

Minutes 9 January 2007

LOXWOOD PARISH COUNCIL

An ordinary meeting of Loxwood Parish Council was held at 7.30 pm on Tuesday 9 January 2007 in St John the Baptist Church Room, Loxwood.

Present: Parish Councillors John Andrews (Chairman), Priscilla Phillips (Vice-Chairman), Mary Ringrose, Alison Sanderson, David Townsend, Charlie Whitmarsh, Peter Winney.

Also in attendance: Peter Evans (Parish Clerk), County Councillor Peter Moffatt.

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

1/07 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Parish Councillor Tim Spence, District Councillor Brian Hooton.

ADJOURNMENT:

Proceedings were adjourned.

- QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Len Milsom suggested that the previous meeting's minutes contained inadequate detail of the County Councillor's report. The Chairman said the minutes were an accurate précis.

- COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

County Councillor Peter Moffatt spoke about possible changes to local health services and consultation thereon: and moves towards closer working arrangements between the County and District Councils in West Sussex.

The meeting reconvened.

2/07 CO-OPTION OF NEW PARISH COUNCILLOR

The Clerk reported that only one individual had expressed an interest in standing for co-option, and further details were awaited from him. There had been no further response to local advertisements or to the Parish Magazine note. If the vacancy were not filled at the February meeting, there seemed little point in continuing to try to co-opt a new Member, as he/she would hold office only until full Parish Council elections on 3 May.

3/07 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL & AMENDMENTS TO REGISTER OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

The Clerk gave all Parish Councillors a copy of a note from the District Solicitor about prejudicial interests in development matters and a story from "Clerks and Councils Direct" about a parish council chairman who had fallen foul of the Code of Conduct for failing to declare an interest in a planning application.

Peter Winney declared a prejudicial interest in **Agenda item 9 – Community Transport (minute 9/07)** as a volunteer driver for Billingshurst Community Transport.

Members were reminded that they should declare interests at any stage during the meeting if it became apparent that this might be required when a particular item or issue was due to be discussed.

4/07 APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was proposed by Peter Winney, seconded by the Chairman and agreed that the minutes were a correct record of the ordinary Parish Council meeting held on 5 December 2006. The Chairman signed the minutes.

5/07 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(a) Highways (minute 183/06(a)): this matter was considered under Agenda item 7 (minute 7/07 below)

(b) Wey & Arun Canal Trust (minute 183/06(b)): the Chairman reported on the informal meeting at which members of the Trust had updated Members on the canal crossing. The Chairman had written to thank the Trust for their hospitality.

(c) County Local Committee Street scene paper (minute 183/06(c)): Members discussed David Townsend's draft response, and agreed that the principal local concerns were dog fouling, litter and maintenance of pavements and grassed areas.

It was proposed by Alison Sanderson, seconded by Mary Ringrose and agreed to respond to the County Council accordingly.

(d) Former flower shop, High Street (minute 183/06(d)): District Council Planning Officers thought that approval was necessary for the change of use of part of the premises from retail to office. They would follow up.

(e) Loxwood Village Website (minutes 188/06): Priscilla Phillips was surprised that her concerns about the Village website had been discussed in an exchange of e-mails between a Parish Councillor and the Webmaster prior to the December Parish Council meeting. Furthermore, she felt that she had been referred to in derogatory terms in the e-mails.

She had intended that the Council should raise her concerns with the Webmaster following discussion at the December meeting, but the Councillor in question appeared to have taken a view on the matters she had raised before the Council had an opportunity to discuss them.

The Chairman clarified that he had indeed been in contact with the Webmaster before the December meeting to ascertain whether or not Priscilla's concerns about accessing the website had been expressed more widely. Peter Winney said he was not aware that the matter had been sorted out prior to the meeting.

6/07 PARISH NEWSLETTER

The Clerk reported that the first issue of the Parish Council newsletter would be published in the first week of March. The printers required editorial material by 19 February.

Members considered inviting local organisations to contribute material. The Chairman said that Hugh Beadle had already produced a note about the Village website, and someone would need to contact other outside bodies for contributions to the newsletter. Mary Ringrose would speak to the local police and Women's Institute: Priscilla Phillips would make enquiries at the

School: the Chairman would ask staff at the health centre and the Canal Trust: and Peter Winney would ask the Loxwood Society for a contribution. The Chairman asked if North Hall users should also be invited to contribute. Alison Sanderson noted that the Parish Council was rather pushed for time, the printers' 19 February deadline being only 6 weeks away.

