

## ALCONBURY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 26th September 2006 in the New Memorial Hall

Present:

Mr. Brown (Chairman), Mr Senior, Mrs Adams, Mrs Dyer, Mrs Hathaway, Mrs Watkin, Mr Watson, and Mrs Williams. Mrs Lancey (Clerk). 11 members of the public.

The Clerk explained that due to the large number of items on the Agenda, it would not be possible to relax standing orders at the meeting and asked members of the public to make any concerns known during the public forum. It would also be helpful if they could give their names and addresses.

### Public Forum

Mr Noon enquired whether the Parish Council had received any further information from the Environment Agency concerning the Flood Alleviation Scheme. The Clerk confirmed that nothing had been received since the last meeting.

Members of the public expressed their concerns about the proposed development of the Old Roadside Barn, the Maltings. It was feared that the current problem with bad odours from the sewage system in the Maltings would only be exacerbated by any new development. Concerns were also expressed about potential parking in this conservation area resulting from the development, which would cause congestion in what is already a very busy thoroughfare for schoolchildren, walkers and cycles. The Parish Council agreed to take these concerns into account when responding to HDC Planning Department.

Mr Hodgson expressed his concern over the potential impact on Alconbury from the proposed development of the A14 and the resulting increase in larger heavy commercial vehicles coming from the A1 to Alconbury Airbase. The clerk agreed to contact Mr. Robert Roweth the HCV Route Manager with these concerns.

### 1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Mrs Aylott, Mrs Elphick, County Councillors Sir Peter Brown and Elaine Kadic, and District Councillor Keith Baker.

### 2. Councillors' Interests

Mrs Watkin declared a personal interest in the bus shelter as her children were of an age to frequent the site, and a prejudicial interest in the planning application in Sharpes Lane due to a relation living in the vicinity. Mr Brown declared a prejudicial interest in the planning application in the Maltings due to a relation living in the vicinity, and a personal interest in the planning application in Sharpes Lane as the owner of the site was a personal acquaintance. Mrs Adams declared a prejudicial interest in the planning application in the Maltings as her property was adjacent to the proposed site. Mr Senior declared a personal interest in the planning application in Sharpes Lane as the owner of the site was a personal acquaintance.

### 3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 29th August and 11th September 2006 (Planning Sub Committee Meeting)

Proposed by Mrs Watkin and seconded by Mr Watson and were duly approved and signed.

#### 4. Matters Arising

##### The Methodist Chapel

A damning report had been received from structural engineers resulting in the decision not to use the Chapel for worship or meetings; hence the Parish Council meeting had been moved back to the New Memorial Hall. The Clerk would be kept informed of any developments.

##### Development of the Post Office/Village Shop

Clerk reported that an informal meeting with the Parish Council, the Postmaster and representatives from HDC Planning had taken place to broadly discuss acceptable proposals for this development. The meeting had been very successful and it was hoped that consequently the village would be able to retain its shop and Post Office.

##### CALC Training on Planning Issues

This worthwhile course had been attended by Councillors.

##### Parish Council Vacancy

After the last meeting the Clerk had contacted Mr Ray Pickering thanking him for his offer of help with the Flood Alleviation Scheme and, providing there was still a vacancy, inviting him to become a Parish Councillor after he was added to the electoral register in December. Mr. Pickering had requested more details of what was involved.

#### 5. Committee Reports

##### a) Clerk's infrastructure Report

Churchyard: Clerk had received notification from the Church Warden that the PCC had been discussing the issue of providing more burial plots for the next 25-30 years and the suggestion had been made of purchasing land in the SW corner of the Churchyard adjacent to the vicarage garden. It had been proposed that a small working party should be set up involving both Alconbury and Alconbury Weston Parish Councils, to look into this proposal. Clerk to confirm that this was acceptable to the Parish Council.

##### Village Green

The damaged lamp post opposite Crown Gardens had been reported.

##### General

Fly tipping under the flyover had been reported and rubbish collected. The pump had been partially repaired – the handle required some welding. Rubbish left in Globe Lane. Clerk to report.

