

## Parish Of Alfrick And Lulsley

### Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> February 2006 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall, Alfrick.

#### Present:

Mrs C Williams, Chairman.

Cllr Mrs S Young (District Councillor).

Messrs; P Attwood, P Brown, R Jackson, G Lowe, P Tebbit, J Guise (District Councillor), G M Brewin (Clerk).

Apologies: S Tolley, S Clarke, P Gilbert, C Smith (County Councillor).

Visitors: Five members of the public.

#### Public Question Time prior to the formal meeting:

A representative of the Parochial Church Council of St Mary Magdalene, Alfrick complained that a report by the WCC Walking and Footpaths Officer L Keir on the proposal for a footpath along Upper House Lane had included a comment, allegedly by the clerk to the council, that the church council were to close the licensed footpath through the churchyard. It was stated that this was not the case; the church had no intention of closing this path but reserved the right so to do. The matter of the development at Hill Orchard, Lulsley was raised again by local residents. Concern was expressed at the development on this site which appears to be outside the agreed planning parameters. The fact that it has been categorised as a category 4 problem by MHDC Planning Enforcement Officers, when it is in an AONB and was felt warranted a category 2 listing, was a serious concern. The clerk was asked to contact MHDC Enforcement Officers immediately asking for enforcement action to be taken as soon as possible!

#### The formal meeting began at 7.55pm.

##### 1. Apologies for absence from members and members' declarations of interest.

Apologies were accepted from Cllrs Mrs S Clarke, S Tolley and P Gilbert. A personal interest in affordable houses was declared by Cllr Mrs C Williams (Relative a prospective purchaser).

##### 2. Minutes:

The minutes of the meeting on Tuesday 17th January 2006 circulated in advance were approved as a correct record and signed by the chairman.

##### 3. Matters Arising not covered by the agenda:

The clerk reported on actions from the previous meeting - a replacement value for the War Memorial was awaited.

#### It was agreed to take agenda item 7 next to enable the Chairman of the Parish Plan Steering Committee subsequently to leave the meeting.

##### 7. Approve the Parish Plan ; final text circulated in advance

Mrs Bridget Lewis, chairman of the Steering Committee noted the changes introduced following the last review and circulated the designer's first draft.

After a discussion, on a proposal by Cllr P Tebbit, it was agreed unanimously to adopt the plan.

The plan proposes that individual councillors would take responsibility for implementing sections of the plan.

Councillors would meet informally to decide on these individual responsibilities. (7.30pm Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> March, Fox and Hounds, Lulsley.)

##### 4. Reports.

Cllr C Smith had sent the following report; Unfortunately the meeting clashes with an Executive Committee meeting of MHDC so please accept my apologies for absence. The County Council will set its budget at the meeting next Thursday with a recommended precept increase of 4.94%. This above inflation rise has been brought about a very tight grant settlement from central government. However both I and my Liberal Democrat colleagues have become increasingly concerned at the level of extra staff that have been employed over the past few years and intend to closely scrutinise the reasons for this as the increase runs into several thousand posts. The final decision on the future of the Malvern Highways Partnership will be made at the County Cabinet meeting in March. I am continuing to press for its retention. I have circulated the following statement regarding the Alfrick footpath appeal to the chairman of the county council overview and scrutiny committee and the county council chief executive.

'Gentlemen: As a ward member who has been scrupulous in trying to be even handed in this episode I am becoming increasingly concerned at the way this appeal has been conducted. I will outline my serious concerns below:

The final date for submissions to DEFRA is on the 22nd February. I would have thought as ward member I should have sight of any officer submissions. This has not been the case unlike any similar situations involving my role as a district councillor.

I have been receiving various letters from the appellants and their supporters alleging that that WCC has been, to put it mildly, less than impartial in its dealings with the appellants and their supporters compared with the objectors.

Councillor John Buckley has been furnished as I have with all the evidence. This turn of events has caused me to have the very real fear that if the appeal is dismissed the appellants will have ample case to instigate a judicial review.

To conclude as I have previously stated I have sought to be even handed to both sides in this dispute and continue to do so. However I have come to the regrettable conclusion that not only should Cllr John Buckley investigate this through the scrutiny process but that the County Council chief executive Rob Sykes should launch an immediate investigation as well. It may well be the case that if this does not happen that I will have no alternative but to take this matter to the local government ombudsman. Sincerely, Clive Smith'

Cllr Mrs S Young reported;

High Hedges Legislation; This came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2005 within the provisions of part 8 of the anti Social Behaviour Act 2003. A report will be given to the next Executive Committee meeting. There have been 48 requests for information packs and application forms have been sent out. Each case involves four officer visits, an Environmental Health Officer and the Landscape Officer visiting complainant's property and the Hedge Owner's property at least once.. There is an average of 14 hours for each case. There is then a likelihood of an appeal which increases Officer's hours. This is the reason for a proposed fee rise to £300 per complainant

Malvern Hills Transport Group; This group is due to end in its current form on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2006. The group is made up of several partners, The Countryside Agency, County and District Councils and Community First. It was set up to improve transport in rural areas. The group members wish to carry on and it is proposed that the Transport Officer of Malvern Hills District Council take on the administration of a re-formed group.

