

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF

WORLDHAM PARISH

HELD ON WEDNESDAY 20th APRIL 2016 AT 7.00pm

AT THE EAST WORLDHAM VILLAGE HALL

Present

Cllr Terry Blake (Chairman), Cllr Andrew Aldridge, Cllr Bill Fife, Cllr Tessa Gaffney, Cllr Mary Trigwell-Jones, Cllr Mark Kemp-Gee, Dcll David Ashcroft, Mr Robin Twining (Clerk) and 20 members of the public

1. Welcome and Introduction

Cllr Blake welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Tara Goodwyn and John and Kate Denyer.

3. Presentation on the proposed scheme for development at Park Farm – Andy Partridge – Southern Planning Practice

Andy Partridge from Southern Planning Practice and Giles Jollands, an architect, gave a presentation, on the proposed development of the site at Park Farm. They stressed that they are not developers but want to work with the community to develop and enhance the village. The Whidbourne's want something that the community wants.

There are four options for the site: Do nothing, have it as all for employment use; a mixture of housing and employment or all housing. They have met informally with the Parish Council to sound out their views. The Parish Council would prefer small residential units.

They provided an outline history of the development of the site with reference to a site plan of 1896 and 1965. A Historic Buildings Advisor and a Highways Consultant have been consulted. The intention is that the existing old buildings should be retained, as a historic aspect, and should be restored. The brief is to work and utilise the current buildings. It is intended to see if any traffic calming measures can be introduced, but this might not be possible as the B3004 is a bus and lorry route.

The site is just within the SDNP and lies within the Settlement Boundary. It is proposed that the main access to the development will be along the existing track between the tenanted cottages and the Three Horseshoes onto the B3004. The access onto Blanket Street will be retained but its use will not be intensified. The farm access onto the B3004 would remain.

The proposed development will currently consist of:

- A pair of semi detached houses of 2-3 bedrooms.
- 4 houses of 3-4 bedroom
- To convert the milking parlour into 7 1 to 2 bedroom apartments either for elderly or as starter units and each will be roughly 600 square feet in size
- In total parking there will be 26 parking spaces scattered throughout the site.

The plans can be adapted to fit the ultimate brief. The building works will be of a traditional form and mass. The courtyard will have a shared garden. There will be parking for 26 cars with room for casual parking. We are trying not to set the parking spaces to be seen as a car park.

A traffic report has been undertaken and as the plans stands no improvement is required for access onto the B3004.

A parishioner asked whether it would be feasible to have a roundabout, the issue is that the B3004 is a designated lorry route so any changes are difficult to implement. We can not have rumble strips because of the noise, but we might be able to have radar controlled speeding measures.

Members of the public raised a number of points including questions on the number and layout of the car parking spaces, sewage (which has not yet been considered), the possibility of increase in traffic exiting onto Blanket Street (no more than currently been used), and the social housing requirements.

Andy Partridge and Giles Jollands concluded the presentation by saying that they will work up the scheme in more detail then re-engage with the community with further consultation.

Cllr Blake thanked them for their presentation.

10 members of the public left the room.

4. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 22nd April 2015 and any matters arising from the minutes

Minutes of the Worldham Parish Council held on 22nd April 2015 were agreed and signed. Proposed by Cllr Trigwell-Jones and seconded by Cllr Blake AIF
There were no matters arising from the minutes.

5. County Councillor's Report – Cllr Mark Kemp-Gee

Cllr Kemp-Gee thanked the Parish Council for inviting him for the 11th time. I represent 20 parishes and I have to go to the Froyle Parish Assembly later this evening. The work you do during the year is very important. I want to briefly focus on 3 out of 14 points.

Firstly children: In Alton which has an electorate of 15,000, there are 10 primary schools with 1,400 children. I am upset that they are being forced to become Academies. Every parent wants their child to attend the primary school of their choice. HCC achieves a 95% rate of first choice for parents. 15,000 secondary children get their first choice.

Secondly Devolution: I am horrified by the proposals for devolution which splits Hampshire into 2. The areas around the Solent are failing authorities with Southampton and Portsmouth in dire financial straits. East Hampshire is the 4th largest contributor of Council tax. I am worried about the funding for Social Health and Health Care.

