

ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE

Lytchett Matravers Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 9th May 2011 in the Village Hall at 7:30 pm

PRESENT:

Cllr R Miller (Chairman), Cllr A Bush, Cllr D Gillard, Cllr M Munford, Cllr E Wilson, and Mr T Watton (Parish Clerk).

Two members of the public were also present.

1. **APOLOGIES:** Cllr K Norris

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

There were none.

3. PURBECK DIST COUNCIL CORE STRATEGY

This item was notified to all Cllrs in advance to be considered by Full Council, and was identified as such in the published agenda. It was confirmed that sufficient Cllrs were present for a quorum, and so the item was considered by the Full Council.

Mr Steve Dring of Purbeck District Council talked through a number of presentation slides (copies have been forwarded to all Cllrs separately) to discuss three options for the Huntick Road site allocation for the previously agreed development of 50 dwellings as identified in the Purbeck Core Strategy Pre-Submission Consultation Document in 2010. He explained that there were three issues:

1. The extent of the protected trees on the identified site, which limits the scope for the dwellings – possibly to 60% of what was intended and therefore foregoing the full number of affordable homes accordingly.
2. An opportunity to add some further employment provision.
3. Heathland mitigation action.

He explained that suggestions had been made to modify the originally identified site in order to address these three issues. In addition to an option to develop the site as originally intended, the two further options were:

1. Original site plus the adjacent existing industrial site.
2. Original site plus the adjacent existing industrial site and a further extension to the East.

After some discussion it was unanimously **AGREED** to take the first of these options forward to the next stages in the process – i.e. “option 2” shown on slide 9 from the presentation. It was noted that these stages include presentation of the amended Core Strategy Document to the LDF Steering Group, Policy Group and PDC Full Council before it is put out for public consultation in Autumn 2011.

The following additional points were made by the Parish Council for PDC to take into account:

- The idea of including a purpose-designed public recycling centre for the village within the “industrial” part of the development.
- Requiring a public footpath to be included to cross the site; and to connect with a further new public footpath, which is to be requested of the developers of the Lytchett Heath Farm

“change of use” proposal. The overall intention of this heathland mitigation action is to move closer to completing the “village circuit” of footpaths / bridleways.

- That a doctors / dentists surgery be included.
- That any S106 contribution derived from this development to be used “for the benefit of the community of Lytchett Matravers and spent on facilities within the village and / or parish boundary”.

It was also **AGREED** that Mr Dring would visit again to attend the Full Council meeting on 18th July. This will be preceded by a Parish Council visit to the proposed development site at 18:00, which Mr Dring will arrange with the landowners.

1. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7TH MARCH 2011

The minutes of the meeting on Monday 7th March 2011 were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

5. MATTERS ARISING AND ACTION POINT UPDATE

The following comments on matters from the minutes of the last Environment & Amenities Committee meeting were provided:

Minute 9, 4th January 2010 bullet 2 Path between Foxhills open space and Deans Drove: Cllr Munford reported on a conversation she had held with Mr Bird in which he stated that a meeting is to take place with the developers of the adjacent plot, September Cottage. Mr Bird hopes to be able to secure the footpath and to secure the land to the south. Cllr Munford indicated that she would contact Mr Bird again to receive a report of the outcome of his meeting with the developers

Minute 8, 1st March 2010. Field and hedgerow ownership – Wareham Rd: school to Halls corner. Following a letter to the line manager of the DCC officer dealing with this, and intervention by County Cllr Drane, an email was received from the officer stating that he had already responded indicated that the hedge has been cut. However no such response had been received by this council, and in any event it was noted that cutting the hedge by DCC does not resolve the issue of hedge ownership and ongoing maintenance of it and the related ditches. The DCC officer concerned offered to send a copy of his response – which the Parish Clerk agreed to – but no such copy of the response has been received. In the light of this it was decided that the Parish Clerk should write to DCC again, with a copy to County Cllr Drane, to pursue an outcome to this matter which – it was noted - has been a problem for a number of years and is a risk to road safety. **Action: Parish Clerk to write again to the DCC officer concerned accordingly.**

