

ALCONBURY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting held on Tuesday 26th April 2005 in the New Memorial Hall

Present:

Mrs. Watkin (Chair), Mrs Adams, Mr Brown, Mr Dawson, Mrs Dyer, Mrs Elphick, Mr Senior, Mr Vanbergen and Mrs Williams.

District Councillor Mrs. Sarah Vanbergen. Mrs Lancey (Clerk). No members of the public.

Public Forum:

As no members of the public were present, there was no public forum.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Mrs Turner.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 29th March 2005

The Minutes of the previous meeting were approved and signed.

3. Committee Reports

a) Clerk's infrastructure Report

Churchyard: Clerk reported that a Safety Audit of gravestones was to be carried out and the Churchwarden would report back to the Parish Council.

Village Green: The Clerk reported that as agreed at the last meeting letters concerning the unauthorised tree pruning had been sent to all residents whose properties surrounded the Brook and a letter had also been sent to HDC. As yet no reply had been received from HDC. Notices had also been displayed to attempt to stop horse riding on the green as this was causing problems for the grass cutters.

Mrs. Watkin said that she had received a strong complaint from one resident who considered that the Parish Council did not keep the green in good order. It was agreed that one tree in particular needed some attention. Clerk to contact Peter Rowlings.

The Clerk reported on correspondence from another resident from Brookside who had bitterly complained about the standard of grass cutting on the green and in particular the amount of debris left on footpaths after a cut. It was acknowledged that this was a very common problem but the Clerk agreed to meet with Fergusons to discuss the issue. It was also agreed that the Clerk should include these issues in the forthcoming article for the Parish Pump. Concurrently, another resident had congratulated the Parish Council on how neatly the green was maintained. The same Brookside resident had also complained about the new signs asking residents to keep their dogs on leads on the Sports & Social Club playing fields and requesting details of costs incurred by the Parish Council. The matter was discussed at some length and it was agreed that as the land belonged to the Parish Council it was their responsibility to attempt to keep the area as free as possible from uncontrolled dogs so helping to keep dog fouling to a minimum. This was felt to be especially important on the playing fields which were used by many children and adults. It was appreciated that without creating a special by-law, control of dogs in the area was unenforceable. The resident had also enquired as to whether a rough piece of land could be fenced off in order that owners might let their dogs off the lead. This was considered, but it was felt that it might only encourage dog fouling which would not be cleaned up. Clerk to respond to resident accordingly supplying all information requested.

The Clerk reported that new waste bins had been sited on the village green which hopefully might encourage more people to clean up after their dogs.

General:

The Clerk reported that the overgrown hedge outside 26 Spinney Lane had been cut back. Two stiles in need of repair were reported, one in Frummety Lane and the other across the field off the Great North Road behind Sycamore Farm. Clerk to report to Rights of Way Officer. Maypole Bridge over the Brook in the paddock behind the vicarage was also in need of repair. The Clerk had already reported this to the Environment Agency. Councillors felt that some road signs that were attached to dwellings were in need of replacement, in particular in the Maltings and Bell Lane. Clerk explained that there was an exercise currently being undertaken by HDC to survey existing name plates. She would report these two cases, along with the sign in need of attention at the bottom of Spinney Lane accordingly. Mr Senior enquired whether more sand bags could be obtained. The Clerk would check with HDC on availability.

b) Planning

New Applications:

0500817FUL - Extension to Dwelling - 19 Maple End - No observations

0500963FUL - Extension to Dwelling - 46 Manor Lane - No observations

The following applications are all in respect of variation of condition 1 of permission to extend time limits until 31/12/08 of temporary use of land and buildings at Alconbury Airfield (ADL):

0500976S73 - vehicle storage, admin., workshop, valeting & smart repairs

0500978S73 - polytunnels for finishing vehicles

0500979S73 - police and military training (including driving)

0500980S73 - military bomb storage to fireworks storage

0500982S73 - workshops, printshops, valeting, repairs & vehicle storage

0500983S73 - youth driver training programmes

0500984S73 - light industrial and storage

0500985S73 - light industrial and storage

There were no observations on the above applications.

Applications Determined:

0500729FUL - Erection of Conservatory – 12 Coulson Way - Permission Granted

0500789FUL - Erection of conservatory - 15 Coulson Way - Permission Granted

0402500FUL - Erection of 2 dwelling - land adjacent 3 Mill Road - Permission Refused.

