

ALCONBURY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting held on Tuesday 25th January 2005 in the New Memorial Hall

Present:

Mrs. Watkin (Chair), Mrs Adams, Mr Brown, Mr Dawson, Mrs Dix, Mrs Dyer, Mrs Elphick, Mr Senior, Mrs Turner and Mr Vanbergen. Mrs Lancey (Clerk) 16 members of the public.

Public Forum:

Complaints had been received concerning the use of small motor bikes riding through the village by youths not wearing any crash helmets. Clerk to report to the police.

Mr Wade complained about speeding along the Old Great North Road. It was agreed that the Clerk should contact CCC to ascertain if it would be possible to apply for speeding restrictions similar to Alconbury Weston and in the meantime to contact the police to see if they could monitor the situation.

As there were several members of the public at the meeting specifically to discuss the Flood Alleviation Scheme, it was agreed to change the order of Agenda items so that this topic might be discussed first, followed by the Parish Plan.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Mr Lane, County Councillor Peter Downes and District Councillor Sarah Vanbergen.

2. Minutes

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 30th November 2004 were approved and signed.

3. Alconbury Flood Alleviation Scheme

The Clerk had agreed with HDC that providing Parish Councillors declared their personal interest in this matter, it was acceptable for them to join in any discussion and to vote. Mrs Watkin, Mrs Dix, Mrs Dyer, Mrs Elphick, Mrs Turner, Mr Senior and Mr Vanbergen all declared a personal interest.

An exhibition had been held in December to explain the Preferred Option being recommended by Atkins Water in conjunction with the Environment Agency. The Parish Council were now required to complete a Reply Sheet to the Preferred Option Consultation. Mrs Watkin also explained that two letters had been received concerning the Scheme – one from a resident in The High Street and one from Lordsway Park. Parish Councillors were given an opportunity to read these letters.

The letter from the High Street residence was of the firm opinion that the Parish Council had no option but to support the proposed Scheme. Residents from Lordsway Park were present at the meeting and were invited to comment on the proposed flood defences. They were most concerned that the Environment Agency were unaware of their Park Home site and that this site had been excluded from the Scheme. They were of the opinion that should the proposed scheme go ahead, it would exacerbate flooding in their area and were requesting that the Parish Council put any pressure possible on the authorities to amend the proposal. Mrs Dix expressed her concern that her property, Ducks Nest, was also excluded from the Scheme. It was agreed that the Parish Council should acknowledge these concerns on the Reply Sheet.

The Scheme in general was discussed at some length. Concern was expressed over the environmental impact on the village and it was acknowledged that the whole area affected by the Scheme would suffer for a number of years both during and after the work had been carried out. It was agreed that the Parish Council should seek as many safeguards as possible from the Environment Agency such as choice of materials used for flood defence walls and insist upon continued maintenance of any new planting in the area.

Concern was also expressed that the proposed footpath along Brookside was unnecessary and would cause an even greater loss of the green. Further, there had never been a request for such a path in the past. The footpath from the footbridge next to the heritage bridge was felt to be wrongly sited and should lead in the direction of the bus stop. It was also suggested that this footbridge might be moved to the other side of the heritage bridge. It was agreed these comments should be included on the Reply Sheet. The question was also raised as to what would happen to the Environment Agency's map showing homes in the area liable to flooding, after the Scheme had been completed. A property designated on such a map, in some cases, made obtaining new insurance extremely difficult which would affect the saleability of a house. This point was also to be made on the Reply Sheet with an enquiry as to whether a certificate would be issued to these homeowners confirming that their property had been protected by flood defences.

Mrs Watkin then suggested that a vote should be taken on whether the Parish Council did or did not support the Preferred Option. The choice was clear, either improvements were made in accordance with the proposal or no work was carried out at all. 6 Parish Councillors were in favour of the Scheme and 4 were against. It was noted that the members of the Parish Council were a fair representation of residents of Alconbury in that it included both residents that had and had not been flooded in 1998. It was also noted that amongst Councillors voting against the Scheme, some had been flooded and some had not and equally those in favour had and had not been flooded. The Clerk together with Mrs. Watkin would complete the Reply Sheet and a copy would be sent to every Parish Councillor.

