

DANEHILL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Danehill Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 31st March 2016, at Danehill C.E. School.

Present: C. Critchley, J. Blake, M. Mockridge, M. Garman, A. Garman, H. Montagu, T. McHattie. Also M. Fishlock (Tree Warden).

In Attendance: C.W. Gooders (Clerk)

Meeting started at 7.34pm

708. Apologies for Absence

Clrs. S. Crabb, M. Riminton.

709. Declarations of Interest

None.

710. Minutes

The minutes of the Danehill Parish Council meeting dated 25th February 2016, having been previously circulated, were agreed and signed as a true record, subject to minute 702 being amended to read that Mr Peter Thurman would be asked to become a consultant to the Jubilee Green/Wood Working Group and not as originally stated a member. Proposed Cllr. Blake. Seconded Cllr. Mockridge. Voting unanimous.

711. Matters Arising

Cllr. Mockridge – Cumnor House School will not be purchasing the Queen's Birthday commemorative medals.

Cllr. Critchley – Suggested change of date for the May Fair from 28th May to 4th June 2016. This is due to clashing dates with Youth Club camp. Council in full agreement.

712. Communications

The following letters and emails were cited by the Chairman as having been received by Danehill Parish Council. All communications have or will be sent to all councillors.

Email dated 22nd March 2016 – Mr P. Parsons. See attached (712A). Community Warden.

Email Dated 28th March 2016 – Mrs C.E.A. Powell. See attached (712B). Community Warden and precept increase.

Email dated 29th March 2016 – Mr J. Mustarde. See attached (712C). Community Warden.

Letter dated 29th March 2016 – Annette Gurr. See attached (712D). Jubilee Green.

Email dated 22nd March 2016 – Mr & Mrs Stott. See attached (712E). Danehill Parish Council Nursery Working Group.

The following communications were read to the meeting.

Letter dated 7th March 2016 – Mr J. Bowes, Isle of Thorns & District Bowing Club. See file. Completed Community Support Grand application form. Referred to Cllr. A. Garman.

Email dated 27th February 2016 – Mr C. Bradford, Danehill Football Club. See file. Cllr. Mockridge proposed that due to the football club having to close, outstanding match fees be waived. Seconded Cllr. Blake. Voting unanimous. Clerk to contact Mr Bradford.

Email dated 20th March 2016 – Mr M. Donfrancesco. See file. Cllr. Montagu liaising with Mr Falconer

and Mr Donfrancesco.

Letter dated 2nd March 2016 – Mr S. Briggs, Ashdown Weekend Committee. See file. Council agree as in previous years to waive fee for hire of recreation ground. Cllr. M. Garman to liaise with Mr Briggs. Mr P. Parson requested that his letter to council dated 7th March 2016 be read to the meeting. Cllr. Critchley – This is part of ongoing communications. The letter has been forwarded to all councillors. The subject and contents of the letter will be addressed within agenda item 11.

713. County and District Councillors' Reports

Cllr. Roy Galley

Work will commence on speed restriction on the A22 between Wych Cross and Pippingford week commencing 4th April 2016.

The double yellow lines are to be installed at the northern end of Church Lane at the war memorial in Danehill.

East Sussex County Council Highways have now decided that VAS (vehicle activated signs) will not now be installed on the A275 at Danehill because they do not adhere to recommended criteria.

Have taken up the subject of litter in the countryside with East Sussex contractors Kier. Is investigating having road signs cleaned.

Mr Goodburn – Confused that criteria has not been met for VAS to be installed at Danehill and yet a fatal accident would change criteria. Roy Galley to talk to police and suggest residents start a campaign.

Mrs. S. Martin – Police Commissioner Katy Bourne will be attending a meeting at Chelwood Gate Church on 6th April 2016, 2.30pm.

Mr P. Parsons – The £ 10,000 included in the precept was not necessary. Roy Galley – Amount for County is to cover shortfall, the Parish Council amount is for future costs.

714. Parish Councillors' Reports

Cllr. A. Garman – Report

submitted. See attached (714A). Whereas her initiative is a worthwhile experience, do not consider the grant application from Lauren Hibbert (see minute 700) meets the objectives of the Community Support Grant. Clerk to contact Miss Hibbert.

