

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD WEDNESDAY 16TH JULY 2008 IN THE MEETING ROOM, PUCKLECHURCH COMMUNITY CENTRE, ABSON ROAD.

PRESENT. O.A. Beg Chairman, P.J. Green, Mrs. M.C. Palmer, R. Symons, Mrs. S.E. Turley, M.S. Watson.

Cllr. S. Grant.

The Chairman opened the meeting with a welcome.

NO 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE. D.A.E. Holder, M.C. Smith, L.J. Whittock.

NO 2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION. The Chairman introduced Alison Gilchrist. Ms Gilchrist thanked Councillors for the opportunity to contribute to discussions regarding the Green Belt issue. She said *'The east of Kingswood proposals for housing developments affects everyone in the area, but especially Shortwood residents. The Parish Council is an important vehicle for raising concern and also for hearing about what is going on in South Gloucestershire Council planning debates.*

Many residents have participated in the first phase of the consultation on the Issues and Options paper – nearly 100 letters were sent from Shortwood residents, each taking a slightly different angle. Parish Council has a copy of Ms Gilchrist letter to S.G.C. that raised issues around the dismal approach taken in informing and involving the community in the exercise.

NEXT STAGE - proposed changes to green belt and Hazel Blears announcement. A chance to make our voices heard locally and at a national level. Campaigning in village itself – posters, banners, car stickers, stalls at village fairs, talks at local WIs, letters in press, etc.

Ms Gilchrist would like to work with the Parish Council to galvanise local residents across whole the parish. Some suggestions:

- *Parish poll and meeting linked to last year's survey results.*
- *Petition.*
- *Identification of potential locations for small-scale house building on redundant agricultural sites – walk the parish, compile a register?*
- *Bye-laws about public open space (will not need central government scrutiny soon).*

Resources and mechanisms we can use (now and in near future): Community Empowerment White paper published last week – government's commitment to better local democracy. (Communities in control: real people, real lives DCLG, 2008).

- *Planning Aid (advice to communities) – p80, S.4.53 and Planning Portal (information) - . 102.*
- *Duty to involve requirements – guidance just published.*

- *Empowerment Fund (p 80, S.4.53) and money to Councils to improve their community participation processes (p.80, S.4.54)*
- *Toolkit on empowering people to influence decisions about housing growth in their area – Housing Green paper, 2007 – p.81,S.4.62)*

Longer term options (depending on what happens in next year – preferred options)

- *Call South Glos. Planning/housing committee to account – public hearing.*
- *Local Government Ombudsman Access and Advice Centre, just opened for business.*
- *Community Infrastructure Levy.*

Quality Parish Scheme – an active campaign would demonstrate commitment to promote democracy.’

The Chairman invited Mr. R. Morton, Chairman of Shortwood Green Belt Campaign to speak. Mr. Morton said *‘the next public input into the S.G. Core Strategy document will not be until January 2009, but Shortwood will continue to do what it can to raise the profile of the Green Belt issue in the interim.*

Next week the Secretary of State for Communities is expected to issue her response to the draft Regional Spatial Strategy and will probably confirm the intention to allow Councils to roll back the Green Belt to facilitate development. There will be a 12 week consultation period, through to October and Shortwood will submit individual and group responses to protect the Green Belt.

However, as was advised at the recent CVS Workshop, we need to have a second strategy. (He would like to set on record their appreciation of the attendance at that meeting of Pucklechurch Parish Councillors.)

Not every large town has a green belt. Many that don’t, in fact have a similar planning facility termed a Green Wedge or Green Buffer, serving much the same purpose. Shortwood, Green Belt Campaign would like the Parish Council to raise this concept with the District Council and set in hand the necessary process to have Green Wedge designation, or similar applied to the parish perimeter area around Shortwood and Parkfield.

If this is set in hand now, such a designation could be in place by whatever date the Secretary of State’s own Green Belt proposals come out of consultation, appeal and public inquiry.

There would need to be a legitimate, positive reason for seeking such a status, not simply to preserve the ‘status quo’ or to prevent coalescing of Shortwood & Emerson’s Green or indeed to stop urban development in this section of the Green Belt.

