

MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF ICKLEFORD PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN ICKLEFORD VILLAGE HALL AT 7.30PM ON TUESDAY 13TH FEBRUARY 2007

Present: Cllrs P J Crowe (Chairman), M Maxwell, D Chapallaz, Mrs B Crosse, Mrs K Goldie, J Carlyle.

Also present: Cllr Mrs T Gibbs (NHDC). PCSO Nikki Williams.

Officer present: Katrina Henshaw (Parish Clerk).

112. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Thurstance (holiday), Cllr Palmer (illness) and Cllr Brook (away).

113. TO RECEIVE MEMBERS DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

113.1 Any financial or other interests. All Councillors details remain unchanged.

113.2 Interests in matters arising at this meeting. None were declared.

114. TO APPROVE AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 9TH JANUARY 2007

Following a proposal from Cllr Mrs Goldie, seconded by Cllr Maxwell and agreed unanimously it was

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 9th January be approved and the Chairman was authorised to sign them as a true record of the meeting.

115 UPDATE FROM PCSO NIKKI WILLIAMS

PCSO Nikki Williams reported that since January 2007 there had been six reported incidents of crime. Two of these were at Ickleford Sports and Recreation Club so the Crime Prevention Officer is offering the committee advice and the Problem Solving Team are investigating the crimes and paying extra attention to the area.

The other four incidents were minor.

PCSO Nikki Williams also advised that the Traffic Management Team is monitoring the van that is parked on Turnpike Lane making visibility difficult.

116 UPDATE ON ONGOING MATTERS

116.1 Proposed new Burial Ground.

Cllr Crowe reported that NHDC have given him a guide to burial costs, grave sizes and details for designing burial grounds so he and Cllr Carlyle are currently drafting an outline plan for the proposed burial ground.

Mr Instone, HCC Planning Archaeologist has advised that trenching may still be required but he will make further comments after he has seen the outline plan.

Cllr Crowe is investigating alternative sources and costs for the engineering maps that Highways require.

116.2 Parish Plan.

Following a proposal from Cllr Crowe, seconded by Cllr Mrs Goldie and agreed unanimously it was

RESOLVED

That the Parish Plan be adopted by Ickleford Parish Council

REASON

To improve the village based upon the views of the residents.

All Councillors expressed their thanks to Cllr Maxwell and the Parish Plan Steering Committee for all their hard work. Cllr Maxwell thanked all Councillors for their comments and contributions towards the Parish Plan document.

As a new community build is included in the action plan, a working group is being set up to investigate this further and apply for a lottery grant. Cllr Maxwell requested that IPC confirm that HCC will lease the land to IPC and enquire at what cost. **Clk**

Cllr Maxwell also informed the Parish Council that the Environment sub-group were currently investigating the possibility of a Community Orchard in the village and were looking for suitable locations.

116.3 Meeting with other Parish Councils on 17th January 2007.

This meeting was extremely well attended by the villages from the Southern Rural area and was very interesting and informative. The next meeting will be held in Kimpton in July.

116.4 Calor Village of the Year 2006/2007.

It was agreed that the judges would be taken on a small tour around the village which would be followed by presentations from organisations and businesses in the village hall. The clerk to contact all organisations and businesses to see what they can offer and if they are available on 25th April when the judges visit. Timetable to be prepared for the event. **Clk**

As the judges are only here for two hours Cllr Carlyle suggested that we consider a virtual tour of the village. This could also be used on the website at a later date. Cllr Carlyle to investigate. **JC**

116.5 Hertfordshire Village of the Year 2007.

The deadline for entries is 3rd May. It was agreed that IPC would enter the competition. The clerk to complete the entry forms and distribute to all Councillors. **Clk**

116.6 Entrance to the sewerage outflow in Watermeadows field.

Anglian Water visited the site and advised the pipe belongs to Hitchin Sewerage. They believe that when it was put in, the pipe met all the safety requirements. However, as IPC and residents have expressed concern they have agreed to reduce the gap and put something more appropriate there. This should be done in the next 2/3 months.

117 REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE

117.1 Blackboard on Lower Green.

William Crosse has removed this.

117.2 Damaged play area fence.

William Crosse has repaired this.

117.3 Willow Tree on Lower Green.

William Crosse has removed the damaged branch.

117.4 Speed sensitive sign.

The sign is not working at all. Ken Clowes, HH is seeking advice from the manufacturers - Coeval in Edinburgh.

117.5 Information board at Gerry's Hole.

The board has been installed. Cllr Carlyle to inspect the work for Mrs Parker.

