

Minutes 3 September 2007

LOXWOOD PARISH COUNCIL

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

Present: Parish Councillors Alison Sanderson (Chairman), Mirus Kuszel, Jane Northam, Priscilla Phillips, Scott Taylor and Howard Thomas.

Also in attendance: County Councillor Chris Duncton, Peter Evans (Parish Clerk), 1 member of the public.

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

111/07 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Parish Councillors David Townsend (Vice-Chairman), Tim Spence and Charlie Whitmarsh.

District Councillor Dr Paul Mackey.

ADJOURNMENT: QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Chris Duncton introduced himself as the new County Councillor for the area and spoke about current issues: the canal crossing on the B2133, the future of local hospital services and the Petworth lorry route.

Andrew Black reported missing speed limit signs in Station Road and street nameplates in Spy Lane. The Clerk would e-mail details of the former to Chris Duncton.

112/07 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

Howard Thomas declared a prejudicial interest in development at Church Cottage, item 114/07(ii), as occupier of a property in close proximity to the site: and Scott Taylor declared a prejudicial interest in planning application **LX/07/03793/DOM** - Loxwood Cottage, Pigbush Lane, item 115/07, as occupier of a property in close proximity to the site.

113/07 APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was proposed by Howard Thomas, seconded by Mirus Kuszel and agreed that the minutes were a correct record of the ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on 2 July 2007. The Chairman signed the minutes.

It was proposed by Priscilla Phillips, seconded by Jane Northam and agreed to amend minute 110/07 of the extraordinary Parish Council Meeting held on 20 August 2007, dealing with planning application LX/07/03564/DOM, to read "The **Parish** Council understands that there are covenants": and proposed by Howard Thomas, seconded by Mirus Kuszel and agreed to make a further amendment, namely "would be most grateful if **Chichester District Council** would kindly provide details".

These amendments made, it was proposed by Priscilla Phillips, seconded by Howard Thomas and agreed that the minutes were a correct record of that meeting. The Chairman signed the minutes.

114/07 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(i) North Hall (minute 99/07(iii), 2 July 2007): Priscilla Phillips (Parish Council representative on the North Hall Management Committee - NHMC) informed the meeting that the NHMC was currently holding its own meeting, and was considering suitable dates for a get together with Parish Councillors. The Chairman suggested that it would not be necessary for all Parish Councillors to attend: if only a few members of the Management Committee were present, it might be a good idea not to overwhelm them!

(ii) Church Cottage (minute 110/07, 20 August 2007): members of the public had reported to the Parish Council that work had started on development at the site prior to determination of planning application LX/07/03537/FUL for amendments to planning permission LX/06/02719/FUL.

Given the level of local interest in this development, and the Parish Council's comments on planning application LX/07/03537/FUL, the Clerk had contacted the planning authority. Their response was that work could go ahead in accordance with the permission granted. As the latest application had yet to be determined, work on the amended plans should not yet be going ahead.

Having seen the item on the published agenda, another member of the public had e-mailed the Council to complain about the Clerk's actions and the appearance of the item on the agenda. The Clerk noted that the planning authority relied to a large extent on parish councils to advise them of possible planning problems and it was standard practice to refer such matters to them. The agenda item might have been phrased more felicitously, and when this had been pointed out, the Clerk had amended the wording.

(iii) New vehicle access (minute 110/07, 20 August 2007): County Highways had not objected to construction of a new vehicle access at Russets and Ramblers, Spy Lane, and the application was therefore due for approval subject to conditions.

(iv) Planning White Paper minute 102/07(ii), 2 July 2007): SALC had responded on behalf of parish councils to the consultation document, and it was not necessary for the Parish Council to submit its own comments.

115/07 PLANNING MATTERS

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

LX/07/03779/DOM – Farthings, 8 Loxwood Road, Alfold Bars - Installation of oil storage tank for domestic central heating

Parish Council – NO OBJECTION.

LX/07/03793/DOM - Loxwood Cottage, Pigbush Lane - Construction of garden store.

Parish Council – NO OBJECTION.

Members also noted a recent **determination:**

LX/07/02537/LBC - Drungewick Manor, Drungewick Lane - Removal of redundant boiler chimney.

PERMIT

and one **appeal decision:**

LX/06/05031/DOM - Bumble Farm, Drungewick Lane - two storey extension and new porch and new bay window to kitchen.

APPEAL ALLOWED

116/07 FINANCIAL MATTERS

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

Members noted the Parish Council's payments and receipts in July and August 2007, and summary transactions and account balances at 31 August. Priscilla Phillips pointed out that the payment to the Church for use of the Church Room for meetings was a donation, not an assessed charge or rent. The Clerk would make this clear in future.

It was proposed by Mirus Kuszel, seconded by Jane Northam and agreed to approve the total payments of **£2,202.22.**

(ii) Internal Audit: the internal auditor's report on the Council's accounts for 2006/7 had been circulated prior to the meeting.

The Clerk drew attention to the auditor's comments on asset valuations, and to his response on behalf of the Council.

The audit return had now been submitted to the external auditors.

(iii) Request for financial assistance: the Treasurer of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) had asked the Parish Council for contributions of £300 for 2006 and 2007 towards the cost of churchyard maintenance.

Members noted that the Parish Council had in the past made annual donations of £200 to help meet the cost of churchyard maintenance. They had no objection in principle to providing financial support but were mindful that the Parish Council was accountable to its electors for the use of council tax revenues, and agreed that the Council should therefore ask to see the PCC accounts. The present Council could not bind its successors to continue to make donations but if the PCC provided copies of their accounts when available, the Parish Council could consider making appropriate provision in its annual budget for a donation.

After discussion it was proposed by Priscilla Phillips, seconded by Jane Northam and agreed unanimously to respond to the PCC Treasurer's request along the lines discussed.

117/07 CORRESPONDENCE

The Clerk noted that major items of correspondence were included as substantive agenda items.

No further matters were raised.

118/07 RECREATION GROUNDS, HEDGES, TREES, OPEN SPACES

(i) Untidy Land in Station Road: the landowner had suggested that the Parish Council acquire the site for a nominal sum, subject to covenants preventing development. Priscilla Phillips pointed out that the Parish Council might wish to place seats, or a bus shelter, for example, on the site and this point should be covered in negotiations with the developer.

Howard Thomas suggested that prices be sought for clearing and maintaining the site.

After discussion it was proposed by Scott Taylor, seconded by Howard Thomas and agreed that the Parish Council wished in principle to acquire the land, subject to clarification of (a) the proposed restrictive covenant and (b) responsibility for meeting any legal costs. Having agreed in principle to buy the land, it was decided to delegate detailed consideration of future use to the Council's Recreation and Leisure Working Group.

The Clerk had asked the District Council Solicitor if he would do the conveyancing for the Council should it be agreed to purchase the land, and was trying to obtain prices for maintenance of the site.

The question of clearance and maintenance would be placed on the agenda for the next Parish Council meeting.

(ii) Protection of trees: the District Council has imposed a TPO on 13 trees at Mellow End, The Walled Garden.

(iii) Recreation & Leisure Working Group: one local landowner might be prepared to lease part of his land to the Parish Council for recreation/leisure purposes. It was agreed to thank the landowner concerned, pointing out that the Working Group's activities were still at an early stage and the Council would be in further contact when firm proposals were made. Other local landowners had been approached and their replies were awaited.

The Chairman noted that the Council needed to discuss future plans with the North Hall Management Committee.

(iv) Children’s playground: it was proposed by Howard Thomas, seconded by Mirus Kuszel and agreed to accept a quotation of £110 for repairs to the playground fence.

Members also considered a request from a local resident to install an improved safety surface. The Chairman reminded the meeting that £7,500 had been provided in the 2007/8 budget for playground improvements including a new safety surface. The previous Parish Council had decided not to proceed until the future of North Hall became clearer (*minute 46/07(ii), Parish Council meeting 27 February 2007, refers*).

It was agreed that the Council should invite quotes for installing safety surfacing and renovating and refurbishing the existing equipment. In view of the large number of playground contractors, and competitiveness of the market, 5 quotations would be sought.

(v) Other matters relating to recreation grounds, hedges, trees or open spaces: the Sports Association had thanked the Parish Council for resurfacing the entrance to the sports ground.

The Clerk had spoken to Martlet Homes about the overgrown cherry trees in Nicholsfield. It had been suggested that County Highways might be responsible for the trees. Martlet Homes had suggested a site meeting to discuss the matter. The Chairman had tried to identify the trees owned by the Parish Council but if they were on highways land, County Highways might be responsible for their management.

The County Council’s offer of bicycle stands would be copied to the Church, North Hall Management Committee and Sports Association. It was agreed to ask the County Council for 3 stands to be sited at the Post Office. After discussion it was agreed not to ask for a stand outside the butchers.

119/07 MEMBERS AND OFFICERS TRAINING

(i) SALC training courses: courses would be held on 2 - 4 November and 7 – 9 December, at Midhurst. Details of course content would be circulated later.

The Clerk would ask if it was intended to hold any further short courses, similar to those recently provided for new parish councillors.

(ii) “The Parish Councillor’s Guide”: it was proposed by Howard Thomas, seconded by Mirus Kuszel and agreed to buy 10 copies of the new edition of the Guide for Members’ use.

120/07 PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

The Chairman said the draft of the latest Newsletter had been sent to the printer at the end of August, with a number of requests aimed at improving the appearance of the Newsletter. Other parish councils had experienced similar problems in getting the layout right, and delays in distributing their newsletters.

It was gratifying that several members of the public had contacted the Council following publication of the last Newsletter. Priscilla Phillips said how much she had enjoyed reading the latest draft, and thanked the Chairman and Clerk for their efforts. The Chairman reminded Members that volunteers to join the production team would be warmly welcomed.

121/07 VILLAGE WEBSITE

Howard Thomas had asked that this matter be discussed. He thought the Webmaster did a brilliant job but there was no-one to update the site contents when the Webmaster was away from home. Members noted that the site was not the responsibility of the Parish Council, which had simply met some of the initial development costs, and currently supplied information for the Parish Council pages. It was agreed to ask the Webmaster about continuity of site maintenance in his absence.

122/07 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS AND INFORMATION

(i) Vandalism: the Clerk to Kirdford Parish Council had asked for help to discourage vandalism and unruly behaviour. Such problems were not peculiar to Kirdford. Members were sympathetic, and suggested that there might be merit in parishes adopting a joint approach, working with community police officers.

Jane Northam offered to take an interest in police matters on behalf of the Parish Council but regretted that she would be unable to attend the Crime and Disorder Reduction meeting on 13 October. The Clerk would circulate details to all members.

(ii) Other matters of Parish interest: no further points were raised.

(iii) Meetings: the Clerk had recently attended a SALC Clerks' Networking Day and circulated a note of matters discussed. As instructed at the meeting he had put up "No Smoking" signs in the Parish Council's 3 bus shelters.

Members were invited to attend the following meetings:

- County Local Committee, at Midhurst Grammar School, on 10 September
- Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, at Leconfield Hall, Petworth, on 13 October.
- Chichester District Parishes, at East Pallant House, Chichester, on 29 October. 2 representatives were invited from each parish council

123/07 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.

124/07 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 1 October, 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 1 October, the venue to be advised.

There being no further business the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.25 pm.

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

(Signed)

Chairman