

**SHIPTON GORGE PARISH COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON  
WEDNESDAY 12 JULY 2006**

**Present:**

Cllr Richard Hewlett (Chairman) (RH), Cllr Mrs Mary Boughton (Vice-chairman) (MB), Cllr Robert Cornish (RC), Cllr John Epplestone (JE), Cllr Charles Errington (CE), Cllr Robert Langran (RL), Cllr David Smith (DS), Cllr Mrs Amy Steele (AS).

**In attendance:**

Parish Clerk Ernie Thomas, Rural Housing Enabler Andy Lloyd and one parishioner.

**Open Forum:**

A parishioner raised the question of excessive vehicle speed through the village, especially dangerous to children in the vicinity of the playing field. It was agreed that the key issue was enforcement rather than reducing the existing 30 m.p.h. limit. After discussion, it was agreed that the **Clerk** should write to the police about the matter of enforcement and also to Dorset County Council about the criteria for a 20 m.p.h. limit and also the availability of illuminated speed signs.

**353. Apologies for absence**

Apologies had been received from Cllr Ron Coatsworth. RH also mentioned the sad death of Cllr Mrs Denise Marriott and that he had written a letter of condolence to her husband on behalf of the Parish Council.

**354. To sign as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 10 May 2006 and of the Parish Meeting held on 17 May 2006**

The minutes of the PC meeting of 10 May were agreed and signed by RH. The minutes of the Parish Meeting of 17 May were agreed, subject to the correction of 'Councillor Robert Cornish' to 'Councillor Ron Coatsworth' in minute 352, and signed by RH.

**355. Clerk's Report**

1. A further letter from Church of England, Salisbury Diocese, passing on a suggestion from the Highways Authority for controlling parking on land outside St Martin's Church was read out to the meeting. Clerk had contacted Mr & Mrs Jones and Eddy Buck with copies of all relevant correspondence. Agreed that the **Clerk** should organise a site meeting involving interested parties. **RL** to provide Clerk with a copy of the plan showing that the public footpath mentioned by the Diocese ran outside of the land in question.
2. Clerk had met Damon Allen for preliminary discussion about servicing of web site. Clerk will input text, leaving Damon to format and upload the revised pages to the web site at periodic intervals.
3. Clerk wrote to Director of Corporate Services following Parish Meeting expressing opposition to proposed closure of Burton Bradstock Library. Reply received saying further consultation period would be allowed.
4. Clerk wrote individual letters to 46 District Councillors (all except Cllrs Mark Parsons and Ron Coatsworth) expressing opposition to the District Council's acceptance of the Inspector's recommendation to remove the Defined Development Boundary from Shipton Gorge. The replies from three District Councillors were read out and these made it clear that in the absence of good and compelling planning grounds the District Council was unable to go against the Inspector's recommendation. The creation of the Local Development Framework might give a further opportunity to influence this matter.

**356. Other matters arising from the minutes**

RH had approached DCC regarding discouraging use of the road through the village by heavy vehicles but was awaiting a response.

### **357. Housing Needs Survey Report – presentation by Andy Lloyd, Rural Housing Enabler**

RH welcomed Andy Lloyd to the meeting and thanked him for a very good Parish Housing Needs Survey Report. He mentioned that Magna Housing had now made a detailed planning application regarding the Peas Hill development following the obtaining of outline planning consent.

AL explained that whilst there was usually a two year round for funding applications, the Housing Corporation had now decided to have an in-year round and Magna were going to bid on the basis of 4 properties for rent, 4 with shared ownership and 4 others. The latter might be offered at full value to reduce the amount of grant needed and AL made clear that Magna could set whatever mix of properties it wished to make its funding application attractive. The person at Magna dealing with the grant application was Sarah Barney. He mentioned that Tim Davis, WDDC Housing Policy Officer, was concerned about the Housing Corporation's policy on grants. Although planning consent was meant to be in place before application, some applicants obtained grants before that had occurred.

There followed a discussion and question and answer session at the end of which AL said he thought it unlikely that Magna would press for less than 35% of affordable housing on its development.

RH said that the following Wednesday the PC's Planning Committee would be considering a planning application for 12 dwellings that did not specify what those dwellings would be. He said that Magna was not consulting with the PC and other interested parties and that was disappointing. In the past Magna had talked to tenants and owners at Peas Hill but avoided contact with the PC. Magna had said many different things to different people, leaving tenants and owners utterly confused. The PC could not respond as they were not being consulted.

