

GRINGLEY ON THE HILL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Council held in the Village Hall on Wednesday 25th October, 2006

Present: Councillor J. E. Hargreaves, Chairman. Councillors Dunkley, Foreman, Foster, Hargrave (arrived during agenda item 9 Monthly Budget Monitoring), Hilton and Taylor, together with District Councillor A. Simpson

06/07/164 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Foster and Hargreaves each declared a personal interest at agenda item 11 (Fires at Elm Ridge, High Street), being nearby residents. Councillor Hargreaves also declared personal interests at agenda items 12 (NEBF Reports), being a member of NEBF, and 13 (NALC Northern Area Committee Reports), being the Parish Council's representative on the Committee. Councillor Foreman also declared a personal interest at agenda item 12, being a member of NEBF.

06/07/165 APOLOGIES

An apology was submitted by Councillor Chambers (unwell).

The Chairman informed Members that Councillor Chambers was in hospital, but her condition was improving. Members expressed their hopes for a speedy recovery.

The Chairman referred to the recent sad death of Councillor Foreman's father, and Members expressed their best wishes and sympathy to Councillor Foreman and his wife and family.

The Chairman reported that Councillor Hargrave was travelling from Birmingham and particularly wished to participate in the co-option vote. He had telephoned to say that he had been slightly delayed. The Chairman asked if Members and the three prospective co-optees present were happy to defer the co-option item until either Councillor Hargrave arrived or 8.15 pm at the latest. Agreement was given.

06/07/166 MINUTES

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Council, held on 20th September, 2006, be approved as a correct record.

06/07/167 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

06/07/168 PUBLIC DISCUSSION

- (a) P.c. Chris Gregson was present to discuss local policing issues, including recent crime figures, with Members. He also referred to discussions with the Area Manager of Sedgemoor Ltd., owners of Belle Vue young persons' home, Carr Lane, when he had been informed that, despite the home recently being granted planning permission on appeal for extended educational use, it was not intended to implement the permission at the present time. As regards the actual planning application, P.c. Gregson confirmed that the Police had not been consulted on it.

P.c. Gregson also confirmed that his beat had recently been enlarged, and that he now covered 25 villages, including Misterton.

Members thanked P.c. Gregson, and District Councillor R. Simpson remarked that it was nice to see him at the meeting.

- (b) District Councillor A. Simpson read out a prepared statement. When she had finished, the Clerk asked her to furnish him with a copy for minuting purposes, but she said she would only do so if he apologised for an alleged discrepancy in the minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 23rd August, 2006. The Clerk refused to apologise, stating that the Minutes were correct and had been approved as such by the Parish Council. At that point, the Chairman stopped the discussion, saying that he wasn't going to allow a slanging match to develop.

In summary, the gist of District Councillor Simpson's statement was as follows, although some content could be missing, as the Clerk had not expected her to refuse to furnish him with details of her statement:

- She referred to an anonymous letter in November Beacon magazine (written in response to her letter in October Beacon magazine), which she said was from an "anonymous simpleton" who she believed did not live in the ward.
- She spoke about the Parish Council's democratic machinery, and repeatedly referred to the Clerk as "managing director", suggesting that his advice to the Parish Council was in conflict with the wishes of Members, particularly as regards allowing her to stay in meetings during confidential session.
- She said that there was no reason why the discussion of the Draft Planning Gain Options Report at the extraordinary meeting on 23rd August, 2006 should have been confidential.

- She suggested that the Clerk had a poor memory, exacerbated by his tendency to forget what had happened at meetings whilst travelling home to Firbeck, whereas she, living at nearby Beckingham, had the advantage over him in that respect.
 - She said that the minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 23rd August, 2006 were inaccurate, insofar as she had not suggested that there would be repercussions for the Parish Council in refusing to allow her to remain in the meeting during confidential session. She said she had actually wished the Parish Council well.
 - She said that she had been selected to represent the District Council as a co-opted member of the Board of Nottinghamshire Rural Community Council, and this was a considerable achievement for someone so new to local government.
- (c) Mrs. T. Taylor reported a damaged street sign on the west side of Horsewells Street. The Clerk undertook to report it to the County Council.
- (d) Mr. M. F. Daniels referred to the problem of speeding traffic, particularly farm tractors. The Clerk undertook to write an article for Beacon magazine, drawing attention to the need for drivers to observe the speed limits. P.c. Gregson drew attention to ‘Speedwatch’, details of which had been made available to Members in the Chief Superintendent’s recent newsletter.
- (e) Councillor Hilton observed that High Street and Mill Road needed to be swept. The Clerk undertook to report the matter to the appropriate Authority.