The Clerk explained that this refusal was because the development was reliant upon the completion of flood compensation works carried out by the Environment Agency.

0403704FUL – Erection of replacement agricultural dwelling – Home Farm, Rusts Lane – Permission Refused. The Clerk reported that this refusal was on several grounds: it was not regarded as a replacement dwelling, it would not be in accord with the Local Plan, it would not relate sensitively to the local environment, it would be harmful to the setting of Alconbury House and it had not been demonstrated that the existing dwelling was unsound and beyond repair.

The Appeal by Admiral Windows & Conservatories Ltd. had been dismissed.

A questionnaire had been received from HDC asking the Parish Council whether they wished to continue being consulted on plan making and planning applications and asking for details on how they would best like to receive planning information. It was agreed that it

was most important to continue to be involved as much as possible in all aspects of planning and that this would become even more important should any further development take place on Alconbury Airfield. Mr Vanbergen completed the questionnaire accordingly. Clerk to return to HDC. As the next CALC Liaison Meeting with HDC on 26th May would be discussing planning issues, it was agreed that on this occasion Mr Vanbergen should accompany Mrs. Dyer.

c) Bramble End Playground

Mr Senior reported that he had made enquiries about 'wet pour' which was a kind of springy tarmac for the play areas beneath the helicopter and the swings at Bramble End. This material was in the region of £35 per sq. mtr so would be considerably cheaper than the quotation from Wickstead Leisure. He would continue to pursue. Mrs Vanbergen had arranged for a Grant Aid Pack to be sent from HDC which could potentially offer grants up to £25,000 or 33% of the total cost, whichever is the lower amount. The Clerk also confirmed that she had spoken to the ASSC concerning the pledged £13,540 of Section 106 money requesting that an update on the proposed expansion be received before the Parish Council's AGM. It was considered that should this money not be spent at the ASSC, it might be put towards the development of Bramble End. Clerk to pursue. Mrs Watkin also reported that the Americans, keen to promote community relations, had helped Alconbury Weston with the clearance of their play area and it was hoped they might be in a position to also help Alconbury should the need arise.

4. Matters Arising

Minster/Axiom Housing Association Properties

Following the complaints made at the last Parish Council meeting, the Clerk confirmed that PC Dave Lofting together with the PCSOs had been involved in this area. Mr. Senior had also visited Mrs. Keys. Both the Clerk and PC Lofting had written to both Housing Associations and they had undertaken to contact all the residents reminding them in the strongest terms possible of their responsibilities as tenants. The Clerk also reported that CCC had informed her that enquiries had revealed that there would be significant costs involved in a possible path closure by way of diverting public utilities equipment. Anyone using the footpath would also have a right to challenge any stopping order in the Magistrates Court. The Parish Council felt that it was best to await the outcome of the Housing Association contact with tenants before making any further decisions in this matter and that closure of the path was not the best way forward.

RAF Molesworth Liaison Meeting

Mrs Watkin had attended the recent meeting on behalf of Mrs. Dyer. She reported that many of the topics discussed did not seem very relevant to RAF Molesworth. She had complained forcibly about the American traffic passing through the village but felt little help to be forthcoming. It was agreed that the Clerk should contact HDC to see if signs to stop through traffic could be improved and to ascertain whether any statistics needed to be collected in order for any action to be taken by Highways. Mrs. Dyer would continue to represent the Parish Council at liaison meetings.

Flood Forum

This had been changed from 21st April to 9th June due to the timing of the General Election. Mrs. Watkin to attend.

The Old Memorial Hall Site

Mrs. Watkin informed Councillors that the land had now been sold for a sum of £88,750

and that the buyer had grown up in the village. It was possible that he might try and change the plans from a 2 bedroom to a 3 bedroom cottage. It still remained for the old charity to be closed down.

Clerk's Contract of Employment

Mrs Watkin had circulated a draft Clerk's Contract of Employment to Councillors, which was acceptable. It was decided to leave the question of annual appraisals until the next meeting when a small group to discuss such items might be set up.

Nominations for Post of Chair

The Clerk reminded the meeting that under the ruling that a Chair should not stand for more than 3 years, Mrs. Watkin would stand down from the position at the AGM. She asked that any nominations be received prior to the next meeting. Mrs Watkin also reminded Councillors that representatives on various committees would be reviewed at the AGM.

