

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting
held on Wednesday, 24 April, 2002 at 7.30 p.m.
in the Village Hall, Abbots Bromley, pursuant to notice having been given.

Present: Cllrs: PJ Charles, LG Ferguson (L Fe below), L Fox, RSV Jarman, KA McLoughlin, MM Moore, C Talbot (Chairman) and S M Tonking.

Also present: PJ Youngs (Clerk); Mr K Birch, Assistant Chief Executive, ESBC; EA Roy

Apologies for absence: Cllr. S Wilson and Borough Councillor AJH Fox.

Members of the public attending: none.

Minute 1: Public Session

Since there were no members of the public present a public session was not held.

The Chairman introduced Mr K Birch who had accepted an invitation to address the Council regarding aspects of the Local Government Act, 2000, notably the Code of Conduct and the Declarations of Interest enshrined in the legislation.

Mr Birch began by stating that his sole intention was to explain the legislation and to ensure that those aspects which were giving rise to disquiet amongst parish councillors were fully understood. He then proceeded to set the legislation in its historical context - explaining the intentions of the newly-elected government in 1997 to eradicate "sleaze" from public life. The need to do so, he pointed out, had been highlighted by high-profile cases and the conclusions of the Nolan Committee on standards in public life.

Mr Birch pointed out that, heavy-handed and convoluted as the legislation might now appear to be, it introduced little that was new to public life: it simply extended to parish councils the elements of public accountability which had long been a feature of county and borough/district councils. Even so, he said, each councillor must be the judge of the facts for him/herself.

He then went on to summarise the essential procedures which Councils had to implement. After he had answered the questions that followed, the Chairman thanked Mr Birch for explaining the legislation and its implications so clearly and fully. Mr Birch left the meeting at this point.

Normal business resumed at 8.20 p.m.

Minute 2: Introduction of new Clerk

On behalf of the Council, the Chairman introduced and welcomed the new clerk who would be taking over from Mr Youngs on 1st May.

Minute 3: Approve and sign the Minutes of the previous Meeting - 27th March

It was proposed (L Fe), seconded (SMT) and agreed that the Minutes be signed, subject to the following amendments:

1. p.4 Minute 127.8 to be amended to read: "Cllr Tonking reported upon her negotiations to obtain once again performers on Horn Dance Day. The overall cost would be £540.50 but, of this sum, £226.00 would be the share to be paid by the Council. **It was proposed (L**

Fe), seconded (SW) and agreed that the Council should contribute this sum to the occasion.”

2. p.5 minute 128.3 “the” to precede “stile” and delete “he had”.

Minute 4: Matters arising and matters of report

- 4.1. Jubilee Cup. The Chairman reported that Borough Councillor Fox had agreed to be the recipient of the Jubilee Cup this year.
- 4.2. Allotment The Clerk reported that arrangements had been completed for the tenancy of the allotment to be transferred to Ms H Morris of “Threeways”.
- 4.3. The Clerk further reported that, thus far, there had been no reply to the Council’s letter, dated 10th April, addressed to Rt. Hon. Nick Raynsford, Minister for Local Government and the Regions regarding aspects of the Local Government Act 2000.

Minute 5: Planning

5.1 Applications

- (i) **HO/25197/002 13 Lintake Drive:** erection of rear extension.
The Chairman ruled that it was not necessary to circulate the plan since “no objections” had been recorded on 27th March in respect of a similar rear extension proposed for 15 Lintake Drive.
PC response: No objections
- (ii) **HO/15026/003: Hawthorn Cottage, 3 Bagot Street, Abbots Bromley:** erection of two storey rear extension.
PC response: No objections

5.2 Decisions

B.1 The following applications have been **AGREED**

- (i) **LB/05395/009: Maxstoke House, Bagot Street:** retention of internal alterations to roof space.
- (ii) **LB/07418/019 & HO/07418:018: Manor Farm House, Hall Hill Lane:** erection of a rear conservatory and construction of a new parapet wall.
- (iii) **PA/02885/012: Ivy House, High Street:** retention of temporary office and toilet facilities.

