

These are the unadopted Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday, 12 May 2014, in the WI Hall, The Street, Crookham Village. Please refer to the Minutes of the June meeting for any amendments.

Present: Residents of the Parish (14). County Cllr John Bennison, Ward Cllrs. Chris Simmons, Tony Clarke and Parish Councillors Julia Ambler, Peter Crawley, Richard Eastment, David Jackson, Judy Johnson and Wendy Makepeace-Browne, also in attendance Daryl Phillips of Hart Council. Cllr. Jenny Radley sent her apologies due to a clash of engagements.

1. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

In the absence of Cllr. Simon Ambler the Vice Chairman, Cllr. David Jackson welcomed everyone to the meeting. He told the meeting that Cllr. Ambler would give his report when he arrived. After the NP presentation and question and answer session Cllr. Simon Ambler then gave his report.

"Good evening ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the 2014 Annual Parish Meeting for Crookham Village Parish Council. I should like to start by extending 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 also have four members of staff, all of whom work incredibly hard and we are very grateful for the dedication they show to their roles.

Precept

We have contained our costs and kept our precept unchanged despite the continued rise in our costs. The Zebon Copse Centre has now started to pay its way and no longer requires such a major contribution from the Parish to its running costs even though we still have a high level of ongoing maintenance which continues to be a significant part of our monthly expenditure. As a result, we are now starting to use the spare funds to conduct a programme of refurbishment and replacement for the play areas in the Parish.

Projects – some of the projects that we are working on seem to have been around for a while, but we are making progress.

Pilcot Rd Footway

After many years in the planning, this project has finally come to fruition. Recently, I was very pleased to see that even before the footpath was properly completed, there were a number of people taking advantage of it.

Crandall Rd Traffic Calming

I reported last year that we were crawling towards a conclusion on this project, unfortunately the rate of crawl is slow but we are continuing to press for the successful completion of this project.

Lea Green Play Area

In January we approved a design and placed an order for a new play area to replace the previous one which had to be removed as it was unsafe. The work, which had been delayed due to the exceptionally wet winter, has now started on this project and, weather permitting, the new play area should be complete by the end of this month. We also have plans in hand to replace the gravel footpath with a proper tarmac surface which will make it far easier to walk across, particularly through the winter months.

Zebon Copse Centre

It's now four years since we took full control of the centre. Much has been achieved in that time, particularly in view of the fact that we were building up business through the depths of the recession. Financially, we are now hitting the targets that were projected and presented to Hart cabinet in January 2008, which led to the agreement for the transfer. In summary that means that we are covering our costs on hall rental and pay for outdoor sports provision and play area maintenance from our precept, which was always our

intention. Our policy is one of rolling maintenance and decoration in order to keep the facility attractive to users and not get hit with large unexpected bills.

Planning

In the current vacuum caused by the fact that Hart District Council currently has no Local plan in place, developers are taking advantage and submitting major applications. The first of these was Watery Lane. CVPC spent considerable time over Easter analysing the outline planning application and, as a result of this work, was able to submit a comprehensive and robust response. Despite the fact that this takes up a considerable amount of our time, we will put the same level of effort into all the other applications that may be submitted, including the Grove Farm application (renamed by Berkley's marketing people "land north of Netherhouse Copse"), which promises to be the next one.

Vacancy

For anyone keen to get involved, we currently have a vacant seat on the Council. If anyone is interested please come and talk to any of us about what is involved. As you can see, we have a huge task ahead of us with the number of ongoing projects and the prospect of responding to new planning applications within the Parish."

2. PRESENTATION ON PROPOSED NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN FOR THE AREA OF CROOKHAM VILLAGE CIVIL PARISH

Cllr. Wendy Makepeace-Brown introduced this item. "In November 2011, the Localism Act was introduced. The aim of the act was to devolve more decision making powers from central government back into the hands of individuals, communities and councils - one such power was planning by allowing areas to create their own neighbourhood planning. The Localism Act brings the biggest change to social engineering in the past 100 years, allowing us to take control of things that are important to our community.

In 1961 CVPC totalled 164 dwellings, today we have about 1700 dwellings, which means 90% of people in the current Parish are living in houses built in the last 50 years – Development won't stop now!

What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

This is an optional new way for communities to decide the future of the places where they live/work. The process lets them:

- Choose where they want new homes, shops and offices to be built
- Have their say on what those new buildings should look like
- Grant permission for new buildings they want to go ahead

Why Does it Matter?

The planning system helps decide what gets built, where and when. It is essential for supporting economic growth, improving people's quality of life and protecting the natural environment.

In theory, planning always gives local communities a 'say' in decisions that affect them but in practice, communities often find it hard to have a meaningful say, so with the Localism Act, the government is offering power back into the hands of local residents, business, councils and civic leaders.