Pucklechurch has a huge, unrecognised, historical feature within its parish boundary. Indeed ancient Pucklechurch is the very reason that this feature was developed over 1500

years ago. It became known as The Kingswood Forest, a Royal Chase or hunting Reserve. It was an early form of factory farming. A local school was named after it, as were several other institutions.

A Green Wedge could link up the projected nature/water park to be developed on the clay quarry, the fields around Shortwood, Shortwood Lodge Golf Course, Siston Court and Common, Overscourt Wood, Webb's Heath, Goose Green and probably other areas as well. It might be further developed into a formal and substantial country park celebrating what is left of the Kingswood Forest.'

The Chairman invited Mr. Dennehy to speak. Mr. Dennehy said he was Chair of 1st Pucklechurch Scout Group Executive, it has been brought to their attention that the concrete steps between the car park and the hut do not create the best access for users, especially those with buggies, wheelchairs and the less able bodied.

Cllr Alan Holder had put forward some suggestions as to how the access could be improved. They would like to create a concrete ramp over the existing steps, which would also give them the opportunity of raising the level of the path against the front door of the hut thus creating a level entrance.

They have a quotation of £2,200.00. to carry out the work. The work would create an additional step to the flight that leaves the hut and goes down to Hill View Road, this should not pose a problem as there are steps there at present. A considerable saving could be made if the work was carried out by volunteers. Mr. Dennehy suggested it would cost approximately £800.00.

They would also like to widen the doorway of the hut, inserting a new UPVC door to improve security and re-point the crumbling porch, this will cost £1550.00.

At present they are planning to use funds raised over the past few years to improve the heating and electrics in the building.

They are hoping it might be possible for the Parish Council to fund the access path as it is also used by residents.

NO 3. LAW & ORDER. P.C. Skelton attended the meeting reporting he had received two calls from a property in Back Lane raising concern that make shift tents had been erected and bonfires lit. Fortunately the owner of the property has a state of the art camera giving a good image.

The local Speed Watch group has passed information to the Police and letters have been sent out.

P.C. Skelton has had no contact from residents at Eagle Crescent over the last 8 weeks and he cannot do anything unless he is notified.

P.C. Skelton said he recently carried out a successful number plate recognition initiative. P.C. Skelton said regarding the proposed development on Oaktree Avenue he would like the opportunity to work with planning and make representation with developers.

Mr. Watson said he was surprised P.C. Skelton had not heard from residents on Eagle Crescent as he is regularly contacted. Residents assure him they have been ringing the 08454 number as instructed. Residents have also passed on information and one informed the Police he had a good quality video of vandalism taking place, but no one has been to look. P.C. Skelton said he would send a copy of the Police Log to Mr. Watson.

Mr. Beg thanked P.C. Skelton for attending the meeting.

NO 4. ARISINGS. Clerk said she has received confirmation from S.G.C. that road the name signs on the Estate have been re-erected.

Mr. Beg confirmed the letter had been written to Hazel Blears MP and thanked Mrs Palmer for compiling it.

Mr. Beg said the street light on Shortwood Rd. was still very bright.

The minutes of the meeting dated 18th June 2008 were agreed a true record and signed.

NO 5. RESPONSE TO PUBLIC PARTICIPATION. Mr. Symons thanked Alison Gilchrist for the amount of detail and research she had undertaken and suggested Parish Council offer a responsible roll allocating two people, Mr. Green and another to work with Shortwood.

Mr. Watson said it was an excellent presentation and thought the observations should not be just for the Parish Council but for residents of Pucklechurch as it could be the thin edge of making Pucklechurch part of greater Bristol.

Mrs. Palmer was concerned about the suggestion of carrying out a parish poll as the information is already available from the Parish Plan as the cost would be very high.

Alison Gilchrist asked if it would be possible for them to use part of the Pucklechurch web site to publicise what they were doing. Councillors suggested she email articles to Mr Smith for inclusion on the web site.

Kingswood Forest. Mr. Beg said that as part of the Kingswood Forest we have the trees at Siston planted by the Forest of Avon.

Mrs. Palmer said she had mentioned the introduction of a green wedge at the meeting in Emerson's Green; she does not believe it is more powerful than the green belt.