Minute 6, 10th May – MUGA: meeting with Sports Club to discuss handover. Meetings to discuss the draft partnership agreement are still to be set up. **CARRIED OVER**

Minute 7, 10th May - installation of plaque for twinning tree. The plaque is still with the Parish Clerk to arrange for it to be installed. The Parish Clerk has some ideas on a secure method of fitting the plaque and will make enquiries. **CARRIED OVER**

Minute 7, 5th August – Allotments security: Mr Warr has been approached and asked to relocate the disused Dyetts Field gates to close the gap in the hedge. All other recommended activity to increase security were considered to be too high a cost for the very minimal increase in security they might bring.

Minute 6, 1st November – Allotments. Five allotment holders have yet to pay their 2011/12 rental. Letters have gone to all five explaining that their rental of the plots has expired and giving them until mid May to pay or remove their belongings from the plots so that can be re-let. Two other plots have been relinquished and re-let. There are six names on the waiting list.

Minute 9, 1st November – Memorial tree for Mr MacDonald. The ceremony with the family is arranged for this Saturday 14th May. The Parish Clerk has prepared a schedule of events and Cllrs

have indicated their attendance. Cllr Gillard agreed to confirm that all family members were aware that the party will gather in the village Hall from 2:45pm.

Minute 12, 1st November – Replacement village name sign. See minute 7 (c) Full Council 18th April. No response has yet been received from DCC.

Minute 14, 1st November – Grit bin for Loop Farm Rd. No further response has been received from the residents of Loop Farm Rd in order to progress their purchase and the installation of this bin.

Minute 8, 10th January 2011 – DCC failing to grit bus routes in Lytchett Matravers. DCC have responded positively to the letter sent to DCC Highways – agreeing to the rest of the village bus route roads to their regular gritting / salting route.

Minute 5, 7 March 2011. Recreation Ground: Tree formerly on adjacent land. The Parish Clerk has now checked the certified copy of the land registration for the recreation ground and confirmed that it does not include the adjacent area where this tree formerly stood.

Minute 6, 7 March 2011. Replacement sign for Foxhills play area. This has been installed. It was noted that the original sign was subsequently found dumped on the open space some weeks after it went missing. Since it has now been replaced it is not proposed to re-use it.

Minute 7, 7 March 2011. Recreation ground drainage scheme planning application. The agreed supporting letter about the capacity of the downstream pipework was sent to PDC as agreed.

Minute 9, 7 March 2011. Definitive map of Rights of way. The Parish Clerk commented that since it is now possible to access the updated definitive map interactively in real time online there is no longer a justification to request updated paper copies to keep on file.

6. OPEN SPACES –

The following items were discussed:

Recreation Ground / Car park – Mr Ashton has reported that he has received from drainage consultant Mr Salinger a copy of an Arboricultural statement. It has arrived without a covering letter, but it is believed that PDC Planning may have requested this from him (as the agent) in support of the planning application for the drainage scheme. Mr Ashton is contacting Mr Salinger to confirm that this is so.

Row Park Paddock – The grazing rental is continuing.

Allotments – Weekly checks and recording of the water usage indicate that there is not a water leak after all, but Mr Warr is double checking all pipe joints etc this week as a precautionary measure.

Library Walk – nothing to report.

Memorial Green / War Memorial – It was commented how tidy the war memorial and green look. Cllr Gillard remarked on the condition of the paint on the railings and Cllr Munford explained how the railings had been wrongly painted just after installation, causing a reaction with the metal coating which resulted in the flaking paint. She explained that an expert report had been provided once this had been discovered. The report advised that the railings would need to be completely stripped of paint and either (i) re-coated and left in their natural metal colour or (ii) re-painted.

Turbetts Green – nothing to report.

Cemetery – a response has been received to the letter to the owners of the land on which the horse chestnut stands which is damaging the small Yew tree near the entrance to Church Walk. They have

agreed to lower branches being removed but indicate that they are unable to contribute to the cost of this work. It was agreed that this should be **CARRIED OVER** for consideration at the next meeting.

