

ALCONBURY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 29th August 2006 in the New Memorial Hall

Present:

Mr. Brown (Chairman), Mr Senior, Mrs Adams, Mrs Aylott, Mrs Dyer, Mrs Elphick, Mrs Watkin, Mr Watson, and Mrs Williams. County Councillor Sir Peter Brown. District Councillor Mr Keith Baker. Mrs Lancey (Clerk). 14 members of the public.

The Clerk addressed the meeting by saying how very sad she was to acknowledge the recent tragic death of Derek Cox. Derek had been a Parish Councillor for some years and was hugely instrumental in the building of the New Memorial Hall. He had also been largely responsible for the introduction of the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme in the village. She had sent a letter of condolence on behalf of the Parish Council to his wife, Sue.

Public Forum

Members of the public wished to talk about the pending Flood Alleviation Scheme and the temporary CCTV camera recently installed in the village. The Clerk explained that reports on both these items would be given under Matters Arising and the Chairman confirmed that they would be permitted to speak.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Mrs Hathaway and County Councillor Elaine Kadic.

2. Councillors' Interests

None recorded.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 25th July and 15th August (Planning Sub Committee Meeting) 2006

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

4. Committee Reports

a) Clerk's infrastructure Report

Churchyard: Nothing to report

Village Green: Concern had been expressed by a resident over the amount of vegetation in the Brook. Clerk had confirmed that the usual reed cut would take place in the Autumn.

General: The pump had still to be repaired but had been removed to the Clerk's property for safe keeping. Repair costs not yet available.

b) Planning

New Applications:

0602576FUL – Extension to dwelling and erection of garage – 17, Great North Road – recommend refusal. Concern expressed over new driveway onto Red Lion Close and impact on No. 2 Red Lion Close. Extension not considered in keeping with surrounding area.

060262FUL – Change of use of agricultural building to storage – Brooklands Farm, Great North Road – no observations.

Applications Determined by Huntingdonshire District Council:

0602108FUL/LBC– Erection of Conservatory – Kiln Barn – Refused.

0602108FUL – Extension to dwelling for use as ancillary residential accommodation – 8 Great North Road - Granted.

0602262FUL – Extension to dwelling – 1, The Paddock – Granted.

c) Bramble End Playground

Clerk reported vandalism to the “wet pour” surface under the helicopter, which had been repaired. A letter had gone out to surrounding residents expressing the Parish Council's concern. Damage had been reported to the police.

Mrs Williams confirmed that the swings had been inspected during the month of August 2006 and appeared to be in good working order.

5. Matters Arising

Meeting with HDC to discuss CCTV camera

Mr Senior reported on the meeting with HDC to discuss the temporary CCTV camera which had recently been installed in the village.

The meeting had been attended by Sue Lammin, Head of Environment and Community Health Services, Frank Cannon, CCTV and Emergency Planning Team Leader, Claudia Waters, Community Safety Partnership Support Officer, with Mark Brown, Judith Aylott and himself representing the Parish Council. They had been asked to sign the Data Protection Act regarding non- disclosure of specific details on the CCTV tapes.

The Police and HDC had received several complaints from 5 residents over the last 3 years regarding anti social behaviour in the area of the bus shelter, as a result of which the temporary camera had been installed. The camera was not in operation 24 hours a day, but was operated by the resident, on whose land it was situated, when anti social behaviour was going on. There were three 90 minute tapes taken over a one month period. They viewed a compilation of approx. 20 minutes. The images were very clear. They allegedly showed drug taking at different times of the day and night, youths urinating in the area, money and drugs/alcohol changing hands between occupants of vehicles and youths, and footballs being kicked around, sometimes into the early hours of the morning. As a result 15 youths had been identified and parents contacted accordingly. Not all of those identified lived in Alconbury. Details of vehicles involved had been passed to the Police. Generally it was felt that activity in the area had diminished since the letters had been sent out. On asking why they had not been consulted about erection of the camera, HDC said that it was not usual practice to inform Parish Councils of such activity. However, should another camera be required, the Parish Council would be contacted prior to installation.

