

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Mursley Parish Council

held at 8.00 pm on Monday 11 May, 2009 in the Committee Room, Mursley Village Hall.

Present: Members of Mursley Parish Council – Kym Bartlett, Neil Coles (Chairman), Wendi Cramphorn, Tim Dolder, Gerry Gallagher, Garry Ives, Len Ward

In Attendance: Clerk to Parish Council – Ian Hook

Residents: Maggie Coles, Beryl Dickens, Mark Priest, Mark Rimmel, John Williamson

1. MINUTES

The minutes of the previous annual meeting held on 28 April, 2008, were approved as required at the next Parish Council Meeting on 2 June 2008 and are available for inspection.

2. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Received: A report from the Chairman on the Council's activities during the past year. The following is a pre'cised version of the Chairman's statement but a full version is retained and is available on application.

Noted: The Chairman expressed disappointment that so few parishioners attended these meetings when there are a number of issues that have great implications for the community. The Chairman thanked all members of the Council for their hard work during the year which involves not just the parish meetings but also considerable research and preparation time while also having demanding jobs and families to look after. He thanked Ian Hook (and his predecessor) as Clerk to the Council for his support.

Parish Finances

Noted: The requested precept for 2009/10 was held at £7350, taking account of the financial position of the council and not wishing to burden residents further in these difficult times. However, the Parish Council content of the rates bill from AVDC did contain an increase which has been challenged. The confusing reply basically indicates that following the granting of various discounts to residents, the same precept is being collected from fewer rate payers.

Principal Concern

Noted: The considerable level of development in the close vicinity is the chief worry for the Council and should be for parishioners, however, because it is not directly in the village and is some years away, it is not at the forefront of everybody's mind. The Chairman advised that some 5390 houses plus schools, business and retail will be built at Salden Chase and given that it is in the South East Plan is a certainty that is unlikely to be reversed by any Government. Twenty percent of the development will be within our parish but the Chairman's concern is that with no natural boundary to prevent further expansion, that is just what could happen. Also, following several meetings with planners, it is evident that they are unable to force the developers to make improvements to surrounding roads such as A421 and B roads in and around the local villages. That would be the responsibility of Central Government and we are all aware of the financial difficulties there!

Winslow Green is a bigger development just 2.5 miles to our west and although it has

been rejected by AVDC the developer is well financed and is certain to appeal. Given the size of the proposal, that could involve a 40% increase in our village traffic, excluding HGVs, busses and commuters. Hence the Chairman's disappointment that only 15 people attended an evening arranged by the Council to explain the Winslow Green development.

Domestic Planning Issues

Noted: During the year there have been the usual considerable number of planning applications but they have been for extensions and modest changes, none of which was of a size that necessitated holding an open meeting. Mursley has been designated a level 4 village by AVDC, the lowest category and which means we would get only limited development mostly on infill sites.

Traffic

Noted: As previewed last year, we have had our preferred solution of vehicle activated signs approved by Highways and had one erected in Whaddon Road which was at the fastest place recorded by the traffic survey. Anecdotal evidence from local residents indicates that it has had a beneficial effect. Another speed survey will be conducted in six months time to validate whether the reduction in speeds is such to justify placing another device in Main Street. These devices cost in excess of £6000 and as that is almost a full year's precept, we need to be sure of their effectiveness before ordering another.

Road Maintenance

Noted: This is receiving close attention given the deterioration since the winter. We have had several meetings with Highways staff and given them our priorities which we are confident will be addressed during the summer. We regularly report the existence of potholes and if residents advise the Chairman or clerk, they will do the necessary although residents could report them by going to the BCC website. Unfortunately, their definition of a pothole is 10 -12" in diameter and 2" deep, so not all of our requests are processed.

Village Maintenance

Noted: Many thanks go to all the parishioners who give of their time to keep the village looking neat and tidy. Special thanks go to the PCC, the Sports Association and Roger Gurnett. Currently, we have not managed to reach accommodation with Thrift Farm who have mown verges etc. in the past, but hope to resolve this shortly. BCC undertake to mow some 6-8 times per year but seem to be elusive during the growing season and even then seem to speed through the exercise.

Affordable Housing

Noted: Following the generous gesture by Graham Bonham and his sister to make land available, the long-held aspiration for affordable housing could be a reality. It would be under the Government's 'exception policy' whereby land would be granted planning permission for that purpose that otherwise would be refused for commercial building. A Housing Needs Survey will be conducted shortly and if a case is proven, we could have affordable housing within 12 - 18 months.

Village Design Statement

Noted: I am pleased to report that this project should be complete by the autumn and special thanks go to Sandra Doherty and her hard working team for producing this document. It outlines the village's architecture and atmosphere which we hope is taken account of by planners in their deliberations on developments affecting us.

Parish Plan

Noted: This continues to be reviewed by Barry and Alison Agnew and they have pursued many of the aspirations included in the Plan, particularly the Village Design Statement but also the cricket team, wine society and a web site. These are now in existence or will be shortly while other wishes of parishioners are still being looked at.

Web Site

Noted: This will be operational shortly incorporating much of the Parish Plan, information on useful items such as bus routes, local amenities, local associations and their contacts which will be updated regularly. Thanks to Simon Ould for his great efforts.

Allotments

Noted: This is a problem. While we are cognisant of the demand, the cost and an available site are big problems to overcome. We will probably form a sub committee shortly to investigate this further but hold no great hopes in the short term.

General Matters

Noted: Finally, everything discussed by the Parish Council is in the public domain and parishioners can, by arrangement, address the council meetings. The agendas are posted on the noticeboard and the minutes available for inspection with the Clerk and soon to be available on the web site.

The Parish Council has very limited decision making capability and really of only advisory nature in respect of planning and highways issue. Notwithstanding that, the Council will assist with any queries and if necessary indicate the appropriate higher authority if that is required.

3. ISSUES RAISED BY PARISHIONERS.

Beryl Dickens raised the following points:-

Short notice of meetings: Neil Coles advised that they conformed with statutory regulations.

Pavement in Cooks Lane; Neil Coles advised that the matter had been reported to Highways but the complaint would be followed up.

Mowing: concern that mowing can take place too late in the year and leaves are not removed.

Neil Coles agreed with the concern and repeated that negotiations are continuing with Thrift Farm.

Sewage: concern that additional houses in Manor Close could exacerbate the sewage problems.

Neil Coles expected that Anglian Water would say that the existing system could cope with 3 extra houses as they had previously advised that the existing system could manage with the 18 houses of the earlier application.

Lighting: would not like money to be spent on removing street lights when requests for

more lights were refused on cost grounds.

Parish Council meeting decided not to support request for removal of light in The Lane.

John Williamson

Queried why no entry had been made to Best Kept Village Competition. Neil Coles advised that the Council had missed the deadline for entries.

In view of that, could we have a general 'clean up day' ?

Maggie Coles

Suggested that the Council requested every household to properly maintain the area immediately around their property; this to be requested via the Pump.

Mark Priest

Advised that he did not receive the Pump. Apologies were made as this was an oversight and would be rectified.

The meeting closed at 8.37pm