Reconfiguration of PCTs; There is to be meeting called by MHDC to meet the PCT Chief Executive at Dyson Perrins School at 7pm on Thursday 23rd February. The proposals are to bring together the three PCTs into one called Worcestershire PCT. It is also proposed to establish one Strategic Health Authority in the West Midlands and to reduce 31 NHS Ambulance Trusts to 11 Large Integrated Ambulance Trusts.

Cllr J Guise reported; Arrangements for regulating council members' conduct have been revised following a consultation exercise. The new arrangement is that complaints go firstly to the local Monitoring Officer and are reviewed by the local Standards Board before any referral to the Standards Board for England is made. Some 58% of complaints currently made are about the conduct of parish councillors.

Parish Footpaths Warden. Cllr G Lowe said that he was in the final stage of completing his appointment with WCC Footpaths Office. He was in contact with his predecessor and would take over very shortly.

## **5. Financial Matters**

Note clerk's delegated action - Payment to npower £14.03 (Street Lights) Agreed.

## **6. Planning Matters;**

- a) Consider the response from the developer of the Leigh Road site for Affordable Houses (circulated in advance) and decide on the terms of reference for councillors who would meet the developer.  
Cllrs R Jackson, P Tebbit and P Gilbert would meet the developer to discuss landscaping. The clerk will ask the developer for suitable dates for this.
- b) Consider -06/00140/FUL, Stables/Store, Woodcutters Barn, Stinchins Hill, Mr M Davies. Circulated in advance. 'No Comment' agreed with the additional comment that in view of the location the disposal of storm water should be specified in the approval documentation.

## **8. Correspondence & Publications Received**

Details are attached to the agenda. The clerk drew members' attention to the following items;

|       |                               |  |
|-------|-------------------------------|--|
| 23/01 | MHDC                          | Survey - Rough Sleepers  |
| 30/01 | WCC                           | Bus Shelter Review   |
| 01/02 | WCC/MHDC                      | Future Travel in MH Area - Meeting etc 8 <sup>th</sup> March               |
| 08/02 | MH AONB                       | Sustainable Devt. Fund   |
| 08/02 | MHDC                          | Local Devt. Framework - Update   |
| 09/02 | MHDC Planning                 | On-line Services Demonstration   |
| 14/02 | MHDC                          | Meeting for Parish Councillors - NHS Configurations 23/2/02                |
| 14/02 | MHDC                          | Awards for Business Excellence 12/4/02                                     |
| 21/02 | <i>Festival Housing Group</i> | <i>Name for Affordable Houses - Leigh Road</i> <i>Agenda March Meeting</i> |

## **9. Report from the informal group on Housing and Planning matters - Cllr R Jackson**

Due to pressure of business this group has yet to meet.

## **10. Response to 'AWARDS FOR ALL' programmes - Cllr Mrs S Tolley**

Cllr Mrs S Tolley is reviewing possible projects under this scheme.

## **11. Review progress to Quality Parish Status.**

- a) Cllrs Mrs C Williams & P Brown to report. The meeting with WCALC is scheduled for 6<sup>th</sup> March.
- b) Approve; Contract of Employment and Person Specification for the clerk, Formal Complaints Resolution Procedure for the council, all circulated in advance. These were reviewed. Some changes and corrections are needed and they will be considered at the meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> March.

**12. Local Minibus Service**

Cllr P Attwood reported that existing funding would see the operation through to December 2006 but further funds would only be available if the service was cost-effective which at the moment it is not.

**13. Parish Lengthsman Scheme.**

The clerk was asked to arrange the clearing of drains at Hill Road/Ravenshill Green

**14. Items for the next meeting.**

See 8, 9, 10, 11, Above.

**15. Confirm the date of the next meeting;**

Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2006

The meeting closed at 9.44pm

Chairman.....

**Other Matters**

Subsequent to the meeting it was noted that the formal proceedings of the appeal against MHDC refusal to grant planning approval for 8 affordable houses on a site on Upper House Lane Alfrick was likely to be held on 14<sup>th</sup> March, before the next council meeting.

Cllr P Brown sought to confirm his statement to the appeal inspector ref Council Meeting 15<sup>th</sup> November 2005 and gave members copies of this text.