

LAMBERHURST PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held on 12th September 2017

Members present:

Cllr Denis Cruse	DC
Cllr John Uren	JU
Cllr Steve Cannella	SC
Cllr Rolf Smith	RS
Cllr Sam Nicholas	SN
Cllr David Hurst-Brown	DHB
Cllr John Francis	JF

In attendance:

Barbara Uren, Parish Clerk	BU
Chris Hamilton, Minutes Secretary	CH
A number of members of the public	

Welcome

The Chairman welcomed the councillors and those in attendance to the meeting.

A. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Application for Housing behind the Allotment Site near Hoptarden Close

A number of members of the public were present. Many wished to discuss the application for housing behind the allotment site near Hoptarden Close.

It was pointed out that LPC had objected to all previous, unsuccessful, applications at this site and there was now a concern that the council had talked of ‘compromise’ with the applicant at the previous meeting. Was the council moving from its historic position to one of easing? In answer, DC explained that the council had a right to object to applications but its views were not necessarily taken into account by the borough council planners. In fact such objections were often ignored. This said, LPC had objected to the first application, having particular concerns about the density of housing, the effect of the proposed development on traffic and parking in the area and on allotment holders. The precise nature of any rights of way across the road going up to the former car park were unclear and the council was currently in discussion with solicitors to establish what exactly they were. Any objections would clearly have a stronger basis if the applicant had no right of way or if the right of way were insufficient for the needs of a housing development. Preliminary reports suggested such rights of way were very limited. Asked if it could be assumed that the council would not do anything to ease this access, DC replied that he, as Chairman, could make no such assertion until the council had discussed this. This would happen later in the meeting and all were welcome to stay and listen. Furthermore the council would not be able to have a vote in principle without an application before them.

Another member of the public made the point that the fallow area of the land in question had never been a brownfield site. DC replied that this would be in the hands of the borough council. LPC could object, had done so, and would continue to do so if the application was not deemed desirable. Another

parishioner raised environmental objections, in particular relating to flooding, asserting that this would need a detailed report and adding that the High Weald Partnership had recommended no development at the site. In his opinion the application was very poor and LPC should recommend rejection. The applicant might consider access over his own land instead. DC replied that if this happened then the council could still make a case for objection but its position would be weaker. Another member of the public disagreed, referring to section 106. It was suggested that LPC had the whip hand. DC believed strongly in the importance of keeping up a dialogue, in particular over the quantity and type of housing. He reiterated that LPC's recommendations were frequently ignored and thus good relations between the applicant and the council would be beneficial and an eventual compromise could help to achieve an acceptable, if not ideal, conclusion whilst closing routes of discussion would not.

The point was raised that traffic in Brewer Street was at saturation point and already a big problem. It was also thought that the development offered the wrong type of housing and did not reflect the need of the community for low cost housing for young people. SN urged those who felt strongly to become involved in the development of the Neighbourhood Plan, where such issues would be discussed and evidence produced to support future plans for the village.

A member of the public asked what the council thought would be a suitable number of houses for the plot. In her opinion there was a good enough argument to say none. DC felt that this could not be answered generally and would depend on the size and mix of those proposed. The council would await subsequent applications.

The following points were also raised by a number of different members of the public in the discussion that followed:

- It was agreed that the access road was to remain securely gated
- It was noted again that there was other access to the applicant's land.
- This application had arisen after a TWBC Call for Sites.
- The costs of this development would make it non-viable (mentioning infra-structure demands in particular)
- There was concern about the domino effect that might occur as a result of a successful application for sites further along behind Brewer St. houses.
- It was a concern that the infrastructure to support such a development was not in place, in particular with regard to the gas supply and the many localised power interruptions which already occurred, although it was added that the developer could be asked to resolve such issues in his planning documents.
- The issue of traffic and parking was raised again
- A tree survey was also needed

DC thanked those present for attending the meeting and raising these issues. He reiterated that the council would do all it could to ensure that the best solution was found should a development go ahead. There was expertise on the council but other such expertise would be welcome. One parishioner present agreed to liaise with Rolf Smith so that a better, fuller argument might be made in response to a future application if necessary. DC confirmed that no

meeting had yet been scheduled between LPC and the applicant and that LPC had paid for legal advice on this matter but that the outgoings on this were modest.

B. Deterioration of Road South of War Memorial, School Hill and Parking on Build-outs.

In response to a question on the state of the road south of the build-out JU explained that there had been a site meeting with highways officials the previous week and they would be organising for the work to be done again.

A further question was raised about parking next to build-outs. It was suggested to the resident concerned that she might contact the PCSO with the registration number of the vehicle and ask him to visit the owner.

C. Request for Council's Support with Issues at a Property in Hopgarden Close

This issue, which had been raised at a previous meeting, was raised again by members of the public present. It was reported that Greg Clark had been involved and attempted to liaise with the Management Company but they would not respond to him. He had explained that the council had limited powers and that, as there was no response, legal action would be required. Those people with the benefit of covenants would have to take the action and there were some well-grounded concerns about recriminations. Residents were asking now for LPC to consider offering some support to residents should they take this legal action. This, and support by other residents, would be invaluable. DC asked for a copy of the deed of covenant to be sent to the council, along with an illustrative list of ways this had been contravened. LPC could then state the distress of parishioners. A resident agreed to send these to the chairman and to the clerk for a letter of support to be prepared.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There was an apology from CS, who had been delayed in London

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF 11TH JULY 2017

These were approved with no amendments.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Pg.2 Hook Green Speed Limits

There had been meetings at Hook Green and also in Lamberhurst, both involving Sarah Hamilton, which was encouraging. In Hook Green they were now looking at the possibility of regularising speed limits. RS reported that in Lamberhurst they had asked for hedges to be cut, signage changed the speed sign to be turned round and the possible removal of the build-out at Church Road. The possibility of doing these was being investigated. DHB felt that the problem there was also that as one left the dual carriageway the 30mph limit appeared much too late.

