

NEWBOLD PACEY AND ASHORNE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 4 JANUARY 2006

PRESENT: Councillors: P Cook (Chair), C Thornton, S Bolton, J Booth, M Griffiths
District Councillors: R Wright, A Macaulay
County Councillors: A Macaulay

And 7 members of the public.

1. Public participation

Mr Woodfin addressed the Parish Council with a concern over the state of the footpath between Newbold Pacey and Ashorne, in particular the area between the gate to the field and the bridge. Mr Woodfin tendered a suggestion that this area needed hardening up for general foot traffic.

Adrian Wilson expressed concern to the Parish Council over the current situation with the village cricket field. Mr Wilson felt that the situation appeared to be worsening following the erection of signage at the area in question and the fact that several residents were receiving letters and phone calls from Mr Darling's solicitors.

2. Declaration of Interest

Cllrs Bolton and Griffiths declared an interest in item 6.a.v
Cllr Thornton declared an interest in item 6.a.iv

3. Apologies for absences

Apologies received from District Cllr D Close

4. Approval of minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the last meeting held on 2nd November 2005 were unanimously accepted as a true record of proceedings.

5. Matter arising from previous minutes

a. Village Hut news- delivery rota

Cllr Griffiths informed the Parish Council that the last delivery run worked well but that he required an extra 4 or 5 copies next time as there were some properties which missed out. Cllr Bolton mentioned that he would also need an extra 4 or 5 copies next time.

b. Cricket field update

Cllr Cook read aloud the minutes from the public meeting held on 5th December 2005 and these were accepted as a true record of proceedings and signed accordingly.

Cllr Cook then informed the Parish Council that she had, that morning, received fresh correspondence from the County Council, all in response to the Village Green application, which included a bundle of photographs of the various signage which had been erected throughout the area in question. These were distributed by Cllr Cook for the Parish Council to view. Cllr Cook made note of the fact that the bridge situated on the land covered in the village green application now has signage on, which was erected by Mr Darling. Cllr Cook questioned County Cllr Macaulay as to whether this bridge was actually owned by the County Council. Cllr Macaulay assured the Parish Council that she would look into this further.

Cllr Cook informed the Parish Council that the written opinion from the County Council was that the Village Green application was bound to fail and when she had reported this to the Open Spaces society they had requested a copy of the letter from County Council as they felt County Council were making too many assumptions about the application without waiting for the decision of the appeal at the House of Lords.

The documentation received also stated in writing that the application is now to be heard on 31st January 2006, with all written submissions to be received by 16th January 2006.

Cllr Cook then read to the Parish Council the objections to the Village Green application which were included in the pack from County Council, the first of which was from David Darling. Cllr Bolton requested that it be noted in the minutes that Mr Darling, in his objection document, had stated that the signs asking for dogs to be kept on leads and not be allowed to roam free over the land in question were erected by the previous owners of Ashorne House. This statement is untrue as the signs were actually erected by the Parish Council in order to stop the dogs roaming onto the Cricket Field. Mr Darling also made the point in his objection document that the evidence returned in the questionnaires completed by residents did not appear to relate to the land in question but rather to the land lying further to the south.

The next objection document read was from the owners of Cover Point, Ashorne whose land adjoins the Ashorne House estate. The owners stated that they have lived on the property for the last six and half years and are able to see onto the Cricket Field from their land. They stated that they have not been aware in that time of activities other than dog walking and carparking taking place on a regular basis on the land in question. They also stated that any other activities were only allowed with the express permission of the previous owners of the land in question, the Sidwells and that these only took place approximately twice a year. The owners of Cover Point additionally stated that they believed the Sidwells did not like people to stray from the public footpath when walking their dogs. Cllr Bolton requested it be minuted that this statement was completely untrue.

The final objection document in the bundle was from Kat Bowen. Ms Bowen stated that the permission to use the land in question had been withheld since Nov 2004 and that since this date the land has not been used without first gaining permission. It was stated that people walking free over the land has been discouraged, which was disputed by Cllr Cook as untrue. Ms Bowen also stated that the use of the land by the Cricket Club is now discouraged and a fence had been erected to stop this.

Cllr Bolton noted that Ms Bowen had mentioned in her objection document that the lock and chain on the gate at the site was put up by the Sidwells, whereas in actual fact this was purchased by the Cricket Club to stop travellers parking on the field and the Sidwells were given a key.

Cllr Cook then proposed that a sub-committee be set up to respond to the objections tendered. Cllr Griffiths posed the question as to whether the Parish Council were prepared to continue with the application and fight for Village Green Status. He stated that it was important to recognise that the Cricket Club committee may be happy with a compromise offered by Mr Darling in the future but that there was a possibility that the continued application for Village Green status may jeopardise that.

A resident, Natasha Conlen was invited to speak by the Chair. Mrs Conlen suggested that the Parish Council take legal advice on the matter and that she was happy to provide the contact details for a solicitor at the firm of Blythe Liggins.

