

**Minutes of the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
held on Monday, 16 April 2012, at 8pm
in the WI Hall, The Street, Crookham Village**

Present: Cllr. Simon Ambler (Parish Council Chairman)
Mrs. Carol Leversha (Parish Council Clerk)

In attendance: County & (ZC Ward) Cllr. Jenny Radley, (NM Ward) Cllr. Tim Davies,
(NM Ward) Cllr. Richard Appleton
Parish Cllrs. Lee Randall, Colin Lethbridge, Peter Crawley, Julia Ambler, David Jackson,
Robert Ney, Philip Ashton.
There were 89 electors of the Parish present.

Apologies were received from Cllr. Chris Simmons (CV ward)

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised of the format to be followed. He reminded those present that that questions only were to be addressed to the Councillors covering the parish, The parish has one HCC Councillor and six HDC Ward Councillors. He also advised that he would be pleased if residents would save their questions on the LDF until it came up on the agenda. He was requested by Mr. Watt (of FACE IT formerly CVWG) to alter the order of the Agenda so that the LDF item was dealt with after item 3 – the Clerk said she had advised the Chairman against that request as it would be grossly unfair on the Ranger who had given up her free time to come along this evening to address the meeting. The Chairman accepted the advice of the Clerk and moved the meeting on.

1. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

"Good evening ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the 2012 Annual Parish Meeting for Crookham Village Parish Council. We have a full agenda so I will and keep my formal report brief.

I would first like to thank all the members of the community who have given their time to help the Parish in various ways. Our internal auditor, Phil du Gay, helps us to meet our obligations on a financial front which become ever more onerous year on year.

I should also like to extend my thanks to all my fellow councillors for all their hard work over the last year. In addition to the formal business of the Council, they do a huge amount of work to help with the various projects in which CVPC is engaged. Their time is given on a voluntary basis and is unpaid.

We have four members of staff, all of whom work incredibly hard and we are very grateful for the dedication they show to their roles. Claire Rowe and Sarah Sherman do a sterling job of running the Zebon Copse Centre. As well as providing excellent customer service to users, they are ahead of target in meeting the ambitious financial targets for increasing income and reducing expenditure set in our original business plan for the centre.

Angela Sayers, our Finance Officer, and Carol Leversha, our Clerk keep us on the straight and narrow with regard to financial and regulatory matters. I should like to thank them both for all their hard work over the last twelve months.

Precept

Unlike the district and county councils, parish councils do not get the 2.5% subsidy from central government in return for not increasing the precept. Despite this, I am pleased to report that CVPC has managed to keep the level of the precept steady which represents a slight drop in income in real terms. This position is greatly helped by the increase in income from the Zebon Copse Centre which was taken over by CVPC in July 2010. As a result of the hard work and dedication of our Centre Administrators, I am very pleased to report that the Centre, together with its associated playing fields and playgrounds, is nearing the point at which it ceases to be a financial burden on the Parish finances. It is interesting to note that when we prepared the business plan for HDC as part of our bid for the S.106 money to refurbish the centre, we estimated that we would break even after four years. We have very nearly achieved that position in some 21 months!

Pilcot Rd Footway

At our last Parish Council meeting at the beginning of April, we had a presentation from the Hampshire Highways team regarding their proposals for the footway from the end of Knight's Close along Pilcot Road. Their proposal was for a footway which varied between 1.5m and 1.8m

in width to be constructed out of black asphalt rather than a gravel surface or other rural surface on the basis that this surface would be more cost effective to maintain and would be consistent with the other footways in both Crookham Village and Dogmersfield. They also proposed that to achieve the proposed width, the existing ditch would have to be piped in several places to allow the construction to take place. While the cost element of the presentation was only tentative at this stage, due to the large number of uncertainties, it was anticipated that the costs would be in the region of £232k.

At the meeting that followed, the parish council expressed concerns that their design requirements for a rural footway had not been achieved. In particular, the width was felt to be excessive and the suggested surface inappropriate. In short, CVPC felt that they had requested a simple low cost rural footway and had been given the equivalent of an urban highway. We will continue to pursue this important project and will request that a more suitable design is adopted. Local residents will be consulted over the next few weeks and we would be interested to hear your views.

