

CRONDALL PARISH COUNCIL

THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON 28TH APRIL 2008 AT 7.30 PM. IN CRONDALL VILLAGE HALL

Present: Parish Cllrs: Shelford (Chairman), Dewey, Dobby, Hebbroon (Vice-Chairman),
Murphy, Passmore, Rook and Wilkinson.

County Cllr. Glen, District Cllrs. Bennison and Singh
D. Liscombe - Hart Community Safety Manager
Approximately 50 Members of the Public
H. Lewis (Clerk)

Apologies: Cllrs. Argent, Bredin, Fox and Sisk

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION BY THE CHAIRMAN

The Chairman of the Parish Council, Cllr. Shelford, welcomed those in attendance to the Annual Assembly.

He introduced the Council and confirmed details of the Parish Election to take place on 1st May, which was to be un-contested due to seven nominations having been confirmed for seven seats representing the Crondall Ward, and four nominations confirmed for five seats representing the Ewshot Ward.

The Chairman ran through the order of the agenda, noting one additional item for discussion to be led by Cllr. Dewey.

Attention was drawn to a display of information in the hall in hosted by Hart Community Safety Team, and to copies of the latest accounts received from the Parochial Charities that were on display for inspection.

Appreciation was extended to Crondall Bell Ringers who once more were on hand to serve refreshments at the assembly; appreciation was endorsed by a round of applause.

The Chairman raised a point of information regarding a forthcoming military parade to take place in Odiham in honour of service personnel attached to RAF Odiham who had returned from duty in war zones in Afghanistan and Iraq. Odiham Parish Council had extended an invitation to Crondall Parishioners to attend the parade on 14th June, and the Chairman confirmed the Council's decision to take up an offer of the inclusion of their name on a scroll of honour to be presented to RAF Odiham.

2. THE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT ON THE PAST YEAR IN CRONDALL PARISH

The Chairman opened his report with a reference to the departure of the Clerk from her role at of the end of June 2008; tribute was paid to the Mrs Lewis for her work with the Parish over the past ten years, and appreciation was endorsed by the Assembly.

The Council's appointment of a successor to Mrs Lewis was confirmed and the Chairman extended a warm welcome to Mrs Baker, who was present at the meeting and would be commencing her employment as a clerk with the Council as of 2nd June 2008.

Tribute was paid to Cllr. Dewey who was to stand down from his role as a parish councillor after nearly 30 years of continuous service. The Chairman made reference to

Cllr. Dewey's extensive knowledge of Crondall Parish, and noted that his experience and expertise would be greatly missed on the Council. On behalf of the Parish, the Chairman presented Cllr. Dewey with a token of appreciation for his years of service; this appreciation was endorsed by the Assembly.

The Chairman introduced Members of the Council who were to report on the main aspects of the Council's role over the past year.

FINANCE REPORT

The Financial Adviser, Cllr. Dobby, reported on the financial activities of the Council over the past year and gave an appraisal of the current financial situation of the Parish.

With the aid of Power Point slides, Cllr. Dobby illustrated the sources of income received and items of expenditure paid out to cover the Parish's running costs over the past year, and explained how these figures had compared against the budget prepared for the year's precept.

Capital expenditure items that had been selected by the Council in their budget for expenditure over the past year were outlined and progress with those projects was explained; Cllr. Dobby noted that the timescale for planned expenditure on such items nearly always fell behind due to the preparatory work involved, hence there was usually more money left over at the end of the financial year than originally planned.

No questions were raised from the floor following this report.

PLANNING REPORT

The Chairman of the Planning Committee, Cllr. Rook, gave details of the membership of the Planning Committee over the past year and noted the remit of their role in reviewing planning applications received on consultation from the District Council ahead of presenting a detailed recommendation to the Council at Planning Meetings.

She drew parishioners' attention to the importance of conveying any views that they had on planning applications directly to the Council for their reference, and noted that they could speak in support or against applications during 'public participation' on the relevant meeting agenda.