##### b) Planning

###### New Applications:

0602943FUL/0602944CAC – Conversion of barn to dwelling and erection of 4 dwellings and demolition of barn – the Old Roadside Barn – the Maltings (Mr Brown and Mrs Adams left the meeting). After a lengthy discussion it was decided that the Parish Council could not recommend approval of this application under the present circumstances. They were concerned over the ecological report on this site as protected species were evident in the area. There were also concerns over increased traffic and parking in an already busy area, and the existing problem with odours from the sewage pipe which would only be exacerbated by more development. It was also noted that this was an old working farm and buildings, and the farmer would have to seek alternative storage facilities in the village or surrounding area.

0603002OUT – Layout and access for erection of 15 dwellings, Transport Depot, Sharpes Lane – (Mrs Watkin left the meeting) After a lengthy discussion it was decided that as this application was dependent upon the Flood Alleviation Scheme going ahead, it was premature and could not be recommended for approval. It was also noted that in the Parish Plan, it stated that residents of the village would not favour significant additional housing development which would put pressure on the already limited local services. Of particular concern was the current over capacity of the local primary school.

Applications Determined by Huntingdonshire District Council  
None reported.

c) Bramble End Playground

Mrs Williams confirmed that the swings had been inspected during the month of September 2006 and appeared to be in good working order. The ground needed building up around the “wet pour” surface under the helicopter.

6. Correspondence

Flood Alleviation Scheme

Clerk reported on a letter that had been received from Emma Dodgson complaining that both the Parish Council and the Environment Agency had failed to inform Alconbury residents about the anticipated Flood Alleviation Scheme and that the majority of the Parish Council stood to directly benefit from the Scheme going ahead. Because Parish Council members affected by the flooding had been granted dispensation by HDC's Standards Committee allowing them to discuss the Scheme, Ms. Dodgson felt their opinion to be biased in favour of the Scheme. This letter had also been placed on the noticeboard on the village green. At HDC's recommendation the Parish Council had also published their reply on the noticeboard, stating that at this point in time the Parish Council had received no more information other than what had been reported at the last meeting, and that in no way did any Councillor stand to directly benefit from the Scheme going ahead. The Clerk pointed out that when the last Scheme was discussed, some Parish Councillors who had been flooded voted against the Scheme and some who had not been flooded were in favour of the Scheme. Ms. Dodgson had since retracted her statement.

Field Close

Residents had expressed an interest in the possible maintenance/registration of land between the road and the wooden fence at the bottom of the motorway in Field Close. Clerk had investigated any ownership of this strip of land, so far without success. She was still waiting to hear from the Highways Agency Land Agent/Property Manager. The Parish Council felt unable to make a decision until the situation was further clarified by the Highways Agency. Clerk to progress.

The Milestone Society

Clerk reported the theft of “Milestone 63” which had been situated opposite Admiral Conservatories on Ermine Street. She was liaising with HDC and The Milestone Society and would report on any further developments.

CALC AGM/EGM

Mrs Dyer would be attending on 14th October. The Parish Council agreed the proposed increased in annual subscription fees to be voted upon at the meeting.

Primary Care Trust - Directory of Services for the Elderly  
Clerk to forward copy of the Parish Pump containing contact details.

'Young Lives' – Anti Social Behaviour Project  
Passed to the Youth Group.

Safer Neighbourhood Panel  
Invitation to attend the first Safer Neighbourhood Panel meeting on 2nd October 2006.  
This would be attended by Mr Senior and also advertised on the noticeboard.

## 7. Responsible Finance Officer's Report

### Annual Audit

Clerk reported that the annual accounts for the year ending March 31st 2006 had been signed off by the external auditor and that a notice advertising closure of the Audit had been displayed as required.

### Financial Regulations

Draft Financial Regulations had been circulated to all Councillors. These were discussed and it was agreed that a Councillor should be appointed to periodically discuss on going financial matters with the RFO. Specific Councillor to be appointed at the October meeting. The Financial Regulations were formally adopted by the Council.