AL agreed to speak to Tim Davis about the PC's concerns with a view to persuading Magna to keep the PC informed. RH observed that but for AL's earlier comment the PC would not have known of the in-year bidding round.

MB said that the current planning application would be considered at the meeting on 19 July with no information regarding the mix of properties. AL said that the Section 106 Agreement between WDDC and Magna would specify a minimum of 35% affordable housing.

AS said that Magna had originally contacted tenants about needing three feet off their gardens but that had later been increased four feet. They had also previously offered incentives such as holidays or provision of hard standing which they now denied having offered. Magna tenants in arrears had been threatened with court action, including those who already had arrangements running. Because they owned the land, Magna had the whip hand. RH said he supported AS in this and that there had been a deluge of complaints from Peas Hill residents about the way in which Magna had handled them. He was unaware of anyone who had agreed to the proposed surrender of part of their garden.

AL noted these concerns and recommended an approach to Geoff Joy, Head of Housing at WDDC, with a letter detailing what had happened, setting out matters of concern and asking how these could be put right. RH mentioned he had written to a senior official in Magna some time ago and never received a reply. MB expressed concern about the Section 106 Agreement as the likely ratio of 3 units of affordable housing to 8 others was not a good mix.

CE said that the commercially justifiable ratio was one open market unit to two affordable housing units. However, Magna had refused to accept this and their planned ratio was the opposite. Their driver was to maximise revenue – a quite different measure of success. He urged that the proposed letter should stress the moral argument that Magna ought to generate goodwill in its dealings with local people. AL reiterated that the letter should catalogue what

had happened, how matters had not been handled well by Magna and the PC's comments on the situation.

RC mentioned that the detailed plans now submitted showed the loss of land from the gardens of existing houses. RH said his letter to Magna had pointed out that without this land there would be overdevelopment of the site. There had been no response, although it was clear that they needed the extra land if the road was to be wide enough to be adopted.

AL suggested that people should write in to say that they were concerned about the way the matter was being handled by Magna. He suggested that RC should have a meeting with the Planning Officer to gain a better understanding of the position. He also mentioned that Andrew Jordan, Development Control Officer, had a weekly surgery in Bridport and RC confirmed that Mr Jordan was the case officer. MB said that the point should be made about the furore that would arise should there be only three or four affordable houses in the development.

CE said there was a second aspect, unconnected with planning issues, namely how the PC could help Peas Hill residents in ensuring that their relationship with Magna was supportive to them. It was important that the PC should engage with Magna to get a dialogue going.

Reference was made to the extraordinary meeting held on 1 March 2005 involving representatives of Magna. No one at the meeting liked Magna's proposals and that remained the case. **Clerk** to provide a copy of the minutes of that meeting to AL. RH said he would contact the head of Magna and any further help or advice from AL would be welcome.

The Housing Needs Survey Report was then gone through at length with a number of aspects being discussed. A key issue that emerged was the fact that although four households had been identified by the survey as having affordable housing needs, only two were on the District Housing Register. The other two needed to be on the register to be considered for affordable housing. Application forms could be obtained from The District Housing Register, West Dorset District Housing Partnership, 22 High East Street, Dorchester DT1 1EZ (telephone 01305 756045). It also became clear that the WDDC policy on sites inside the Defined Development Boundary was to use them to deliver affordable housing for general District need without priority for local residents. However, the PC's wish was for the available affordable housing to be primarily used to meet local need. There were two possible options, namely to request a voluntary agreement regarding the existing stock or to ensure that a Section 106 agreement provided for a local tie for homes. CE observed that Magna had already emphatically ruled out a voluntary agreement on local lettings.

The report's recommendations for the PC that remained to be actioned were:

- a. To adopt the report and make it available to the community. AL undertook to make amendments to the draft report reflecting discussions at the meeting.
- b. To inform the community that households in need can register at any point with the Rural Housing Enabler.
- c. To remind the community, perhaps through a newsletter, that it is essential to become registered on the District Housing Register to be eligible for any form of affordable housing offer.
- d. To set up a Parish Housing Action Group. RH said that the PC could act as such. Its initial actions would be to lobby the District Council and Magna on the lines already discussed and to inform the community of the issues and actions through meetings and newsletters.

AL suggested that RH should send a copy of his correspondence to Councillor Ron Coatsworth and also to the Rt. Hon Oliver Letwin, MP. It would also be helpful to make reference to letters and other representations on the issues that had been received from parishioners. RH thanked

AL for the time spent at the meeting and for the helpful information provided. (JE left the meeting at this point).