Cllr Bolton was of the opinion that the Parish Council should continue the fight for Village Green status in order to preserve something for the village in the future.

Cllrs Booth and Thornton concurred with Mrs Conlen's suggestion that the Parish Council should take legal advice quickly on the matter as the submissions for the application are required in two weeks time.

Cllr Cook proposed that she seek advice from solicitors and then call a further meeting to discuss the next stage of action. This was agreed unanimously. Cllrs Griffiths and Thornton volunteered to accompany Cllr Cook to the solicitors meeting. Cllr Cook advised the Parish Council that she would call the Open Spaces society in the event that the solicitor suggested by Mrs Conlen was not able to help. This was unanimously agreed.

District Cllr Wright volunteered to speak to the Senior Enforcement Officer, Gary Fisher, regarding the fencing and signage that had been erected by Mr Darling and request that Mr Fisher visit the site to give a further opinion as to whether the signage and fencing is legal. This was agreed by the Parish Council. District Cllr Wright also volunteered to re-engage the MP, Mr John Maples and request that he speak to County Council on behalf of the Parish Council. This was also agreed by the Parish Council.

County Cllr Macaulay requested the Parish Council copy her in on correspondence relating to this case.

Clerk to send copy of County Council opinion to Open Spaces. Cllr Cook to contact solicitors. Cllr Wright to speak to Mr Maples and the Enforcement office.

c. Parish Plan update

Cllr Thornton advised the Parish Council that she had not yet received a copy of the plan to proof-read. Cllr Griffiths assured the Parish Council that he would organise this. District Cllr Wright extended congratulations to the Parish Council on the plan.

Cllr Griffiths to supply Cllr Thornton with a copy of the plan for proofreading.

d. Allotments

Cllr Griffiths expressed concern over the population of rabbits at the allotments. Cllr Cook volunteered to contact a pest controller.

Cllr Cook to contact pest controller

e. Village garden

There was nothing further to report on this item.

f. Fire and rescue society

Cllr Bolton advised that he had read the letter pertaining to this item and had sent off the reply but had heard nothing further.

g. Safety in the home DVD

There was nothing further to report on this item.

6. Planning

a. New Applications

- i. 05/03179/FUL- Erection of building for parking and storage. The American Barns, Banbury Rd. No representations sent
- ii. 05/03149/FUL- Change of use of commercial theatre to office and residential. Ashorne Hall, Ashorne Hill. Representations sent regarding the new windows proposed.
- iii. 05/03561/FUL- Amendment to planning consent 05/00218/FUL- replacement of existing cottage to provide third bedroom. Meriecot, Ashorne. Representations sent regarding the proposed roof line and new windows.
- iv. 05/03717/FUL- Proposed pre-fabricated garage and timber summer house situated on garden land to side of property and proposed widening of existing vehicular crossover and drive. Treetops, Ashorne. No representations sent.
- v. 05/03663/FUL- Two storey pitched roof extension to rear. Heather Croft, Ashorne. No representations sent.

b. Decisions out of committee

None

c. District Decisions

- i. 05/03149/FUL- Change of use of commercial theatre. Ashorne Hall, Ashorne. Granted. Decision noted.

7. Finance

a. Approval of payments

The Parish Council agreed to following payments:

1.	D Cruden- final salary	£500.00
2.	BHL Ltd- Purchase of grit bin	£99.58
3.	WCC- The Hut printing	£9.68
4.	St Georges Churchyard- annual grant	£230.00
5.	Village Hall- annual grant	£220.00
6.	E Spencer- expenses Nov, Dec	£22.13

It was also agreed to pay the Clerk's salary for Nov and Dec in accordance with the amount budgeted in the 2005/06 precept. Additionally it was agreed that Cllr Thornton would provide the Clerk with the outstanding total for rental on the village hall and that this would be paid. Cllr Thornton also advised the Parish Council that the Village Hall had not received the annual grant for 2005 and it was agreed to add this amount onto the grant approved above, making a total of £430.00.

b. 2006 Budget approval

Copies of the budget for 2006/07, as prepared by the Clerk, were distributed to the Parish Councillors and discussed. Cllr Bolton queried the amount budgeted for the Clerk's expenses. It was explained that the increase is due to the Clerk not living in the village and therefore charging for mileage. This was accepted by the Parish Council. Cllr Griffiths questioned the need to budget £1,200 for election costs. It was explained that should elections be called for the money needed to be available. This was accepted. Cllr Cook proposed raising the allotment rents to £12.00 per allotment and this was unanimously agreed. The budget as prepared was unanimously accepted by the Parish Council. Cllr Griffiths wished it minuted that the prepared budget spreadsheet was an easier way of reading the proposals.

c. 2006 precept approval

The Parish Council unanimously agreed to set the 2006/07 precept at £4,300.