The meeting was then adjourned to permit Len Milsom to ask if and how the question of development at Dunsfold Park would be covered in the newsletter. The Chairman replied that the Parish Council would comment as and when appropriate. The meeting was reconvened.

The Chairman asked for volunteers to draft and edit material. A Working Group was formed of the Chairman, Peter Winney and the Clerk. The Chairman said the Group would need to meet twice before the February Parish Council meeting to produce a draft for Members' consideration. Peter Winney offered to write some material and Charlie Whitmarsh would write a note about highways matters. The Clerk would circulate copies of similar newsletters, for information.

7/07 HIGHWAYS MATTERS

(a) Meeting with County Highways: Charlie Whitmarsh reported on a useful site meeting with Brian Smith from County Highways. Numerous problem areas had been inspected in a tour of the Parish and concerns expressed about the generally poor standard of some local roads and the standard of contractors' work on drains and reinstatements. Some repairs were purely temporary, and would wash out with rain and frost: some roads needed planing off and replacement of the top course.

Brian would write to the Parish Council to advise what action would be taken following the meeting. A number of repairs had already been carried out. Peter Moffatt pointed out that the County Council received insufficient central government grant to allow it to carry out all necessary highways work.

Peter said he was due to go into hospital shortly and would be convalescing for 2 or 3 months. Members wished him a speedy recovery.

(b) Rights of way improvement plan: David Townsend had reviewed the draft plan and felt there was little that the Parish Council could usefully say. It was, however, agreed to press for improvements to the surface of the Loxwood/Ifold right of way (minute **13/07(d)** below refers)

8/07 PLANNING MATTERS

(a) Members considered and commented on the following **new applications** affecting the Parish:

LX/06/05352/FUL – Oakwood Farm, Drungewick Lane - Alteration to original access drive and additional landscaping.

Parish Council – no objection.

LX/06/05881/TPA – Casterbridge, High Street - Reduce eastern sector by 2-3m on 1 no. Ash tree (T1) subject to TPO/6/LX.

Parish Council - no objection provided conditions are attached requiring surgery to be carried out at the appropriate time and under the supervision of the Tree Officer.

Members noted recent **District Council decisions:**

LX/06/04837/FUL - Unit 3, Loxwood Chase Stables, Guildford Road - erection of detached outbuilding to be used as stable/carport/oil store (following demolition of existing stable).

PERMITTED

LX/06/4880/FUL – Holmbushes, Roundstreet Common - new hard tennis court (34 X 17m) with painted macadam surface. PVC coated chainlink fencing enclosure 2.75m high.

PERMITTED

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

REFUSED – would be over-dominant and detract from character of original house. Unacceptable impact on character and appearance of surrounding rural area.

LX/06/05263/DOM - Oak Grove Cottage, Spy Lane - change of use and alteration of existing loft space into fourth bedroom and en-suite bathroom with additional staircase.

PERMITTED

The Council had been invited to visit a property which was the subject of a forthcoming planning application. Members declined the invitation, noting that the Clerk had invited the applicant to attend the Parish Council meeting at which his application would be considered.

(b) Local Development Framework: Members noted that the Delivering Development Opportunities (DDO) document would be discussed at the District Council's annual meeting with parishes on 25 January. The District Council would also hold an "informal consultation" on the DDO in the North Hall on 30 January. The Chairman and Priscilla Phillips hoped to attend the District Council's meeting. It was agreed to publicise the informal consultation on the Village website.

A lengthy discussion ensued on the various sites already considered in connection with the LDF process and the Parish Council's previous consultation with the Village. It was not thought necessary to reconvene the Major Development and Infrastructure Advisory sub-Committee but to restate the views expressed by the Council in its submission of June 2006, amended to take account of the DDO document. The Chairman would bring a redraft to the February meeting of the Parish Council.

Mary Ringrose was unhappy with this approach, feeling that it would cause problems. The Chairman invited all Members to submit written comments to him to assist in his redraft.

Following consideration of the item Alison Sanderson left the meeting at 9.25 pm.

9/07COMMUNITYTRANSPORT

Members had before them a note from Billingshurst Community Transport responding to the concerns they had expressed at the previous Parish Council meeting (minute 184/06 refers).