Mr. Green asked if the Kingswood Forest included trees around Kingswood and Warmley and would it over ride the green belt.

Mr. Morton said the term 'forest' meant a mixture of trees and open space.

Pucklechurch Scout Hut. Mrs. Palmer said the access was very poor and felt it should be supported but it was not included in the budget as it had to be set by February.

Mr. Symons said there was some spare budget and there may be £1000.00. in August but at the moment it was a bit too early to tell.

Councillors agreed to support in principle the installation of the ramp and would discuss funding cost at next months meeting.

NO 6. MEMBERS MATTERS. Mrs. Palmer said she thought Councillors should start thinking about next years precept, she had printed the S.G.C's. list showing the amount of precept requested by Parishes of which Pucklechurch was one of the lowest. As it may be necessary to make regular a grant towards the running costs of the Village Hall it may be necessary and justifiable to increase precept. Mr. Symons said we will have a clear document by the time we have to request the next precept.

Mr. Watson reported on behalf of Mr. Holder the following:

- He would like speed limit on the narrow part of Feltham Road to be discussed.
- He would an audit carried out at the allotments as he was concerned some of the plots were not being used properly.
- Something needed to be done about the seagulls at the Landfill Site.
- There has been a problem with the Combined Sewer Overflow in Feltham Road, the pump had failed and raw sewage had polluted the Brook. Wessex Water had carried out a clean up operation.

Mr. Green expressed concern about the long grass and brambles in the grounds of the old Chapel. Clerk to write to the owner of the property requesting that once again on the grounds of health and safety the area is strimmed and tidied. Clerk also to ask when Councillors can expect to receive a planning application?

Mr. Symons said 60 people had attended the meeting to discuss the regeneration of the Village Hall. They had been very encouraged, the goodwill was there. They need to complete a document and share it with parishioners so that they have a clear plan.

Mrs. Turley said that on the 1st July Mr. Brian Hazel had defended himself in court and the case is to go to Crown Court.

Mrs. Turley advised that there was a problem with responsibility for the removal of the tree that blew down blocking Shortwood Road (locally known as Police Station Hill). S.G.C. cleared the limbs from the road placing them by the cycle/footpath, also there is a dead tree on Westerleigh Rd. that the Tree Officer has been asked to investigate.

Mr. Beg said there were various trees obstructing highways and he would walk around and record where they were.

NO 7. REPORTS. Mr Watson and Mrs. Turley attended the Safer Stronger South Gloucestershire Meeting. The meeting in Pucklechurch had been relatively well attended and the minutes have been circulated.

Mr. Watson had attended the Parish Charter Working Group meeting, it had been very productive. A review of the Charter had taken place, they looked line by line at the various points. They established there was a greater need for training for Parish Councillors and A.L.C.A. indicated they were happy to run courses. Quality Status was discussed and A.L.C.A said they were very much available to assist. Regarding I.T. funding they were trying to find ways to provide Parish Councillors with support.

Mr. Watson had attended the In Vessel Composting meeting at Dyrham the company putting forward the case had no drawings or information. Mr. Watson believes it is in totally the wrong place and will have a major impact on the A420 as lorry drivers will always take the shortest route. Mr. Watson asked that Pucklechurch Parish Council be consulted.

Mr. Green had attended the Kingswood Community Transport A.G.M. it had been a good meeting, well attended and Councillors had been thanked for their support.

Mrs. Turley said the Speed Watch Group has reported over 100 vehicles so far, they've been out on six occasions, at different times of the day. During one session 35 vehicles in one hour exceeded the limit. Speeds of 60mph were recorded in a 40mph limit on Shortwood Rd near Meadow View. The Police have acknowledged receipt of the information and as mentioned earlier by P.C. Skelton have taken action.

Mr. Beg reported that Twinning would make the return visit to Pringy in October and as agreed Parish Council would provide a gift.

NO 8. The completed Risk Assessment and Standing Orders were signed. Clerk to send copy of Standing Orders to Councillors.

NO 9. PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR CONSIDERATION. PK08/1797/F erection of rear conservatory, 21 Woodpecker Crescent. No objection.

PK08/1866/F erection of rear conservatory, 5 Eagle Crescent. No objection.