Crandall Rd / A287

Hampshire Highways have agreed that the present traffic calming measures along Crandall Road have not been successful in reducing traffic speeds. They have looked at the proposals put forward by CRAG which they believe contain good ideas and have suggested that a meeting be arranged to discuss this further. However, I am disappointed to say that to date, no firm date has been agreed for this meeting. We have had a number of potential meeting dates which keep slipping, this now looks unlikely to happen before May. CVPC will continue to push for as early a date as possible for this important meeting.

Lea Green Play Area

Over the past twelve months, our Administrators at ZCC have had training and taken responsibility for the inspection of the various play areas in the parish. Over this time, they have reported that the equipment seems to have been sadly neglected in the past, CVPC has had to allocate significant funds to replacing worn and defective equipment. Unfortunately this policy has not proved effective in the at the Lea Green play area and we have had to close and remove several unsafe pieces of equipment. In recognition of the fact that the this play area is no longer fit for purpose, CVPC are looking into replacing the entire play area with new and improved equipment. To that end, we are interested for feedback from the Netherhouse Moor residents as to what equipment would best suit their needs so that we can prepare proposals to obtain suitable cost estimates for this scheme.

The Copse

One of the projects for this year was to work with the HCC Rangers who manage the woodland in Zebon Copse to obtain Lottery Funding to do extensive works through the Copse. Natalie Tanzer, one of the HCC Rangers has kindly come along this evening to give us a short presentation.

Local Development Framework (LDF)

Obviously there will be more discussion on this topic when we get onto the resolution later in the meeting. Last year saw the publication of the first draft for consultation of the Hart DC LDF Core Strategy Development Plan. This is the long term spatial planning framework for Hart up until 2028. CVPC is one of the statutory consultees for this plan and recognising the likely strength of public feeling on this issue (you will no doubt recall the meeting on the SHLAA held here, where there were people in the car park listening through the open windows), arranged a public meeting in a larger venue, ZCC on 12th September 2011. Unfortunately, despite this being a very important issue, attendance wasn't particularly high, probably not helped by the fact that the consultation period was over the summer holiday time. We subsequently submitted a response which we hoped fairly represented the feedback received and views within the Parish, particularly in relation to the proposed strategic site adjacent to Crookham Village.

2. ZEBON COPSE NATURE TRAIL – REPORT FROM RANGER

Natalie Tanzer, Zebon Copse Ranger, then gave a presentation on the works which had been undertaken at the Copse over the past year. Last January a Grant had been given to create a Nature Trail around the Copse. The aim was to make improvements for the community and for the wildlife. This was a challenge and she hoped to explain this. A new wildlife pond had been created, coppicing work undertaken and opening up the ground floor for bluebells. A natural path, edged with woven materials had been created to keep people from wandering over the other areas. As soon as the site was cleared it became a haven for butterflies. Ponds have been disappearing at a rapid rate so this new pond was to encourage the threatened species and all kinds of wildlife. Ponds are home to a great many species. There were lots of dragonflies

around the pond and it has become a feeding ground for bats. School groups can now be accommodated and children educated to the benefits of the area. Without light getting through to the ground floor it is not possible for butterflies to survive. The dedicated paths also encourage people to walk through the woodland and there is far less litter than before. Shady areas with shelter are important too and some have been left so that they are inaccessible to the public – diverse structure to the woodland is essential. The bluebells which have grown over the years have had crisscross trampling but the path has proved its worth by keeping people to a regular walk. Mire areas are also important and hold some fairly rare plants, cuckoo pint, orchids etc. Coppicing is not removing the trees - it is keeping them growing and the new shoots provide food for the deer. Interpretation boards are going to be erected in the near future and were sourced from local businesses. It's a small and busy site and by raising awareness we can protect the site, especially with young people. She then invited questions.