Old School Clock

JU reported that this was working slowly towards a conclusion. He was

hopeful that the receivers would pay for repairs on the clock and then the resident would apply for a deed of easement. Once the repairs had been carried out the annual maintenance costs would be modest.

Planning Applications: Court Lodge

The applications had been approved. DC had attended the meeting. The conditions that were placed on the application had taken account of a number of objections.

Pg.3

Power cuts on Down

These had been the subject of a great deal of correspondence with Greg Clark and the National Trust etc. DHB had been told that the underground cable at Scotney was the problem and it had emerged that the National Trust were also keen to have this put right. It had been stated that this would be done within three years, a length of time which was considered unacceptable. DC continued to liaise with Greg Clark, who was still pursuing the case.

Fences

JU had looked at the fence in question and decided that there was no real problem. All were happy that this should not be pursued.

Beacon on Down

This was expected to go up soon.

Non-Performing Assets

All had been completed for Furnace Avenue and matters were close to completion at Brewer Street.

Pg.5

Car Park Barrier

RS had obtained three quotes for a new barrier at the car park. They ranged between £2,400 and £3,000. There was some discussion as to the need for this barrier into a car park not owned by the village. Was this a problem to parishioners? There had been issues over the summer with camper vans using it overnight and some even using the field beyond. There were also concerns, after the recent incident on the Down, that travellers might also return there. JU reminded the council that LPC had to pay a lot of money to remove vehicles from the field on a previous occasion. JF asked if vehicles would not still be able to use the entrance on the Chequers side. It was thought that this was too narrow for large vehicles, especially since there were often cars parked in the way. A barrier would be a deterrent. It was agreed that RS would prepare this as a specific item for the next agenda. JF agreed that the money could come from reserves rather than from the precept. CH would supply an email contact at Shepherd Neame.

5. ACCOUNTS

JF circulated the accounts for two quarters. These included income from the borough council, now spent, for work on the non- performing asset site. There were otherwise no unusual items and the accounts were accepted with no questions.

6. COMMON LAND AND ALLOTMENTS

It was reported that more posts had been put on the Down. There was discussion as to whether more were needed on the slip road on the lower Down where the ditch was silted up. It was agreed that the common land group should investigate this.

SN spoke of the Woodland Management plan which she said was aspirational

and addressed the issues of clearance, replanting etc. over 10 years. The aim was to look for grants to support the plan. The council agreed to approve the expenditure involved in applying for funding.

7. **CORRESPONDENCE**

Undated letter dropped round to the Church's Parish Office from Alfie Pilcher – No address.

This requested that the parish council build a skate park. It was agreed that this was too costly a project for the parish council to undertake.

Living Forest

Estimate for extra posts on The Down. £526.00 plus VAT, to fill in the gap near the Crossroads ditch.

All were in favour of this expenditure

Public Conveniences

The caretaker gave notice of an increase in charges to £500 per month and made a request to replace the handwashing facilities and for a new height barrier to stop mobile homes parking in the car park and using the facilities. After discussion, the increase was agreed but it would be pointed out that this was a generous increase and above inflation.

Reply from Mr Ellis regarding his proposals for the former abattoir car park and requesting a meeting with members of the Council to discuss.

BU had replied that the council would be discussing this. DC would now ask our lawyer to reply explaining that his rights of access across the land were limited and advising him that, given the location of the allotments, any increase in the access might be deemed by the council to be detrimental to the area and cause traffic issues.

TWBC 2nd Call for Sites: list of land submitted for Lamberhurst and accompanying map from the TWBC website.

Councillors examined the responses on the map, for information only.

It was added that LPC had been supporting residents at Pearse Place in seeking an enforcement order upon a property there..

8. **PLANNING**

It was noted that one application had been approved outside the LBD. It was agreed to write to TWBC to ask why and to refer this to the borough councillors.

9. **REPRESENTATIVES' REPORTS**

War Memorial Hall

It was mentioned that Parish News suggested places to apply for grants and how to get solar panels.

Bowl Water

Nothing further to report

Playing fields

Nothing to report

Youth / Playground Working Group

It was agreed that bins needed replacing with a lidded variety to stop invasion by birds and animals. It was added that a child had been attacked by wasps in the playground that day. JU had had the nest destroyed. LPC would pay the bill.

Buses/Transport

Nothing to report

Police

Nothing to report

Highways

Nothing to report

Footpaths

Nothing further to report

Flooding

Nothing to report

Housing

Nothing to report.

Common Land

Nothing further to report

Events

Nothing to report

KALC

Nothing to report

Parish Chairman

Nothing to report

Business

Nothing to report

Website

Nothing to report.

School

Nothing to report

10. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

SN has been liaising with Kate Jelly who could start the consultation process once she had a list of consultees. SN still needed list of local businesses to put on the list and any further contacts who should be consulted. She asked councillors to pass on any names. The parish magazine would be used to circulate information. The next step after this would be to look for grants and set up a meeting to discuss the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan.

11. POWER CUTS ON THE DOWN

This had already been covered

12. MATTERS OF URGENCY AT THE CHAIRMAN'S DISCRETION

Gala Lights

A maintenance contract was needed with them. This should be on the November agenda. The lights should be tested before the winter season.

Civic Centre

DC had sent an email. Councillors should address their responses to the borough council.

13. EXEMPT ITEMS

There were none.

The meeting closed at 10.15pm.

