

DAMERHAM PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Meeting held in Damerham Village Hall on
Monday 13th June 2016 at 7.30 p.m.

Councillors present:

David Crane (Chair), Mrs Cathy Godber, Mrs Suzanne Musker, Glyn Perrens, Barry Vincent

Minutes taken by Bob Gilbey

Parishioners present:

Mr John Godber, Mrs Jan Burnell

Public participation:

There was no involvement from the Parishioners present.

1. Apologies:

Apology received from Mr Richard Major, Mr Edward Heron (NFDC & Hampshire Councillor) and Mrs Sue Sykes (Parish Clerk)

2. Declaration of business and pecuniary interests:

No interests were declared.

3. Consideration of the Community Right to Bid submitted by the Council with respect to The Baptist Chapel, Damerham.

The Chairman outlined the current situation regarding the proposed Registration of the Chapel as a Community asset. The Parish Council has submitted to NFDC a Registration of Interest Form. NFDC has responded requesting more information before Registration can be completed. This information needs to be provided before 4th July 2016.

DC has spoken with the Sales Agents for the Chapel to inform them of the Parish Council's interest in registering the site as a Community Asset. He also held a meeting with Cllr. Heron to discuss the issues involved in registration of the Chapel.

In order to gain registration the Parish Council will have to identify a specific community use for the site. However it is not necessary for the Council to actually carry through this use in practice. The Parish Council could set up a Community Association to manage the Asset rather than being directly involved themselves. It is likely that the Parish Council would need to form a partnership with a Housing Association to develop and carry through any affordable housing project for the site.

If registration is successful then the Sales Agents would have to declare this to any bidders for the site. However there is no obligation on the part of the vendors to sell the site to the Parish Council irrespective of registration.

Individual councillors were then invited by the Chairman to give their views on the issues.

- Barry Vincent said that he could not see them getting permission for more than a 30% extension on the old chapel and this would at most make 2 small units. His personal view is that he would not want a larger scale development considering that the building is in the Conservation Area and the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. David Crane replied that there has so far been no submission for planning, as yet. BV then expressed concern that should there be a development of multiple houses then access to/from the houses would be dangerous coming out into Lower Daggons Lane.
- Suzanne Musker asked whether the site was viable for affordable housing in the light of ever-increasing rumours as to how much the site was going to realise. Glyn Perrens (who works for a housing association) explained that it was an exceptional

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site – but costs would be a major problem if the houses were to be rented to local people or key workers. Any housing association would need more houses to justify any expenditure. GP expressed the opinion that the development was OK in principle, but not in practical terms.

- Suzanne Musker asked if the building would be practical as a single dwelling – or would the costs involved make it non-viable? In reply it was pointed out that the Barn at Old Channel Hill has demonstrated that money could be made by a developer – but the initial purchase costs were the key factor.
- Cathy Godber asked how affordable housing could be funded. GP replied that up to 80% of the costs could be covered by a commercial loan – but the recent changes to the rules would allow tenants to exercise their “right to buy” after 10 years – and this could destroy the viability of the development.
- CG also stated her concern that the possible development could spoil the countryside aspect of the village.
- Richard Major had submitted his views in writing in his absence from the meeting. He suggested that registration by the Council should proceed to preclude any other party developing the site whilst a feasibility study could be commissioned by the Council to decide what policy to adopt in the long term.
- Sue Sykes had also submitted her views in writing as a member of the public. She suggested that registration would serve the purpose of potentially meeting the need for affordable housing in the village.

The Chairman then indicated that Cllr. Heron is to contact the New Forest Villages Housing Association on behalf of the Parish Council to seek their views on the feasibility of the Baptist Chapel site for development as an affordable housing project.

Barry Vincent asked if there was any other viable site for affordable housing outside the Conservation Area and the AONB? His personal view was to let the building be developed and not to register interest by the Parish Council.

The Chairman felt that there could be major objections if a plan was put forward to demolish the building and build a house or houses on this site.