B.2. The following applications have been **REFUSED:**

None

B.3. The following applications have been **DEFERRED:**

None

C Correspondence and other planning matters

- (i) Copy of a letter sent to Rev S Davis dated 12th March stating:
- (ii) *Lopping of three holly and felling of two Lombardy Poplar trees, St Nicholas Church:* ...the Council's Landscape Architect does not wish to place Tree Preservation Orders on any of the subject trees. Therefore, there are no objections to the works as proposed."
- (iii) The Clerk was asked to enquire regarding the legality - or otherwise - of notices which had appeared in the area concerning car sales. Whilst it was appreciated that these had been erected on private land it was felt that they were dangerous in so far as they were likely to distract the attention of motorists.
- (iv) **PA/20982/005 Goose Cottage, Goose Lane:** proposal to build a cottage adjacent to Goose Cottage. The Clerk was asked to enquire whether a decision had been taken upon this matter following the submission of this Council's comments submitted on 25th March

Minute 6: Financial Matters

6.1. Financial Statement for April.

The Clerk invited comments upon the statement which had been circulated prior to the Meeting. **It was proposed (RJ), seconded (LF) and agreed that the statement be approved.**

6.2. Report on payments made since the last Meeting.

None

6.3. Bills to pay.

The Clerk introduced the following for payment:

voucher no /cheque no	Payee	Sum due	Details
01/408	SPCA	306.00	Annual subscription 2002/03
02/410	PWLB	1,661.27	Half yearly payment on loan due on 1 st May
03/411	TrentForce	41.13	Removal of debris from Schoolhouse Lane play area - £35.00 as agreed (Minute 128.1) + VAT
04/412	CC of Staffs	18.00	Annual subscription 2002/03
05/413	Cornhill Insurance	532.15	Annual Insurance. 2002/03
06/414	W Averill	65.00	Millennium Green: supervision of equipment, litter clearance etc. (see below)
07/415	P Youngs	818.46	Salary & expenses February - April
08/416	C Dunmore	628.62	Work on Churchyard extension
09/417	R Blower	20.00	Repair work to play equipment on the Millennium Green.
10/418	GC McCulloch	176.00	Site visits Nos. 1 & 2 (of 12) under contract
11/419	GC McCulloch	40.00	Site visits 1 & 2 under contract to Millennium Green.
12/420	St Giles Hospice	10.00	At request of K Cadman in lieu of payment for scribing certificate

It was proposed (L Fe), seconded (MM) and agreed that the above payments be made.

6.4. Section 137 payments

6.4.1. The Clerk reported that Mrs K Cadman had, once again, prepared a framed certificate for last year's Jubilee Cup winner, Mr Ken Webb. She had expressed the wish that, in lieu of payment of £10.00 a donation for this amount be made to St Giles Hospice.

6.4.2. Air Ambulance Donation. It was decided to make an award to the Air Ambulance organisation in appreciation of the fact that the current management of the "Goat's Head" has opened the adjacent toilets to members of the public.

It was proposed (LF), seconded (L Fe) and agreed that the above payments be made.

6.5. Presentation of summary of accounts for the financial year 2002/02

The Clerk invited comments regarding the statement which had been circulated prior to the meeting. Copies of the village hall accounts were circulated.

It was proposed (PC), seconded (SMT) and agreed that the Summary be accepted. The Chairman then signed the relevant pages in the Receipts and Payments book.

The Clerk further presented a summary of the records of the New Village Hall account. **It was proposed (SMT), seconded (KM) and agreed that the accounts be accepted.**

6.6. Millennium Green

6.6.1. Cllr. Tonking said that it was time to consider an expressed wish voiced by Mrs Wendy Averill that she be relieved of her responsibilities for the supervision of the equipment - and related duties - in connection with the Millennium Green. It was noted, with appreciation, that Cllr. Charles was willing to undertake this work and it was agreed that he should commence on 1st May. In the meantime, the Clerk was asked to:

- (a) issue Cllr. Charles with a copy of the duties related to this work, and
- (b) enquire whether it was permissible to make the small weekly payment of £5.00 to Cllr. Charles which had been the rate of remuneration of the two previous holders of the post.