DS read out an extract from the minutes of the meeting of 1 March 2005 in which Magna said that priority would be given to those on the District Housing Register who were resident in the parish. It was agreed that RH's letter should mention this minuted undertaking. Agreed that **RC** should review the Section 106 Agreement to establish its scope and that **MB** should look into the significance of the reference to 'reserved matters' in the planning notice.

**358. To review risk assessments and revise as thought necessary**

RH reported on some minor revisions needed to the existing PC risk assessments following a review. It was unanimously resolved that the **Clerk** should incorporate these revisions in the Risk Register.

**359. To consider and, if thought fit, to approve sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Return for the year ended 31 March 2006**

The Clerk distributed copies of the final accounts for the year ended 31 March 2006, the bank reconciliation and the asset register. It was noted that the entries in section 1 of the Annual Return were in accordance with the Parish Council's financial records for the year and it was unanimously resolved that the accounts be approved. Section 1 of the Annual Return was signed by RH in confirmation of this approval. RH read out the contents of the Statement of Assurance (section 2 of the Annual Return) and it was unanimously resolved that the Statement of Assurance be approved. Section 2 of the annual Return was signed by RH in confirmation of this approval.

**360. To appoint the Parish Council representative to the Village Hall Trust Committee**

It was unanimously resolved that Cllr Mrs Amy Steele be appointed as the representative to the Village Hall Trust Committee.

**361. To authorise the appointment of additional signatories to the Parish Council's bank account**

The Clerk reported that currently RH, MB, RC and RL were the authorised signatories in respect of the Parish Council's bank accounts with Lloyds TSB. It was unanimously resolved that JE, CE, DS and AS be appointed as additional authorised signatories, subject to each individual's consent. **Clerk** to prepare and submit the necessary documentation to the bank.

**362. Reports from Councillors**

Copies of the 2006/2007 accounts and details of bank balances at 27 June 2006 were distributed. The Clerk reported that cheques had been issued since the last meeting as follows:

| <b>CHEQUE No</b> | <b>RECIPIENT</b>  | <b>AMOUNT</b> |
|------------------|---|---------------|
| 399              | Contract Monitoring Services Ltd (Photocopying, stationery, etc.) | £11.40        |
| 400              | R Hewlett (Playing field expenses)                                | £72.77        |
| 401              | Allianz Cornhill (Insurance)                                      | £317.59       |
| 402              | DAPTC (Annual subscription)                                       | £84.15        |
| 403              | G Rosamond (Playing field maintenance)                            | £97.14        |
| 404              | Playsafety Ltd (Playing field inspection)                         | £74.03        |
| 405              | G Rosamond (Playing field maintenance)                            | £243.04       |
| 406              | E S Thomas (Clerk's salary)                                       | £518.00       |

These payments were ratified.

RH reported that the RoSPA inspection had been carried out the day before the Playing Field Maintenance Day. There were no surprises in the ensuing report. Payments of £36.50 to RH in reimbursement of the cost of lining paint purchased from Travis Perkins and of £66.75 to DS in reimbursement of the cost of wood for the roundabout were approved. RH thanked DS for his donation of wood for the seat.

RH said that his company, Contract Monitoring Services Ltd, had continued to provide photocopying, stationery and postage for the PC. Payment of £33.89 to the company in respect of this was approved.

RL reported that the periodic Parish Maintenance Unit form was due in October. **Clerk** to provide each Councillor with a copy of the PMU form to list any proposed works for consideration at the next meeting. RL said that Blair Turner of the PMU had said that before the overhanging hedge at Barr Lane could be dealt with, the PC needed to find out the identity of the relevant landowner. MB provided this information for the **Clerk** to write officially to Blair Turner to ask for this matter to be attended to.

### **363. Correspondence**

The correspondence log had been distributed. RH commented on the ever-increasing volume of correspondence being received. He said that it was fast becoming beyond the capacity of the PC to respond to every consultation document. The Spatial Strategy document was passed to **MB** to respond.

### **364. To fix the date for the next and subsequent meetings**

It was confirmed that regular PC meetings would continue to be held on the second Wednesday of each alternate month. The next meeting to be held on Wednesday 13 September with subsequent meetings on 8 November, 10 January, 14 March and 9 May. **Clerk** to announce these dates in BVN.