Cllr. Rook gave a summary of the 84 planning applications that had been reviewed by the Council over the past year, noting the variety of their size and content, and remarking on the current trend for expansion of properties as opposed to relocation.

Applications of particular local interest that had been received over the year were noted, with their eventual outcome to date; the most controversial having been an ongoing planning application for an erection of an additional care home on the site of the existing Hill Brow Nursing Home in Ewshot.

Planning appeals taken out within the parish over the past year were noted, with particular reference made to the ongoing attempt to gain planning consent to upgrade facilities at Tweseldown Racecourse, and the appeal by the operators of Farnborough Airport to increase the allocation of permitted weekly flight numbers at weekends, which was won.

The current status of the planning appeal against refusal of planning applications in relation to housing development on the site of the former Queen Elizabeth Barracks and Wakefords Copse was outlined to the Meeting; it was noted that a decision from the Secretary of State was now anticipated on or before 1st July.

To conclude, Cllr. Rook considered that it had been a relatively quiet year for planning and noted that a new committee would be appointed when the incoming council took office on 12th May.

In response to a question raised, it was confirmed that the Parish Council had supported a planning application to demolish the former Police House in Crondall and rebuild two semi-detached properties in replacement; in the event this application had not come to fruition.

It was also considered that the Parish Council had expressed opposition to the proposals within the planning application, and consequent planning appeal, by TAG to permit more flights to and from Farnborough Airport over the weekend period.

TRAFFIC AND LIGHTING REPORT

Cllr. Wilkinson, Chairman of the Traffic and Lighting Committee, opened her report by confirming the committee membership of the past year.

She gave examples of some of the frustrating issues that had held back progress over the year due to the slow response from other local authorities, namely; relocation of the 30 mph speed limit sign to a position further out from the entrance to the recreation ground in Well Road and the replacement or supply of direction signs within Crondall, both of which had been agreed over two years ago, and the extreme length of time taken to remove the damaged pole from the old parking sign outside Crondall Stores.

An update was given on the use and considered value of traffic Speed Indication Devices in Crondall over the year and the consequent decision by the Council to purchase a SID for exclusive use in the parish as a traffic calming measure.

A report was given on damage to some of the new village name signs in Crondall and Ewshot, apparently caused by the County Council's grass cutting contractor at the end of last Summer; it was noted that the Council had arranged for repair at their own cost due to the contractor's refusal to accept liability.

Items considered to be outstanding following a series of major road works in the parish over the past few months were noted, with details of how the Council planned to address these matters during an onsite meeting shortly to be arranged with the County Council.

In respect of Street Lighting it was noted that, following the Council's extensive repair and replacement programme, happily there had been very few problems over the year.

Queries were raised on the following topics:

RESURFACING WORK IN CROFT LANE – it was expressed that, in view of the considerable work and large amount of money spent by the County Council in Croft Lane, the drainage ditch could have been piped and covered to allow greater width and provide parking. Reasons why the County Council could not cover the ditch, following the advice of DEFRA that open drainage ditches within a rural setting should be retained, were explained, and the Council outlined their reasons why they were not happy with the finished work, which in their opinion did not extend over to the correct boundary along one side. A comment made by the Chairman of the Crondall Society in favour of the retention of the drainage ditch within the rural setting, received notable support from the Meeting.

TRAFFIC CALMING – the Council's future plans to address traffic calming were requested. In response it was confirmed that they considered the acquisition of a SID for

the parish to be a valuable tool in controlling the speed of traffic, and the traffic calming effect of cars parked along side the main routes through Crondall was also noted.

SID – a request was made for the SID to be used towards the top end of Pankridge Street, and during discussion it was confirmed that preparatory work had been carried out by the Traffic and Lighting Committee on the most effective sites to place the device. The purchase price of the SID was confirmed for information.

GROUNDS REPORT

Cllr. Hebbroon, Chairman of the Grounds Committee detailed the committee membership of the past year and also made reference to the fact that the Council employed a full time Groundsman.

