

ALCONBURY PARISH COUNCIL - Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 31st July 2007 in the Memorial Hall

Present:

Mr Senior (Chairman), Mr Brown, Mrs Dyer, Mrs Elphick, Mr Hardy, Mr Watson and Mrs Williams, District Councillor Keith Baker, Mrs Lancey (Clerk) 6 members of the public.

Public Forum

Mr Goddard and Mr Crawford of Hawthorn End reported to the Council that the verge outside No. 15 Hawthorn End was for sale along with the property; however, it had been proven via the Land Registry that this piece of land had not been adopted by the owners of the property, and had in fact been maintained by Mr Goddard over approximately the last 35 years. The Land Registry had informed Mr Goddard that this piece of land was still shown under the ownership of the original developers of the estate (Alconbury Developments Limited). It had subsequently been confirmed by Highways that they had not adopted this piece of land and this was also being checked out by the County Council at Shire Hall in Cambridge. Mr Goddard stressed that he had no interest in owning the land, but merely wished that it should be preserved as a safe play area for the village children. The Parish Council agreed to contact ADL and also Shire Hall to try and resolve the issue, and the Clerk would check through past minutes where it was hoped that a record of Mr Goddard's work on behalf of the community would be confirmed.

Mr Hodgson, Manor Lane, wanted to know why the travellers on Ermine Street had been allowed to stay so long when they were obviously breaking the law by using vehicles along the footpath. A suitcase had also been left along with a huge amount of other debris. As the travellers seemed to appear on this site every year he wanted concrete bollards to be erected so they were unable to park vehicles on the footpath. He was also concerned about HCVs parking outside Truckstop and wanted concrete bollards installed to prevent this. Clerk to contact Highways on both counts.

46. Apologies for Absence

Apologies received from Mrs Adams, Mrs Aylott, Mrs Hathaway, Mrs Watkin and County Councillor Peter Brown.

47. Councillors' Declaration of Interest for items on the Agenda

Mr Watson and Mrs Elphick registered a prejudicial interest in item 49 - development of the village shop – being residents in close proximity.

Mr Watson and Mrs Williams registered a prejudicial interest in Item 52 - Maypole Square - being residents in close proximity.

48. To sign and approve minutes of previous meetings held on 26th June 2007

Proposed by Mr Watson and seconded by Mrs Williams. Minutes duly approved and signed.

49. The Village Shop and Post Office – update from Clerk

HDC Planning Dept. had informed the Postmaster's architect of several points which they found unacceptable on the recent planning application for the redevelopment of the site, including the fact that the plans did not specifically detail that a Post Office would be incorporated within the new shop unit. The Clerk had informed HDC that this was contrary to the understanding of the Parish Council. The Clerk had not had any written confirmation of refusal of the application from HDC Planning Dept.

50. The Brook Clearance

Mr Senior reported that, depending upon the weather, ENCAMS had suggested 1st, 8th, 15th or 29th September for the brook clearance. They would confirm a date after liaison with both the Wildlife Trust and the Environment Agency (in case of a reed cut).

51. The Parish Plan - update from Mrs Williams on Working Party progress

Cambridgeshire ACRE had been contacted concerning on-going issues arising from the Parish Plan such as traffic calming measures in Rusts Lane, parking in the village (and particularly outside the school) and the Youth Group. Clerk added that ACRE had requested they be kept informed about all these issues along with the situation with the shop and Post Office. It was hoped that might have influence on such items as the JFMI Scheme bid for Rusts Lane. The next major issue was the meeting for new activity groups to be held on 29th August. It was hoped that as many Councillors as possible would attend this and the representatives for the ASSC and the Memorial Hall were asked to ensure that members of both these committees would attend the meeting, along with diaries, with a view to identifying availability of venues for any clubs that might be formed. Posters would be widely displayed in both villages. High priority items from the plan had now either been actioned or were on-going. The next meeting was set for 7th November when the next phase of activities would be identified and other Councillors called upon to assist as necessary.

52. Maypole Square enhancement (Mr Watson and Mrs Williams left the meeting for this agenda item)

A revised quotation had been received from HDC for golden gravel and kerbing only, omitting the seat and flower beds, of £8117.20. However, the clerk had been informed that an additional £1,000 would be added for HDC's fees. She had requested a breakdown of these fees. It was agreed that no decision would be reached until a reply had been received from HDC. Clerk to check if there was any time limit on using the grant money obtained.