A resident asked about how the education side worked – how did schools get in touch about this. Natalie said in touch details were on the noticeboards. Richard Hellier thanked Natalie and mentioned two of the UKs most important butterflies were in neighbouring areas and might well enter the Copse. He wondered whether working with landowners would prove beneficial and was assured that the Rangers would welcome partnership working. A question was asked about keeping holly down – the stumps had been treated to inhibit regrowth but people were reminded that holly does have its uses. A question was raised about whether there was a written asset of the biodiversity of the parish and Richard Hellier said that FACE IT were working on this. A concern was raised about the Copse going from a small conservation area to a parkland area. The response was that when the nature trail was planned it was done so very carefully – the goal is to protect the wildlife but also to encourage community involvement. The intention is to plant hazel in the newly-open areas and start a coppicing cycle to manage its growth. In addition to the Copse the Rangers manage a lot of other areas which are not open to the community.

3. COUNTY & DISTRICT COUNCILLORS` QUESTION TIME

The Chairman invited questions on topics other than the LDF at this point.

Mr. Brian Whyatt asked the Chairman a question on the SID and the Parish Plan. He said he had never seen a copy of the Parish Plan – this was refuted by the Clerk who said that all Newsletters and the Plan had been delivered to every property in the parish. A comment from the floor was made about “selective mailing” and this too was refuted.

A question was raised about the health needs of the district and Cllr.Appleton advised that this was being done by Fleet Town Council and if they so choose they can invite the Crookham Village Parish Council to be involved and Cllr. Appleton offered to follow through.

4. TRUSTEES & APPOINTEES REPORTS

Memorial Hall Trust (Cllr. Simon Ambler)

The two hall's owned and managed by the Committee continue to be well used. Unfortunately, one of the halls major users, the Montessori play group had to close down last year due to being unable to comply with the new regulations imposed on play groups. Despite this, income from bookings continues at a steady level and costs are kept to a minimum helped by a lot of the necessary work being done on a voluntary basis. The trust maintains a reasonable reserve equivalent to around two year's expenditure and income continues to match or slightly exceed expenditure.

Crondall/Crookham/Fleet Welfare Trust (Cllr. Peter Crawley)

Cllr. Crawley said the Trust had been set up to provide winter fuel for needy people which it does throughout Fleet and Crookham Village, the village has about 10 households. The majority of the Trust money comes from the Mummings who collect on Boxing Day. If anyone knows of any elderly who would meet the “needy” criteria he would welcome being informed.

Cottrells Almshouse Trust (Cllr. Tim Davies)

(Post meeting report)

Cllr. Davies had attended a meeting in the early part of the year. There is a new Clerk and the Deed which governs who may be eligible to apply for accommodation is going to be amended in that it will be changed from the old wards to now cover all the parish councils. Cllr. Davies is endeavouring to get the rate of interest in mortgage reduced from 9.5%.

5. PARISH INFORMATION ROOM AND COUNCILLORS SURGERIES

Cllr. David Jackson asked those present if people would be sufficiently interested to meet with a parish councillor at fixed times in the village and the ZC Centre. What Cllrs did not want was to set these surgeries up and then spend 2 hours sitting around in an empty room.

Richard Hellier said he thought this would be helpful and to give this a trial for a six month period. Cllr. Jackson said we could use the meeting room at the Centre – he said it was also possible to

contact councillors via email addresses given on the Website. The website facility is not well used nor do residents email councillors. Brian Whyatt asked how much teeth the PC had to deal with issues raised by residents. Cllr. Jackson said we were somewhat limited – dog waste bags and bins we can deal with – a doctor's surgery is another matter but if enough people approach the Parish Council it can raise matters on their behalf. What is needed is individuals giving the Parish Council a body of evidence. He said he could not commit his colleagues but he hoped that we could set up a couple of meetings here and at Zebon Copse and we would let people know dates and times.

6. NOTICE RECEIVED FROM CROOKHAM VILLAGE WORKING GROUP REJECTING THE CURRENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK AND SEEKING THE SUPPORT OF THE PARISH COUNCIL IN PURSUING OTHER OPTIONS

The Chairman said he had agreed to permit Brian Watt to address the meeting and then Cllr. Jackson will give the Parish Council update on its response to the Consultation. Then he will pick up the questions from the floor for the District Cllrs to address.