### Budget versus Actual Spend 2006

A spreadsheet containing details had been circulated to Councillors showing an underspend YTD of £3,877.13. This was mainly due to monies not yet spent by the Youth Group and the Minor Improvement Schemes. Clerk anticipated an overspend at the end of the year in two major areas – grass cutting and salaries. The grass cutting was due to the unexpected forced change in contractors and the salaries by the agreed national agreement for Clerks. She proposed this overspend should be covered by reserves from last year.

### Cheques for signature (notified with Correspondence List):

Rental of Methodist Chapel - £15.00

CALC Training - £218.76

Clerk's Salary – September - £331.31

Demon – Web Hosting - £11.75

Pipex Broadband - £14.99

Moore Stephens – Annual Audit - £141.00

Grafton Projects – stationery - £33.77

Transfer of Reserves to Deposit Account - £8,000

Payments were proposed by Mrs Adams and seconded by Mr Watson.

### Cleared Balances:

Current Account: £5,007.64 Deposit Account £26,592.70

Youth Group Account: £5272.10

## 8. The Bus Shelter

A quotation had been received from Community Safety for the removal of the existing bus shelter and installation of a 3 bay cantilever shelter for a total of £4,753. The Community Safety Partnership were prepared to try to find half of the cost and the Transport Team had

agreed to contribute £1,000, leaving the Parish Council to pay £1,376.50. After a lengthy discussion it was unanimously agreed to accept this quotation.

#### 9. The Freedom of Information Act/Communications Strategy

Mrs Watkin reported on the recent Freedom of Information Act Workshop that she had attended, and found to be very worthwhile. Notes had been circulated to all Councillors. It was agreed that a result of this the Clerk should attend an archiving course, and that a model "Publication Scheme" should be obtained and adapted as necessary for Alconbury Parish Council. This should then be formally adopted and regularly reviewed.

She had also produced a Communications Strategy document which discussed how the Council communicated with both the general public and between themselves. The following points were agreed:

The setting aside of Standing Orders at meetings should be restricted. The Open Forum should be used to note concerns, not for debating issues.

Agendas should be as full as possible and if possible, should be annotated when a decision needs to be made. Draft minutes must be available by the Friday of the week in which a meeting is held.

Representatives on village groups must be meticulous in reporting relevant information between the Council and the group concerned

Parish Council software is duplicated on another computer so that e-mails can be accessed should the clerk be away. Councillors need to check their e-mails on a daily basis.

A simple newsletter should be produced 5 times a year along with an Annual Report.

#### 10. Quality Council Status

After some discussion it was agreed that the Council should work towards achieving Quality Status. The first step was for the clerk to obtain a Certificate in Local Council Administration. It was anticipated that the Clerk would attend a course beginning in the early part of 2007. In the meantime she would investigate financial implications for next year's Precept

#### 11. The Youth Group

Mrs Adams reported that the meetings for the younger groups were still very successful but that disappointingly there had been no meetings during the holidays for the older group due to the lack of permanent youth worker cover. An extra group for 12-14 year olds was being developed. A quote for £72K had been received for a multi-surface play area with another one awaited. Nigel Murphy would give a presentation when all information was to hand. The mobile CCTV unit would visit the Youth Group.

#### 12. The Memorial Hall

Mrs Adams reported that there was a new booking clerk – Diane Girard. Work was progressing on a new brochure. There would be a memorial event for Derek Cox. Running costs had reached £550+ per month and a budget review meeting would be held to discuss requirements for next year. Clerk had obtained quotation for cutting the front hedge in the sum of £20. This was agreed by Councillors. Clerk to action.

### 13. Neighbourhood Watch

A meeting had been held on 13th September. NW is willing to part fund a CCTV camera. It had been stressed again that any incidents in the village must be reported as the Police only work to statistics. The Flood Alleviation Scheme had been discussed. It had been commented that the village should work together on this issue. The new Community Police Officer, Rebecca Williams had attended the meeting.

### 14. Sports & Social Club

No further information was available on the Football Foundation grant. There was concern that the land to be purchased might not be available at the original price. £804 had been raised at the Family Fun Day. A "Sing Along with Lawrence Night" was booked for 28th October.

### 15. The Parish Plan

A full report would be available for the October meeting.

### 16. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on 31st October 2006 in the Memorial Hall, starting at 7.45pm.