

DAMERHAM PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held in Damerham Village Hall on
Monday 14th July 2014 at 7.30 p.m.

Councillors present:

David Crane (DC), Bob Gilbey (BG), Mrs Cathy Godber (CG), Glyn Perrens (GP),
Phil Tandy ((PT. Chairman), B. Vincent (BV)

Parishioners present: John Godber.

Others present:

Mrs Ros Jones (Footpaths Officer), Mrs Sue Sykes (Clerk)

Public participation

Mr John Godber raised an issue which he said he had to raise every year: the verges had not been cut on Court Hill, Browns Lane and Pound Lane. He had done some strimming himself and he wanted to see action taken by the Council. The Chairman explained that HCC and the Council had an agreement on the cutting of these verges and that the matter would be raised later on the agenda. (See Item 12 below).

Mr Godber also questioned the progress on the Damerham Village sign. This matter was also with HCC and it was understood that it was not considered a priority.

Mr Godber and CG also commented on the continued bad state of the potholes (see also below). There was general dissatisfaction from councillors with the level of workmanship.

1. Apologies:

Were received from Edward Heron (NFDC) and from Spinney Adlem (Watercourses Officer).
Cllr Stewart Langdon and Cllr Pete Doherty were not present.

2. Declaration of business and pecuniary interests:

No interests were declared.

3. Rural Housing

Catherine Kirkham from HARAH made a presentation to the Council on rural affordable housing for local people (attached). She commented on the number of homes currently believed to be needed in Damerham and on the cost of the properties currently available in the village. She said that, should the Council want to pursue the option of looking at providing housing under the scheme, then the next step would be a Housing Needs Survey, which would be carried out by HARAH and funded by NFDC. During the discussion the following questions were answered:

- *If land could be found would there be an optimum number of houses that could be built?* It was unlikely that less than six houses would be financially viable.
- *Would these houses be for purchase or rent?* Normally the properties would be sold or share-owned; not let.
- *How much rent would properties attract?* A two bedroom house on current market rates in the area would be £168 per week. A discussion followed on how affordable the housing would be and it was agreed that the prices did compare extremely favourably with market prices.

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- *Would people not living in the parish be given any of the proposed homes?* The scheme gave priority to local people or those with local connections. It was not needs driven.
- *Was there a bar to building within the conservation Area?* Not so long as permission was obtained. HARAH had a purchase limit of £10,000 - £12,000 per house plot.

The Chairman pointed out that, though a need had been shown in the last survey (carried out in 2003) land had not been available and the scheme had therefore fallen through. The District Council was in conversation with the Longford Estate which might result in land being made available. Whether there would be enough land on the given site was uncertain. It was confirmed that this land would then belong to NFDC and that their agreement was to use HARAH to carry out new building projects.

It was agreed that HARAH be asked to initiate a Housing Needs Survey. This would take between two and three months.

Proposed Phil Tandy. Seconded Glyn Perrens. Unanimous.

Action: Catherine Kirkham to send a draft survey to the Clerk for recommendations and alterations by the council at the first possible meeting.

4. Minutes of the previous meetings held on 19th May and 16th June 2014

These were agreed and signed. No questions were raised.

5. Matters arising not covered elsewhere on agenda

None.

6. Report from Parish Footpaths Officer

Mrs Ros Jones gave her report as follows:

"6i State of the Paths

Vegetation is still growing strongly but the mud is drying in most places. Insects are plentiful this year, including hoverflies, solitary bees, moths and butterflies – many of which feed on bramble!

6ii Problems

a) Footpath 7 towards Knoll Farm Drive has many fallen trees across it since the spring and walkers have to follow the field edge. I wrote to Mrs Wallis in June to ask if the trees could be cleared as soon as convenient, but I haven't yet been back to see.

b) I have received complaints about walkers who trespass up West Park Drive instead of following Footpath 14 across Park Field. I suggested that the owners of west Park might put up a sign saying "no footpath" and this has been done. I also asked the owner of the house adjoining the official path to have the vegetation obscuring the HCC signpost cleared. This was done by Eddie Robbins, whom I saw cutting back the branches and picking out the lettering to make the sign more visible. Thank you Eddie!

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c) Another recurring complaint cropped up this month about the surge of nettles on Path 7 behind Spring Meadow. I spoke to Mrs Hampshire who said that they would be dealt with as soon as possible."

The hedges in Mill End that remained uncut would be done as soon as possible.

7. Report from Parish Watercourses Officer

In SA's absence this discussion would be taken under Item 8 below.

8. Report from Transport Representative

BV spoke to his report:

"Over the last couple of months there have been a number of potholes repaired around the village and you have probably noticed that there are still a few marked waiting to be done. Today myself, Phil Tandy, David Crane, Cathy Godber along with Councillor Heron had a meeting with Richard Bastow from the Highways Department. We walked around the village pointing out several things to him including the major problem at Mill End, the problem at South End with flooding and also pointed out the drains near Royal Cottage, the bank between Greenbanks and Steels Lane and problems with various drains around the Village Hall area.

When I asked Mr Bastow when all these jobs would be carried out he assured us in front of Councillor Heron that all the work with the exception of South End would be done by the end of September 2014. The job at South End would be a little longer he informed us."