6.6.2. The Clerk stated that on 14th April Mrs Averill had expressed some concern regarding the condition of some bolts on the swing unit; he had conferred with Cllr. Tonking as one of the Green's Trustees and, upon her advice, had made an approach to Mr Richard Blower with a request that he might inspect the equipment. He had subsequently done so and had carried out some basic repairs. (The approved payment of £20.00 - see Minute 6.3. above - was in respect of this work.)

6.6.3. The Clerk introduced a letter from Universal Play Ltd regarding the inspection and repair of equipment. However, it was considered that the Council and the Trustees are currently meeting the requirements of the insurers concerning this

matter without having to incur the very high costs involved in entering into a maintenance agreement with the installers of the equipment.

6.6.4. Winter Maintenance, 2002/03. A letter from Mr GC McCulloch was read in which it was stated that he considered that it would be sufficient for two visits to be made for routine maintenance work next summer. He gave as a cost for the two visits, £170.00 and this, it was agreed, fell well within budget.

6.7. Arrangements for the Annual Parish Assembly

6.7.1. The Clerk stated that Mrs K Cadman had delivered the framed certificate for Mr Ken Webb, last year's recipient of the Jubilee Cup.

6.7.2. It was agreed that councillors would report variously upon the village hall and the voluntary transport scheme.

6.8. Remuneration of Clerk

6.8.1. The Salary details of the new Clerk Eric Roy were discussed. **It was proposed (MM), seconded (LF) and agreed, that his starting point on the National Association of Local Councils and the Society of Local Council Clerks recommended salary scales should be LC1 (the appropriate scale for the population of Abbots Bromley) and Spinal Column point 15.** The salary is reviewable annually in accordance with the recommended scales.

6.8.2. The gratuity which may be paid to a retiring clerk in lieu of pension, was discussed. **It was proposed (PC) and seconded (LFe) that Peter Youngs be awarded a gratuity in lieu of pension in accordance with the Local Government (Discretionary Payments) Regulations 1996.** Cllr. Tonking agreed to submit the Council's calculations, in view of their complexity, to the Staffordshire Parish Councils Association for their advice.

6.9. Other financial matters.

Cllr. Tonking reported that the Horn Dance entertainers had been booked (see Minute 127.8.(ii)).

Minute 7 Group Reports

7.1. Recreation

7.1.1. Schoolhouse Lane - access strip of land to play area. In answer to an enquiry the Clerk confirmed that solicitors for Sherlock Homes and the Council - via ESBC - had now been put in touch with other another.

7.1.2. Play equipment The Clerk passed to the Chairman a number of catalogues dealing with items of play equipment.

7.2. Village Property

7.2.1. Buttercross. The Clerk reported upon recent developments concerning the damaged monument:

- (i) an email received from County Cllr. Philip Atkins on 12th April had stated that a full set of drawings had now been prepared and had been passed to English Heritage; it was thought likely that the contract for repair would be given to Linford-Bridgemans.
- (ii) the Clerk's telephone conversation with Dr Paul Stamper of English Heritage on 24th April had revealed a long time-scale yet before the repairs could be carried out since the matter had to be referred to the Department of Culture, Media and Sport and times allowed for formal negotiations between the Department and English Heritage. In essence, it was considered that the work would entail jacking up the monument, essential repairs carried out on the damaged pillar and the structure lowered back into place. Dr Stamper had expressed his confidence that the work could be completed in time for Horn Dance Day.

7.2.2. Cllr Charles enquired whether the Council's photocopier was "still available for use by the community at large". It was on request, but there were no plans to advertise this fact.