Mr. Watt said Fleet and Crookham Village were threatened and if we do nothing about it Fleet and Crookham Village will be merged. He produced a list of issues and said it was a domino effect. The impact on the environment will be enormous – he produced slides showing what was now and what might be. He then introduced politics into the issue.

Cllr. Jackson then responded to the presentation and said complaining to Hart about housing numbers would not address these concerns – they would need to address this via the Member of Parliament. He explained how without an adopted LDF the district was open to planning by appeal. The challenge, Hart judged, was best met by going around the edge of Fleet with “bolt ons” to which we objected and would continue to object. The next consultation will be a technical one and will not be a “go away and do it again” issue. That is a challenge that has to be addressed – we start from a position of some difficulty. The numbers attending the September LDF meeting were not great and it is good to see so many here tonight. He hopes we can count on a similar turnout for the next consultation phase and it is essential that individuals write and express their individual views.

The Chairman said the next point of consultation would probably be in July (as was the last one) and that will be the point for representation. Cllr. Jackson said whilst we would like Grove Farm to go away we also have to plan for what will happen if it does not – he encourages everyone to think about how it should best be managed if it does happen. Only one hand was raised when it was asked how many people had read the CVPC response to the previous LDF consultation in October 2011. He advised that the document could be viewed on the parish website and included all the major points put forward by FACE IT tonight. Cllr. Appleton addressed the meeting and said that the top down figure was imposed by the last government. This government said it would be down to the districts to justify their figures. Under the NPPF we now only have 12 months to adopt the Plan.

Mrs. Makepeace Brown

She asked if the land had been sold for the 450 houses and do the houses have to be 450 – could it be less if other sites were found. The answer to the first question is a commercial one and we are not party to that. The second question is that HDC have to come up with the correct number of houses as laid down by the Plan – the 450 on Grove Farm goes towards the total number for the district in the plan. The numbers have to stack up at the end.

Mr. Hellier

One of FACE IT's concerns is that a certain location not too far away does not appear to have been considered as an alternative. There does not appear to have been a transparent process. Cllr. Jackson said to build a new settlement is not on the next phase of consultation and this was confirmed by Cllr. Appleton.

Cllr. Jackson said FACE IT needs to read carefully the terms of the consultation and not raise its hopes too much.

Mr. Whiteside

Said he went to the planning consultation in HOOK and neither Pilcot nor Grove Farm were mentioned as possible sites. He said that the SHLAA did not appear to be transparent.

Cllr. Jackson explained how the SHLAA worked and that the Grove Farm site was the only one judged acceptable at this stage.

Mr. Cruickshank

Said surveyors were down Hitches Lane marking out things and he thinks this is a done deal.

Mr. Gwynne

Asked about challenging the next phase of the consultation and said would a change of administration alter the process.

Cllr. Jackson said he believed the plan was unlikely to change to any significant degree, even if the administration should change at Hart, because of the shortness of time – a plan must be in place within a year or it will be a free for all for developers.

Mr. Phillpot

He had spoken to Planning Policy at 1.30 this pm and they deny everything which has just been said – nothing has been firmed yet. He had phoned about the surveyors on Hitches Lane. He said there was no transparency.

Cllr. Jackson explained that sites would not be finalised until the LDF was approved and that full details would only emerge when planning permission was sought.

The Chairman said that what was needed from FACE IT was concrete suggestions which this Council could support.

Cllr. Appleton said one thing about the process of the SHLAA was favouring sites on the edge of existing settlements. The threat to Pilcot Farm would follow on how Grove Farm got onto the SHLAA and if there are further changes to housing numbers you could find someone wants to make up the number by adding in the next available site.

Cllr. Jackson explained to the meeting whom to address their concerns to and stressed they evidence those concerns and make sure people register to speak at the public enquiry. The Chairman said there will be almost a battle royal between developers as some stand to make a lot of money and they will have top people there arguing to get sites on the LDF and there will be top people on the other side and perhaps FACE IT should get involved.

