

# Minutes 3 December 2007

## LOXWOOD PARISH COUNCIL

An ordinary meeting of Loxwood Parish Council was held at 7.30 pm on Monday 3 December 2007 in St John the Baptist Church Room, Loxwood.

**Present:** Parish Councillors Alison Sanderson (Chairman), David Townsend (Vice-Chairman), Mirus Kuszel, Sacha Pawley (following co-option), Priscilla Phillips, Scott Taylor and Howard Thomas.

**Also in attendance:** County Councillor Chris Duncton, Peter Evans (Parish Clerk), 4 members of the public.

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

### **150/07 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Parish Councillor Charlie Whitmarsh.

### **ADJOURNMENT: COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT**

The Chairman adjourned proceedings and invited County Councillor Chris Duncton to address the meeting:

- Plaistow Post Office was threatened with closure.
- The B2133 was likely to be closed at the Onslow Arms for the week beginning 7 January to permit work on the canal crossing to proceed.
- The Chairman spoke about the numbers of HGV's using the B2133, including those leaving Dunsfold Park at its eastern access, close to Alfold Crossways. The Clerk would e-mail details to Chris Duncton.

The Chairman thanked Chris Duncton for his report.

### **ADJOURNMENT: QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

Colin Robinson was concerned at the volume and speed of traffic through the Village. The Chairman said the Parish Council had long shared these concerns, and had been pressing County Highways for some years for action. The matter would be discussed later as a substantive agenda item.

The Chairman thanked Colin Robinson and reconvened the meeting.

### **151/07 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

Howard Thomas declared a personal interest in item **154/07(ii) - Trees in Station Road/Nicholsfield**, as owner-occupier of a property adjacent to the site in question.

### **152/03 CO-OPTION TO THE COUNCIL**

The Chairman introduced Sacha Pawley, candidate for co-option. It was proposed by Howard Thomas, seconded by Mirus Kuszel and agreed to co-opt Sacha Pawley to membership of the Parish Council. Sacha signed her Declaration of Acceptance of Office and joined the meeting.

The Chairman reminded the meeting that there was a further vacant seat to be filled following Tim Spence's resignation. She asked all Members to encourage suitably qualified local residents to stand. If the vacancy were not filled, there could be very serious consequences for the Parish Council and local representative democracy.

### **153/07 APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

It was proposed by Mirus Kuszel, seconded by Scott Taylor and agreed that the minutes were a correct record of the ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on 5 November 2007. The Chairman signed the minutes.

## **154/07 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

**(i) Canal crossing - road closure (minute 140/07):** Members noted that the B2133 at the Onslow Arms would be closed for 5 days from 7 January. It was not known how long subsequent restrictions, with signal controlled single-line traffic, would be in force.

**(ii) Trees in Station Road/Nicholsfield (minute 145/07):** the Chairman and Clerk would attend a site meeting with Martlet Homes at 2 pm on 10 December. Other Parish Councillors were invited to attend.

**(iii) Dunsfold Park (raised at the Adjournment, 5 November 2007):** the Chairman reminded the meeting that the Parish Council maintained a watching brief on possible development at the site. Recent reports indicated that the site-owner intended to apply for eco-town status.

**(iv) Flooding survey (minute 131/07(iii)):** the District Council's survey had been publicised in the Parish Council Newsletter and on the notice board. Incidents of flooding should be reported to the Clerk.

## **155/07 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/07/04973/DOM** - Weavers Cottage, Drungewick Lane - Two storey extension and replacement of garage and outbuilding.

**Parish Council – no objection**

**LX/07/05453/TPA** - Drake House, Guildford Road - Reduce height (back down to old wound points), reduce width by 1m (all around), remove epicormic growth from base up to 3m and deadwood on 1 no. Horse Chestnut tree and 3 no. Lime trees. All 4 trees (in the frontage) within Area A1, subject to TPO/1/LX.

**Parish Council – no objection provided conditions are attached to specify the timing of work, and to provide supervision by the Tree Officer.**

**LX/07/05634/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.

**Parish Council – no objection**

Members also noted recent **determinations:**

**LX/07/03201/DOM & 03202/LBC** - Old Gunshot House, Skiff Lane - Extension to existing garage and new chimney.

**PERMITTED**

**LX/07/03537/FUL** - Church Cottage, Station Road - Proposed demolition of existing garage and erection of new detached four bed dwelling with associated access, garage and parking together with replacement garage and parking for Church Cottage. (Amendments to planning permission LX/06/02719/FUL).

**PERMITTED**

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

**PERMITTED**

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

**PERMITTED**

**LX/07/04538/DOM** - Courtyard House, Pigbush Lane - First floor extension and single storey link extension.

**PERMITTED**

**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.

**PERMITTED**

**LX/07/04752/FUL** - Mill House Farm, Drungewick Lane - Mixed live/work development comprising re-use of existing redundant agricultural buildings to form livery stables with associated stores, workshop and use existing two storey brick/stone built building as a dwelling.

