

Minutes 7 January 2008

LOXWOOD PARISH COUNCIL

An ordinary meeting of Loxwood Parish Council was held at 7.30 pm on Monday 7 January 2008 in St John the Baptist Church Room, Loxwood.

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

Also in attendance: County Councillor Chris Duncton, PC Phil Hanlon, Peter Evans (Parish Clerk), 3 members of the public.

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

1/08 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

ADJOURNMENT: COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

The Chairman adjourned proceedings. She thanked County Councillor Chris Duncton for attending the extraordinary Parish Council meeting at which the Hall House Farm planning application had been considered, and invited him to address the meeting.

Chris Duncton noted that the drawbacks to the Hall House Farm application had been thoroughly aired at the extraordinary meeting. Development might, however, lead to increased numbers at the School and growing trade in village shops.

Construction of the canal crossing at the Onslow Arms was a short-term inconvenience but would be a long-term asset. He would pursue the question of alterations to signage to divert HGV's away from the B2133 through the village and along the A29.

The Chairman thanked Chris Duncton for his report.

ADJOURNMENT: POLICE REPORT

The Chairman invited PC Phil Hanlon to address the meeting:

PC Hanlon spoke about the organisation of local Police resources. He had responded to reports of anti-social behaviour at North Hall and at the surgery, and stressed the importance of reporting all such incidents. E-mail reports should be sent to the Inspector at Chichester.

Some parish councils had set up committees to organise Speedwatch schemes. County Highways could advise on installation of street furniture for traffic calming.

Damaged and dirty highways, and road safety concerns arising therefrom, should be reported to County Highways.

The Chairman thanked PC Hanlon for his report.

ADJOURNMENT: QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Len Milsom reported a healthy attendance at a special meeting of the Loxwood Society held to discuss the Hall House Farm planning application. Local residents had objected to the application, as they had at the earlier extraordinary Parish Council meeting.

The Clerk would ascertain the date of the District Council Planning Committee meeting at which the application was to be considered, and the rules governing public speaking at the meeting. The Parish Council would consider at its February meeting whether or not it wished to be represented at the meeting.

The Chairman thanked Len Milsom and reconvened the meeting.

2/08 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

Mirus Kuszel declared a prejudicial interest in planning application **LX/07/05877/FUL** - Cranfield Cottage, Pond Copse Lane - as owner-occupier of a property backing on to Pond Copse Lane, in close proximity to the application site.

3/08 CO-OPTION TO THE COUNCIL

The Chairman introduced Elizabeth Dugdale, candidate for co-option. A second candidate had withdrawn prior to the meeting. It was proposed by Howard Thomas, seconded by David Townsend and agreed to co-opt Elizabeth Dugdale to membership of the Parish Council. Elizabeth signed her Declaration of Acceptance of Office and joined the meeting.

4/08 APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

It was proposed by Howard Thomas, seconded by David Townsend and agreed that the minutes were a correct record of the ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on 3 December 2007. The Chairman signed the minutes.

It was then proposed by Scott Taylor, seconded by Howard Thomas and agreed that the minutes were a correct record of the extraordinary Parish Council Meeting held on 20 December 2007. The Chairman signed the minutes.

5/08 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(i) Members allowances: the Executive Officer of the Sussex Association of Local Councils had explained that the Parish Basic Allowance was only available to councillors who had stood for election and not those co-opted subsequently. Parish councils had absolute discretion as to the amount paid to the Chairman as an allowance. What the Chairman chose to do with the allowance was entirely his/her choice.

This confirmed the Parish Council's understanding of the position, and the basis on which Members' allowances had been included in the budget for 2008/9.

(ii) Land in Station Road: Members noted that the Council's solicitors had been instructed to proceed with the acquisition of the land.

According to County Highways the footpath across the site would become publicly maintainable highway when the County Council adopted it. The Clerk had asked when this was likely to happen, and it was assumed that the Parish Council's solicitors would pursue the point as part of their searches.

6/08 PLANNING MATTERS

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

LX/07/05949/LBC & LX/07/05987/DOM - Oakhurst Cottage, Oakhurst Lane - Revision to approved scheme (LX/07/03540/DOM and LX/07/03545/LBC) to include dormer window instead of rooflight on extension. Raising of ridge height on new link.

Parish Council comments- no objection to the dormer but objections to raising the ridge height. The Council objected to the ridge height in an earlier application and was pleased when the height was subsequently reduced. The Council sees no justification for raising it again.