The Chairman said the two principal issues were the likely demand for the service and the need for volunteer drivers from the Parish: a suitable article could be placed in the forthcoming Parish Council newsletter. Peter Winney emphasised that there was no intention or wish to upset any existing community transport arrangements. Priscilla Phillips said the existing scheme was desperately short of drivers and transport was provided only in cases of sickness or disability. The managers of the existing scheme were happy to work with Billingshurst Community Transport.

It was agreed that Peter Winney would liaise with Richard Vause, representing the existing scheme and report back.

10/07 POLICE LIAISON

A copy of a letter from another parish council, asking the local police to improve contacts with local youngsters, had been circulated with the Agenda. The Chairman supported the views expressed in the letter, noting that this approach should reduce the problems associated with youngsters congregating in the centre of the Village.

Mary Ringrose pointed out that such problems occurred around North Hall rather than in the Village centre. Loxwood's local police were trained in youth matters, and she would raise the point with the local policeman when next in the Village.

11/07 FINANCIAL MATTERS

(a) Accounts and payments: the Clerk reported the Parish Council's payments in December 2006, and the current balances, details of which had been circulated at the start of the meeting. It was proposed by Peter Winney, seconded by David Townsend and agreed to approve the payments as listed, totalling £802.34.

(b) Applications for financial assistance: Members considered applications from Chichester Citizens' Advice Bureau and West Sussex Rural Mobile Youth Trust

It was noted that local residents visited the CAB office in Cranleigh rather than in Chichester. It was therefore agreed not to make a grant to the Chichester office.

The Chairman reported that the local youth club had closed through lack of helpers. It was agreed to ask the West Sussex Rural Mobile Youth Trust *inter alia* when they might visit Loxwood with the Purple Bus mobile youth facility, making use of equipment purchased by the Parish Council, and to reconsider their application for a grant in the light of their reply.

12/07 CORRESPONDENCE

Members noted recent correspondence, details of which had been circulated prior to the meeting.

13/07 RECREATION GROUNDS, HEDGES, TREES, OPEN SPACES

(a) Children's playground: the contractors were due to start on the repairs on Wednesday 10 January. The Clerk had asked the District Council if it could provide financial and practical assistance with refurbishment and new safety surfacing.

(b) Mobile skatepark: Members noted the suggestion that the District Council purchase a mobile skatepark for hire by parish councils. Peter Winney said the capital cost of the skatepark would be £16,000 and it might cost £1,200 a day to hire. It was agreed to ask the District Council for details of costs, supervision etc at the Westgate Centre skatepark.

Should the Parish Council wish to hire a mobile skatepark, the North Hall Management Committee would not allow it to be sited in any part of the Hall grounds.

(c) Footpath diversion: the Clerk reported confirmation of a minor diversion of footpath 811, south of Oakhurst Farm

(d) Other matters: the Clerk reported that Plaistow & Ifold Parish Council would support the Parish Council in its attempts to improve the right of way from Loxwood Post Office west to Ifold. It was agreed to ask the County Council to improve the surface by rolling in crushed stone.

Charlie Whitmarsh said that the footpath alongside the canal needed reinstatement. Mary Ringrose reported that the kissing gate at Devil's Hole needed repair. The Clerk would contact the County Council.

The Chairman had bought a large-scale Village map for the Tree Warden to record trees which the Parish Council was responsible for maintaining.

Peter Winney said one of the hedges he had identified as needing cutting back had been attended to.

14/07COUNCILLORS' ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS AND SEMINARS

The Clerk and Chairman circulated a report on the meeting of the North East Parishes Forum on 7 December.

Members were reminded of the District Council's Annual Parishes Meeting on 25 January, at which the DDO document would be discussed, and the "informal consultation" in North Hall on 30 January.

Priscilla Phillips said there had been no meeting of the North Hall Management Committee to report.

Sussex Association of Local Councils (SALC) was holding a training weekend at Midhurst on 9 – 11 February. The Chairman was concerned that insufficient details had been provided of the course content. The Clerk would contact SALC.

Following consideration of the item Priscilla Phillips and Peter Winney left the meeting at 9.59 pm.

15/07MEMBERS' QUESTIONS AND INFORMATION

The Chairman circulated a note of his activities other than those covered by substantive Agenda items.

16/07ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

No further matters were raised.

17/07DATES OF FUTURE PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

Members noted the dates of ordinary meetings of the Parish Council - 6 February 2007, 27 February, 3 April, 8 May (Annual Parish Council Meeting).

The Annual Parish Meeting had been rearranged for 28 March.

There being no further business the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 10.03 pm.

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

(Signed)

Chairman