JC

117.6 Muddy area of Grubbs Lane.

Eoin Bell, Right of Way Officer, HCC has advised that this area is one of his candidates for a bid for capital funding from the next financial year. He presently has about 30 possible areas which would benefit from similar attention and is now in the process of prioritising these according to public safety, level of present and potential use and how they fit as a link in the overall network. He then has to get competitive quotations from three contractors and submit these bids at a funding meeting in competition with his colleagues who operate elsewhere in the County. This process is further complicated in that they do not yet have a definite figure on what their capital budget will be from April. As a relatively small job on a popular route he is reasonably optimistic that this will be affordable but obviously cannot guarantee anything at the moment.

117.7 Extra dog bin on Westmill Lane.

Further to installing a dog bin half way down Westmill Lane, there has been a request for an additional bin at the end of the lane. Cost would be £200-£300 for the new bin and then £93.48 per year to empty it. This is not in a residential area and would be easily accessible for the contractors to empty.

Following a proposal from Cllr Mrs Crosse seconded by Cllr Mrs Goldie and agreed unanimously it was

RESOLVED

That a new bin would be installed in this area.

REASON

To encourage dog owners to pick up their dog's mess.

117.8 Playground safety inspection.

Clements carried out the annual safety inspection on 5/2/07 and reported the following

- Gates, fence, seat, picnic table, signs and overall area – **satisfactory.**
- 4 seat see-saw / 2 seat cradle swing / Square climber / Springer / Toddler slide / Safety surfacing (grass mat areas) – **satisfactory.**
- Litter bin – part full. **Action required – IPC to check NHDC have emptied the bin.**
- 4 flat seat swings – chains worn. **Action required – change within 3 months.**
- 4 tyre swing – showing signs of wear. **Action required – monitor.**
- Tyre walk/monkey bars – tyres wearing and one shackle seized. **Action required - monitor tyres and lubricate shackles. Cost £10.00**
- Trim trail – chain walk slack. **Action required – adjust chain length. Cost £20.00**
- Multi-climber / slide – climbing net frayed. **Action required – monitor.**
- Safety surfacing (tiled bases) – satisfactory but dirt on tiles beneath see-saw. **Action required – IPC to sweep.**
- Safety surfacing (raised bark pits) – bark getting low. **Action required – top up to 300mm depth (BSEN1176).**

Following a proposal from Cllr Maxwell, seconded by Cllr Mrs Goldie and agreed unanimously it was

RESOLVED

That all the above actions would be carried out.

REASON

To ensure that the playarea meets all safety requirements.

118 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

- 118.1 07/00278/1HH 14 Freewaters Close, Ickleford.
Two storey front extension with integral garage, three front dormer windows and external staircase to east elevation. First floor rear extension (west elevation).
The planning application was discussed and it was

RESOLVED

That IPC would not object to this application.

REASON

Although IPC realise that this is a very large extension to the property, there is no objection and it might even improve the appearance at the end of the road and hide the Ickfield Close flats.

119 PLANNING DECISIONS

- 119.1 06/02668/1TCA St Katharine's Parish Church, Arlesey Road, Ickleford.
Reduce 5 x Irish Yew to 2.1 metres high.
NHDC had no objection to this application on 10th January 2007.
- 119.2 06/02570/1LB Waltham Cottage, Turnpike Lane, Ickleford.
Insertion of two roof lights into rear roof elevation.
NHDC granted conditional listed building consent on 30th January 2007

120 CORRESPONDENCE

- 120.1 Post Office.
The Post Office on Ickleford Road will be closed for refurbishment from 6th February to 28th February inclusive. Nearby branches are in Redhill Road, Bucklesbury and Highbury Road.
A copy of this letter has been sent to organisations in the village and also displayed on the village noticeboard.
- 120.2 NALC - Consultation: The Commons Act 2007.
Deadline for contribution to NALC's response on this consultation is 28th March 2007. Deadline for direct responses to Defra is 9th April 2007. A copy of the consultation document can be downloaded at www.defra.gov.uk. The clerk to request Defra send a hard copy to Cllr Mrs Crosse. **CIk**
- 120.3 NALC - Consultation on amendments to the model code of conduct.
Deadline for responses is 9th March 2007. A copy of the consultation document can be downloaded a www.communities.gov.uk. The clerk to request Defra send a hard copy to Cllr Mrs Crosse. **CIk**
- 120.4 HAPTC - January 2007 newsletter inc the Elections Practitioners Guide.
The clerk to request forms from NHDC. **CIk**
- 120.5 CPRE - February 2007 newsletter.
- 120.6 HCC - Hitchin Primary Review
Meeting will be at 7.00 pm on Tuesday 20th March 2007.
- 120.7 Environment Agency - Great Ouse catchment flood management plan.
Deadline for responses is 30th March 2007.