5. Correspondence (A list of all correspondence had been circulated to all)

Councillors' Code of Conduct and Declaration of Interests

HDC has suggested that it might be good practice to include a standard Agenda item headed 'Councillors' Interests'. This was considered a good idea. Clerk to action.

CALC District Association Meeting

The next meeting would be held on June 8th. Mrs. Dyer to attend.

Cambs. Probation Service Summary Annual Report

Circulated to all Councillors.

Noise Nuisance

Several complaints had been received of dogs barking from a property in Bell Lane. Clerk had informed HDC and log sheets for completion, together with an advisory leaflet had been given to residents.

Guide to taking part in Trafalgar Weekend 21-23 October

Brochure passed to Mrs. Dix for information.

Presentation on Police Community Support Officers

As this would take place on the same day as the Parish Council's AGM, no-one was available to attend.

Access to Information

HDC are trying to establish how to best cater for needs of disabled people in terms accessing their information about services. No particular individuals or groups were identified.

A14 Ellington to Fen Ditton Public Consultation Leaflet

Highways Agency had decided to postpone the exhibition due to the timing of the General Election.

NSPCC

The NSPCC were seeking a contribution towards their services in Cambridgeshire. It was decided not to contribute in this instance.

East Midlands Regional Plan
Available to all Councillors.

The Village Affair
This will be held on 16th July 2005.

6. Responsible Finance Officer's Report

Cheques for signature (now notified along with Correspondence List)

Cambridgeshire County Council - Drugs Bus Donation (Section 137 as previously agreed)
- £500

CALC Subscription 05/06 - £351.73

Clerk's Salary - April 05 - £260.80 - 32 hrs. @ £8.15 per hr.

Clerk's Internet Calls - £5.00

Payments were proposed by Mrs Dyer and seconded by Mrs Adams.

Clerk reported that the first half of the annual precept (£8,500) had been received,

Cleared balances - Current Account £15,675.52 and Deposit Account £21,836.45

Balance of Youth Group Account - £6965.31

Balance of Parish Plan Account - £810.55

The Clerk reported that the Parish Council had been called to Audit for 1st July 2005 which meant that the Annual Return would need to be signed at the June meeting. Draft accounts should be circulated for the AGM. The Clerk requested permission to purchase an anti-virus program for her computer which was agreed.

7. The Parish Plan

Mr Dawson reported that the questionnaire was now being proof read and would be reviewed on 4th May and hopefully go to print on 5th May. When printed it would be distributed to all households and a month would be given for its completion. As with the first questionnaire, boxes would be sited around the village in order for residents to return their completed forms. It was hoped that results would be available for the ASSC Open Day in September when the Parish Plan Working Party would have a display. Some discussion took place concerning the awarding of prizes for completed questionnaires and it was decided that the best way to handle this was for the Parish Council to send out cheques to the winners.

8. The Youth Group

Mrs Adams reported that the last meeting had been very disappointing as it had not been attended by anyone from the detached youth team, nor Sharon McCrorie and that the appointed youth worker had not yet been in contact as she had been on sick leave and was not expected to return for at least another two weeks. The next Youth Forum was planned for 6th May with the next meeting on 23rd. Various trips were being organised.

Mrs. Watkin expressed her concern that the activities being organised by the Youth Group, no matter how commendable, were targeting the wrong groups of young people, and that she was still receiving many complaints about bad behaviour. She felt that the real problems in the village were not being addressed. She enquired as to whether the funds available could not be somehow diverted to solve the problems with these particular groups of young people and felt that the key to this lay with the youth worker. It was generally felt that the Youth Group had been continually let down by CCC whose response

to problems had been unsatisfactory. As Nigel Murphy the Chair of the Group was also aware of this he was attempting to get the matter resolved with the Huntingdon Youth Centre. Mrs. Vanbergen volunteered to help Mr. Murphy with this problem.

The Parish Council expressed their concern that they had pledged money to help solve one of the most important issues in the village but did not appear to be any closer to solving the problems. It was not the case that they did not appreciate the work that had been carried out by the Youth Group, but that the groups of young people who were benefiting the most were not necessarily the ones who were causing most of the problems.

9. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting date will be 31st May 2005 when both the Annual Parish Meeting and the AGM will be held. The Annual Parish Meeting will start at 7.45 and will be held in the Methodist Chapel.