What About Crookham Village Parish?

For some months now, CVPC has had a working group looking into the benefits, requirements and costs of producing a Neighbourhood Plan for this area.

As this Parish has a well formed Parish Plan, we have a sound start to a Neighbourhood Plan document. We have looked into the process for completing the project and we have researched the resources that will be required to do the work, both in terms of man power and finance. The document has to be written in conjunction with the Local Plan that Hart District Council will create and will need to show 'general conformity' with Harts' Local Plan strategic objectives.

Due to the fact that Hart are still creating the District Local Plan, some think that a Neighbourhood Plan cannot be undertaken. This is not correct and there is a lot of back ground work and research that can be done in parallel with the Hart Local Plan creation. In creating our own Neighbourhood Plan, CVPC will become its own planning authority in effect and will have the ability to decide (via the agreed NP numbers) what is built, when and where for our Parish for the next 15 years.

The NP can be updated annually based on housing figures managed at District level, so CVPC would expect to work with Hart to keep up to date and maintain a rolling plan for our area.

A Neighbourhood Plan has seniority to Harts plan on everything from design to parking spaces for the developments in our designated area and CVPC would work with land owners to a community agenda NOT a district or political agenda.

With development comes 'developer contributions', which are the fees per dwelling that builders have to pay for whatever they build. If CVPC has a Neighbourhood Plan, we will get a higher % of that funding from Hart for use as we see fit for the community.

Crookham Village Parish is under threat right now from mass development. If we had started a Neighbourhood Plan in 2011 when they come in, we could be in control now of what we do and do not have built in our area. Having this document will not prevent any more building, but it will allow us to be in control of how we deal with the building that we have to take by law (as decided by central government) and it will absolutely stop us having to take anything extra.

What happens next?

If CVPC vote tonight to undertake a Neighbourhood Plan project, we will need all the help we can get to manage, research and complete the project plan because we are a group of 7 volunteers (with a vacancy to be filled) who already do as much as we can for the community and are already stretched with the tasks we perform in the limited time we can give. We will be required by law to consult with local interested parties, which cover our neighbouring Parishes, schools, businesses, our parishioners, etc. so we will be looking for community support.

We will need to set up a steering group to represent our children, youth, retired community, business, environment, voluntary sector, the disabled, local residents groups, etc.

The CVPC NP working group consists of Councillors Makepeace-Browne, Johnson and Eastment. You have our total commitment to this project and we will need community and Hart commitment back to support us in our work. We already have some strong skills volunteered, for which we are grateful, and we expect to hit the ground running as soon as we can to progress this project. We have found some funding, an excellent set of consultants for professional help and have a great working relationship with Hart so feel confident that we can successfully undertake this task on your behalf."

Daryl Phillips (Corporate Director HDC) then spoke.

He said that two year's ago Neighbourhood Plans were not very exciting because the growth levels for Hart were relatively low but things have changed and there is now a significant increase in building required – Hart need to build a further 6,000 dwellings over the plan period. Green fields will have to be built upon which will not be popular. We are already seeing ad hoc applications – Watery Lane (330) the developer thinks he will get permission on appeal, and now Berkeley Homes and Grove Farm 440 houses and this is happening across the district. Without the Local Plan it is developers who chose which sites come forward. Daryl said NPs are now extremely interesting in that parishes find the sites. It is important that the Parish start thinking about it – only last week the Secretary of State threw out an application because it didn't comply with the NP which existed. He would recommend that residents look at what is important to the parish and he feels that they should look at housing development and it will probably take 18 months to complete. What can be done is look at the HDC process and pickup from Hart what would suit for the

NP – Odiham is looking at a NP now. You will not be running on your own. You have to have a plan, consult and then it is subject to examination by an Inspector based on soundness and then a referendum – HDC pay for the inspector and referendum. Average cost of a NP (Rolls Royce version) is £20k/£30k – but for an average NP cost £17k/£18k but if you are careful then you could do one for £10k/£15k costs if you concentrate on one particular topic and he sees that for this parish it would be housing development. You need to worry about what is to come not just what is happening today. Not having growth is not an option. NP gives us a bigger influence over what happens and the NP actually becomes Planning Policy. If the NP is in conformity with the Housing Plan you have a fighting chance. He says it is wise to think about it. Ring fence it back to what is important to the parish you get your foot in the door first and with the exception of Odiham you will be one of the first to have a NP. HDC has a duty to support a NP but does not have to finance it. If you have a NP then he thinks you would not need to review it for about 5 years. He then answered questions from the floor for 30 minutes which ranged from planning issues to the Neighbourhood Plan.

3. COUNTY & DISTRICT COUNCILLORS` QUESTION TIME

Residents may ask questions of those County & District Cllrs present and representing their relevant areas of the Parish:-

Zebon Copse Ward – Ward Cllr. S. Ambler

Crookham Village Ward – Ward Cllrs. C. Simmons and T. Clarke

County Councillor John Bennison.

