

ALCONBURY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 29th April 2008 in the Memorial Hall

Present:

Mr Senior (Chair), Mrs Adams, Mr Brown, Mrs Dyer, Mr Hardy, Mrs Hathaway, Mrs Watkin, and Mrs Williams. County Councillors Peter Brown and Laine Kadic. District Councillor Keith Baker. Mrs Lancey (Clerk). 5 members of the public.

Public Forum

Mr Hodgson complained of the continuing problem with trucks parking outside the old Truckstop site and the appalling state of the surrounding area due to the debris left by drivers. He had contacted the police on numerous occasions. Mr Senior assured him that the Parish Council were also in constant contact with both the police and HDC to try and keep the area in a hygienic condition. Clerk would also contact Environmental Health.

Mr Hodgson also complained about the continuing increase of containers stored on the airbase which it was agreed were a complete eyesore. Mrs Williams informed him that contact details had been put in the latest Newsletter in order to encourage residents to voice their complaints to HDC. He sought assurance that when the current planning application came up for renewal, the Parish Council would endeavour to ensure that all restrictions relating to storage and vehicle movements on the site would be reviewed and adhered to. Mr Senior assured Mr Hodgson that the Parish Council would be extremely vigilant when any planning applications came up for renewal and if necessary a public meeting could be called.

220. Apologies for Absence

Apologies received from Mrs Aylott, Mrs Elphick and Mr Watson together with retrospective apologies from County Councillor Peter Brown for the meeting on 25th March 2008.

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

Mrs Williams declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item 227 living in close proximity to the planned development, and Mrs Adams declared a personal interest in planning application 0800572FUL as the applicant was known to her.

222. To sign and approve minutes of previous meetings held on 25th and 31st March 2008.

Proposed by Mrs Hathaway and seconded by Mrs Williams. Minutes duly approved and signed.

223. Presentation from Cliff Carlson on planned Community Project.

Mr Carlson addressed the meeting, explaining that as a member of the US Eagle Scouts he wished to undertake a project which would benefit the community. He sought the Parish Council's approval of his plan to provide the village with at least one new notice board. He passed details of the planned boards which would be made from recycled plastic with the appearance of natural timber. Each board would cost in the region of £600 and he outlined some activities he and his colleagues would be undertaking to raise the necessary funds. The Eagle Scouts would also be responsible for the installation of the board. If sufficient funds could be raised, more than one board could be purchased. The project needed to be completed by the end of August 2008. It was considered that the corner of Field Close and Manor Lane would be an appropriate position for the board, and the Clerk would proceed with obtaining the necessary permission from HDC for the installation. The Parish Council

unanimously supported Mr Carlson's project and thanked him for the interest he had shown in the community.

224. Post Office Closures

County Councillor Peter Brown in his capacity as Chairman of the Cambs. and Peterborough Post Office Network Change Group, updated the meeting on the latest situation regarding closure of post offices in Cambridgeshire. 35 post offices had already been closed in Norfolk and Suffolk, and it was anticipated that approx. 30 would be closed in Cambridgeshire. He did not know whether Alconbury would be one of these. The consultation period had already started and visits were due to be made to individual post offices. Announcement of proposed branch closures would be made on 8th July. There would be a 6-7 week consultation period following these announcements, and the final decisions would be made at the end of October. He would keep the Parish Council informed of any developments.

225. Truckstop Site – update from Clerk

Clerk reported that directional signs had now been removed. District Councillor Keith Baker had reported that the owners of the site had met with HDC Planning to discuss the potential development of the site. The owners had been strongly advised by HDC that a truck stop on this stretch of the A14 was still required, and until such time as they (the owners) could adequately demonstrate that a truck stop in this location was not viable, Planning would not support any re-development applications. It was agreed that the Parish Council should try to ensure that any new facility planned for this site should be kept strictly within its boundaries.

