

ALCONBURY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting held on Tuesday 27th January 2004 in the Methodist Church

Present

Mrs. Watkin (Chair), Mrs Adams, Mr Dawson, Mrs Dix, Mrs Dyer, Mrs Elphick, Mrs Turner and Mr. Vanbergen. County Councillor Mr Peter Downes and District Councillor Mrs Sarah Vanbergen. Mrs. Lancey (Clerk), 20 members of the public.

Presentation

Sharon McCrorie the Patch Manager at Huntingdon Youth Centre attended the meeting in order to discuss youth issues in the village. Everyone present had the opportunity of expressing their views and concerns. After a lengthy discussion it was agreed that a working party should be formed to look into all issues concerning young people in the village. It was felt that young people should be encouraged to be more constructive within their environment while at the same time more support from the police would be welcomed by many residents. It was strongly suggested that Alconbury should have representation on the Community Safety Partnership Programme. This, along with an application for funding for possible youth workers in the village would be addressed by the working party. Volunteers for the working party were Sarah Vanbergen, Peter Downes, Elizabeth Adams, Debbie Hose, Sandra Orange (Alconbury Weston) and Pauline Whitehead. An initial meeting was to be arranged as soon as possible by Sharon McCrorie and the Clerk.

Open Forum

Residents from Lordsway Park asked if there had been any progress with the signs requested for the bottom of Rusts Lane. Clerk had not been informed of any progress to date. Concern was expressed about the amount of litter generally in the village. It was explained that the Scouts already carried out an annual litter pick.

Welcome

Mrs Watkin welcomed to the village the Reverend Canon Jonathan Young as Priest in Charge and the Reverend James Muggleton and the Reverend Dr. John Hare as Assistant Curates.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Mr. Lane.

2. Minutes

The Clerk apologised to County Councillor Peter Downes for omitting his name from the Draft Minutes. They had been amended accordingly. The minutes of the last meeting held on 16th December 2003 were then approved and signed.

3. Committee Reports

i. Infrastructure Report

Churchyard: Mrs Elphick requested that the Parish Council should express their thanks to Richard Coulson and Ian Parrott for the work they had carried out on the Church clock. Clerk to action.

ii. Village Green: Nothing to report.

General: Clerk reported on the vandalism that had occurred in the village on the night of 10th January. Damage had been caused to a street sign, footbridge and the kissing gate at

the Church. This had been reported not only for repair but also to the Police. Vandalism had also been reported to the Clerk along the footpath leading from the Old Great North Road to the housing association estate . Clerk to contact both Highways Dept. and the Housing Association. Clerk reported that the footpaths in Manor Lane would be resurfaced during January/February. Mrs. Adams requested that the trees should be trimmed along the Maltings as they had overgrown the road. Clerk to action.

iii. Planning:

There were no new applications.

Applications Determined:

0302986FUL/LBC – Extension to Dwelling, 5 The Maltings – refused.

00302984FUL/LBC – Extension to Dwelling, 3 The Maltings – refused.

0302878FUL – Erection of 18 metre high telecommunications mast – Home Farm – refused.

0303276FUL – 38, Manor Lane – extension and alteration to dwelling - refused.

0303201FUL – Regent House, Rusts Lane – extension and alterations to dwelling - granted

0303282FUL – 14, School Lane – extension to dwelling - granted.

0302953FUL – Extension to Dwelling, 38 Brookside – granted

iii Bramble End Playground

Nothing to report.

4. Matters Arising

i. The Parish Plan:

Clerk had received a call from Cambridgeshire ACRE to say that there was nothing to cause an immediate problem with Alconbury's initial application for a grant for a Parish Plan. The first meeting of the Steering Group should now be arranged. The actual Grant Application Form would be completed at this initial meeting which would also be attended by Mr. Stan Rees of Cambridgeshire ACRE. Clerk to organise along with Mr. Dawson the Parish Council representative.

ii. American Traffic:

It was agreed that the amount of American traffic passing through the village had not improved. Mrs. Dyer to action at the next RAF Molesworth meeting.

iii. Flood Alleviation Scheme:

Mrs. Watkin reported on the Flood Alleviation meeting which she had attended on 9th Jan. 2004. The brook was to be dredged and the channel re-profiled. This could mean the loss of some trees on the village green and might mean the Fair would not have sufficient room. The fords would be removed. There would be some structural walling in Alconbury Weston The work in Alconbury could be justified on the means testing basis used by the Environment Agency but this was not the case in Alconbury Weston which might have to be funded from another source. In any event the work would not commence until 2006-2009. There was to be yet another consultation. An exhibition would be held so the general public could see the appearance of the planned alterations. Clerk to circulate a copy of the minutes of this meeting.

iv. Council Tax:

Councillor Downes reported on the latest situation with regard to the County Council

element of the forthcoming Council Tax increase. There had been three proposals – a rise of either 6%, 8% or 10%. CCC wished to keep the increase at 6% but this meant that the passport money stipulated by the Government to be allocated to schools could not be met within the County. In order to meet this allocation the rise would be 9%. CCC had appealed to the Government and there was to be an MP's debate on the issue. There was also the suggestion that any rise should be capped at 5% which gave CCC yet another dilemma. The result of the debate was awaited.

v. Sandbag Provision:

As agreed, a letter detailing provision of sandbags to properties together with other relevant flood information had been copied and was given to Councillors for distribution..

vi. Bus Shelter:

Clerk had received confirmation that the new bus shelter outside the Surgery would be provided March – May 04.

vii. 26, Spinney Lane:

Clerk reported that the untidy garden had been improved.