Ms Cole

Why has HDC had to dictate large numbers – why do we have to take this when Farnham doesn't. One wonders whether there is any point doing anything – it sounds as if it's a done deal. It seems that HDC are not taking any notice of anything we say or do.

Cllr. Ambler said the NPPF applies to all areas. Some may already have plans in place but Hart is in the process of producing a plan otherwise it becomes a free for all on the basis that within the district there is not a 5 year plan supply. Developers on 3 sites around the district are already planning applications using that argument.

Mr. Hall

Wished to support the PC and HDC. In government "consultation" means that big decisions have been taken and here and now we are just arguing about detail. If you want to think ahead you need to think 20 years ahead and you need to plan well. Where is your power and influence to come from - you need to play serious politics with people who play dirty.

Ms Johnson

With the new arrangements for Calthorpe Park School, what are the parish going to do about the bus routes to the school.

Cllr. Radley said it had only just been decided that Crookham Park (QEB) children will be allocated to Calthorpe Park School but there is a contribution of money which will be allocated to that but this is all in process. She will make sure the Parish Council is involved with anything along those lines.

Mr Holmes

Said it seems from what he has heard tonight we will be in the hands of our district councillors and he wished to ask how they would vote – he was advised they were not allowed to commit themselves.

Mr. Wooley

Asked that when entering the technical stage of the process can the Parish Council come up with a programme to help summarise these documents to assist the residents. The Chairman said that this was what the Parish Council had attempted to do for previous consultations and would go through this for the next process and would continue to do its best for residents.

Mrs. Goddard

Said she and her neighbour had ploughed through the whole document and it was extremely difficult to make sense of it. Parishioners need help to make a suitable response.

The Chairman said the difficulty was that it was a very difficult document to understand.

Cllr. Jackson said he had been involved with planning on the parish council for around 12 years and would be happy to be approached to assist.

Cllr. Stephen Parker (Portfolio Holder for Planning on Hart District Council) said he had attended as a resident of Zebon Copse and had not been aware that this was on the Agenda. He went into depth to explain the timescales involved – officers are going as fast as they can to meet those dates. If Hart were to do something radical – like Winchfield – we do not have the time to incorporate that between now and the end of May. These dates were only made public when the NPPF was published and without a 5 year land supply any developer can come along and offer a site and unless there are overwhelming reasons against it then permission is granted. If you want to protect your site you need to put forward another site. We will send off the document on Thursday and on Monday we will start work on the next plan and that is when other sites can be put forward. Winchfield has submitted sites to the SHLAA and Hart are obliged to consider them. If you can come forward with good reasons why another site is better than Grove Farm then we can consider it.

Cllr. Radley and Cllr. Davies were then invited to speak. Cllr. Radley said it was important to speak from the heart and quantity was also important. Local knowledge about what is needed is as important as addressing the technical issues. The more individuals who write to Hart the better. Say what is needed but say it in your own words.

Mr. Watt was then invited to sum up. He thanked everyone for making their views known this evening. "We have been told quite late on in the meeting it's a done deal all you can do is lay back and enjoy it. From what he had heard over the last two weeks he does not accept that and we must come back to our resolution." He endeavoured to introduce politics into the voting but was firmly put back on track by the Chairman. Mr. Watt said he believes we now need to work even harder to make sure not a moment is lost. What he wants from this meeting is to know whether the Parish Council is prepared to support the following resolution.

FACE IT RESOLUTION - Proposed by Mr. Watt and seconded by Mr. Holmes.

We wish to work with CVPC to ensure our views are heard, reflected in the Parish Plan and taken proper account of by HDC and in the next LDF consultation.

We totally reject the current LDF in respect of proposed and potential developments impacting Crookham Village.

We seek support of the CVPC to press for an objective and evidence-based, strategic re-evaluation of all Hart sites – including Fleet, Crookham Village and the other country villages being considered, as well as options for a new settlement.

A vote was taken and the majority present supported the resolution with one vote against. The Resolution will go forward to the next parish council meeting for debate.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There being no other business put forward the Chairman closed the meeting at 21.59pm.