

# **NORTHCHAPEL PARISH COUNCIL**

## **Unadopted Minutes of a Meeting held at Northchapel Village Hall, On Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2010**

**Present:** Councillors Mr Willie Poste, Mrs Jane Walter, Mr Alex Brown, Mrs Lynda Bell, Mrs Sharon Holden and Mr David Burden

**In attendance:** Mrs Helen Cruikshank, Parish Clerk

**Comments and Questions from the members of the public:**

There were no members of the public present.

**16. Apologies for absence:** Councillor Andrew Dempsey  
Councillor Georgina Murphy

**17. Declarations of Interest:** Councillors Burden and Holden declared a personal interest as Village Hall Trustees

**18. Minutes:** The Minutes of the previous Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2010 were approved as a correct record and signed.

**19. PCSO Ian Luxford:** PCSO Clair Ganlin has been seconded to Chichester so PCSO's Ian Luxford and Jane Morley now cover this area. PCSO Luxford reported that there had been no reported crimes in the Parish over the past month or so although there had been 3 RTL's either side of the Village. Year to date at end June saw 22 reports of crime which was down 13 year on year. He advised to be extra vigilant in these times with an increase in thefts from sheds, outbuildings of tools and scrap metal. Please report any suspicious vehicles. Councillor Walter requested that regular visits to the village be made during the school holidays. PCSO Luxford said the team had been getting to know local children, joining them on the bus from the MRC to Northchapel. Councillor Poste requested that visits be made to the Play Area at night to deter any vandalism particularly with the new play equipment having been put up. Councillor Bell questioned the outcome of the Hillgrove theft and PCSO Luxford said he would chase the matter up and report back at the next meeting.

**20. Report from the Elected Representatives of West Sussex County Council and Chichester District Council if available.**

County Councillor Duncton gave his belated apologies for not attending the AGM. He highlighted the importance of attendance at the Day-care & Activity Centre meeting at the Grange. Councillors Poste and Walter agreed to attend. The Ford recycling centre had won an award as an education centre for schools and groups and was very popular for visits. The recent fire meant that the centre was currently out of action but it was hoped to be back up and running soon. He was saddened to report the news that the headmistress of Northchapel Primary School would be leaving at Christmas especially given that all seemed settled now at the school. News from County Hall that local authority funds will have budget cuts. Details will be known shortly but large cuts across all departments and money will be very tight. At the last CLC meeting at Loxwood there was a petition about traffic orders with good and bad speakers. There is currently a County 50mph speed limit but this needs to be 40mph. The problem being this then must be enforced which is difficult for the Police. The County Local Committee (CLC) had previously awarded Northchapel Parish Council £500 towards the Play Area project. Councillors expressed their thanks.

District Councillor Andrews reported that the LDF will be put on hold with varying opinions regarding the current local plan. It has been postponed for a year to allow the coalition government to decide a good long lasting plan for the LDF. The interim plan will not be that desirable. District Councillor Andrews stressed that speed limits do work as they create safer driving. Police can identify speed hot spots and lowering speed limits can only make the most of people slowing down as quality of villager's lives will inevitably improve. He reported that tough financial decisions will need to be made with the recently announced budget cuts. There will be loss of people, buildings, a slow-down of capital spend and a re-address required. Cut backs must not affect the most needy. A clinical look at these is required. Suggested areas to be looked at include shared premises (local government, medical and near local government), merging of rubbish collections and a unified revenue and benefit system across districts.

District Councillor Andrews finished by speaking of the District Council Bulletin Board which is a library of documents constituting the district council's work program with an opportunity for members to comment, discuss or post issues that concern them. He is happy to provide a "how to use" which may facilitate meetings between Parish Councils.

The Chairman thanked both the County and District Councillors for their reports.

## 21. Working Party Reports

**Allotments, Village Green and Play Area** - Councillor Poste reported that the Allotments were in desperate need of rain. There had been a water leak but this has since been repaired. He had had a heated conversation with a resident on the Village Green about the Sports Wall which had since been resolved. There had been no further contact regarding the track. The Village Green is in a very rough state at the moment so Councillor Poste announced that grass cutting will be stopped until it rains however in the meantime the grass opposite the shop will be cut. Councillor Walter reported that the new Play Equipment had been installed and she had received a lot of positive feedback. Timberline is due to return to fix the wobbly chin-up bars so the balance of the payment would be held until this had been done. A picnic table with seating has also been requested, the Parish Council agreed this was a good idea and Councillors Walter and Poste would proceed with purchasing one and getting it concreted in. Councillor Poste added that the fencing had also been finished and the Play Area was now looking very smart, making a big difference to the image of the Village Green.