06/07/169 ACCOUNTS

Resolved: That the October Accounts be approved for payment.

06/07/170 BANK RECONCILIATION

Members received the bank reconciliation statement to 29th September, 2006.

06/07/171 BUDGET MONITORING

(a) The Clerk submitted the September budget monitoring statement.

- (b) The Chairman enquired whether the Parish Council was within budget on Cemetery maintenance. The Clerk replied that, although he hadn't researched the matter, he expected that it was. However, he read out a letter from North Notts Landscapes Ltd., which indicated that grass was continuing to grow as if it were springtime. In the circumstances he had asked the company to continue maintenance until further notice.

Members endorsed the Clerk's action.

06/07/172 CASUAL VACANCY

Pursuant to Minute No. 06/07/133 of September, 2006, the Chairman referred to the decision reached at the last meeting (against the advice of the Clerk) to distribute a leaflet to every household in the Parish, inviting expressions of interest in serving as a co-opted member, and to publish the leaflet on the village website. He also said that, unfortunately, some households had only received their leaflets within five days of the deadline. Three residents had indicated an interest in serving as a co-opted member and were in attendance. He asked if Members and the three interested parties were happy to proceed, and they indicated they were.

The Clerk then explained in detail the suggested procedure for filling the casual vacancy, and asked if Members and the three interested parties were happy to proceed on the suggested basis. They indicated they were.

The Clerk then asked if Members were happy to vote by show of hands, or by signed ballot. Councillor Foster requested a signed ballot, and Members agreed.

On being put to the vote, the voting was as follows:

Michael Daniels	5
Paul Kemm	2
Tracey Taylor	0

Resolved: That Mr. Daniels be invited to serve as a co-opted member.

The unsuccessful candidates were thanked for their interest and participation, and Councillor Foreman informed them that it probably wouldn't be long before there were other vacancies to fill.

06/07/173 RISK REVIEW AND ASSET INSPECTION

The Chairman reported on action taken to repair a broken hinge on a gate into the multi-court. Some further work was necessary. The Clerk undertook to have signs made for both gates, the wording requesting that they be kept closed.

06/07/174 FIRES AT ELM RIDGE, HIGH STREET GRINGLEY ON THE HILL

Letter was submitted from Mr. M. Monk, The Willows, High Street, Gringley on the Hill, asking that the subject of fires at Elm Ridge be put on the agenda and discussed. He said that, for near occupants, this was becoming increasingly difficult to live with.

Councillor Foster observed that the situation had improved considerably over the last two years. There had been a few fires in August and September, which had not caused any nuisance.

Resolved: That no action be taken, but that, if any resident were to experience nuisance, it should be immediately reported to Bassetlaw Environmental Health Department.

06/07/175 NORTH EAST BASSETLAW FORUM

There was nothing to report.

06/07/176 NALC NORTHERN AREA COMMITTEE

The minutes of the meeting held on 11th September, 2006 were being circulated.

06/07/177 PARISH PATHS PARTNERSHIP

- (a) Pursuant to discussion earlier in the year, the Clerk drew attention to the fact that the County Council had now dropped the requirement for parish councils to indemnify it against breaches of Ordnance Survey's monopoly over the use of Ordnance Survey data. A letter had now been received, simply asking the Parish Council to enter into a Contractor Licence for the use of Ordnance Survey Data. The Clerk had furnished all Members with a copy.

Resolved: That the Chairman be authorised to sign the Contractor Licence.

- (b) An Email was submitted from the County Council regarding the following:

- (i) Confirming that the 2006 P3 grant of £799.75 would shortly be paid over to the Parish Council.
- (ii) Requesting the Parish Council to make arrangements with its contractor to install the P3 furniture ordered.
- (iii) Giving details of various ongoing action and requirements.

Councillor Hilton and the Clerk would liaise over the various requirements

- (a) The Chairman and Clerk submitted a report regarding the current situation.

An outline planning application had now been received, which would be considered later in the meeting. The proposal was to build 46 houses, of which 14 would be outside the envelope, to the north east of the main site. The favoured location for a community building on West Wells Lane would instead be used as open space.