Other works were also discussed by the Council, which would be carried out in the autumn. The only anticipated problem was the ditch bounding the Village Hall as Edward Heron believed that it might be the Hall's responsibility for maintaining this ditch.

Action: DC offered to raise this matter at the Hall Committee meeting on the following night

Action: Chairman to e-mail Richard Bastow (New Forest Highways Manager) with details of the jobs discussed as a reminder and a record of the conversation.

Action: Clerk to write Alistair Thomas at Tilney Investments to ask that the hedging of Green Close Cottage be cut as these overhang Green Close footpath, which is used by all families walking to the school.

9. Correspondence

The correspondence with Mr Cobb concerning the ditches on his land was discussed.

Action: Clerk to write to Malcolm Munroe saying that the Council would like to register an interest in further developments on this land owner's property.

10. Finance and payments

10.1 Payments to be made in July 2014

The following payments were approved:

- Grant cheques, approved at May PC meeting, were signed for £1000.00:
Victim Support £50 (cheque no: 507)
St Georges Church PCC £475 (cheque no: 512)
FunQuest £475 (cheque no: 511)
- Mr N F Quinnell £45.00 (cheque no: 503)
- James Byrne Printing Ltd £40.00 (cheque no: 505)

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- Playsafe Ltd £81.60 (cheque no:506)
- To FunQuest for auditing a'cs £50.00 (cheque no: 510)

10.2 To approve bank reconciliation for February 2014

The Clerk had changed the due date of statements so that they would be available before each PC meeting. However on this occasion the statement was not available and she had prepared a budget update for Councillors (attached).

10.3 Audited accounts for 2013

The accounts submitted by PT to the internal auditor were agreed and signed.

10.4 Improved banking arrangements

The Clerk had accessed papers on line to permit her to view the PC accounts on the bank's web site. These were duly signed by the signatories. Once these were processed she would be able to add the Vice Chairman as a third signatory to cheques.

11. Village Play Trail

The RoSPA annual Inspection Report had been received and was on file. The recommendations were agreed.

Action: PT to put essential work on the Parish Lengthsman's list.

The original agreement for maintenance of the PlayTrail was believed to expire in 2019.

Action: PT to check exact date of the Parish Council's agreement to maintain the PlayTrail.

Action: PT to approach PD to take on the role of FunQuest Contact and oversight of the PlayTrail. PT was a trustee of FunQuest.

12. Media contact

The Chairman said that an e-mail had suggested that Parish Councillors should not talk to the press and that PD had raised the problem for those who worked within the media; he had also suggested that this was an unrealistic prohibition. NALC had recommended inserting words into the Standing Orders of the PC to make it clear to Councillors that, should they want to make comments to the press, they should state that this was their own personal view and did not reflect the view of the PC as a body.

Action: PT to e-mail all with proposed wording to be added to Standing Orders.

Action: Clerk to add to agenda for September meeting.

13. Reports from Councillors attending other Meetings

13.1 Police Liaison

GP had attended a meeting on 10th July and gave the following information to Councillors:

- There had been a reduction in non-residential burglaries (sheds).
- There had been a sizable reduction in the Hampshire Constabulary budget, which would result in a loss of officers and a change in shift patterns. Fordingbridge would keep its Police Liaison Officer but the Fordingbridge Police Station would close completely on 8th September 2014.

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- Local flood plans had also been discussed and a recommendation made that there should be a local contact for each area in case of flooding.

13.2 Hampshire Association of Local Councils

PT attended a HALC meeting – as he did periodically in order to keep in touch. This had not thrown up issues of concern to Damerham, but had given him an insight into those faced by other parishes. Flooding and the proposed voluntary code of conduct for cycling events had been the main causes of concern.

14. Other matters brought forward by the Chairman

12.1 Hedge cutting:

After considerable discussion two proposals were made

- a) that the CC should be asked to cut the lower part of Court Hill on both sides of the road (from Church Lane to the village) on the First Cut (between first two weeks of May and the last two weeks of June) and thereafter as necessary

Proposed: Barry Vincent. Seconded: Bob Gilbey

Voting: 5 for the motion with 1 abstention. Motion carried.

- b) that there should be a First Cut to the hedges in Court Hill, Browns Lane and Pound Lane and thereafter as before

Proposed: Mrs Cathy Godber. Seconded: David Crane

Voting: 2 for the motion. 4 against. Motion defeated.

Action *The Chairman to make the appropriate request.*

12.2 The War memorial

As work had already been done to clean the Memorial this would have to be reported to the War Memorials Trust because the grant could not be claimed retrospectively.

Action: *PT to write to the Trust pleading mitigating circumstances due to the Centenary celebrations; the need to claim the VAT; and also due to the availability of the company who carried out the work.*

13. Other matters (of a minor nature) brought forward by councillors

13.1 Fly tipping:

CG had heard a report of fly tipping on New Road consisting mainly of building materials. She had tried to report this on-line and would try again.

13.2 Recycling

BG asked if the Council needed to discuss the recycling collections. It was unclear if the e-mail received had been for individual response or if a discussion was required.

Action: *PT to revisit e-mail to see if comment and discussion was needed and, if so, this would be an agenda item in September.*

13.3 The beacon: currently at Court Hill Farm and should be returned by the end of July.

14. Date and time of next meeting: Monday 8th September 2014 at 7.30pm

The meeting ended at 9.45pm.