**Planning** - Councillor Brown reported that planning was quiet locally but regionally very busy. It has been officially agreed that the delegated option be adopted for the South Downs National Park Authority Planning Services with the existing procedures maintained with SDNPA having a small planning team to oversee the process and decide major or controversial applications. The LDF had been put on hold. Due to the new Government revoking regional strategy, planning appears up in the air for the time being so all we can do is monitor the situation and report back any changes. There are two planning applications to be dealt with after this meeting.

Councillor Burden reported there had been 4 meetings of the National Park board to date with key committees and Chairpersons being elected. The location of the headquarters is still to be decided. The National Park has 2-3 yrs to produce a Management Plan which will allow everyone to have an opportunity to give their opinions. It is an interesting time and he will keep us all informed of its progress.

**Footpaths**- Councillor Walter stated two broken bridges had been reported one by Oaklea and one in the Frith.

**Village Hall** - Councillor Holden said she was very impressed with the Police at a recent 18<sup>th</sup> birthday party held at the Village Hall where they had come and checked at the start and at the end of the party.

**Housing** – Councillor Holden said that the residents from St Michaels Close had been given a Short Notice Inspection from HOME and at a brief glance it appeared all results very poor. Given the results from the few returned forms from the housing questionnaire had highlighted poor maintenance in St Michaels Close above everything else, it had been agreed at the last meeting to obtain quotes for an independent survey to be done to identify problem areas to report to HOME. Appendix 2 was noted detailing three quotes for a housing surveyor to come and view (a number of external views and 2 internal views approx) which should be adequate to produce a general summary and provide a report;

- Cricknays (Horsham) Helen Sudworth Est. 14hrs @ £125 per hour = £1750 + VAT
- Peter Arnell Est. 1.5days @£480 per day = £729 + VAT
- Paul Chesney Est. 2 days = £1700 + VAT

Councillor Brown stated that a report was needed with a timetable for solutions, assessment of what is wrong and improvements which need to be done. He declared an interest in knowing Paul Chesney in business and added that he had experience in social housing. Councillor Poste said he was frightened to approve spending £1700 of Parish Council money for nothing to happen as it is not something that could be used to force HOME to act. Councillor Burden said that the Parish Council have a duty and role to put pressure on HOME. Councillor Brown said to identify the complaints – windows, ventilation, flooring and rotting, complain directly to Chichester District Council as maintenance is falling below acceptable levels. District Councillor Andrews said that CDC has a duty of care as a concerned provider of benefits to the tenants. He suggested contacting Amanda Jobling at CDC to seek advice but reiterated that HOME has the repair responsibilities. Councillor Bell suggested filling in the HOME form which the residents had received together with a letter. The housing working party to advance and report back at the next meeting.

## Appendix 1

Councillor Poste added he had sadly received a disturbing letter of complaint from a previous resident of St. Michaels Close regarding disclosure of confidential information from the housing survey. It was agreed this was entirely unsatisfactory and a breach in confidentiality something that the Parish Council takes very seriously. The matter was discussed at length and it was in total agreement that the matter be addressed immediately. Clerk to write an apology letter on behalf of the Parish Council.

### **22. Playground – new equipment**

This was discussed under the Allotments/Village Green/Play Area working party report.

### **23. North-East Parishes Forum**

Councillor Walter stated she had attended the NE Parishes Forum held in Loxwood on 10<sup>th</sup> June and commended Inspector Chris Woollerton from Sussex Police on his excellent presentation regarding Rural Policing. The next NE Parishes Forum is to be held in Northchapel on 16<sup>th</sup> September. It has been requested that the Parish Council chair and supply refreshments at this meeting. Clerk to put this as an item on the agenda at the next meeting to discuss in more detail.

County Councillor Duncton said that a CLC meeting had taken place on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2010 where David Burden had sent his apologies. The next CLC meeting would be on September 28<sup>th</sup> if any Councillors would like to attend. District Councillor Andrews said that there was a Special meeting of the CLC to discuss the Loxwood Speed Limit Proposals on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> September and asked that the next Northchapel Parish Council meeting be changed to allow Councillors to attend. It was agreed to change the meeting to Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> September.

### **24. Housing-Surveyor Quotes**

This was discussed under the Housing working party report.

### **25. Local Development Framework**

This was discussed under the Planning working party report.

### **26. Financial Matters**

- The Council's current financial position @ £28,326 was noted
- The Bank reconciliation at Appendix 3 was noted
- The schedule of accounts submitted for payment at Appendix 4 was noted and approved including payments to WSCC £405.27 (Clerks May Salary), D Goodyear £570 (June's Grass Cutting), JE Homewood & Sons £1128 (Play Area Fencing) and Timberline £6764.49 (balance for new play equipment).
- Internal Auditors report @ Appendix 5 was noted

### **27. Clerks Report**

The Clerks report was duly received and noted.

### **28. Date of next meeting – Amended to Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> September 2010 at 8pm Northchapel Village Hall to allow Councillors to attend the Special CLC meeting at Loxwood.**

Signed .....

Date .....