53. Adoption of the New Code of Conduct

It was resolved to adopt the Parish and Town Councils Model Code of Conduct and to adopt the code including paragraph 12(2) with effect from 1st September 2007. The rules to be put in place, as per CALC's suggestion, of how the situation will operate were:

"If a councillor with a prejudicial interest wishes to speak on an agenda item then that interest and intention must be stated immediately after the first item on the Agenda. The public will be allowed a maximum of six speakers who may provide information for up to three minutes only and each person may only speak once. The Chairman will look to secure a balance of public speakers. The public participation is not part of the debate but merely fact giving and answering questions in the same manner as the councillor with the prejudicial interest"

It was resolved to adopt these rules along with the Model Code of Conduct. The Clerk explained that for a fee of £24, CALC would notify interested parties and place the required advertisement in the local press on behalf of the Council. It was agreed that CALC should be asked to proceed accordingly.

54. Training for Parish Councillors

It was agreed to attend the initial meeting with CALC on Quality Status (18th September) before deciding what additional training might be required.

55. The Bus Shelter

A reply had been received from Claudia Waters to the Parish Council's letter of 20th June in which the Council had requested that a seat and sides be installed in the bus shelter as per HDC's original quotation. Claudia Waters had stated that the additional costs for the installation of the sides would be £1150. The seat would be installed at no extra cost. She had offered to split the additional sum of £1150 three ways between the Community Safety Team, the Transport Team and the Parish Council, which would mean the Parish Council would pay £383 in addition to the sum of £1376.50, making a total of £1759.50. It was decided that the Parish Council must, albeit very reluctantly, accept to pay the additional £383 in order to provide a suitable bus shelter for the residents of the village. A very strongly worded letter should be sent to Claudia Waters expressing the Parish Council's utter dissatisfaction of how the whole issue had been handled.

56. Alconbury Sports & Social Club – report from Mr Watson

The purchase of additional land was now complete. The issue of VAT was still being pursued.

57. Parking outside the School – report from Mrs Williams

Meetings had been held with School Governors, PCSOs, Parish Councillors, County Councillors and Highways to discuss the continuing problems of illegal parking outside the school during drop off and pick up times. The PCSOs had suggested single yellow lines in the area which would cost in the region of £1500. The Governors were prepared to contribute towards this amount and would also write to parents encouraging them to park safely and use the Memorial Hall car park. Laine Kadic had offered to seek funding through the Safer Routes to School. It was agreed that the Parish Council would be prepared to contribute towards this initiative and would formally write to Highways to put the process in motion.

58. The Youth Group – report from Mrs Aylott

The Clerk reported on behalf of Mrs Aylott that there had been a high turnout to the Family BBQ in July with very positive feedback from parents. £70 had been raised at the Village Affair to go towards the ball park. An outline project plan for the ball park was being prepared. The end of year grant report had been submitted to ACRE. Some unused funds may have to be handed back, but it would be requested that these funds might be transferred to the ball park development project. Currently no charges are made for entry to the Youth Group or for craft materials, but it may be necessary to charge a nominal fee in future. A music quiz night would be held in October/November – date to be confirmed. As the group is so popular the committee would approach the Memorial Hall to see if fortnightly meetings would be possible.

59. Adoption of Standing Orders

The Clerk had prepared Standing Orders relating specifically to Alconbury Parish Council. These had been circulated to all councillors. It was resolved to adopt these Standing Orders dated July 2007.

60. Field Close – update from Clerk

The Clerk continued to receive complaints about the unkempt area alongside Field Close. The road maintenance company had contacted the Clerk and had been asked for any assistance they could give. The Clerk had sought a price from Highways for pruning trees and removing dead trees from the whole area. It was agreed this should be discussed

again when the quotation was available.

61. Tree Planting Initiative

The Scouts and Cubs along with Peter Rowlings, Tree Warden, had suggested the area at the very bottom of the Sports & Social Club playing field, alongside the Brook, for their tree planting initiative. Once planted, the area would be maintained by the Scouts/Cubs. This suggestion would be put to the ASSC. Peter Rowlings would be happy to discuss with the ASSC.

62. The Clerk's Appraisal

This had been carried out on 26th July with Mr Senior and Mrs Watkin. It had been identified that the Clerk was working more than the 42 ? hours per month for which she was paid. It was agreed that hours should continue to be monitored until the end of September when a new average could be calculated. Payment for additional hours worked could then be back dated to April. Formation of working parties had helped with the Clerk's workload. It was agreed that a list of on-going working parties should be regularly circulated to all Councillors. The Parish Council's computer equipment would need replacing in the next financial year. In the meantime Mr Brown would look into an acceptable way of backing up the Clerk's computer which was difficult with the current software. A Health & Safety check remained to be carried out on the Clerk's premises, and a Risk Assessment for the Council's assets needed to be completed. It was felt that the Clerk's CiLCA training was proving to be very beneficial to the Council.