4. The Parish Plan

Mr Scotney, Chairman of the Parish Plan Steering Group, reported on the Draft Questionnaire that had been circulated to all Parish Councillors, and requested its approval by the Parish Council. He explained that the questions had been selected from samples shown in the Countryside Agency's software package, and had been chosen in order to gain a true feeling of what the residents of Alconbury wished to see in the longer term in the village. It would be delivered to every household together with a covering letter from the Parish Plan Committee. Some Councillors expressed their concerns that its length might discourage its completion. After some discussion, the Draft was supported by the Parish Council and it was also agreed that they would be prepared to offer up to a total of £175 as a financial incentive towards completion of the Questionnaire. It was hoped to distribute the forms and collate replies before Summer 2005.

5. Committee Reports

Clerk's infrastructure Report

Churchyard: Nothing to report.

Village Green: Clerk reported a telegraph pole adjacent to the lower foot bridge that appeared to be unstable. Dog fouling on the green had got worse. Clerk to procure signs

and more waste bins.

General:

Mrs Turner reported a manhole cover missing opposite the Mill P.H. Clerk to action.

Mrs. Elphick had received complaints about the location of the new waste bin in Chapel Street. Clerk to investigate moving it to another site where the pavement might be wider.

Residents in Sharpes Lane/Brookside were in favour of a grit bin on their new pathways.

Clerk to action.

Clerk reported that the public footpath from Rusts Lane to Beech End had been reinstated to its original width.

New bollards had been placed at the bottom of Polecat Lane. Clerk to report on the reason for their installation.

A damaged manhole cover at the Rusts Lane end of Manor Lane had been reported.

Planning:

Clerk reported that the rejected planning permission for two dwellings on the land adjacent to the Vicarage had gone to Appeal. At the request of the majority of the Planning Committee she had written to the Planning Inspectorate to say that in spite of previous comments, the Parish Council supported this rejection.

Information had been received concerning a Staff Cottage at Alconbury House. Under a Section 106 Agreement this property could only be used by staff of the house, but as circumstances had changed and staff were no longer employed, HDC had recommended that the agreement should be varied to allow occupation by someone employed or last employed in agriculture.

New Applications:

0403733FUL – Erection of Conservatory – 11 Oak End - No observations

0403704FUL - Erection of replacement agricultural dwelling – Home Farm, Rusts Lane.

The Clerk reminded Councillors that correspondence from the agent dealing with this application had previously been received but that the Council had declined to comment until the actual planning application had been submitted. Mr Vanbergen expressed his personal interest in this application. After some discussion, the Parish Council agreed that the original dwelling should be saved and therefore they would object to this application.

Applications Determined:

0403263TELDDET – Erection of 15 metre lattice mast – Orange Personal Communications Services Ltd. – Approval not required.

0403733FUL – Erection of Conservatory – 11 Oak End – Approved

0403221FUL – Extension to Dwelling – 26 Bramble End – Approved

0402955FUL – Erection of building for R & D – Research Centre – Approved

0403121FUL – Extension to Dwelling – 46 Manor Lane – Refused

Bramble End

Clerk reported that one cradle swing had been replaced. The second one awaited extra shackles. A digital photograph had been requested by ROSPA in order to proceed with the complaint made by the Parish Council concerning metal corrosion on the old swings.

6. Matters Arising

Website

Clerk reported that the new website was up and running

(www.alconburyparishcouncil.gov.uk) together with her new e-mail address ParishClerk@alconburyparishcouncil.gov.uk.

Application for Funding

The completed application for funding had been received from Alconbury Registered Childminders Group. After some discussion it was decided that as this was not a charitable group, a donation should not be made. Clerk to action.

Register of Financial and Other Interests

Copies of forms in respect of Mr. Senior had been received from HDC.

American Traffic through the Village

It was generally agreed that the amount of American traffic cutting through the village had worsened, in spite of the efforts of Mrs Dyer working with RAF Molesworth. It was noted that should the Flood Alleviation Scheme go ahead, in all probability the bridge might be closed and this would be an ideal time to re-train drivers (not only Americans) to use the by-pass. In the meantime, Mrs. Dyer would continue to lobby RAF Molesworth at the regular liaison meetings.