**REFUSED**

**LX/07/04803/DOM** - Bonnington Farm, Drungewick Lane - Alterations and two-storey extension, change of use and alteration of loft including new roof, double garage.

**PERMITTED**

**LX/07/04910/LBC** - Oakhurst Cottage Oakhurst Lane - Clarification of works approved under application no. LX/07/03545/LBC along with details of further internal alterations as detailed in the schedule of proposed alterations.

**PERMITTED**

**Appeal decision:**

**LX/07/00354/FUL** - Land East Of Lindene Gate And Newhaven, Guildford Road - 2 no. detached chalet bungalows

**APPEAL DISMISSED**

**(ii) Planning concern:** at the last Parish Council meeting it had been reported that quad bike activities and clay shoots were taking place on land in the Parish, causing a nuisance to neighbours. A number of local residents later contacted the Parish Council, and the Clerk had referred the matter to the District Council's Planning Department.

**156/07 FINANCIAL MATTERS**

**(i) Financial Report:** the Clerk reported the Parish Council's payments and receipts in November 2007, and summary transactions and account balances at 30 November. It was proposed by David Townsend, seconded by Howard Thomas and agreed to approve the total payments of **£1502.25**.

**(ii) Budget 2008/9:** David Townsend introduced the draft budget prepared by the Parish Council's Budget Working Group. He explained the basis on which the budget had been drafted, as a realistic expectation of what the Council might achieve in the year, and drew attention to its main features. Provision had been made for a cost of living increase to the Clerk's salary, for paying a members' allowance and for alternative arrangements for producing the Parish Council Newsletter. The balance in hand included reserves of £13,500 earmarked for assistance to North Hall. The Working Group recommended that the precept remain unchanged at £28,000.

The Chairman added that provision for traffic calming and control measures had been taken out of the budget as both the Police and County Highways had said there was no realistic prospect of installing flashing speed signs in the Village. The reported accident record was not bad enough to warrant such measures and it was agreed to ask residents, through the Parish Council Newsletter, to make a point of reporting accidents. If the Parish Council decided to go ahead with a Speedwatch scheme, using a speed indicator device (SID), the cost could be met from existing reserves. This matter was due for discussion under a later agenda item.

Priscilla Phillips' suggestion to increase provision for Members' travelling expenses to £250 was agreed. After further discussion, it was proposed by David Townsend, seconded by Howard Thomas and agreed to adopt the recommended budget with this one amendment, and to issue a precept for £28,000 for the financial year 2008/9.

It was then proposed by Mirus Kuszel, seconded by Howard Thomas and agreed to amend the Council's Scheme of Members' Allowances from 1 April 2008 to allow payment of £240 to elected members.

The Chairman reminded the meeting that some Members had in the past not wished to accept an allowance. Members were not duty bound to take all or any of the allowance, and could forgo part or all of it, should they so wish.

The Clerk was checking the legal provisions relating to payment of members' allowances. Priscilla Phillips recalled that Trevor Leggo, the Director of the Sussex Association of Local Councils, had spoken at a training course about reimbursement of members' necessary expenses. The Clerk would contact Trevor for clarification.

**(iii) Cheque signatories:** in view of changes to the membership of the Parish Council, a new bank mandate was required.

It was proposed by Priscilla Phillips, seconded by Sacha Pawley and agreed that all Members of the Parish Council be authorised to sign Parish Council cheques and to sign instructions to transfer funds between the Council's accounts.

### **157/07 CORRESPONDENCE**

**(i) Sussex County Playing Fields Association:** Members noted the Association's annual report and accounts for 2006/7, the invitation to attend their AGM and request for a donation of £15. It was thought that Loxwood Sports Association was already a member of the Association.

After discussing the benefits of supporting the Association, it was proposed by Priscilla Phillips, seconded by David Townsend and agreed to make a contribution of £15 as requested.

**(ii) Sussex Association of Local Councils (SALC):** the Director of SALC and the Chief Constable would hold their regular consultation meeting shortly. It was agreed to ask that the absence of police patrols in the Parish be raised. Local vandalism and anti-social behaviour were at a low level, but such incidents were nevertheless irritating and disturbing to local residents.

It was agreed that the Chairman and Clerk would respond on behalf of the Parish Council to the consultation document on possible changes to the Quality Councils scheme.

**(iii) Loxwood PCC:** a letter of thanks had been received from the PCC Treasurer for the Parish Council's contribution to the costs of churchyard maintenance.

### **158/07 RECREATION GROUNDS, HEDGES, TREES, OPEN SPACES**

**(i) Land in Station Road:** the Chairman reported that Hillreed Homes, the landowner, did not propose to make any contribution to the Parish Council's costs of clearing the area of land in Station Road, should the Council acquire it, as they considered its present overgrown state the result of the Council's delay in coming to a decision. As a gesture of goodwill, they did not propose to ask the Council to meet their (Hillreed's) legal costs in the transfer.