121 FINANCE

121.1 Lower Green Contract 2007.

Richard Nicholls has quoted £55 (10% increase from last year's cost of £55) for each cut and £15 (25% increase from last year's cost of £12) for each strim. As this seems a high increase the clerk is to look at when the last increase was and discuss costs with Richard Nicholls. **Clk**

121.2 Money remaining from the BIFFA grant.

Angela Forster, CSM will order two benches from Neptune for the Village Green and two benches for Lower Green which still leaves £850 approximately. It was suggested that this money be used for the new dog bin and the work on the trees at St Katharine's Church. The clerk to advise Angela Forster, CSM. **Clk**

121.3 Cllr Mrs Gibbs Discretionary Grant of £350.

It was suggested that IPC apply for a grant for software for the new website and a grant towards the costs of changing the flower bed on the triangle to a dry bed which would be more environmentally friendly. Cllr Mrs Gibbs supported both these proposals so the clerk to apply for the grants. **Clk**

121.4 Notification of receipts received since the last meeting

£280 – Grant from NHDC towards emptying 3 dog bins in Ickleford for 2006/07.

121.5 Payments for the months of February 2007.

Payments of £1,901.97 were proposed by Cllr Maxwell, seconded by Cllr Carlyle and agreed unanimously.

122 REPORTS FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

122.1 NHDC

Cllr Tricia Gibbs advised that NHDC would be increasing their part of the Council Tax by 4.9%

123 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES

123.1 Ickleford School Governor

Cllr Maxwell reported that Ickleford School had sent representatives to the meeting regarding the review of Hitchin Schools. All schools were asked to nominate their chosen schools for closure which Ickleford School declined to do. One of the main criteria being looked into is the school's performance particularly the value added performance. Ickleford are in the top 4% for this and also have a full school role.

HCC are looking into the Health and Safety for swimming pools in schools and have indicated that every teacher should be a certified lifesaver and have ASA Level 2. The fact that Ickleford School's pool is extremely shallow would be irrelevant. Cllr Brook is looking into this further as it has not become policy yet.

Ickleford School has recently been awarded a Gold Travel Award for its work promoting healthy ways of travelling to school.

123.2 Rand's Governor

In his absence Cllr Thurstance sent a report advising that 10 more students from Ickleford received education grants. Organisation Grants were allocated to

- £1,500 to Ickleford Scouts towards 5 new tents. (1st time they have applied).
- £1,060 to Ickleford Pre-School for various educational aids.
- £1,723 to Ickleford Cricket Club towards covers which will prevent cancellation of matches for the colts whose league operates between May and July. Last May, all home matches were cancelled owing to wet wickets. 68 children aged between 8 and 16 years old participate in the Saturday morning coaching sessions.
- £2,000 to Ickleford School. This was a last minute application for a grant towards urgently needed repairs to their swimming pool project.

Cllr Thurstance and Cllr Chapallaz have been appointed to join a new sub-committee to review financial strategy of the Rands Trust funds.

123.3 Biffa

Cllr Crowe reported that they received a copy of the audit report relating to the concerns raised regarding contaminated ground water levels. Biffa and the Environment Agency are monitoring these levels which are not considered serious.

123.4 Scrutiny Review Meeting

Cllr Crowe attended the recent meeting where South Somerset District Council did a presentation about how they compared to NHDC.

This presentation was then followed by discussions on communication with Parish and Town Councils and Building Local Capacity and Democracy. Communication appeared to be the biggest issue and Cllr Crowe advised that at the meeting of all Parish Councils from the Southern Rural area, all Parish Councils felt that too much jargon was used by NHDC and it wasn't always clear from the letters what action NHDC required from the Parish Councils.

124 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

124.1 Cllr Mrs Crosse requested that IPC plant a Willow Tree on the Common. She agreed to look into cost of a Willow Tree and speak to the Common Holders about this proposal.

124.2 Cllr Mrs Crosse advised that a lot of the track across the green from Lower Green Farm to Whitsun House has deteriorated badly over the winter and Charles Franklin, HCC has arranged for a major section of it to be reconstructed sometime in the next month.

This work is being funded by HCC Rural Estates because of the heavy use made of the track by the County Council's tenants and their clients. The County Council does not own the track, but it has responsibilities due to the track being a public bridleway.

124.3 The clerk advised IPC of a new rounders team that was starting in Ickleford with the aim to play against other local village sides. It was agreed that IPC would apply for a grant from NHDC to help with setting up costs.

125 DATE FOR THE NEXT MEETING

124.1 The next meeting

To be held on Tuesday 13th March 2007 in the small hall at 7.15 pm and there will be a presentation about planning by Mary Caldwell and Andy Beavan from NHDC.

The meeting closed a 9.50 pm