Cllr. Montagu – Report submitted. See attached (714B).

Cllr. McHattie – Report submitted. See attached (714C).

Cllr. Critchley – Report submitted. See attached (714D).

Cllr. Riminton – Report submitted. See attached (714E). Read by Cllr. Critchley.

Cllr. M. Garman – Report submitted. See attached (714F).

Cllr. Blake – Report submitted. See attached (714G). Cllr. Critchley – Approximately £29,000.00 has been spent to extend the burial area at Danehill Cemetery. Has the required criteria been met to secure burials for the future? Cllr. Blake – It was not possible to reduce the slope any more than has been achieved, but believe there is now enough space for the next 20 years. Clerk to contact the grave digger to gauge his opinion.

Cllr. Mockridge - Report submitted. See attached (714H). Will re-look at timetable for Speedwatch.

M. Fishlock (Tree Warden) – Report pending. Annette Gurr and Cllr. Blake to join Jubilee Green Working Group. Clerk to ask Peter Thurman if he would consider becoming a consultant to the Jubilee Green/Wood project.

Tree Warden – Only general maintenance work and/or remedial work to dangerous trees should be carried out at Jubilee Wood. To comply with Peter Thurman's report (dated 21st February 2016) no further work should be carried out until the Working Group has met and a formal plan produced. Cllr. Blake proposed that no further work apart from general maintenance be carried out at Jubilee Wood until a written plan has been formulated. Seconded Cllr. Garman. Voting 5 for. 1 abstention (Cllr. McHattie). 1 against (Cllr. Critchley).

Tree Warden – There has been damage to trees in the Parish during the recent storm, but nothing dangerous.

Meeting was opened to the public to express a view and/or ask a question.

There were 60 members of the public in attendance.

The Chairman requested that any topic apart from the proposed Community Warden be raised. Public participation in respect of the Community Warden will be requested in agenda item 11.

Mr Stott – Gave a précis of his email dated 22nd March, see (712E). There was vocal public support for the opinion that Danehill Parish Council should have liaised with the parish before submitting a planning application for a nursery building at Jubilee Green. Cllr. Critchley – It has always been the intention of the council to hold a public meeting if planning permission were granted by Wealden District Council. Nikki Morris – The nursery requires a building that offers 30 hours per week, something that Chelwood Gate Village Hall cannot do. Cllr. Critchley – If planning permission were granted by Wealden for the Jubilee Green site, it would set a precedent for another site inasmuch as Wealden would have recognised that no more car journeys (therefore no more emissions) were being created by an additional building.

Helen McLennen – Would a nursery building just be another hall? Cllr. Critchley – It would be a specified nursery building, but would be available for use when the nursery was not there. Cllr. A. Garman – Neither of the existing halls can accommodate a fulltime nursery. Could the governance document for one of the halls be changed to facilitate a fulltime nursery? Mr Fishlock – Why didn't Danehill Parish Council attend a Wealden District Council Planning surgery? Cllr. Critchley – They did and were advised to apply for planning permission. Mr P. Parsons – Other parish councils have regular meetings to consult with parishioners. Mr Stott – Could we have a public consultation on this issue? Cllr. Critchley – A meeting/meetings will be called if planning permission is granted.

715. Young Councillor Update

Cllr. A. Garman – Documents advertising and explaining the role will be distributed shortly.

716. Jubilee Green

Cllrs. Blake and Mockridge requested that agenda item be deferred. Cllr. Critchley – Work to date on Jubilee Green/Wood has been carried out in accordance with the original survey of resident's wishes and the Terms of Reference. Cllr. Mockridge proposed that both A & B of this agenda item be deferred until a new working group had sat and a plan for the future of Jubilee Green was agreed. Seconded Cllr. Blake. Voting unanimous.

717. Community Warden

Cllr. Critchley – There are eight parts to the Community warden's potential role.

1. PCSO role.

2. Business warden.
3. Volunteer co-ordinator (Speedwatch etc.).
4. Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator (connected to national database).
5. Availability for outsourcing to neighbouring parishes (cluster group).
6. Emergency Plan co-ordinator (connected to Wealden District Council).
7. Possible other duties (park warden, tree warden).
8. Assistant to Clerk of the Council.

Cllr. Critchley then read the following statement.