226. Field Close – update from Clerk

A further letter had been received from a resident in Field Close complaining of trees overhanging her property. As the Scout community initiative for this area was no longer going ahead, the problem of tidying the area remained. HDC had carried out work to dangerous trees but were unable to continue due to lack of funding. It was agreed that the Clerk should proceed with obtaining quotes for some kind of fencing for the area (should the Parish Council wish to adopt the land) and also prices for felling the trees nearest to properties which were the main concern.

227. Maypole Square – update from Clerk (Mrs Williams left the meeting for this agenda item)

The total cost of the scheme was to be £7934.17, which made the Parish Council's (25%) contribution £1983.54. The contractor was due to start work at any time and the Clerk had notified residents accordingly. Funds had been reserved into the accounts for this project.

228. Quality Status

It was reported that the Quality Panel had sought some clarification on the fact that the minutes submitted in the Portfolio had only been initialled by the Chair, not with a full signature. The Panel had not rejected Alconbury's application, but had resolved to defer the application until this matter had been addressed. With immediate effect all minutes and agendas would contain a full signature. Copies would then be submitted with a covering letter saying that this was now standard procedure, and the application would be reconsidered at the next Panel meeting in June/July. It was agreed by all that this was a very disappointing result.

229. The Sports & Social Club

Despite the fact that as a result of rising project costs the ASSC might have to find substantial extra monies to go towards the development of the new area, it had been decided to proceed with the project. The Cricket Club also needed to purchase new sight screens and to put in a new all weather surface and might approach the Parish Council for financial assistance.

230. The Memorial Hall – report from Mrs Hathaway/Mrs Adams

The AGM had taken place. Hire rates had changed from 1st April and would be based on an hourly rate rather than a session rate as it was considered this would make charging fairer for all groups. Running costs for the year had been high and the hall had run at a loss. There had, however, been some extraordinarily high bills during the year which meant a careful eye would be kept on charging. Litter dropped in the car park and the surrounding field remained a problem. The “deep clean” week end had been very successful.

231. Neighbourhood Watch – report from Mr Hardy

Mr Hardy reported on a successful financial year for Neighbourhood Watch. They were looking to putting a bench in memory of Barry Stock at the Memorial Hall and also providing a further notice board for the village. The Village Affair would be held on July 12th. Due to its continued success it would remain open until 6pm and the whole of the green would be in use. Due to this the insurance premium would be increased. Mr Senior offered the use of electricity from his home. Mr Hardy to contact Neighbourhood Watch accordingly.

232. Councillor Support – Mrs Watkin

Mrs Watkin outlined her concerns about Councillors managing their ever increasing work load along with other work and personal commitments, and whether they received adequate support from the Parish Council. She considered a good starting point would be to look at job descriptions for Councillors. A working party was formed to look into these issues. Meeting to be arranged.

233. Emergency Planning – report from Mr Hardy

The initial meeting of the working party had been held when key venues and participating groups had been discussed. Before progressing further it had been decided that details (as promised) from HDC should be obtained as to their preferred approach to the problem, together with a specimen plan from Needingworth village. Mr Hardy to progress.

234. Compost Giveaway

The District Council were giving away free bags of compost as a thank you to residents for recycling their waste. 200 bags would be available week commencing 2nd June. The Memorial Hall car park could be used as a distribution point. Specific details to be announced.

235. Small Scale Environmental Bid – update from Clerk

The bid for low level lighting along the pathway between Bell Lane and Rusts Lane had not been successful.

236. The Scout Store

HDC Planning had replied that this store would only be permitted development if the building was on land belonging to or maintained by the Parish Council for the purposes of any function exercised by them on that land, which did not appear to be the case. It would

therefore require planning permission. The building proposed had been considered acceptable in principle, although brick facing would not be considered suitable – timber cladding would be more appropriate. This information had been passed to Nigel Murphy. It was suggested that the store might be used to house emergency planning equipment which would comply with the requirements for a permitted development.

237. USAF Community Relations

A letter of introduction had been received from Natalie Culver, the new Community Relations Adviser. She had confirmed that complaints raised about American traffic passing through the village at the last meeting in November 2007 were being given high priority. It was suggested that she should be invited to meet with Parish Councillors later in the year.