8. District Councillor's report

District Cllr Wright reported the following:

The re-organisations at District Council are continuing with the three directors being reduced to two. Trevor Askew and David Nash were offered the positions. The Director of Finance has now left.

The Heads of Service are also being reduced- from 10 down to eight.

The CPA inspectors visited District Council in October and the conclusion was that there has been a definite improvement but there is much further work to do to get up to standard.

Council Tax considerations are taking place at the moment. There appear to be a lot of budget pressures this year with an income shortfall from carparking fines being reported.

The Dene Valley sports complex is in its final stages and is being presented to the Executive in February. The final business plan is being submitted to Wellesbourne on Friday 6th January 2006 ready to present to the District Council.

Cllr Cook questioned Cllr Wright as to who is responsible for clearing up after motor accidents. Cllr Wright informed Cllr Cook that the police inform District Council who then tidy up. Cllr Cook mentioned that this had not happened following the recent fatal accident in Ashorne. Cllr Wright volunteered to take this back to District Council.

9. County Councillor's report

County Cllr Macaulay reported the following:

There is to be a reorganisation at County Council as well with a reduction in the number of Directors. A new Director of Children, young people and their families services has been appointed- Marion Davis.

Cllr Macaulay requested that the Parish Council submit an objection to the proposed merger of Coventry and Warwickshire ambulance service with the the West Midlands as this will likely represent a below average service for Coventry and Warwickshire. This was agreed by the Parish Council.

At the last County Council meeting £2 million extra was earmarked for highway repairs. This will be spread among rural roads, pavement and street lighting.

Cllr Thornton questioned Cllr Macaulay as to what was happening with regards to the merger of the police forces. Cllr Macaulay answered that all plans were up the air at present.

Cllr Macaulay to provide the Clerk with details of the Strategic Health Authority and the Clerk to send objection letter.

10. Police report

There were no police officers present therefore there is no report under this item.

Cllr Cook informed the Parish Council that she had attended the Police surgery in Moreton Morrell on Dec 20th 2005.

Cllr Cook also raised concern over the visibility at the Square in Ashorne (C167/C45 junction) following the fatal accident. The police have agreed to have the issue passed to County Council in order to have the area assessed. Cllr Macaulay volunteered to speak to County Council also.

Cllr Macaulay to speak to County Council.

11. Correspondence

A list of correspondence was produced and dealt with.

12. Matters of interest

a. Contact list for Cllrs

The Clerk requested email addresses from all Cllrs who had them so that information could be circulated more easily. District Cllr Wright requested a copy of the contact list for the District and County Cllrs. This was agreed.

Clerk to supply list to County and District Cllrs.

b. Cllr resignations

Cllr Cook informed the Parish Council that resignations had been received from Cllr Poole and Cllr Booth. A letter of resignation from Cllr Poole was read. Cllr Cook advised the Parish Council that a notice had already been put on the noticeboard and that the final date for residents to request an election is stated as 2nd February 2006.

c. Gritting

Cllr Cook expressed concern over the gritting of Ashorne. Cllr Macaulay assured the Parish Council that grit will be provided for the bins as and when required.

d. State of footpaths as raised by Mr Woodfin

With regards to the matter raised by Mr Woodfin Cllr Cook informed the Parish Council that she has previously advised the County Council about the state of some of the footpaths in the village but that they were unable to help.

Mr Woodfin advised the Parish Council that the land owner is happy for work to take place to make the footpath easier.

District Cllr Wright informed the Parish Council that the owner is responsible for keeping the footpath clear but not for maintenance. If the landowner files a disclaimer with County Council if material is put down there will be no comeback on her should someone have an accident.

Cllr Griffiths expressed the opinion that residents would not be happy if the whole footpath was hardened but would be pleased to see the worst parts dealt with.

Cllr Cook to speak to the landowner

Cllr Cook also raised the issue of the Holloway, which is an unclassified road, and which has parts of the path badly eroded.

Cllr Macaulay to look into.

e. Newbold Pacey to Moreton Morrell Road

Cllr Booth reported that, with regards to the above road, the hedges are overgrown beyond the gas works.

Clerk to contact Highways

f. Village Hall curb stone

Cllr Booth raised the point that several residents have a concern over the raised curb at the entrance to the Village Hall with the thought that it may cause someone to trip. Cllr Cook replied that it is necessary in order to prevent flooding of the Village Hall.

g. Chippings on road

Cllr Booth informed the Parish Council that there have been chippings on the road since the Darlings undertook some tree planting. Cllr Cook did not consider that it could be proven this had come from the Darling's.

h. Litter on road at Newbold Pacey

Cllr Booth reported that there seemed to have been a lot of litter on the road at Newbold Pacey between Christmas and New Year. District Cllr Wright answered that this had come off a Biffa lorry and was now cleared away.

13. Date of next meeting

The next meeting is to be held in the Newbold Pacey and Ashorne Village Hall on Wednesday 1st March 2006 at 7.30pm.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 10.00pm.