

Minutes of Whaddon Parish Council meeting held on 9th June 2008 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall

Present:- Acting Chairman Dr N Strudwick
 Councillors Mrs M Peyton, Mr C Rose
 District Councillors Mr N Cathcart
 Parish Clerk Mrs G van Poortvliet
 Parishioners 1 present

The Clerk explained that Chairman Webb was unable to attend the meeting due to ill-health and invited nominations for an Acting Chairman. Councillor Dr Nigel Strudwick was duly elected. Acting Chairman Strudwick explained that, although many Councillors were absent from the meeting, a quorum was present and no major decisions were due to be taken that evening.

1.0 Noting receipt of declarations of acceptance of office – the Clerk had received these from Councillors Phil Neale and Nigel Strudwick . All declarations of acceptance of office had now been received.

2.0 Apologies for absence – had been received from Chairman Ted Webb, Councillors Phil Neale, Clare Byatt and Lee Ginger and District Councillor David McCraith.
 The Councillors suggested that the quorum requirement (currently three members) be reconsidered at the next AGM.

3.0 Disclosure of interests – none declared.

4.0 Approval of minutes

Councillors all agreed that, as no requests for amendments had been received from the absent Councillors, Acting Chairman Strudwick could sign the minutes. Acting Chairman Strudwick then signed the minutes accordingly, including one set for the Main Notice Board.

District Councillor Cathcart requested the Clerk to amend the AGM minutes (19th May 2008) to reflect his opposition to the proposed transfer of SCDC housing stock to a Housing Association.

5.0 Matters arising

5.1 Update on Whaddon Roads and Transport

Roads and footways:

- District Councillor Cathcart had formally written to the Housing Department at SCDC about the repairs needed to the road outside the bungalows in Ridgeway Close. He is awaiting a response. Acting Chairman Strudwick thanked District Councillor Cathcart.
- The dip in the A1198 at the right-hand turn into Whaddon was worsening. The Clerk was asked to write to Highways about this. Councillor Rose offered to take a photograph of the road provided it could be done safely.

Proposed bus service: Cambridgeshire CC had sent notification that they were re-tendering the contract for bus-service 127 with a proposed start date of 28 July 2008. The Clerk would seek clarification about the impact of this on the proposal to introduce this service into Whaddon.

Bus Shelter: the new shelter was due to be delivered in the last week of July. Councillor Ginger had arranged for the existing shelter to be demolished and Councillor Peyton and Chairman Webb would deal with the disposal of the asbestos-sheet roofing panels.

5.2 Diseased Trees on Church Street

Roz Richardson (SCDC tree officer) had looked at the horse chestnuts on Church Street. Acting Chairman Strudwick summarised the key points from an email report sent by Roz Richardson following her visit. The trees were suffering from a bacterial disease with various degrees of infection. It was recommended that a professional condition survey be undertaken to establish which trees were a priority for works, to enable further decisions and to acknowledge a duty of care. SCDC would support the PC with planting new trees and stump removal although the PC would need to fund the removal of the existing trees.

The Councillors wanted to act quickly because of the condition of some of the trees. Acacia Tree Services had quoted £250 plus VAT for a report by a qualified arboriculturalist. A member of the public, on invitation from the Acting Chairman, expressed concern about the condition of the tree over the park benches and also pointed out that the trees had originally been planted in memory of Molly Hale.

It was resolved that the Clerk would arrange for Acacia to undertake the report as soon as possible. Councillor Rose volunteered to help remove the ivy from the trees to aid with the assessment. It was suggested that it would be necessary to inform parishioners what was happening, particularly should trees need to be removed.

6.0 New Correspondence

- SCDC – details of BT consultation re proposed closure of phoneboxes (closing date 6th September 2008).
- Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) – details of changes to bus routes in Cambridge City Centre.
- Bassingbourn Community Facilities and Events Working Group – questionnaire about village hall usage in connection with potential new village hall for Bassingbourn.
- NATS Terminal Control North Proposed Changes to Airspace – consultation extended to 19th June 2008.
- CCC – notification of termination of bus service 127 and re-tendering with proposed start-date of 28th July 2008.
- CCC – notification that the Parish Path Partnership Grant awarded to Whaddon for 2008/09 had been agreed at £800 (for new disabled-access kissing-gates on footpath 8 and the refurbishment of footpath signs).
- SCDC – review of Street Trading consent. Views sought by 18th July 2008.
- CCC/SCDC – consultation re proposals to change the boundary between Cambridge City and SCDC. Deadline 27th June 2008.
- SCDC – invitation to a briefing on Post Office closures (16th July 2008).

7.0 Village Hall Matters

Acting Chairman Strudwick provided an update. Plans for the refurbishment of the hall were progressing well. Another meeting with the architect had been arranged. It would be necessary to meet with a lawyer to discuss setting up the village hall as a charitable trust.

8.0 Potential Removal of Telephone Kiosk on Bridge Street

Acting Chairman Strudwick explained that BT had identified the telephone kiosk on Bridge Street for potential closure as part of a wider programme of phone-box closures. In order for the PC to respond to the consultation the Clerk had asked for usage figures. These were expected in late June/early July. The Councillors commented that if there should be only one phone-box in Whaddon that it should be coin-operated to allow for emergencies. The Clerk was asked to put the item on the agenda for the August PC meeting.

9.0 Update on Affordable Homes

Bedford Pilgrims Housing Association had completed negotiations with County Farms Estates for the purchase of the land on Church Corner and their architects were in discussion with SCDC planners. CCC had written to SCDC planning department stating that the Church Corner site was the only land they were willing to sell in Whaddon for the project.

10.0 Comments from the Public

A member of the public offered to help with removal of the ivy from the horse chestnut trees.

11.0 Any other Business

Councillor Peyton commented on the existence of pot-holes in Bridge Street, towards Dyers Green. The Clerk will report these to Highways and also remind them about the repairs necessary to the footway on Meldreth Road.

Finance:

Cheques approved today (9th June 2008)

Cheque No. 100588, for £362.70, to Whaddon Golf Centre for seven cuts of the recreation ground and additional strimming.

Cheque No. 100589, for £60.00, to Mr P Chilvers for internal audit services.

Cheque No. 100590, for £60.44, to Mr E J Webb for Chairman's expenses.

Cheque No. 100591, for £678.68, to Mrs G van Poortvliet for Clerk's wages and expenses.

As only one cheque-signatory was present a second cheque signature is to be obtained after the meeting.

The internal auditor had signed off the PC's annual return for 2007/08.

Letter to the Chairman – the Clerk circulated a letter sent to the Chairman complaining about the increased traffic on Meldreth Road. The Councillors commented that the police had carried out some speed-checks on Meldreth Road and that the issue was constantly being brought up at the Neighbourhood Watch Area Board Meetings. The Clerk added that District Councillor Cathcart had written to the government minister but had been told that there were no central plans to uniformly reduce speed-limits in villages. Additionally CCC had issued guidelines for their review of speeding in the county with priority being given to A and B roads with the highest accident levels. The Clerk will formally respond to the letter.

Cambridge Water Company - ten awards of £250 would be available under the Village Life Fund initiative. It was suggested that the details be passed to the Whaddon Playground Project.

There being no other business the meeting was now closed at 8.30 p.m.

The date of the next meeting will be Monday 11th August 2008 at 7.30 p.m.