Club Hall – Cllr Miller reported that an informal survey into the structural condition of the building has been carried out and a report produced. He handed copies to some Cllrs. *Action: Parish Clerk to scan this report as a .pdf and circulate to all Cllrs.* He also commented on the complaint about the tree which had been hanging over a neighbour's garden in Turbetts Close, but which had since been pruned.

Hedges and Ditches – nothing further to report other than comments on under Minute 5 (Field & Hedge Ownership) below.

Foxhills Open Space – Nothing to report.

MUGA – The Parish Clerk reported that Technical Surfaces Ltd will be on site on Tuesday 10th May to repair the damaged seam in the playing surface, as previously authorised by Cllrs Miller and Norris as an emergency action to prevent greater and more costly damage to it.

LTL Lighting have provided a quotation for replacing the low level lighting bollards with a lamp standard, as a means of reducing the vulnerability to vandalism. It was noted that the low level bollards were installed in compliance with a planning condition imposed by DCC (the planning authority involved) and thus if the council wishes to proceed with this advice then a relaxation of that condition will be required. It was agreed to **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that the council proceeds with this course of action.

LTL Lighting had also provided a quotation for the remedial work on the vandalised floodlight, etc in connection with the insurance claim currently in train.

Village Centre Project – nothing to report.

7.FOXHILLS PLAY AREA – Project update, including receipt of highlight report, and consideration of fencing option - discussion of points and recommendations to Full Council.

Mrs Taylor commented on the report as attached to these minutes at Appendix A. She also commented on a conversation with a resident who felt that a fence should be put around the play area. It seems the resident felt that such a fence would assist the police in dealing with children over 13 using the play area, and also to curtail usage later in the evenings. It was noted that these points are inconsistent with the comments and advice made by the police during the design stage, and also when further consulted on the potential for problems with over-age users. The clear advice at the time had been that provided a sign was displayed indicating the age limit, there was nothing to prevent the police moving on anybody over that age seen using the equipment. Regarding any time restriction on usage – such as later in the evenings – it was noted that any such restriction is unenforceable. Additionally, there is no precedent for such a limitation on play areas nationally.

Mrs Taylor took the opportunity to comment on the detailed research and investigation which had taken place during the design phase – and in particular with regard to the matter of whether or not to have a fence. She reported that consultation with PC Jon Stuart was consistent with what he had also indicated to the council – that is, that the provision of a suitably worded sign indicating the age

limit is sufficient authority for the police to move over-age users on. She also reported on the advice which had been obtained from Ryan Evans-Johnson who at the time of the project design stage was employed Dorset Community Action as a children's play specialist. He had supported the view that the area should be left unfenced so that play is left unrestricted and could incorporate the surrounding safe grass area.

It was noted that in the light of the previous advice the Parish Council had originally taken a deliberate decision not to initially include a fence, but to review the matter after the play area had been in use for a period. It was **AGREED** that as the annual ROSPA safety inspection for the council's play areas is due this month it would help the council's decision-making on this matter to receive whatever unsolicited remarks the ROSPA qualified inspector makes about lack of fencing of the Foxhills play area, and then to review its decision in the light of that. **Action: Cllrs to consider at the next meeting any recommendations the inspector makes with regard to fencing.**

Other points raised by the working group were:

- Poor quality fitting of the additional mats
- One concrete plug from the original site of the play panels is still visible
- A signage panel has now been provided by SITA and it was requested that both this and the Viridor sign be put on display alongside the name / safety sign.

Finally, it was **AGREED** that the next Highlight Report would be in July.

8.VILLAGE FACILITIES ASSESSMENT - Cllr Miller had produced a list of village facilities, and separately indicating those which were in Parish Council ownership and control – as attached at Appendix B. The Parish Clerk reminded those present that this had been agreed as a first step towards one of the Council's top three priorities for its long term plan. **Action: Parish Clerk to circulate this list to all Cllrs to consider ready for comment and review at the next meeting**

8.VOLUNTEERS – UPDATE – Cllr Miller advised that a volunteer, Di Drew, had been found who will lead on the Village Directory project. It was noted that Cllrs Miller and Norris are in contact with other possible volunteers.