The policing of Alconbury was to change within the next few weeks with a dedicated “local bobby” patrolling a much smaller area. A Community Panel was to be formed from the Police, Neighbourhood Watch, HDC, the Parish Council and residents, which would meet every 6 weeks. The local policewoman would spend more time in the village and be more easily contacted.

The Parish Council had explained that one reason for not demolishing the bus shelter had been the impending flood alleviation scheme. It had recently been confirmed by the Environment Agency that as a result of the scheme, the shelter would be demolished and re-sited, but it was accepted that this would not happen within the next 12 months. HDC would investigate temporary measures, but no decisions were made as this was not a full Parish Council meeting. The bus shelter should be an agenda item for September when

hopefully more information would be to hand from HDC.

It was stressed that the residents of Alconbury must have a bus shelter with a seat. There was no guarantee that removal of the shelter would solve any problems and it was feared it might cause the youngsters to meet under the flyover which was a much more dangerous location.

HDC had offered to bring the mobile CCTV unit to a Youth Group meeting so youngsters could see how effectively it operated. They had also acknowledged the efforts made to promote the Youth Group in the village. It was felt that communication between all parties at the meeting had been greatly improved.

A member of the public said how appreciative he was of the Parish Council's actions, but felt that anti social behaviour in the area of the bus shelter still continued. This was, however, of a different nature. He was advised that the police, or Claudia Waters, should be contacted when any incident occurred.

Jointly Funded Minor Improvement Scheme 07/08 Bidding Round

This was to be submitted covering speed restrictions in Chapel Street/School Lane and speed restrictions/ pedestrian crossing safety in Rusts Lane.

Flood Alleviation Scheme

The Environment Agency had requested a meeting with the Parish Council, as land owners, to discuss the proposed Flood Alleviation Scheme. Mr Brian Patten of the EA was accompanied by 3 representatives from the new firm of consultants Royal Haskoning. Mr Patten had acknowledged that there was an enormous amount of consultation to be carried out prior to any planning permission being sought. This would be with English Heritage concerning the bridge, English Nature concerning flora and fauna, the Parish Council and also importantly the general public. They intended to produce a monthly newsletter, the first of which they gave to the Clerk to post on noticeboards. It was hoped also to use the Parish Council website. An exhibition for the general public would be held towards the end of November. Depending upon the outcome of the various consultations, it was anticipated that planning permission might be sought in March 2007. If the plans were approved, work would then start and would take approximately 18 months to complete. A lengthy discussion then took place with the general public who were very concerned about the whole scheme. The public were advised that the Parish Council had asked the Environment Agency to clearly set out what other alternatives had been considered for the scheme and the reasons for them choosing "the preferred option" as part of the next consultation exercise. They were also asked to provide better plans and photographic montages to show clearly what the village green would look like after the scheme had been completed and any new landscaping had been carried out in order that members of the public could gain a true picture. The Clerk explained that the Parish Council had no further information at the moment but that Royal Haskoning and the Environment Agency were very committed to having full consultation with all parties concerned. It was pointed out that the Parish Council had not concluded either in favour or against the scheme at this stage, and would rather debate and vote on the issue after the plans had been finalised and presented to them. The Parish Council assured the general public that they would be consulted with further information as soon as it became available. Mr Pickering, who had in the past worked for the Environment Agency and was at the meeting, made himself known to the Parish Council and offered his assistance with the Scheme, for which the Parish Council was very grateful.

Allotments

Further residents had expressed an interest in the possible provision of allotments in the village. Availability of land was still being progressed.

Ethical Standards and the Code of Conduct

Certificates for attending this training course were given to Mr Brown and Mr Watson.

The Methodist Chapel

As from September Parish Council meetings were to be held in the Methodist Chapel. Clerk had arranged for payment to be made in advance. A separate key would be cut for the Clerk's use.