The whole matter had been discussed at a meeting attended by the Chairman, Clerk, Mr. C. Downton and Mr. Richard Fidler of Bassetlaw Planning Department on 17th October, 2006. Mr. Fidler had been extremely reticent, but the following had been discerned:

- (i) Because part of the proposed development site was outside the envelope, it appeared that it would be hard to justify a recommendation to grant approval.
- (ii) A possible exception to policy regarding the envelope might apply if a fresh application contained a proposal to provide a community centre outside the envelope.
- (iii) Even so, it would be necessary to satisfactorily resolve the requirement for 10% open space provision, but this might not be insuperable.
- (iv) At the meeting on 23rd August, 2006, attended by Home Office representatives, Bassetlaw Planning Officers and District Councillor A. Simpson, the Planning Officers had suggested to the Home Office that they should “simplify the issue”. This meant dropping that part of the planning application relating to the community building.

After the meeting on 17th October, 2006, the Clerk had discussed the matter with Mr. Jay Everett, of the Home Office. Mr. Everett said that any suggestion that the application might be refused was clearly at odds with the meeting on 23rd August, 2003, where Mr. Jim Kehoe, and Mr. Fidler made it crystal clear that officers would support a proposal including the open area to the north of the existing buildings – if the proposal included 15% affordable housing across the whole of the application site. Mr. Everett had now suggested a further meeting. The Clerk had asked that the Parish Council be included in the discussions.

Members now discussed the matter with regard to making observations on the planning application later in the meeting.

- (b) Pursuant to Minute No. 06/07/138(b) of September, 2006, Members expressed concern that children were still putting themselves in danger by accessing the site. The Clerk undertook to draw the matter to the attention of the Home Office.

- (c) As some development work had begun at the site, it was suggested by the Chairman that the Home Office should provide a single point of contact telephone number for residents to use whenever necessary. The Clerk undertook to raise the matter with the Home Office.

06/07/179 GRINGLEY WHARF

Councillor Foreman indicated that he still needed to pursue the case for moorings.

06/07/180 HEYDAY

Letter was submitted from Ms. S. Williams, Heyday Organiser, offering to meet the Parish Council to discuss Heyday's services for retired people.

Resolved: That Ms. Williams be invited to attend a meeting of the Parish Council.

06/07/181 PARKING IN BAWTRY

The Chairman reported that he had been approached about the possibility of Gringley residents being given a parking disc for a free half hour's parking at Bawtry, to enable them to do a quick shop. He had, therefore, asked the Clerk to write to Bawtry Town Council.

A reply had been received stating that there was no system in place for the issue of parking discs. The letter also pointed out that the charge for 30 minutes was only 20p, and that there were spaces on High Street designated by Doncaster Metropolitan District Council for short-term stay .

06/07/182 TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

Pursuant to Minute No. 06/07/86(a) of July, 2006, an Email was submitted from the County Council, stating that its policy regarding one-way streets was that they may be considered where significant improvements could be achieved on safety or network capacity without access or safety problems.

One-way streets would not be considered where:

- increased traffic speeds may generate accidents;
- significant access difficulties would be created;
- transferred traffic would cause problems elsewhere.

One-way streets would not be allowed at Gringley because it was considered that speeds would increase. There were no accidents at present, and it was possible that there could be if one-way streets were introduced.

Members agreed with the logic of the above argument.

06/07/183 CEMETERY

- (a) Pursuant to Minute No. 06/07/149(a) of September, 2006, the Clerk reported that North Notts Landscapes Ltd. had informed him that it was not a practical proposition to remove grass cuttings from gravestones and surrounds.

Resolved: That no further action be taken.

- (b) Pursuant to Minute No. 06/07/149(b) of September, 2006, the Chairman reported that only one family had responded to the public notice about loose headstones. Members agreed that the matter would be revisited in 2007.
- (c) The Chairman reported that the Cemetery hedge still needed to be cut and the gate needed to be painted.

The Clerk confirmed that the hedge was scheduled to be cut in October. Councillor Foster confirmed that she would paint the gate by next spring.

06/07/184 PLAYING FIELD

A brief discussion took place about the recent work in the playing field, when Members emptied the old sheds at the western end. Some steel remained to be removed. The Clerk confirmed that Middlebridge Construction intended to commence demolition work shortly.

06/07/185 HIGHWAYS

A discussion took place about various highway matters, including:

- (a) The poor condition of the pavement outside the four houses on Green Road. The Clerk undertook to report the matter to the County Council.
- (b) The fact that the pavement along the A631 had not been treated and was continuing to deteriorate. The Clerk undertook to report the matter to the County Council.
- (c) Councillor Taylor's disappointment at the lack of significant progress on road safety improvements at Beacon Hill Road.
- (d) An unauthorised notice at Finkell Street, which Councillor Taylor undertook to attend to.