Old Memorial Hall/Church Commissioners

It had been agreed that the Old Memorial Hall Committee should make a contribution towards legal costs incurred by the Church Commissioners. Mrs Watkin requested that the Parish Council should pay these two invoices (£250 and £293.75) with a view to reimbursement after the sale of the land. This payment was agreed by the Parish Council. Clerk to action.

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

Huntingdonshire Local Development Framework

Two further seminars are being held as part of the consultation on the significant changes being made to the planning system. One to be held on 10th February 2005 is aimed particularly at Parish Councils representing the more rural parts of the district. It was agreed Mrs. Watkin would attend.

Second CALC Liaison Meeting

This meeting is now being arranged and is likely to be held in May. The main topic will be 'Planning Issues'. Mrs Dyer to attend.

New Year's Honours

Clerk reported that T.K. Mistry had received an MBE in the New Year's Honours List. It was agreed that the Clerk should write a letter of congratulations.

Referral Orders

Mr Senior reported that two juveniles had been found guilty of burglary in the village and as his property had been one of the targets he had been in discussion with the Youth Panel concerning the Referral Orders placed upon these offenders. The Orders would last for 12 months for one juvenile and 6 months for the second, and would entail 5 hours of work in the community on Saturday mornings. All work would not necessarily be in Alconbury. The juveniles would be very closely supervised. The Parish Council discussed what kind of work these offenders might be asked to carry out in the village and it was agreed that tasks such as litter picking, especially in places used frequently by young

people such as under the flyover and in the bus shelter, and cleaning up graffiti would be very useful.

Donation Requests

Two requests for donations had been received from CARESCO (who support the Thursday Club) and Victim Support. The Clerk reminded the Parish Council that in 2003/2004 £100 was donated to CARESCO and £50 to Victim Support. It was agreed that similar donations should be made this year.

The Bulletin

The Bulletin was circulated to all Councillors.

County Council Budget Proposals

An e-mail had been received from County Councillor Peter Downes informing the Parish Council that the County Council would be consulting on its budget proposals via the internet this year – www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk – and follow the links. There are three suggestions options – a rise of 3%, 4% and 5% - all of which would require a cut in services next year.

Huntingdonshire NHS Primary Care Trust

Representatives from the Trust would like to attend a Parish Council meeting sometime between February and December. Clerk to arrange.

Relocation of Marshall Aerospace

A report on this planned relocation had been circulated to all Councillors. It was noted, however, that Alconbury was not to be their choice.

East of England Plan – Consultation

This had been circulated to all Councillors.

Resignation

The Clerk reported that she had received the resignation of Councillor Robert Lane, due to pressure of workload. This would create a casual vacancy which would be advertised in due course.

8. Responsible Finance Officer's Report

Cheques for signature:

Glasdon UK - £27.33 – fixing for waste bin

Church Commissioners - £250 – legal costs (as previously discussed)

Smiths Gore – £293.75 – legal costs on behalf of the Church Commissioners (as previously discussed)

Clerk's Salary – January - £262.72 – 32 hrs. @ £7.91 per hr. + back pay.

PTA - £500 – agreed donation

Grafton Projects - £18.24 – stationery

Wicksteed Leisure - £247.33 – new swings

Paul Tait - £235 – Website design

ADCHC - £67.50 – hall hire – Parish Plan account

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

Clerk reported cleared balances – Current Account £9262.93 and Deposit Account

£21,716.08

9. Safer Routes to School

Mrs Dyer reported that unfortunately, due to budget cuts, it was likely to be 2 years before anything significant would happen with the Scheme. However, work had to continue as planned by the Working Party as there were 12 schools in the pipeline before Alconbury and it was important not to lose our place in the queue.

10. The Youth Forum

Mrs Adams reported that the two Youth Forums that had been held over the last two months had been quite well attended. A third was planned for 25th February which would be aimed at 9-13 year olds and their parents. A temporary youth worker had been appointed. Feedback from the Youth Forums was planned for the next Committee Meeting on 7th March.

11. Any Other Business

Mr Vanbergen asked the Clerk what the situation was with the complaint about the overgrown trees on the corner of Mill Road. Clerk replied that the owners of the land (Huntsbuild) had been contacted but that no reply had been received. She had also spoken with Highways but they could not suggest any other action. Mr. Vanbergen suggested that the County Councillor might be approached for help. Clerk to organise.

12. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on Tuesday 22nd February 2005 at 7.45 in the New Memorial Hall.