discussion it was proposed by David Townsend, seconded by Priscilla Phillips and agreed not to make any changes to the status of the Working Group.

(ii) Highway maintenance: Tim Spence and Charlie Whitmarsh reported that repairs to various roads in the Parish were still outstanding, despite Members' site meeting with County Highways in January 2007 and subsequent contacts with their officers.

It was agreed that Tim Spence and Charlie Whitmarsh draft a note of outstanding highways concerns for the Clerk to forward to County Highways and to County Councillor Chris Duncton.

(iii) Dog fouling: Howard Thomas was concerned at dog fouling on the paths through Loxwood Farm Place and alongside the canal east from The Onslow Arms. It was agreed to ask the District Council Dog Warden for new warning signs and whatever other assistance he could offer, and to write a piece for the next Parish Council Newsletter.

(iv) Speed signs: Howard Thomas understood from a conversation with a local police inspector that fixed flashing speed indicator signs could be obtained through the police for £2,000. This was less than the cost quoted previously, and it was agreed that Howard Thomas and Tim Spence should pursue the matter with the inspector.

133/07 PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

The Chairman said the latest Newsletter had been sent out at the end of the previous week, 3 weeks later than expected. A copy had been available on the Village Website some weeks previously. Despite delays in printing, the Newsletter was well received and Parishioners had given positive feedback to the Council.

It was agreed that the Parish Council should investigate other means of production. The Clerk would circulate local parish councils to ask about their arrangements, and report back when information was available. Members were requested to retain old copies of the Newsletter, as the Council would require them as examples if it decided to ask other printers to quote for the work.

134/07 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS AND INFORMATION

(i) Forthcoming meetings: the Clerk would copy details of the following to all Parish Councillors:

- West Sussex Association of Local Councils – Petworth District at 7.30 pm on 3 October at Sutton Village Hall, featuring a guest speaker from the Countryside Alliance.
- Crime & Disorder reduction consultation at Petworth, 13 October.
- West Sussex Primary Care Trust, public meetings on creating an NHS fit for the future, in Horsham (4 October), Midhurst (10 October) and Pulborough (29 October), plus several further afield.
- Sussex Police Authority public consultation meeting at 7.30 pm on Tuesday 23 October at the Y Centre, Blackhorse Way, Horsham.
- Annual parishes meeting at Chichester District Council offices, 29 October.
- Sussex Association of Local Councils (SALC) training courses at Midhurst 2 - 4 November. The Clerk had asked if SALC intended to hold any more short courses for members, similar to those provided following the May elections. SALC were considering the matter.
- Action in Rural Sussex and Sussex Association of Local Councils were holding their AGM's at Ardingly on 9 November. The theme of the joint meeting was "21st century village". The Clerk would let Howard Thomas have the details.
- Village Halls conference on 10 November. The Clerk would also copy details to Ron Davis (North Hall Management Committee Secretary).

(ii) Meetings attended:

- Representatives of the Parish Council had met the North Hall Management Committee (NHMC) on 19 September to talk about how both could work in partnership to serve Loxwood's parishioners. A note of the discussions had been circulated to all Members. The Chairman felt the meeting had been useful and productive, a view subsequently endorsed by the NHMC Chairman. It was agreed that the note be circulated to all NHMC members attending the meeting. The Clerk would provide the NHMC Secretary with details of surveyors and other consultants who might be able to assist the Committee. In response to Charlie Whitmarsh's question, the Chairman said the meeting had concentrated on the Hall building itself, and had not considered recreation facilities at the site.
- Priscilla Phillips, Howard Thomas and the Clerk had attended a recent meeting of the North East Parishes Forum at North Hall, at which there had been a very interesting presentation on the work of the Community Wardens. Following the meeting the Chairman had written to the District Council regretting any confusion over the organisation of refreshments. The next meeting of the Forum would be held at Bury on 6 December.

135/07 ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

The Clerk reminded Members that if they wished to place an item on the agenda for discussion by the Council, they should provide details at least 6 working days before the Parish Council meeting. This was necessary to meet the statutory timetable for publishing the agenda.

136/07 DATES OF FUTURE PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

Ordinary meetings of the Parish Council would generally be held on the first Monday of the month, that is on 5 November, 3 December, 7 January 2008, 4 February, 3 March and 7 April.

The next ordinary Parish Council meeting would be held at 7.30 pm on Monday 5 November at the Church Rooms.

There being no further business the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.00 pm.

Approved at a meeting of the Parish Council held on (date)

(Signed)

Chairman