LX/07/05877/FUL - Cranfield Cottage, Pond Copse Lane - Replacement of existing with new house and garage

Having earlier declared a prejudicial interest in the application, Mirus Kuszel expressed concern at the size of the proposed new house, its position, and adverse impact on neighbours' privacy. He then left the room.

Parish Council comments – objections. The scale and bulk of the proposed house, replacing a single-storey dwelling, will be out of keeping and out of character with this pleasant semi-rural lane. The style of the house is inappropriate and unattractive, and out of sympathy with its surroundings, contrary to the recommendations of the Village Design Statement. The proposed new house will stand forward of the building line, setting a precedent for later development, the cumulative effect of which will be to change irrevocably the character and appearance of the area.

Mirus Kuszel rejoined the meeting.

LX/07/05974/DOM & 05977/LBC – Lunns, Roundstreet Common - Replacement of existing conservatory

Parish Council comments - no objection.

Members also noted recent **determinations**:

LX/07/04592/FUL - Sir Roger Tichbourne, Loxwood Road, Alfold Bars - Demolition of existing outbuildings. Extension to provide new restaurant and additional kitchen space and associated landscaping.

PERMITTED

LX/07/04593/LBC - Sir Roger Tichbourne, Loxwood Road, Alfold Bars - Demolition of existing outbuildings. Extension to provide new restaurant and additional kitchen space and associated landscaping.

DEFER FOR S OF S REFERRAL THEN PERMIT

(This application for listed building consent is recommended by the Planning officers for approval but has been referred to the Secretary of State)

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.

PERMITTED

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

PERMITTED

and an appeal against District Council refusal to grant planning permission:

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

7/08 FINANCIAL MATTERS

(i) Financial Report: the Clerk reported the Parish Council's payments and receipts in December 2007, and summary transactions and account balances at 31 December. It was proposed by Priscilla Phillips, seconded by Charlie Whitmarsh and agreed to approve the total payments of **£1831.29**.

(ii) Applications for financial assistance: Members considered applications from Alfold and Loxwood Parish Magazine and from Chichester Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) for financial assistance.

It was agreed to ask for sight of a copy of the Magazine accounts before considering the application in detail.

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.

8/08 CORRESPONDENCE

(i) Greening Campaign: Members noted the District Council's invitation to be one of 5 communities in the District to be part of a Greening Campaign. It was agreed to publicise this on the website and on the notice board.

(ii) County Planning Consultation: the Clerk would respond to the questionnaire on the performance of the County Planning Department and the Parish Council's experience of dealing with the Department.

(iii) Local planning concerns: further correspondence had been received from local residents about quad biking and other activities in the Parish. The District Council had responded to a local individual who had reported his concerns to them, but they had not replied to the Parish Council's communications. It was agreed to follow the matter up with the District Council.

The Clerk would also report difficulties in downloading planning decision notices from the District Council's website.

9/08 RECREATION GROUNDS, HEDGES, TREES, OPEN SPACES

(i) Trees at Nicholsfield/ Station Road: following a site meeting with the Chairman and Clerk, Martlet Homes had accepted responsibility for management and maintenance of the trees. Their contractors would carry out the necessary surgery by mid-March.

(ii) New notice board: of the three designs suggested, Members favoured the man-made timber model by Greenbarns Ltd, which provided 2 lockable display boards and a central bay for a map of the Village. The cost would be around £1,400, but it was hoped that up to half of this might be covered under the District Council's grants scheme.

Fears were expressed that a new board might become a target for vandals, and some Members wondered whether the proposed site in Station Road was the most suitable. It was agreed to consider other possible sites, including the grassed area at the corner of Nicholsfield and Station Road, and adjacent to the bus shelter at the Post Office.

(iii) Playground in North Hall grounds: the Chairman reported that the tenders received for installing rubber safety surfacing were in the region of £30,000/£40,000. To repair the play equipment and to provide new woodchip safety surfacing would cost less than £3,000.

In view of the continuing uncertainty over the future of North Hall (possible rebuild, extensions, refurbishment), Members agreed that it made more sense to renew the wood chip surface and do the repairs than spend large sums on rubber safety surfacing. It was therefore proposed by David Townsend, seconded by Charlie Whitmarsh and agreed to accept the quotation for renewal of wood chip and repairs to the play equipment, and to request grant aid from the District Council.