*Motion: Barry Vincent asked that the Council to vote on NOT registering interest–
Voting: 2 were in favour of NOT registering and 3 were against.*

Some additional points were then raised:

- GP qualified his decision against not registering based on the Parish Council having a survey done by a specialist team.
- It was noted that, if the Parish Council is to proceed with registration on Interest it would have to respond to the NFDC request for detail on the community use it proposes for the site. Specifically DC would have to respond to Andrew Smith’s letter spelling out the potential uses that the Parish Council had identified as a community project.
- CG suggested using the chapel as a pre-school nursery. Western Downland School are looking into the possibility and this site could be ideal for this purpose.
- GP queried the likelihood of any plans ever getting planning permission.

Motion: The Chairman moved that the Parish Council should proceed with the registration of Interest depending upon there being a positive response by the New Forest Housing Association to an affordable housing project for this site in financial and planning terms.

Voting: 3 voted in favour, 1 against and 1 abstained.

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Glyn Perrens asked that all councillors be kept aware of any information being passed back by the professionals and pointed out that registration by the council would result in any purchase being delayed by 6 weeks.

4 Planning applications

16/10579 Land rear of the COMPASSES INN, High Street, Damerham
Conversion of barn to dwelling; associated external alterations.

It was noted that the changes involve larger windows to the rear of the building; turning an outbuilding into an office; developing an existing building into a workshop.

DC suggested that some, if not all, of these changes had already been done – and should this be considered as a retrospective application.

Motion: That the Parish Council was in favour of the development (1 - approval and would accept the decision of the Planning Officer)

Voting: Unanimous

16/10700 October House, Lower Daggons Lane, Damerham
To install a “Log Cabin” as a Holiday Let

The Council was mindful that there had been an earlier application to pull down three semi-derelict buildings and replace them with one equal in area. This was approved and work is about to begin. The new application is to install a log-cabin as a holiday let. It would not be visible from the road and to date there has been no objections from neighbours. The Chairman also pointed out that there had been no comments to date by the Planning Officer, but asked the meeting Parish for their opinion.

Motion: The Council had no objections to the application (1 Approval and accept the decision of the Planning Officer)

Voting: Unanimous.

5. Any Other Matters the chairman thinks urgent.

5i The Parish Lengthsman

Marcus was in the village today. He met with SM and said that the repairs to the “decking” footpath behind the Trout Lakes is beyond his scope of work.

ACTION: SM and Council to seek another contractor to take on the work.

Removing several years’ worth of algae from the railings of the East End river bridge had taken much longer than estimated and therefore neither the clearing at Littlemill Bridge, nor strimming in the Play Trail had been done. The Lengthsman has a spare day on Thursday – but will need authorisation from NFDC before he can proceed.

The Clerk had recommended using bark chippings in the “Den” area created by children on the PlayTrail. She had said that this and the addition of some wood sections should deter children from taking soft furnishings into this area which posed a Health and safety risk. She would obtain the chippings.

5ii Fallen tree

A tree has fallen at the far end of the Play Trail. The clerk is investigating the ownership of this but NFDC do not think this is their responsibility.

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5iii Vacancies for Parish Councillors

The date for electors to request an election to fill the councillor vacancy had passed, so the Parish Council can co-opt new members as and when they appear. The Chairman asked if anyone had any suggestions.

6. Any other business of a minor nature.

6i Hedges

BV asked if contact could be made with Tylney Investments to cut the laurel hedge in Green Close as it is very over-grown.

6ii Verges

CG asked why the verges in Pound Lane and Brown's Lane had been missed in the recent cut and BV pointed out that those on the lower part of Court Hill had also been missed.

6iii Neighbourhood Watch

SM reported that her husband was willing to act as co-ordinator for the High Street. The clerk would call a village meeting to bring together the area co-ordinators and the police when a coordinator for West Park Lane had been identified.

7. Date of the next Parish Council meeting – Monday, 18th July 2016