NO 10. CORRESPONDENCE. A letter of thanks was received from the Alzheimer's Society for grant aid.

NO 11. Information/invitations to S.G. Heritage events was received.

NO 12. An email from Cycling England advised Bristol & South Gloucestershire Council had been successful in their application to become England's first Cycling City. Councillors are invited to a cold finger buffet followed by a workshop 23rd July 6 – 8.30pm at Armada House in Bristol.

NO 13. A letter was read from Mrs. Tina Symons, Trustee Pucklechurch Community Association advising Mr. Mike Reynolds has agreed to stand as the fourth trustee.

NO 14. Clerk had received a telephone call from Mr. Haynes in Parkfield Rank asking for permission to arrange carol singing on the green at Christmas. A convenient date will be agreed with residents and The Salvation Army invited to lead the singing. Councillors were happy to agree.

NO 15. A letter was read from Steve Webb M.P. advising he has been contacted by Mrs. Diane Todd at The Bridge Inn, Shortwood. It was almost 3yrs since her husband had been tragically killed and she would like to erect a plaque close to where he died. The request has been passed to the Parish Council for consideration as it is a matter to be decided locally. Councillors agreed to defer a decision until September.

NO 16. A letter was received from Rachel Goodchild advising St Thomas a Becket, the School and a Christian group called Church Next were organising a holiday club this summer. The club will be held in the School 26th – 29th August, they anticipate 50 – 80 children will attend. They are asking parents for a small fee of £15.00. for the week but will provide bursaries to large families who could not otherwise afford the club. The materials, insurances, advertising, refreshments and equipment for this venture will also cost money and they wonder if the Parish Council would be able to give a small donation towards the initiative. After discussion Mrs. Palmer proposed a donation of £60.00. to help fund the bursary, seconded by Mrs. Turley, all agreed.

NO 17. FINANCE. Clerk confirmed the independent internal audit had taken place, Councillors checked the report.

NO 18. The Annual Return was agreed, completed and signed.

NO 19. Mr. Symons updated Councillors on the budgeted figures.

NO 20. Clerk had quotation for the refurbishment of the Bus Shelter outside the Village Hall and the replacement of the damaged panel on the Shelter by Maple Walk. It was agreed to defer a decision until the September meeting.

NO 21. Mr. Whittock had raised concern that the gate from the recreation field into the Burial Ground needed attention. Clerk obtained quotations to replace the wooden posts and re-hang the gates. Wizzard Landscapes £148.00. plus V.A.T. Town & Country Services £75.00. plus V.A.T.

NO 22. Mr. Whittock has had concern raised that residents find it difficult to gain access onto the recreation field as the ground is sloping and uneven. Clerk has contacted S.G.C. who are happy to grant a license for the work, as it will benefit the community, but are unable to fund the cost of the work. Clerk has quotations to excavate pavement and gate entrance to required levels and remove 8no existing kerbs. Lay type 1 sub-base, supply and fit 2no tapered and 6no drop kerbs. Supply and lay 2 coats of macadam. Wizzard Landscapes £1370.00. plus V.A.T. Town & Country Services £1171.25. plus V.A.T. After discussion it was agreed to accept the quotations from Town & Country Services.

NO 23. The following cheques were agreed for payment. Instant Landscapes £1491.52. grass cutting. D.W. Parsons £5274.57. supply and installation of Bow Top Railings and new gates on recreation field. Mrs. R. Abbott £14.99. expenses for Parish Plan. Town & Country Services £156.57. skip changeover in Burial Ground. EDF Energy £12.83. unmetered supply for millennium stone. Pitman Engineering £41.12. repairs to gate between Village Hall car park and recreation field. Autocross Plastics £819.56. refurbishment of two bus shelters on Shortwood Rd. D.W. Parsons £58.75. cutting hedge on lane between Abson Rd/Hill View Rd. Mrs. A. Sharpe £125.00. Mrs. D. Bailey £315.34. being salary £310.66. plus stamps £4.68. Iain A. Selkirk £115.00. internal auditor. Pakka Church £60.00. donation towards holiday club.

There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed.

Date for next meeting 20th August at 7.30pm.