(iv) Play seminar: Members noted an invitation from Play England to attend a seminar in Guildford on 22 January on the Risk In Play Dilemma. Priscilla Phillips thought she might be able to attend.

(v) **Dog fouling:** the Dog Warden had again been asked to provide assistance to mitigate the problem. He had suggested prosecuting persistent and blatant offenders, but this would require witness statements. He would send the Council some written material which might be useful.

(vi) **Chapel playing field, Spy Lane:** the Council's Recreation and Leisure Working Group had thought that this site might be suitable for recreation and leisure use in the Village, and had approached the Chapel authorities. However, the owners had no plans at present either to sell or rent the playing field.

(vii) **Other matters:** it was agreed to repair the damaged bus shelter in Vicarage Hill.

It was agreed to put notices on the notice board and on the website encouraging local residents to cut back trees and shrubs overhanging public footpaths and obscuring sightlines. There will also be a reminder in the March newsletter, even though it was a little late for pruning due to the potential of nests.

10/08 HIGHWAYS

(i) **Speedwatch:** the Chairman reported Inspector Jim Bartlett's response to the Council's enquiry about the scheme. His preferred plan was not to adopt the Community Speed Watch scheme but to purchase and deploy Speed Indication Devices (SIDs), which would be placed at sites across the district where speeding concerns had been raised. As and when necessary, police officers could be deployed to conduct police enforcement. The police were seeking to purchase a small number of SIDs and had already purchased a speed detection device.

Inspector Bartlett would be encouraging parish groups who wished to support the scheme to purchase SIDs, as a collective, to increase the visible deterrent in the district.

(iii) **Other highways matters:** some 30 mph repeater signs in the Village needed cleaning, as did the speed limit signs south of Alfold Village. The Clerk would contact the appropriate authorities.

11/08 ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2008

The Annual Parish Meeting would be held in North Hall on 15 April 2008, starting at 7.30. Local groups would be invited to provide a display about their activities, rather than making a formal report during the meeting.

It was intended to invite the County and District Council Chairmen, the Rector, Headteacher and representatives of local groups and organisations. Members were asked to inform the Clerk of any other individuals or organisations who should be invited.

12/08 PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

The Chairman noted that the current production arrangements were unsatisfactory. Copy was added or removed without reference to the Council, advertisements and flyers were outside the Council's control, distribution was consistently late and the Council had now been presented with a bill for £170 for printing unwanted extra pages.

Informal enquiries indicated that the Newsletter would be produced more satisfactorily if the Parish Council made its own arrangements with a printer and took control of the Newsletter's format, content and distribution. Members recalled that the 2008/9 budget provided £3,550 for production of the newsletter. Preliminary costings, based on prices quoted by the District Council's Print Unit, suggested that this was more than sufficient to meet future costs.

It was then proposed by Howard Thomas, seconded by Sacha Pawley and agreed that the Chairman and Clerk should agree terms with the printer within the budget. The question of advertising would be considered at a later date.

13/08 VILLAGE FUN DAY

Priscilla Phillips said it was not feasible to organise such an event this year but it might be possible to arrange a Fun Day in 2009. Representatives from local groups would have to take on the organisation of the event, and its impact on other Village events needed to be considered.

Howard Thomas noted that a number of similar events were already held in the Village, and questioned if another event could be organised successfully.

The Chairman thought there might be duplication of effort and Sacha Pawley asked if similar events had been held successfully elsewhere. Priscilla Phillips said Chichester Council for Voluntary Service, which had helped organise such events in other villages, had promoted the idea. It was agreed to await developments.

Other events were suggested as a means of fostering community spirit, such as a local business forum, and arts and crafts exhibition. The Parish Council could help, for example, by paying for the hire of North Hall.

14/08 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS, INFORMATION AND MEETINGS

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

(ii) Meetings: the Clerk had attended a meeting of the North East Chichester Parishes Forum at Bury on 6 December, at which the District Council's budget and the inadequacy of the government grant settlement had been discussed.

Members were reminded that the Petworth Sub-District of Parish Councils would meet in North Hall on 13 February.

Priscilla Phillips hoped to attend a Vibrant Villages meeting in Chichester on 13 February.

15/08 ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

It was agreed to discuss quad biking and other outdoor activities as a substantive agenda item at the February meeting.

16/08 DATES OF FUTURE PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

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

There being no further business the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.13 pm.

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

(Signed)

Chairman