This parish council is faced with choices that have never before been made at parish level. The current government policy of devolution and localism is now beginning to make a big difference to the way services designed to help all of us are both funded and delivered. Decision-making and budgeting on highways, traffic management, social care and community policing are all heading our way.

Faced with these challenges, your parish council has already taken bold steps in match-funding infrastructure investments and in exploring income-generating possibilities beyond the traditional precept.

Whether you agree with localism or not it is becoming very clear that parish councils are going to have to change. The traditional structure of volunteer councillors organising the mowing of verges and the maintenance of road signs is a thing of the past as we learn to grapple with bigger issues which were previously the responsibility of other public bodies that directly affect the quality of life of our Parishioners.

In practical terms, this shows up in several ways:

- More demands on councillors' time and expertise
- An ever-widening of the role of the parish clerk
- And, of course, a rising precept

So, how should we respond?

Well, we could do nothing, of course. We could just watch developments from afar and see services and the quality of all our lives diminish.

Or we could take a different path.

This council has decided to meet these challenges head on, to take responsibility and to lay the foundations for a stronger, better community in Danehill & Chelwood Gate.

It is clear that this course of action is not universally popular. No government body at any level enjoys that. But let me be clear. This council has responsibility for everyone in our community, from richest to poorest and from most independent to most needy.

That is why we have, at public meetings over the six months, stimulated debate about controversial initiatives like the Community Warden role. We have discussed and voted on this at public council meetings and at public finance committee meetings. We have posted information on the PC website. We have hosted a full-day workshop on the financial workings of the council. And we have written to every household laying out our plans and inviting public response. I believe this council has been very open about this, and other initiatives and what they mean to our community.

But, as the recent attempts at organising an opinion survey have shown, we have clearly not done enough to explain our position.

So, in response to public sentiment I am now proposing that we call a 60-day period of public consultation, beginning tomorrow, 1st April and culminating at an extraordinary council meeting in June.

During this period we will do the following:

- Host two public workshop-style evenings that will pose the questions: How best can we meet the challenges of the changing local government landscape? How can we maintain and improve the quality of life for parishioners?
- We will also include in April's Parishioner newsletter a full explanation of the proposed community warden role and an invitation to all parishioners to submit their views on this by letter, by telephone or by email before the end of May.

We will then bring all of this to an extraordinary council meeting in June at which time a final decision about the warden will be made. Details of the public workshops to be published by the clerk.

I now ask the council to vote on the proposal to hold a 60-day period of public consultation as I have described.

Mr Miles – Read his letter see attached (717A) presented to Danehill Parish Council meeting 25th February 2016 (deferred to this meeting), also the results of a Community Warden Survey (conducted by parishioners) – Those parishioners in favour of a warden NIL. Those parishioners against a warden 247.

Mrs Martin – Now I fully understand the roles of the proposed warden, I withdraw my signature from the survey against a warden in Danehill.

Cllr. Critchley – The proposed 60 day consultation period including the two public workshops will be dedicated entirely and specifically to the proposed community warden. Cllr. Critchley proposed that a 60 day consultation period from 1st April 2016, as previously described, cumulating in an extraordinary Danehill Parish Council meeting in June 2016, go ahead. Seconded Cllr. M. Garman. Voting 6 for. 1 against (Cllr. A. Garman).

717. Finance

The Month End Movement report for February 2016 was approved and adopted. It was noted that the bank reconciliation as at February 2016 was £66,429.98 and it had been signed by the Chairman and the Responsible Financial Officer. The Month End Reconciliation report for February 2016 was approved and adopted and signed by the Chairman and the Responsible Financial Officer. The Balance Against Budget report for February 2016 was approved and adopted subject to Cllr. Blake reviewing cemetery expenditure with the Clerk. See attached. (717A). Proposed Cllr. M. Garman. Seconded Cllr. T. McHattie. Voting unanimous.

718. Date of Next Meeting

26th April 2016 – Chelwood Gate Village Hall – Annual Parish Meeting.

26th May 2016 – Danehill C.E. School – Annual Danehill Parish Council Meeting.

Meeting closed at 10.10pm

Chairman..... Date.....

Anyone requiring sight of any attachments to these minutes, please contact the Clerk 01825 740 731