63. Matters Arising from previous minutes (for information only)

The Village Affair

The Parish Council's stand manned by Mrs Dyer, Mrs Watkin, Mr Watson and Mrs Williams had been well attended. Thanks should be sent to Mr. Read for his display of photographs. The Newsletter received good reports. Complaints had been received specifically concerning the lack of seat and sides in the bus shelter.

Quality Council Meeting with CALC

Confirmed for Tuesday 18th September, 7.30pm in the Playgroup Room.

Re-routing of the A14

County Councillor Peter Brown had suggested that the first meeting of the working party should not be held until after the response of the Highways Agency is known, which is due any time.

Parking at 2a Rusts Lane

Thera East Anglia had been very supportive over this problem and had been carrying out spot checks. They wished to be kept informed of the situation.

Local Development Framework – Core Strategy

The Planning Committee had made representation to HDC along the lines already agreed by the Parish Council and expressed in the Parish Plan resisting significant residential development in the village in favour of development of larger towns in the area.

Responses available on request.

64. Committee Reports

a) Clerk's infrastructure Report

Churchyard: Nothing to report.

Village Green: Further repairs would be carried out to the footbridge next to the Heritage Bridge. The chestnut tree next to the bridge had been pruned as it was damaging buses. The seat at the bottom of Crown Gardens had been vandalised and repaired. .
General: Damage to footbridge at the bottom of Polecat Lane had been reported. There had been problems with abandoned cars/cars for sale in the village

b) Planning

New Applications – None received

Applications determined by HDC Planning:

0701274FUL – Extension to dwelling, 3 Old Glebe – refused.

0701532FUL – Extension to dwelling, erection of porch and conservatory – 4 Sharps Lane – permitted.

070186S73 – Renewal 0501534 for continuation of use of former classroom as domestic storage – Alconbury House – permitted.

c) Bramble End Playground

Monthly inspection carried out by Mrs Williams. No apparent problems. Grass around the surface under the baby swings needed to be monitored.

65. Correspondence

CPALC Policy Development

No comments to be made.

Emergency Planning for the evacuation of Crown Gardens

In case of emergency it had been suggested that the residents of Crown Gardens would be evacuated to the Memorial Hall. Committee contacted accordingly. Clerk named as key holder. It was suggested more key holders should be appointed.

Acknowledgement from Jonathan Djanogly MP of receipt of the Parish Council's submission to HDC in response to the development on the Airfield. Mr Djanogly wished to be kept informed.

“Shaping the Environment of Huntingdonshire”

No Councillors available to attend consultation on 19th September.

Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership – Parish Involvement

No Councillors able to put their names forward

Parking Policy Review

Forwarded to Parish Plan working party, but not relevant to Alconbury.

“The Future of the Post Office Network” – HDC's Council Motion to resist closures.

Circulated to all.

Cambridgeshire Design Guide

Circulated to all. No comments to be made

66. Responsible Finance Officer's Report

Financial Year 2006/2007

Clerk reported that the accounts for the financial year 2006/2007 had been passed by the external auditor, Moore Stephens without comments, and a notice had been displayed

accordingly.

Financial Regulations

One change needed to be made the Council's Financial Regulations to agree with the newly adopted Standing Orders (see Minute 59). Paragraph 2.1 should read " September" for submission of budget proposals to the Council rather than "October" as currently stated. It was unanimously agreed that this amendment should be made.

Cheques for signature:

Pipex Internet - £14.99

Demon – Web Hosting - £11.75

Speedi Sign – sign for Village Affair - £15.00

Alan Summerfield – grass cutting Mar-Jun - £3066.75

CALC – Chairman's Workshop - £40.00

Moore Stephens – Audit Fee - £334.88

Clerk's Salary July (including extra for training and travelling expenses to CALC) - £493.25

Paula Williams – Village Affair Costs - £30.66

Inland Revenue – PAYE/NI contributions Apr-Jun - £281.01

Petty Cash top up - £19.66

Payments were proposed by Mrs Williams and seconded by Mr Watson

Cleared Balances:

Current Account: £12,713.34, Deposit Account £13,523.07

Youth Group Account: £3,590.99

67. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on 28th August 2007 at 7.45 in the Memorial Hall.