06/07/186 DRAFT EAST MIDLANDS REGIONAL PLAN

The Clerk drew attention to the above consultation document which, when fully implemented, would have a life of 20 years. He pointed in particular to Policy 42 in Part I, which, as regards the Northern Sub-Area (includes Bassetlaw), stated that “the development of transport infrastructure and services in each Sub-area should also be consistent with the following objectives: ...N5 To improve surface access, particularly in public transport, to Robin Hood Airport near Doncaster.”

The Clerk had discussed the matter with the relevant contact at Nottinghamshire County Council, who accepted that pressure for a new railway station at Misterton could constitute a valid representation.

Resolved: That the Parish Council’s response be based on the facts that a new station would help provide a sustainable job catchment area for the airport and would support rural regeneration.

06/07/187 OCTOBER BEACON MAGAZINE

Consideration took place of a letter in October Beacon magazine from District Councillor Simpson, in which she was very critical of the Parish Council, and the Clerk in particular. The letter related to aspects of the extraordinary meeting of the Parish Council held on 23rd August, 2006.

The Chairman observed that he had been saddened by the letter, and was deeply disappointed that, after an excellent 12-year relationship between the Parish Council and former District Councillor Martin, the relationship with District Councillor Simpson had deteriorated in such a short time.

Councillors Foreman and Hargrave condemned the letter as being thoroughly out of order.

Councillor Foster observed that, at the meeting on 23rd August, 2006, her initial reaction had been that District Councillor Simpson’s stance had been unreasonable. However, she had since carried out research into procedural requirements necessary when excluding the press and public from a meeting, and had ascertained that there should be a formal vote on every such occasion. This had not happened and she felt that it was possible that this is what had concerned District Councillor Simpson.

The Clerk responded to the point made by Councillor Foster by saying that the item in question “Detention Centre Site: Draft Planning Gain Options Report” had appeared on the agenda as likely to be discussed in the absence of the press and public. Both he and the Chairman had explained the reasons for confidentiality. No member had dissented. The Chairman had read out the resolution under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

The Clerk added that, strictly speaking, the Parish Council should formally vote on every decision it made (by show of hands or by signed ballot), but it wasn't practical and it wasn't generally done. If the Parish Council wished to do so in future it could, although he doubted whether it would wish to.

The Chairman went on to say that the Parish Council had to move on, and it was important that a proper relationship existed between the Parish Council and its District Councillor. He intended to work towards that end.

The Clerk said that he fully agreed with the Chairman as to the need for a proper working relationship between the Parish Council and its District Councillor. However, from his (an employee's) point of view, he considered that District Councillor Simpson's conduct towards him had taken her beyond redemption, and he said that the relationship between the two of them had been permanently destroyed.

The discussion concluded with District Councillor Simpson apologising to the Parish Council (but not to the Clerk) for the upset she had caused the Parish Council.

06/07/188 THE WILLIAM CLARKE CHARITY (GRINGLEY ON THE HILL)

Councillor Dunkley submitted a report about the above Charity, and the need to wind it up because of irrelevant objects and low assets. Before this could happen, the Parish Council needed to appoint two trustees.

Resolved: That Ann-Marie Morley and Councillor Dunkley be appointed.

06/07/189 LOCAL WORKS – CAMPAIGN FOR THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES BILL

Letter was submitted from the above, stating that the Parliamentary Private Members' Ballot was to take place on 23rd November, 2006, and urging supporters to write to their Member of Parliament accordingly.

Resolved: That the Clerk write to Mr. John Mann, MP.

06/07/190 BT TELEPHONE SERVICE PROBLEMS

Pursuant to Minute No. 06/07/147 of September, 2006, a letter was submitted from BT stating that, following an investigation, no common faults had been found in the village.

Members observed that the letter was unsatisfactory insofar as much of the village had been affected. They did note, however, that the village payphone had been repaired.

Resolved: That the Clerk write further to BT.

06/07/191 NEWSPAPER DELIVERY

Councillor Dunkley reported that the new village newspaper delivery service was almost up and running.

06/07/192 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

23/06/41

Home Office

Residential development on land at former detention centre, West Wells Lane, Gringley on the Hill

Resolved: That Bassetlaw District Council be informed as follows:

The applicant, the Home Office, was prepared in principle to redevelop the site with a combination of mixed housing (including affordable housing) and provision for a community building which it would gift to the village, and had confirmed this to representatives of the Parish Council. There was a long-established need for a community building to replace the inadequate and outmoded village hall, and this was identified in the Gringley on the Hill Parish Plan published in 2004. In this growing village there was also an urgent need to provide a suitable assembly room for our Primary School, which currently suffered from the lack of one.