7.3 Highways and Pathways

The Clerk was asked to take up the following with the relevant parties:

7.3.1. (for the attention of the Highways Department, Trent Valley, Lichfield)

- (i) the completion of the path in Goose Lane - adjacent to the recently-rebuilt wall alongside St Helens
- (ii) Miresbrook Lane.
- (iii) temporary road sign on the Crown Bank - which, though now lowered, is in danger of killing off the grass beneath.

7.3.2. (for the attention of SCC, Green Hall, Stafford): damage to a bridge on footpath 23 at Ashbrook.

7.4. Competitions

A number of BKV posters were circulated.

7.5 Rural Housing

Nothing to report

7.6. Newsletter

Cllr. Ferguson said that he was working towards June for the next edition of the Newsletter.

7.7. School Governor's Report

Cllr. Ferguson informed the Council that a new secretary had been appointed to Richard Clarke First School.

Minute 8: New auditing arrangements

The Clerk gave a brief report upon the new "lighter touch" auditing arrangements which came into force on 1st April 2002. He said that information received from the Audit Commission stated that the new arrangements were intended to be "proportionate, affordable and sustainable". In terms of the cost of the new arrangements, it should be expected that so long as annual turn-over did not exceed £25,000.00 then a cost of no more than £120.00 per annum might be expected.

An annual return, consisting of four parts, should be anticipated. These would be as follows:

Section	Content	To be completed by:
1.	The Statement of Accounts	Responsible Financial Officer - ie. Clerk
2.	Statement of Assurance	Clerk (following approval of Council)
3.	Auditor's Certificate & Opinion	External Auditor - District Audit for the present
4.	Annual Report by Internal Auditor	Internal Auditor ¹

It was agreed that it was not necessary to elaborate in further detail at this stage but it was equally clear that the new arrangements would be simpler to administer and that a Practitioners' Guide, issued by NALC and the Society of Local Council Clerks would offer all the assistance necessary in preparing related documentation for the future.

Minute 9: Village Plan - update

Cllr. Tonking stated that there was nothing further to report at this stage.

¹ Enquiries of SPCA had not produced a satisfactory answer to the question as to who the internal auditor might be; we are assured of further guidance on this matter.

Minute 10: Local Government Act 2000:

- (a) **Ethical Code of Conduct**
- (b) **Declarations of Interest**

(a) Code of Conduct. The Chairman called for a vote on the adoption of the Ethical Code of Conduct. **It as proposed (LF), seconded (PC) and agreed by majority decision that the Code be adopted and that the Clerk be asked to notify the Standards Board for England in accordance with the requirements of the legislation.**

(b) Declarations of Interest. The Chairman, referring to the fact that councillors now had 28 days within which to submit their Declarations, advised that those who were so minded to comply should so do and pass completed forms to the new Clerk, Eric Roy.

Minute 11: Correspondence, etc.

With reference to the letter received from SCC headed “Local Bus Service Reviews - East Staffordshire Area” seeking local views on the bus services within this parish the following points were made:

- (i) whilst there is a bus on weekday mornings enabling people from the village who work in Lichfield to get to work there is not a bus from Lichfield to Abbots Bromley at the end of the working day (say around 5.30 p.m.) to enable them to make the return journey. This had the additional disadvantage of ensuring that the morning bus is under-used.
- (ii) it is regrettable that there is not a bus on Saturdays from Burton to Abbots Bromley around 5.00 p.m. Such a service would benefit shoppers at large and, in particular teenage children.

Minute 12: Items for Agenda of next Meeting

- 1. Appointment of Chairman, Vice Chairman and councillors to committees.
- 2. Horn Dance, 2002.
- 3. Matters for consideration arising from the Annual Parish Assembly

Minute 13: Date, time and place of next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting should be held on Wednesday 29 May at 7.30 p.m. in the Memorial Room of the Village Hall. The Meeting concluded at 10.00 p.m.

Chairman Date:

Proposed: Seconded: