

# Minutes 5 November 2007

## LOXWOOD PARISH COUNCIL

An ordinary meeting of Loxwood Parish Council was held at 7.30 pm on Monday 5 November 2007 in St John the Baptist Church Room, Loxwood.

**Present:** Parish Councillors Alison Sanderson (Chairman), Mirus Kuszel, Priscilla Phillips, Scott Taylor and Charlie Whitmarsh.

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

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

### **137/07 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Parish Councillors David Townsend (Vice-Chairman) and Howard Thomas, District Councillor Dr Paul Mackey.

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

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

- He had taken up the matter of the overgrown trees at the corner of Nicholsfield and Station Road with County Highways, as a result of which they had inspected the site.
- The high-visibility fluorescent speed limit signs had now been installed on the main approaches to the Village. The problem of damaged road surfaces was not limited to Loxwood, and he would be visiting the area with Steve Johnson (County Highways Drayton office) to carry out an inspection. Charlie Whitmarsh raised the question of altering local signage to discourage heavy goods and through traffic from using the B2133 through Loxwood. County Highways had been asked some years ago to alter the signage to send traffic along the A29 Billingshurst bypass and A281, but no changes had been made. He would e-mail details of this and other outstanding highways concerns to Chris Dunton.
- Consultation on Fit for the Future (changes to local hospital and health services) would close in mid-November.
- Reorganisation of schools in Midhurst and Petworth and changes to the age of transfer were in prospect.
- Work on the canal crossing at the Onslow Arms could now proceed, all legal and administrative issues having been dealt with.
- In response to a question about possible development at Dunsfold Park, the County Council would take an interest if development affected the County roads network.

The Chairman thanked Chris Dunton for his report.

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

Len Milsom said that possible development at Dunsfold Park would be discussed at a Waverley Planning Forum on 7 November and at a public meeting on 17 November.

A number of leisure activities (quad biking, clay shooting, archery) had been organised on land adjacent to the Indigo Cabinets premises. It was not clear whether these were public or private activities, and whether planning or other consents were necessary.

The Chairman thanked Len Milsom and reconvened the meeting.

## **138/07 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

Scott Taylor declared a prejudicial interest in planning applications **LX/07/04592/FUL & 04593/LBC** (Sir Roger Tichbourne, Loxwood Road, Alfold Bars - Demolition of existing outbuildings. Extension to provide new restaurant and additional kitchen space and associated landscaping), as owner-occupier of a property close to the site.

## **139/07 APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

It was proposed by Charlie Whitmarsh, seconded by Priscilla Phillips and agreed that the minutes were a correct record of the ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on 1 October 2007. The Chairman signed the minutes.

## **140/07 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

**(i) Road closure (minute 131/07(ii)):** the Clerk had asked the Wey & Arun Canal Trust what the current position was on the proposed closure of the B2133 at the Onslow Arms and subsequent restrictions on access. A response was awaited.

**(ii) Parish Action Plan (minute 131/07(iii)):** Members had received a report from Priscilla Phillips and Howard Thomas on progress towards implementing the recommendations of the Plan.

The Chairman said that quite a lot of the matters raised had been considered. Action had been taken to set up a youth club, a major development committee and a village website: to request adult education classes locally: to produce a Parish Council newsletter, install dog waste bins, and assist in developing/publicising community transport schemes. Provision of additional notice boards would be considered later (*minute 144/07 (i) below*). Other local aspirations, such as cycle paths and tree preservation orders, had been taken up with the responsible authorities, who had explained why they did not propose to take them forward.

Traffic remained a major concern, but the Parish Council, through Tim Spence and Charlie Whitmarsh, had been in contact with County Highways for some considerable time, and would continue to press for action.

County Councillor Chris Duncton offered to follow up the question of a local cycle path.

**(iii) Loxwood Preschool (minute 131/07(iii)):** Priscilla Phillips reported on her meeting with a representative of Crawley Council for Voluntary Service (CCVS) to discuss possible relocation of the Preschool. It was now up to the CCVS and Preschool to take matters forward.

**(iv) Flooding survey winter 2007/8 (minute 131/07(iii)):** David Townsend had studied the paperwork about the District Council's survey. In order to assist, there had to be some means for the Parish Council to receive notification of any significant flooding that occurred locally. It was agreed to draft a note for the notice board, Newsletter and Village Website.

**(iv) Fence in Nicholsfield (minute 129/07):** Priscilla Phillips asked how matters stood following refusal of the planning application. The Clerk understood that it was the District Council's responsibility to take the action it deemed appropriate in the circumstances.

## **141/07 CASUAL VACANCIES**

Members regretted that circumstances had obliged Jane Northam and Tim Spence to stand down from the Parish Council.

The Clerk described the procedure for filling the vacancies, either by election or co-option. The Chairman encouraged all present to ask friends and colleagues in the Village to consider standing for the Council.

## 142/07 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/07/04752/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.

**Parish Council – no objections provided that (i) the new dwelling is subject to an agricultural tie and (ii) conditions are attached preventing use and occupation of the converted building as anything other than ancillary accommodation to the main dwelling house.**

**LX/07/04775/DOM** - The Hollies, Loxwood Road, Alfold Bars - Two-storey side extension and first floor rear extension

**Parish Council – objections. Because of its size, scale and massing, and proximity to the southern boundary of the plot, the proposed extension will be overbearing and unneighbourly. Part of it will be visible from the road frontage, to the detriment of the character and appearance of this attractive property.**

**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.

**Parish Council – no objections provided conditions are attached preventing use and occupation of the first floor area of the double garage as anything other than ancillary accommodation to the main dwelling house.**

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

**Parish Council – no objection provided the proposals are acceptable to the listed building officers.**

**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.

The Chairman adjourned proceedings to permit the applicant to explain the detailed changes to the earlier application, for which permission had been granted. The Chairman thanked the applicant and reconvened the meeting.

**Parish Council – concerns that the proposed French windows should be in keeping with the character and appearance of the existing building. The Parish Council will rely on the listed building officers to ensure that all materials and finishes match the existing.**

**LX/07/04592/FUL & 04593/LBC** - Sir Roger Tichbourne, Loxwood Road, Alfold Bars – Demolition of existing outbuildings. Extension to provide new restaurant and additional kitchen space and associated landscaping (*Having earlier declared a prejudicial interest Scott Taylor left the room during consideration of the item*).

**Parish Council – pleased to note that this former pub is to be restored and refurbished to provide an additional local amenity.**

Members also noted recent **determinations:**

**LX/07/03422/DOM** - Russets And Ramblers, Spy Lane - Create new access to Ramblers, Spy Lane and remove shared access rights on Russets, Spy Lane. **PERMITTED**

**LX/07/04240/DOM** - Hunters Rest, Guildford Road - Rear extension. **PERMITTED**

**LX/07/03763/FUL** - Holmbushes Nursery, Roundstreet Common - 1 no. replacement dwelling and triple garage. **PERMITTED**

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

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

**LX/07/04024/DOM** - 8 Nicholsfield - Single storey rear extension. **PERMITTED**

**(ii) Church Cottage, Station Road:** Members noted that the Parish Council has received a further set of amended plans from the developer for the new house adjacent to Church Cottage. The consensus seemed to be that these latest plans were an improvement. The Council had not been invited to comment, the new plans having been supplied as a matter of courtesy.

Charlie Whitmarsh said that the plot for the new house looked small now that the site had been opened up, and the development would be detrimental to the character of this part of the Village.

### **143/07 FINANCIAL MATTERS**

**(i) Financial Report:** Members noted the Parish Council's payments and receipts in October 2007, and summary transactions and account balances at 31 October. It was proposed by Mirus Kuszel, seconded by Charlie Whitmarsh and agreed to approve the total payments of **£904.23**.

**(ii) Requests for financial assistance:** as requested, the Caterpillars Toddler Group had lent their accounts book to the Parish Council, and the Churchwarden had now supplied a copy of Loxwood PCC's income and expenditure accounts for 2005 and 2006.

The Chairman and Clerk had reviewed both organisations' accounts, and reported to Members on the organisations' finances. It was proposed by Priscilla Phillips, seconded by Mirus Kuszel and agreed to make a donation of £600 to the PCC towards the cost of graveyard maintenance, £300 in respect of 2005 and £300 in respect of 2006: and further proposed by Scott Taylor, seconded by Mirus Kuszel and agreed to pay the Caterpillars' rent of North Hall for the period 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008, likely to be around £700.

**(iii) Budget 2008/9:** Members recalled that the Budget Working Group for 2007/8 had consisted of 6 members of the Parish Council. This could have made it difficult for other Council Members subsequently to discuss, or disagree with, the draft budget presented to Council, as a majority of the Council had already agreed on it! Furthermore, as discussed at the last Parish Council meeting, a working group could not take decisions on behalf of a parish council.

The Chairman therefore suggested that it would be more appropriate to have a smaller Group to draft the budget for 2008/9, and to have a discussion on the draft at a full Council meeting. It was then proposed by Charlie Whitmarsh, seconded by Priscilla Phillips and agreed that the Budget Working Group for the 2008/9 budget should consist of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, with the Clerk taking notes. It was also agreed that the Group should meet in the Parish Council office in North Hall.

**(iv) Audit 2006/7:** the Clerk reported that the external audit has been completed. An unqualified certificate had been entered on the Parish Council's Statement of Accounts, which had been displayed on the notice board as required by law.

### **144/07 CORRESPONDENCE**

**(i) Chichester DC Local Character Enhancement Scheme:** Members noted the District Council's grant scheme. It was agreed to consider applying for a grant to buy another notice board for the Village.

**(ii) Anti-social behaviour at North Hall:** the local Police Community Support Officer had contacted the Council about reports of youngsters misbehaving in the North Hall grounds. It was hoped that a Street Briefing would be held in the Village later in the month, at which residents could report their concerns to the Police.

Members were aware that cans and bottles were sometimes left scattered at the North Hall site. The Police had emphasised that all such incidents should be reported, and a suitable article would be drafted for the next issue of the Parish Council Newsletter.

Following Jane Northam's resignation from the Parish Council, it was agreed that Mirus Kuszel would take over the role of Police representative on the Parish Council.

**(iii) Action in Rural Sussex (AiRS):** AiRS' suggestions that community buildings might be used to provide a range of local services were noted. The Clerk supplied a copy to Priscilla Phillips, as the Parish Council's representative on the North Hall Management Committee.

**(iv) Adult Education survey:** the Parish Council's response, based on the Parish Action Plan survey of local demand for adult education classes, had been submitted.

The next meeting of the County Education working group would be held at Midhurst on 22 November. The Clerk would copy details to any Members wishing to attend.

#### **145/07 RECREATION GROUNDS, HEDGES, TREES, OPEN SPACES**

**(i) Land in Station Road:** the Chairman reported that the landowners had responded to the Parish Council's queries, and were anxious to bring matters to a conclusion. The Council was being offered the site at a nominal price. Legal fees would be in the region of £500 and initial clearance and annual maintenance thereafter would cost around £800. If the Council did resolve to buy the site, it could, for example, provide a new notice board and public seating there.

Members agreed in principle that the Council should acquire the land, and it was proposed by Charlie Whitmarsh, seconded by Scott Taylor and agreed that the Parish Council should purchase the land and ask the current landowner either to clear the overgrown site, or to pay towards the cost of having the land cleared, which would be in the region of £550.

Priscilla Phillips reminded the Council that there was limited visibility for pedestrians crossing Station Road at the point where the footpath across the site joined the highway. A dropped kerb had been installed, presumably by County Highways, and it was agreed to raise with them the question of road safety and public liability.

**(ii) Playground:** the tendering process for new safety surfacing and repairs to the equipment was still in progress. Three contractors had attended site meetings with the Chairman and Clerk, and one quotation had been received.

**(iii) Highways:** County Highways Accident Investigation Team had told Tim Spence that the accident rate was not sufficiently serious to warrant installing flashing speed signs in the Village, the only possible exception being at Vicarage Hill on the approach to the 30 mph limit. The Police had said little could be done in Loxwood due to the low number of recorded accidents.

Charlie Whitmarsh would pursue the various outstanding highways issues with County Councillor Chris Duncton.

**(iv) Dog fouling:** Member noted Howard Thomas's proposals for combating the problem of dog fouling.

After the matter was raised at the last Parish Council meeting, the Clerk had contacted the Dog Warden at Chichester District Council. He had visited the Village again and was considering putting up more signs and doing a leaflet drop around the area where dog fouling was reported to be a particular problem. Another article would be placed in the next issue of the Newsletter.

Members suggested that new dog waste bins could be installed at Brewhurst Bridge and in Merryhills Lane. The Clerk would seek prices for installation and emptying.

**(v) Other matters:** County Highways had inspected the trees on the corner of Station Road and Nicholsfield. As the trees were not growing on publicly maintainable highway, County Highways did not propose to attend to them. They suggested that the trees were the responsibility of the District Council or Martlet Homes or the residents of Pond Cottage. They intended to contact the last named, asking them to cut back the trees. The Clerk would try to ascertain who owned the land, and contact Martlet Homes again, should it prove to be their responsibility.

#### **146/07 PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER**

The Chairman said there had been a good response to the Council's request for information about other parish councils' newsletters. The problems experienced by the Parish Council were not uncommon. Local residents had commented very favourably on the Newsletter and it was important to maintain publication. Other means of production were being investigated, and a report would be made to Council when information was available.

Charlie Whitmarsh reported that his company had recently printed some 1500 leaflets at a cost of £320.

It was agreed to ask North Hall Management Committee to approve a draft note for the Newsletter outlining the problems associated with the Hall, and asking for voluntary help to maintain the Hall.

### **147/07 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS AND INFORMATION**

**(i) Members' questions:** no matters were raised.

**(ii) Meetings attended:** the Chairman, Mirus Kuszel, Priscilla Phillips, Scott Taylor and the Clerk had attended the AGM of the North Hall Management Committee (NHMC) on 16 October. The Clerk had supplied the Committee with details of consultants/surveyors who might be able to help with a survey of the Hall, and it was understood that the NHMC would discuss the matter at its meeting on 12 November.

**(ii) Forthcoming meetings:** the next meeting of the North East Parishes Forum would be held at Bury on 6 December.

### **148/07 ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA**

No matters were raised.

### **149/07 DATES OF FUTURE PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS**

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

There being no further business the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.15 pm.

*(Following the close of the meeting, Scott Taylor confirmed that he was willing to take over the role of Parish Tree Warden)*

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

(Signed)

Chairman