The Parish Council had for several years been in discussion with the Home Office and the Planning Department about the future of this site, including provision of a new community building. The position was set out in a minute of the meeting of the Parish Council held on 22nd February, 2006. One thing that minute did not cover (because the context did not require it) was the wish of the Parish Council that allotments be developed on the open land to the north-west of the site. Provision of allotments was something the Parish Council was statutorily required to do following receipt recently of a petition from local people requesting such provision.

In anticipation of this project going ahead, the Parish Council had, in partnership with Nottinghamshire Rural Community Council, recently conducted a house-to-house questionnaire exercise to establish what facilities the community felt were important in the new community building. Those aspirations had been passed on to the Home Office.

On 23rd August, 2006 a meeting took place between representatives of the Parish Council and the Home Office, when plans were produced by the Home Office which showed the mixed development referred to above.

It was now understood that, when the Home Office representatives met Planning Officers and District Councillor A. Simpson later on 23rd August, the Planning Officers made it clear that they could not support the proposals because of the negative impact of the community building on affordable housing provision – hence the application in its present form.

This came like a bolt from the blue, as, in all the years of discussion, there had never previously been any indication that the District Council would not support a community building, such provision having been referred to in the resolution to grant planning permission and draft Section 106 Agreements that had been circulated.

As regards the current planning application, the Parish Council's position was that it certainly welcomed redevelopment of the site, but could not support it in its present form. The following was, therefore, proposed:

- Because of the demonstrated need for a new community centre in the village, and in view of the willingness of the Home Office to provide one, there should be an exception to planning policy to provide for a community centre in the area outside the envelope to the north-east. However, in practice, once the principle of development of that area was approved, it would be sensible to build the community centre in the area designated in the application as open space, which was the area originally identified by the Home Office as suitable for the community building.
- The open space obligation could be satisfied by a commuted sum to be applied to the provision of facilities at the community building.
- An area of land to the north-west of the application site should be set aside to enable the Parish Council to fulfil its statutory obligation to provide allotments for parishioners.

In conclusion, such an opportunity may never come the way of Gringley again, and it was considered incumbent on the District Council to do what it was perfectly entitled to do, and support the village's aspirations.

06/07/193 PLANNING DETERMINATIONS

Councillor Hargrave left the meeting at this point, to return to Birmingham.

23/06/29

Mr. M. Bullen

Erect three bedroom detached house and garage and construct new access on land adjacent South Beeches, High Street, Gringley on the Hill

Permission Granted

23/06/30R

23/06/31L

Mr. P. N. Naylor

Conversion of existing squash court to form kitchen and mezzanine area at Ravencourt, High Street, Gringley on the Hill – resubmission of 02/06/10 and associated 02/06/11L

Permission Granted

23/06/33

Mr. M. A. Sherwin

Demolish existing detached garage and erect two-storey extension and detached double garage at Shaw Lock Cottage, Shaw Road, Gringley on the Hill

Permission Refused

23/06/35

S. Dobb, Esq.

Erect extension to first floor at The Stables, Horsewells Street, Gringley on the Hill

Permission Granted

05/06/194

PLANNING APPEAL

APP/A3010/A/05/1189857

23/05/6

Mr. & Mrs. D. W. Platts

Siting of mobile home and associated drainage for temporary accommodation throughout the year at Vianney, Carr Lane, Gringley on the Hill

Appeal allowed and a conditional personal planning permission granted for a limited period

06/07/195

PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960

Resolved: That, in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the public be excluded, and they are requested to withdraw.

06/07/196

VILLAGE MAINTENANCE 2007

Letter was submitted from North Notts Landscapes Ltd. stating that prices would be approximately 4% higher in 2007.

Resolved: That the current maintenance contract be extended accordingly.

06/07/197

APPOINTMENT OF CLERK TO THE COUNCIL

The Clerk submitted a draft job advertisement, job description and person specification.

Resolved: That the documents be approved, and the job be advertised in the Retford Times, with a view to short listing at the November meeting.

06/07/198

ANONYMOUS LETTER IN NOVEMBER BEACON

The Clerk observed that District Councillor Simpson had given the impression, earlier in the meeting, that she knew the identity of the writer of an anonymous letter in November Beacon magazine. A brief discussion ensued.