8.DCC CHANGES TO THE HIGHWAYS VEGETATION MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME (SEE EMAIL 12TH APRIL). It was clarified that the major impact of this is the reduction from 9 to 6 urban roadside cuts per year from 2012. It was remarked that the lack of cutting will have a significant detrimental effect on the appearance of the village and is likely to generate local public complaints. It was agreed that it would be prudent to plan for this by obtaining prices from local contractors to do three cuts per year as a direct replacement for the withdrawn DCC maintenance, but to focus this on the most prominent village locations only so that the increased cost impact on the precept is minimised. As part of this planning it was agreed that the Parish Clerk should circulate a copy of the plan showing all the locations of the DCC regular cuts, and that Cllrs should then nominate the priority ones to be attended to out of local expenditure. **Action: Parish Clerk to circulate the DCC maintenance plan accordingly.**

8.SCOPE OF THE COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES. Cllr Miller produced a suggested statement of responsibilities. After a brief discussion the following was agreed for the further consideration of the committee by the next meeting:

- To be responsible for the upkeep and general maintenance of all open spaces that fall within the Parish Council remit.
- To agree the specification for the work undertaken by employees and contractors working under the Parish Council direction.
- To be responsible for all practical aspects of environmental services offered by the Parish Council to parish residents; e.g. general maintenance and upkeep of the car park, cemetery, memorial ground, and children's play apparatus, recreation ground, youth club, grass and hedge & tree maintenance in council owned areas.

- To create a timetable register to ensure a timely replacement programme for all external equipment under Parish Council control.
- To contribute to the development of future facility and development plans by the Parish Council.

Action: All Cllrs to consider the above and be ready to suggest any amendments for formal agreement of a recommendation at the next meeting of this committee.

8.LENGTHSMAN SCHEME. Cllr Miller reminded those present that former Cllr Gracey had worked with Lytchett Minster and Upton Town Council to ensure that Lytchett Matravers Parish Council had the opportunity to consider joining this scheme. He explained that the scheme is governed by a Partnership Agreement between DCC and Lytchett Minster and Upton Town Council, as “lead council”. This provides them with £10,000 per year contribution towards employing a “Lengthsman” to undertake minor public maintenance work of various kinds. DCC also provide training to the employed “Lengthsman” in some specialist skills for tasks currently undertaken by their staff which will be covered by this role. It is intended that such schemes will enable the “lead council” to offer other parish and town councils the opportunity to enter into a sub agreement with the Lead Council so that they can buy in some service from the trained and qualified Lengthsman. A proportion of the DCC allocated funding is available for this. It was noted that Lytchett Minster and Upton Town Council had indicated that whilst £2000 was available to Lytchett Matravers Parish Council to pay for Lengthsman services, their trained Lengthsman was already fully committed and so would not be able to work in Lytchett Matravers parish – therefore giving no access to the additional knowledge and skills derived from the training provided by DCC. Concerns were expressed at the implications of the “scope of work” table on page 2 of the Partnership Agreement between DCC and Lytchett Minster and Upton Town Council which includes a substantial list of work currently undertaken by the District and County Council which, it is feared, might not be undertaken by them in Gowns / Parishes covered by an agreed Lengthsman scheme – because the agreement indicates that it is covered by the Lengthsman.

After some discussion it was agreed to **RECOMMEND** to Full Council not to join the scheme. The reasoning was that it seems to offer very little added value, yet signing up to the scheme includes apparent risk of tacitly absolving District and County Councils of responsibility for the types of work listed in the “scope of work” table.

8. CORRESPONDENCE

There were no items of correspondence to report.

14. MATTERS OF INTEREST AND INFORMATION

There were no items reported.

The meeting closed at 9:55pm

Modified by/on **Signed by/on**