

## **ST. NICHOLAS HURST PARISH COUNCIL**

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL  
HELD IN THE SMALL VILLAGE HALL, SCHOOL ROAD, HURST  
ON MONDAY 7<sup>th</sup> September 2009 AT 7.30 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors W. Smith (in the Chair),  
Bowman, Curry, Dry, Holdstock, Larkin, Lyon, J  
Martin.

Councillor Annette Drake

APOLOGIES: Councillor P. Martin

OFFICERS: Mrs. M. Bradshaw (Clerk)

### **7611 Vacancies on the Council**

It was noted that one vacancy remains on the Parish Council. Councillor Lyon is aware of a potential candidate who may be interested in covering the Davis Street area.

### **7612 Minutes**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on the 13<sup>th</sup> July 2009 were agreed as an accurate record.

### **7613 Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

### **7614 Public Forum**

No matters were raised in the Public Forum.

### **7615 Police Matters**

No report was available although the Chairman did refer to a recent report which provided crime statistics for the area. Some brief discussion was held around the recent late night disturbance in School Road. The Parish Council will continue to work with PCSO Anne Chalmers regarding possible dates for using the speed gun in the village.

RESOLVED: the Clerk to ascertain the source of the recent crime report which Councillors considered useful and comprehensive.

## 7616 **Planning Applications**

Members discussed the applications attached to these Minutes. The majority of applications had been commented upon over the summer break. Of the remaining applications there were no adverse comments relating to F/2009/1597, F/2009/1675 or F/2009/1821. The Parish Council objected to application F/2009/1741 as there were no material changes to the previous application which was also objected to.

Councillor Larkin updated the meeting on the recently received Strategic Development Locations. A brief look at the paper raised concerns about the possible option of reopening the Ashridge Interchange. Councillors agreed that, if this option materialised, the implications on through traffic in the village would be significant.

RESOLVED: the clerk to express the Parish Council's views to WBC on the outstanding planning applications.

Councillor Larkin to follow up on the implications of the Strategic Development Locations for the Parish Council.

## 7617 **Provision for Young People in the Parish**

Councillor Jan Martin confirmed that there was no update to bring to this meeting other than a map still needs to be completed and the cycle path plotted.

## 7618 **School Road Play Area Works**

The Chairman updated the meeting on the current position with School Road and the on going issues:

- The Chairman stated how the Parish Council has now been informed that the legal and administration costs associated with WBC drawing up the planting licence are £657. Councillors agreed that this was unacceptable.
- The Chairman and Clerk have compiled a briefing note to allow the former and Councillor Mrs Annette Drake to request a meeting with the Chief Executive Officer of WBC. The Parish Council wish to express their dissatisfaction with the process, the costs incurred and the unnecessary delays.
- Some discussion was held around the adjoining gates which currently allow some residents direct access to the playing field. The Chairman has met with one resident who, in particular, wishes their gate to remain.

- Councillor Mrs Bowman proposed that “In the interests of health and safety the Parish Council must prevent any access from private property to the playing field”. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Mrs Curry and unanimously agreed by the Parish Council.
- Some discussion was held around the fencing and the quotes which the Chairman had already received. The possibility of privet hedging was also discussed but subsequently discarded as a suitable option.
- The Chairman briefed members regarding the current situation with the village pond. Some complaints have been received regarding its present condition and general aesthetics. The Chairman explained that he had recently inspected the pond with a local contractor with a view to obtaining a quote for maintenance work and general clearing. Members agreed that any work needed to be fully specified and three quotes sought.

**RESOLVED:**

The Chairman and Councillor Mrs Drake to arrange a meeting with WBC's Chief Executive Officer;

Advice to be sought from WBC regarding the adjoining gates and the Clerk to write to the resident concerned;

The Parish Council to gain three quotes for fencing the playing field; and

The Parish Council to produce a specification for the work required at the village pond and three quotes sought accordingly.

**7619 Traffic Initiatives**

The Chairman gave a brief update on the traffic initiatives covering both the positing of the VAS nearer the village and the gated entrances to the parish.

**7620 Playbuilder**

Councillor Mrs Curry updated the meeting. Councillors Mrs Curry and Dry had recently attended a briefing meeting and Mrs Curry had received confirmation that School Road Play area is to be included in the Year 1 project. Dinton Pastures is also included. The Parish Council is unclear as to what criteria have been applied or how much funding will be received.

Councillor Dry expressed her concerns and reservations regarding additional development at School Road. Concerns related specifically to the increased volume of traffic which could be coming into that area at specific times of the day. As a result, she felt that she could no longer be involved with the project as she was unable to support School Road as a suitable site.

RESOLVED: Councillor Mrs Dry to step down from her role in the Playbuilder project.

Councillor Mrs Curry to consider all options in terms of play equipment for School Road.

## 7621 Finance

The following accounts were presented for approval this month:

### Accounts - Sept 2009

	£	£
Previous Balance		36,109.09

The following accounts are presented for approval this month:

#### Ref Expenditure - Payee

6.1	Allianz Insurance plc (increase in PL cover)		61.57
6.2	Kevin Guy (July)		61.89
6.3	SDK Environmental Ltd (dog waste service)		18.35
6.4	Southern Electric (School Road)		26.05
6.5	Thames Water - allotments		59.22
6.6	M Bradshaw		
	<i>Salary July 09</i>	404.73	
	<i>Office</i>	60.00	
	<i>Mileage</i>	2.35	
	<i>Stationery</i>	29.99	497.07
6.7	Kevin Guy (August)		61.24
6.8	Hurst Village Halls		25.88
	<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<b>811.27</b>
	<b>Income</b>		<b>0</b>

**Revised balance c/f** **35,297.82**

## 7622 Correspondence

### More Powers for Parish and Town Councils

The Parish Council was contacted by Steve Shaw, National Co-ordinator, Local Works - promoting the Sustainable Communities Act:

The Sustainable Communities Act is a radical piece of legislation that became law due to a 5 year campaign run by the Local Works coalition, of which the National Association of Local Councils and the Society of Local Council Clerks are leading members.

The Act sets up a 'bottom up' process whereby citizens and their councils can drive government action to promote or protect thriving communities. The Act has

the potential to devolve powers down to local level, allow local people to have more say over how public money is spent in their area and even change primary legislation on things like planning rules.

But in the final days of the Act being passed Local Councils were omitted from the process by Whitehall officials. Local Works is now campaigning for an amendment Bill to the original Act that will not only formally include Local Councils in the process, but will also give them new powers in that process.

The Sustainable Communities Act Amendment Bill enables Local Councils to take advantage of the Act if you wish to, as follows

- First by requiring principal councils to include representatives of Local Councils on the citizens panels required by the original Act;
- But, what if principal councils do not 'opt in' to the process required by the Act? The new Bill deals with this by enabling County Associations of Local Councils to put proposals for action direct to government;
- By ensuring that the process is an ongoing one- i.e. not a one-off, so that councils and communities everywhere can continue to feed their ideas into government to ensure greater local sustainability.

Help is needed in order for this amendment Bill to become law and the Parish Council is being asked to:

1. write to, or email, (as a council) your MPs asking them to 'Please sign Early Day Motion No. 1545 in support of the Sustainable Communities Act Amendment Bill.', and
2. urge others, e.g. individual Parish and Town Councillors, to write to their MPs in a similar way.

RESOLVED: the Clerk to write to the Local MP.

The meeting ended at 9.30 p.m.

Signed.....

Date.....