It was proposed by Howard Thomas, seconded by Sacha Pawley and agreed, by a majority of 4 to 2, to proceed with the acquisition of the site at the nominal price of £1, and that the Parish Council meet the cost of the initial clearance of the site.

The County Council's reply to the Parish Council's query about the status of the footpath across the site was awaited.

**(ii) Notice boards:** having previously discussed placing a new notice-board on the land in Station Road, should the Parish Council acquire it, the Chairman spoke about the wide range of notice-boards available and possible prices (*minute 144/07, 5 November 2007, refers*). It was agreed that the Chairman and Clerk should identify 3 suitable types for consideration by the Council at its next meeting. Any other Parish Councillors who wished to review the range of available notice-boards were very welcome to join the Chairman and Clerk in the office the next morning.

Priscilla Phillips thought it would be useful to include a map of the Parish on the notice-board.

**(iii) Playground:** the tendering process for new safety surfacing and repairs to the equipment was still in progress. The Council had invited 5 contractors to quote: 4 had attended site meetings and to date 2 had supplied quotations.

**(iv) Dog fouling:** the District Council's Environment Officer had pointed out that there were already 4 dog waste bins in the Parish. This was more than in any other comparable Parish and he was therefore reluctant to consider providing additional bins. Brewhurst Bridge and Merryhills Lane were non-starters as locations for bins. The only place where he might consider installing a new bin was at the sports ground in Plaistow Road. The cost to supply and install a bin was £340, with the annual cost of weekly emptying £202.

It was agreed that the best solution to the problem was to educate thoughtless dog owners. A reminder of the dangers of dog fouling had been included in the December issue of the Parish Newsletter, and it was agreed to consider further putting up warning signs and organising a leaflet drop in affected areas.

**(v) Other matters:** Priscilla Phillips suggested that an article be placed in the next issue of the Newsletter asking householders to keep their hedges clear of the footpath.

## **159/07 HIGHWAYS**

**(i) Local signage:** the question of altering local signage to discourage heavy goods and through traffic from using the B2133 through the Parish had been taken up with the County Council.

**(ii) Speedwatch:** Mirus Kuszel reported an offer by a local resident to organise a Speedwatch group in the Parish. Members considered this a positive step to reduce the speed of traffic in the Village, and asked Mirus to invite Inspector Bartlett to attend the January Parish Council meeting to provide further details of the scheme.

**(iii) Other highways matters:** the Chairman reported County Highways' programme of works in the Parish. While it was gratifying that a number of long-standing defects were to be made good, it was disappointing that some work was not scheduled until 2010/11. Furthermore, some much-needed reconstruction work had not been scheduled at all, such as repairs to Station Road east to the boundary with Rudgwick Parish.

The Clerk would write to County Highways and invite the new Assistant Highways Supervisor to attend a site meeting with Parish Councillors.

## **160/07 ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2008**

The Chairman suggested that the Annual Parish Meeting for 2008 be held in mid-April, and it was agreed to book the North Hall for either 15, 16 or 17 April.

It was intended to restrict formal business to a minimum, with the Chairman's report on Parish Council activities over the year, the Clerk's financial report, and an opportunity for questions and comments from local residents. Local organisations would be invited to publicise their activities with displays in the Hall, and there would be an opportunity for residents to chat informally with local groups and parish councillors.

Following her discussions with the Chichester Council of Voluntary Services, Priscilla Phillips suggested that an Annual Fun Day be held in the summer, in the grounds of North Hall. Such events had proved enjoyable elsewhere, and successful in fostering community spirit.

## **161/07 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS AND INFORMATION: MEETINGS**

**(i) Members' questions and information:** Howard Thomas asked about the Village of the Year competition. John Andrews was reported to have circulated draft material to the Wey & Arun Canal Trust for comments, and some organisations had contributed material to him. The Parish Council had not yet been contacted.

**(ii) Meetings:** Priscilla Phillips had attended the Village Halls conference and found it very interesting. Topics had included energy saving, marketing the hall, farmers' markets and the "Hallmark" scheme.

Members were invited to attend several forthcoming meetings:

- Chichester District North East Parishes Forum at Bury Village Hall, 6 December
- North Chichester County Local Committee at Midhurst Grammar School, 11 December
- SALC training courses for members at Dunford House, Midhurst, 8-10 February and 4-6 April
- CPRE Sussex seminar on the planning system, at Plumpton College, 26 February

## **162/07 ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA**

The Chairman reminded the meeting that 2008 marked the Parish Council's 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It was agreed to place an article in the Newsletter.

## **163/07 DATES OF FUTURE PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS**

The next ordinary Parish Council meeting would be held at 7.30 pm on Monday 7 January 2008 at the Church Rooms. Other ordinary meetings would be held on 4 February, 3 March and 7 April

There being no further business the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.12 pm.

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

(Signed)

Chairman