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

i. Cambs. Police Authority – Budget Consultation:

Meeting on 29th January to be attended by Mr. Vanbergen.

ii. Audit Commission Questionnaire - District Council Performance Assessment:

To be completed by Mrs. Watkin and Clerk.

iii. Inspector's Report on Airfield Inquiry:

Report together with covering letter from Derek Cox to be circulated. Clerk to acknowledge receipt of letter.

iv Local "Correspondents":

BBC Radio Cambridgeshire are looking to recruit a loose network of local "correspondents". Information to be handed to Mrs. Dix.

v. Repair to Kissing Gate:

Thanks had been received from PCC.

vi. Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue Budget Consultation:

No comments were made by Parish Council.

vii. Steering Group Meeting – Street Wardens:

Information passed to Mrs. Adams for consultation at Working Party on youth matters.

viii. Guided Bus Newsletter:

Circulated to Councillors.

ix. Study of Rural Economy & Services Meeting:

No comments were made by Parish Council.

6. Responsible Finance Officer's Report

i. Payment of Accounts:

The following accounts were passed for payment:

Clerk's Salary – 32 hours (January) £241.60

Victim Support - donation £50

Alconbury Methodist Church – room hire £18.00

Burleigh Contractors – felling of dead chestnut - £117.50

K. Fergusons – grass cutting £470

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

ii. Free Balances:

Clerk reported free balances at Deposit Acct. £21,343.93 and Current Acct. £4063.09.

7. Representative Reports

(i) Old Memorial Hall/Alconbury & District Community Hall Charity: Mrs Watkin reminded the meeting that a new charity - The Alconbury & District Community Hall Charity (ADCHC) had been formed for the development of the New Memorial Hall. The ADCHC considered itself to be the sole beneficiary of the assets of the original charity, which managed the old hall, the Alconbury Memorial Hall Charity. Once planning permission had been granted on the site of the original building a considerable amount of money (between £50,000 and £80,000) was at stake.

Mrs. Watkin reported that she had dealt with a large amount of correspondence (and had herself written some 70 documents) on this subject involving both charities, the Charities Commission and the Church Commission (who had originally gifted the land to the village) and that this had necessarily taken up a huge amount of time and effort for both the Old Memorial Hall Committee and the Parish Council. She was now working towards a new Scheme to set up an Endowment Fund to administer the proceeds of the sale. She stressed that all through this process both the Parish Council and the Old Memorial Hall Committee had simply followed the instructions of the Charities Commission in working towards this new Scheme and in so doing had endeavoured to serve the whole of the community.

In spite of the fact that instructions from the Charities Commission were being carried out, the ADCHC were still very unhappy and had expressed their concerns on the issue on numerous occasions. Mrs Watkin reported that the letters from the ADCHC had become increasingly assertive. In preparation for the new Scheme, the Parish Council Representative together with other new Trustees of the Endowment Fund had been appointed. The ADCHC had subsequently written to all the newly appointed Trustees making scathing remarks about the work of the Parish Council and the Memorial Hall Committee. Mrs Watkin strongly refuted the various allegations made in this letter. At no time had the ADCHC accepted that the work towards the new Scheme had been carried out under the auspices of the Charities Commission. Mrs. Watkin pointed out that there were several other thriving charities within the village supporting the residents, and that the ADCHC was not the only one. Under the new Scheme all of these charities would be able to benefit from the monies made available from the fund. The first draft of the Scheme was expected at any time.

Subsequent to their letter to all Trustees, the ADCHC had spent a considerable amount of money on taking legal advice on the matter. As a result of this they now accepted that there is a permanent endowment established by the 1981 Scheme. It had also been accepted that there was no issue to be taken up with the Church Commission as the covenant under which the land was originally gifted was non-restrictive. However, the

ADCHC had now reached the conclusion that the only solution, which would ensure that they gained control of the assets was that all monies resulting from the Endowment Fund should be transferred to the Trustees of the New Memorial Hall. Mrs. Watkin had again taken advice from the Charities Commission and understood that this was not possible and that the proceeds from the Endowment Fund must be made available to all the inhabitants of the village. Mrs. Watkin suggested that under these circumstances it would therefore seem unwise for the ADCHC to spend any more money on taking legal advice. The Charities Commission had once again stated that all actions taken by the Parish Council and the Old Memorial Hall were properly valid. Mrs. Watkin stated that she now considered the issue to be resolved. When the draft Scheme was received, it would be displayed, as required, in two public places for 21 days. It would then be returned to the Charities Commission for final acceptance and then displayed once more. When this had been achieved, the land could be sold.

Mrs. Watkin continued that she knew that the ADCHC was working very hard for the good of the community, and that many user groups were taking benefit from the marvellous new facilities. She felt that the New Memorial Hall deserved the continued support of the Parish Council. A letter had been received from the New Memorial Hall requesting the Parish Council to donate £1,742.79 towards the new pavement in front of the Hall/Doctor's Surgery. This amount of money related to the pavement, which was not considered to be bordering the New Memorial Hall. It was agreed that use of the original Application for Funding/Donation Form should be reinstated, and that the RFO should send a copy to the ADCHC for immediate completion. The request would then be considered at the next Parish Council meeting.

8. Date of Next Meeting:

The next meeting is to be held on Tuesday 24th February 2004 in the New Memorial Hall.