Having noted the Committee's involvement in the routine activities of maintaining the parish grounds, he centred his report on the larger projects currently in progress:

Football Facilities – an update was given on a project to improve the facilities in Crondall and it was noted that the Council had made the decision during the year to renovate the existing pavilion at Farnham Road Recreation Ground as opposed to relocating football to Hook Meadow. A progress report was given on the renovation work to the football pavilion, currently underway, which aimed to support the resident football club in their elevated league status, and to increase their responsibility for looking after and maintaining the facilities.

Footpaths – progress was reported on work to resurface the path to the Old Gym and the path leading from Hook Meadow to Well Road that had been successfully completed over the Autumn.

Crondall Churchyard – Cllr. Hebbroon outlined a plan of work to resurface the paths in Crondall Churchyard that had been deferred pending the outcome of a current application submitted by the Council for a grant toward the cost of the project from Hampshire Villages Initiative. Details were also given of necessary work that had been carried out during the year to cut back the large trees along the rear perimeter of the old churchyard and thinning work to the smaller lime trees along the main pathway to the church.

Cricket Facilities – details were given of work that had been carried out by the Pavilion Club to replace the effluent pump serving the pavilion and tractor shed on Hook Meadow, and the extension of the tractor shed compound by the Cricket Club for safe storage of their new roller; the Council had made a financial contribution towards the cost of both these projects.

Further to the Council's consideration of a request put forward at the last Assembly by the Cricket Club, to permit parking on Hook Meadow, it was noted that the Council had decided against consent due to insurance concerns over public safety.

Ewshot Car Park – an update was given on progress following a request for the Council to consider extending the capacity of their car park that served Ewshot Village Hall and Recreation Ground. It was reported that a specification had been drawn up and contractors had been invited to quote for the work; the matter was still progressing.

Questions were taken on the following topics:

CHURCHYARD – in response to a query from Mr Porter, Cllr. Passmore gave a detailed description of the work planned for the churchyard paths and the area surrounding the war memorial, subject to receipt of a grant towards the cost from Hampshire Villages

Initiative. It was noted that additional money received from the grant would allow for a higher quality of work specification that would ensure longer wear in the future.

BURIAL GROUND – the Council were asked what plans they had for provision of a new burial ground in the future. It was noted that no immediate plans had been put in place, however, following assurances that the procedure would take some years to initiate, it was agreed that the next Grounds Committee would start investigations into the matter.

3. ONE WAY TRAFFIC SYSTEM IN CRONDALL

Cllr. Dewey recalled with parishioners the closure of Dippenhall Street in the centre of the village earlier in the year due to work to lay a new gas main, and noted his observations that when traffic was directed along the alternative route through the village, via Croft Lane and Church Street, there appeared to be far less traffic congestion at the main T junction outside Crondall Stores.

He suggested that this evidence supported the view that a one way traffic system in this area of the village would reduce the current traffic congestion at the T junction, increase pedestrian safety along the narrow top section of in Dippenhall Street that had no pavement, and also deter the volume and speed of traffic passing through Crondall; details were given of a suggested one-way route for traffic travelling from the Farnham direction that would be directed off Dippenhall Street into Croft Lane and around Church Street to the Borough, allowing only traffic from the opposite direction to drive down the top section of Dippenhall Street.

The Meeting discussed this suggestion and several opinions were aired for and against.

Particular concern was expressed over the effect that such a one way system might have on road safety outside Crondall School, if all the through traffic was directed down Croft Lane, and it was noted that there already existed a traffic congestion problem in this area at school drop off and collection times.

Another opinion expressed was that the current congestion at the T junction served as a form of traffic calming in the village.

However, views were expressed that a one way system might well serve to deter the traffic that regularly uses the route through Crondall as a short cut.

The discussion developed into a consideration of the current problem from the volume and speed of traffic passing through the village and possible solutions. It was noted that very often the simplest measures could be most effective and any major traffic control measures would necessitate an increase in road signage that might spoil the rural appearance of the village.

A vote on the suggested one way system was inconclusive one way or the other.

The Chairman confirmed that the incoming Parish Council would be asked to consult with officers at the County Council to obtain an expert opinion on the matter.