A question was asked of all Cllrs. present whether they would support the NP process. Cllr. Bennison said he would assist in any way he could but as a County Councillor this was limited. Cllr. Tony Clarke said he would be assisting as he had done with the Crookham Village Parish Plan. Cllr. Simmons said he too was in a position to offer to help as he too had helped with the Ewshot Parish Plan.

Cllr. Bennison was asked about the Crondall Road safety improvements and advised that he and Cllr. Jackson had met with the Highways Engineer and work is still in progress and they are developing something which can be built. HCC are looking at the practicalities and the options for the section of footway. Cllr. Jackson said he understood that when HCC had explored options for a possible footway on Crondall Road, between the canal car park and The Exchequer, the Parish and residents will be consulted again. Cllr. Bennison said Greg Churcher had handed the project over to Helen Merrills and it is in this year's budget.

A resident asked about the Lea Green play area refurbishment and asked whether there were any plans for a children's play area within the village area. Cllr. Jackson said there had been a wish to build something on The Crescent Green some years ago but this had met strong opposition. The Parish are willing to consider installing a play area but require a site for it to happen.

4. TRUSTEES & APPOINTEES REPORTS

Memorial Hall Trust (Cllr. Simon Ambler)

Cllr. Ambler gave the following report: "There are two halls, the Memorial and Willis halls which are owned and managed by the Trust, they both continue to be well used.

Whilst the business model is completely different from that which we use for ZCC, being operated as a charity and relying mainly on volunteer assistance, the halls provide a valuable community facility. They are home to a number of regular groups, probably the most well-known and longstanding being the Crookham Players.

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. Wendy Makepeace-Browne gave the following report. "This charity is over 100 years old and was set up to help those who were poor and in need by delivering fuel. Over the years, whilst the aim is still the same, it has become necessary to change the way in which the help is given and now they provide financial help instead of actual fuel. It is a small charity with only 7 members (including the secretary) and there are 3 Parish Councils represented. I do not believe that the trust has been run well for many years and I was shocked to find that they have a large cash reserve, when they have no overheads. Worse still for me was the fact that whilst they have this huge spare reserve, they have only been giving around £50 per person each year at Christmas to an ever reducing number of people as they have been focussing only on the elderly in our area. I am concerned that CVPC has been represented on this board for some time and this issue has been allowed to continue. Since being on the board I (and 2 other trustees) have been pushing for reform of the way in which the charity is run. We have forced a review of the constitution, which was out dated and not being adhered to, and we have forced £3K of funds to be released for use in the community that the charity is supposed to be serving. We are looking for more places to donate as we have over £7k in reserves still, so I would welcome any suggestions from the public or CVPC members for areas where there are deprived people of any age within the Crondall, Crookham and Fleet boundaries. For Christmas 2013, we made only 20 gifts of £60 the spread of which was 7 in Crookham Village, 11 in Crondall, 2 in Fleet and 2 in Church Crookham. CVA and Crondall Events/Neighbourcare are the main donors each contributing around £550 each last year, other funds are raised through collection tins in pubs and takeaway shops."

Cottrell's Almshouse Trust

Cllr. Wendy Makepeace-Browne gave the following report. "A very professionally run charity, set up in 1844 to provide accommodation for poor persons of good character of the local area. It has 14 single occupancy flats and 2 double occupancy flats. The board is made up of 6 trustees (including representation from 3 Parish Councils), the secretary plus the Priest from Christ Church in Church Crookham who is an ex-officio trustee. They run and maintain the buildings and grounds to a good standard for their occupants and they manage their funds well. We meet twice a year as standard and the role for the trustees is light with only the odd interview meeting for new residents being required. They are funded mainly by the rents from their clients so the grant of £500 that CVPC gave this year was very gratefully received. This Charity is a delight to be part of."

5. CONSIDER RESOLUTIONS OF WHICH WRITTEN NOTICE HAS BEEN RECEIVED AT LEAST 7 DAYS BEFORE THE MEETING

No resolutions were received by the Clerk.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman invited residents to raise any other issues. Tina Collins asked if we want to contact the whole community is there any facility to have face book and twitter as a quick way to contact people. Cllr. Jackson said if you looked at the parish questionnaire you will find that the community did not rate face book or twitter as a means of communication. The Chairman said there did not seem to be one single way to communicate effectively but he recalled that the rate of return for the refresh of the Parish Plan had been good but out of that only 11 responses had used the web. Faceit have over 300 people on their Face book page. Cllr. Jackson said if the web tender is approved he will ask for "push" link. The Chairman said he had raised this last year but had not had much support for it but perhaps things have changed and we should revisit it.

The meeting closed at 8.38pm