238. Parking around the School – update from Mrs Williams

The problems with parents parking around the school had been exacerbated due to the building work taking place. PCSO Gemma Clarke had been asked to regularly patrol the area and all parents had been contacted. The building work was due for completion in September 2008.

239. Archiving Workshop

The Clerk and Mrs Dyer had attended a worthwhile workshop on Archiving, Publications Schemes and Freedom of Information. An Archiving Policy would be worked upon as soon as time permitted.

240. Wildlife Area alongside the Brook

Mrs Dyer reported on her meeting with the Wildlife Trust to discuss development of the overgrown strip alongside the brook as a wildlife area. One suggestion had been made to plant a hedge alongside the bridge end of the strip. This was an on-going project and Mrs Dyer would report back as necessary.

241. Clerk's Salary (Mrs Lancey left the meeting for this agenda item)

It was agreed that with effect from 1st April the Clerk's salary should be increased by one spinal column (to 25) with an hourly rate of £10.78. Hours worked were being monitored and would be reviewed at the annual appraisal. The possibility of some assistance had also been discussed.

242. The Clerk's Computer

Quotations had been sought for a replacement computer. After some discussion it was agreed to go ahead with the Dell quote.

243. Committee Reports

a) Clerk's infrastructure Report
Churchyard: No observations.

Village Green: No observations.

General: Fly tipping in Globe Lane had been reported.

b) Planning

New Applications

0800572FUL – Erection of dwelling and garage – land adjacent

1 Globe Lane – revised design – Comments as on original application.
0801221FUL – Erection of two storey extension, 51 Manor Lane – extension considered to be very prominent, creating an oppressive outlook for the residents of No. 49. Extension would create a large 2-storey wall right on the boundary where currently there is a single storey garage – recommend refusal.

Applications determined by HDC:

0800349FUL – Change of use from agricultural land to recreational land and multi-user games area – ASSC – permission granted.

c) Bramble End Playground

Monthly inspections carried. Small cracks at the edge of surfaces reported – to be monitored.

Mrs Williams was still awaiting quotations from suppliers. Mrs Watkin enquired whether CCC had been contacted as she understood funds were being made available.

244. Correspondence

Information from CPALC on Fees their Board Report and Service Agreement - Affiliation Fee could be reduced for a qualified clerk.

Biological Records Centre – Pond Survey. Forwarded to the Residents Association in Coulson Way and passed to Parish Councillors. The pond in the Maltings might also be included.

First CPALC Support Desk Newsletter – circulated to all

Proposal of one way system – Manor/Spinney Lane - This was discussed by Councillors. It was felt that such a scheme might cause an increase in the speed of traffic, and would also be a problem as Manor Lane was on the bus route. Clerk to respond accordingly.

245. Responsible Finance Officer's Report

Accounts and Audit Arrangement 2007/2008

The Parish Council had been called to audit for 1st June 2008. Draft Accounts had been circulated to all councillors and to the Internal Auditor. The necessary information had been displayed in order that the public could inspect the accounts. The Parish Council had also been selected as one of 5% randomly picked for an additional intermediate audit. The Annual Return would be signed at the AGM at the end of May.

Cheques for signature:

1st Alconbury Brownies - donation - £100 (Section 137)

Pipex Internet (Apr 08) - £14.99

Demon - Web Hosting - £11.75

Grafton Projects – Stationery - £36.20

CPALC Affiliation Fees 2008/2009 - £409.44

Clerk's Salary April 2008 - £355.33

Inland Revenue - PAYE/NI Contributions - £232.06

Alconbury PCC - work in Churchyard - donation - £400

Payments were proposed by Mr Senior and seconded by Mrs Adams

Cleared Balances: None reported - bank statements not received.

246. Date of Next Meeting

27th May 2008 - Annual Parish Meeting and AGM to be held in the main hall of the Memorial Hall. An earlier start time of 7.30pm was agreed.