Appreciation was expressed to Cllr. Dewey for raising this subject at the Assembly.

4. **PARISH BOUNDARY REVIEW**

The Chairman of the Parish Council gave a presentation to the Assembly on the current District Parish Boundary Review.

With the aid of Power Point slides, Cllr. Shelford outlined the process and progress of the review, giving details of the options for change to the Crondall Parish Boundary that had been presented by the District Council on consultation, and the response submitted by the Parish Council.

He also noted the public feeling expressed within Ewshot in favour of formation of a parish separate from Crondall.

A decision recently approved by the District Council on the options presented in the review, which was currently open to further consultation ahead of application for a boundary order, was noted; 'that the northern section of the Ewshot Ward be moved into a new Church Crookham Parish and that the Parish Council be asked to consider proposals for splitting the existing parish into two parishes of Crondall and Ewshot or alternatively remaining unified'.

The representational and financial implications for electors in Crondall and Ewshot relating to the proposed options for change to the parish boundary were outlined to the Assembly.

Cllr. Shelford reported the Parish Council's recommended response to this decision taken by the District Council; 'that the Crondall Parish Boundaries remain as they are, but if this option was not considered possible and the northern section of Ewshot Ward is combined with the new Church Crookham Parish, that the remaining section of the Ewshot Ward remain within Crondall Parish'.

Parishioners were invited to ask questions and express their opinion on this recommendation and the options put forward for change to the parish boundary.

The Chairman was queried on the accuracy of figures quoted in relation to the financial implications of the boundary changes, and in response he clarified how these had been calculated to achieve as accurate an approximation as possible.

It was generally concluded that if Crondall and Ewshot remained as one parish they might have a stronger joint representational voice and would have a stronger financial reserve to call upon.

An opinion was expressed that the decision on whether Ewshot and Crondall should separate should be based on a 'sense of place' and that Ewshot would benefit from having their own precept as it was suggested that spending in the parish had historically been biased towards Crondall.

It was confirmed that a separate Parish of Ewshot could be viable financially and examples were given of existing parishes within the District that manage independently on a far smaller electorate than that of Ewshot.

Attention was drawn to the fact that, if the northern fringe of Ewshot was transferred into a new parish of Church Crookham along the lines suggested, the boundary would reflect that of the ecclesiastical parish boundary.

To conclude, the Chairman noted that a there was some way to go yet before a final decision was formalised and assured the public that matters were progressing.

5. PROVISION OF EXTRA AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The Chairman recalled the public exhibition that had been held in association with the Rural Housing Enabler and Hyde Housing Association on 10th March as part of the ongoing investigation to gauge the requirement for an extra area of affordable housing within the parish.

A report on the public exhibition had been received from the Rural Housing Enabler and considered by the Parish Council. The Chairman gave details of the report, which overall was considered to be disappointing in that it did not indicate a clear way forward with regard to public opinion as a whole.

However, it was noted that the results of a public questionnaire conducted as part of the exhibition, indicated that the majority of those consulted were in favour of development of a further area of affordable housing within Crondall under a Rural Exception Scheme and that the most preferred option from potential sites identified, was an extension of the current Lefroy’s Field.

It was noted that an assessment of availability regarding sites in Crondall that had been identified as having potential for affordable housing, was not yet complete, and that the Parish Council could not progress matters until they were presented with a clear picture of the situation. The Assembly was informed that, in the meantime, the Parish Council had asked the Rural Housing Enabler to continue to pursue and clarify details.

The procedure followed by the Rural Housing Enabler to identify sites with potential for a development of affordable housing within a Rural Exception Scheme, that was currently underway, was clarified to the public.

To conclude the meeting, the Chairman expressed the Parish Council’s appreciation to those who had attended and contributed towards the Assembly and invited all to participate in further informal discussion and refreshments before they left.

The Chairman of the Crondall Society conveyed thanks to the Parish Council for their work on behalf of the Parish throughout the past year, which was endorsed by a round of applause from the parishioners.

The meeting closed at 9.30 pm.

Signed.....

Dated.....