Creative Change

As requested, Clerk had ascertained the authenticity of this company and would request further details for distribution to the public.

CALC Training

Training on the planning process would be held on 11th September, 7.00pm sharp in the Methodist Chapel.

The Post Office/Shop

Meeting arranged for 4th September, 7.30pm in the Methodist Chapel with the Postmaster and representatives from HDC Planning Dept. to discuss the preferred options for development of the shop/post office site. This would be attended by the Planning Sub Committee and other Parish Councillors who might be available.

Parish Council Vacancy

The Clerk reminded the meeting that there was still a vacancy for a Parish Councillor and with the impending workload it was important to fill this vacancy as soon as possible. Any one interested could contact either the Clerk or any Parish Councillor.

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

Dispensation – Flood Alleviation Scheme

Clerk confirmed that the Standards Committee had granted dispensation to allow members of the Parish Council to speak and vote on matters relating to the Flood Alleviation Scheme up until 30th April 2010. This had obviously been received prior to the meeting with the Environment Agency on 23rd August 2006.

CALC

Major changes to CALC's organisation – circulated to Councillors. Mrs Dyer confirmed she would attend the AGM/EGM on 14th October 2006.

Household Rubbish Collection

Request from resident for a special house collection of large rubbish items such as furniture. It was suggested a free service might already be available to the elderly. Clerk to investigate.

Speed Restrictions – Great North Road

Letters from residents suggesting "pinch points"/priority chicanes forwarded to Highways.

HCV's Entering the Village

Clerk had received a complaint from a resident concerning the amount of Heavy Commercial Vehicles that entered the village, especially via Rusts Lane, in error. Clerk to contact local companies such as Unwins and ADL to see if they could help and speak with Highways concerning improved signage.

7. The Clerk's Appraisal

Mrs Watkin summarised the Clerk's appraisal which she, together with Mr Senior, had carried out in August 2006. It had been decided that a Communications Strategy should be formulated for the Council. It was hoped this might be prepared for the October meeting. The Council's Financial Regulations should be finalised for the September meeting. Health and Safety issues should be presented for the November meeting. Further training needed to be addressed, which might involve the Clerk obtaining the CiLCA qualification which was relevant to the Council obtaining Quality Status. To be further discussed. The Clerk was also to maintain a log of Councillor Training. It had been agreed that a mentor who had a good understanding of the role of the Clerk should be appointed. The Clerk had been asked to record the number of hours worked each month.

A copy of the appraisal form was available to Councillors.

8. The Parish Plan

Unfortunately the planned sub committee meeting had been cancelled. A new date was set for 5th September 7.30pm at Mrs Watkin's residence. It was acknowledged that a huge amount of work was still to be carried out on this major project within a short space of time.

9. The Sports & Social Club

Mrs Adams/Mr Watson reported that news was still awaited on the grant from the Football Foundation. In the mean time costs were escalating.

The artificial cricket pitch had been set fire to. Police had been informed.

Family Fun Day planned for Sunday 3rd September 2006.

10. Police Liaison/Neighbourhood Watch

The restructuring of policing in the village had been covered under Matters Arising. The Church had been broken into and reported to the Police.

11. Responsible Finance Officer's Report

Cheques for signature (notified with Correspondence List):

Alan C. Summerfield – grass cutting (6 cuts) -£3066.75

Clerk's Salary – August - £331.54

CALC – Training Workshop - £25

Demon – Web Hosting - £11.75

Pipex Broadband - £14.99

Methodist Chapel – rental - £15

Boyd Sport & Play – repairs to Bramble End - £146.88

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

Cleared Balances:

Current Account: £13,784.22 Deposit Account £18,592.70

Youth Group Account: £5272.10

Clerk to provide expenditure versus budget figures for September meeting.

12. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on 26th September 2006 in the Methodist Chapel, starting at 7.45pm. Please Note Change of Normal Venue.