Thirdly Local Issues: I would like to see some planning gain as a result of the planning developments that have occurred, for example a permissive path around the solar farm, a new footpath around Watery Lane. The Highways are going to resurface Hartley Lane.

I am grateful for the local contact that I have with you.

6. District Councillor's Report – Dcillr David Ashcroft

Dcillr Ashcroft reported that it had been an interesting year, especially concerning planning with the solar farm and the proposed warehouses at Wilsom Farm. Permission had been granted for the building of 600 houses at Bordon. Building will start at a later date on the Prince Phillips Barracks site, and to get the centre built as soon as possible.

At the last District Council meeting the replacement of Section 106 monies with CIL has been implemented. Enforcement and planning control has been strengthened. EHDC has reduced the Council Tax by 2% with a desire to reduce it to zero over the next 5 years, by investing in industrial and commercial premises.

Devolution is at the moment in the melting pot, but EHDC needs to be in with the negotiations. Devolution is not a done deal.

7. Chairman's Report – Cllr Terry Blake

Elections for Parish Councils fell due in May of last year. 5 of our 6 parish councillors offered to continue to stand, and in the absence of a contested election were all duly reappointed. I'm pleased to say that Andrew Aldridge accepted our invitation to fill the vacant position left by Councillor Bagnall's resignation. A further vacancy occurred in November with the resignation of Councillor Thomas Brock after many years of dedicated service, and we are grateful for his considerable contribution and service to the community over those years. I'm pleased to say

that we have recently been able to fill this vacancy with the co-option onto the Council of Bill Fife.

As you will see from the agenda, we have the usual reports on the work of the Village Hall Committee, Neighbourhood Watch, Speedwatch and Footpaths. I would like to thank all those involved in these activities for their hard work and valuable contributions, and all other members of our community who contribute in their various ways to our parish life.

The last year has proved to be a particularly busy one for the Parish Council. In addition to the usual routine matters which the parish council has to deal with, including potholes and highways issues, we have had to deal with an unprecedented number of planning applications, 32 in all, as well as several large consultation documents. This considerably adds to the clerk's work as well as Councillors'. A number of the planning applications proved contentious.

Approval was given for the 5 hectare solar farm on Wilsom Farm despite strong objection by your council both at the planning consultation stage and at the planning committee meeting. Whilst the impact on the landscape is now clearly apparent, the upside is that we have been given a commitment by the developer of a contribution of £70,000 spread over 20 years.

Another particularly controversial application, for the erection of two large warehouses on a greenfield site adjacent to Wilsom Farm Road is currently under consideration by EHDC's planning department. We have objected to this development, primarily on the grounds of unsuitability of the development, cumulative impact, and flooding and highways concerns.

An application for a certificate of lawful development for a concrete crushing operation on Oaklands Farm adjacent to Green Street has recently been approved by HCC. The Parish Council objected to this application on the grounds that it had not been in operation for the requisite 10 years, but HCC planners were persuaded otherwise.

The Hartley Mauditt village hall came into the spotlight when a planning application was submitted involving demolition of the hall and construction of a bungalow on the site. Although the application was refused it brought the question of ownership and the condition of the hall to the forefront, resulting in the Parish Council having to seek legal advice on its rights and responsibilities in relation to the hall. A Special Meeting of the Parish Council was held in October to give residents of Hartley Mauditt and West Worldham the opportunity to express their views on the future of the hall. An outline proposal has since been submitted by a Parish Hall Steering Group for demolition of the hall and conversion of the site to a viewing area. This may need the agreement of the PCC, and certainly the landowner.

One of the weightier documents on which we were consulted in the past year was the SDNPA's 466 page draft Local Plan. Rather to our surprise it proposed the removal of our settlement policy boundary in East Worldham. The Parish Council has objected to this on the grounds that, excluding all development in the village, other than for windfall developments, could lead to stagnation and stifling of the vitality and viability of the community.

In my report last year I mentioned that we were awaiting the publication of the Alton Transport Strategy. This has now been published and, as expected, includes a proposal for a junction between the B3004 Cakers Lane and the A31 Alton by-pass. Whilst it is unlikely that this will go ahead in the near future due to lack of funding, it is a possibility for the longer term.

I'm pleased to be able to report that our Village Design Statement has now been completed after a gestation of nearly four years. I would like to thank all my team members for their contributions and tenacity in sticking with it. It was interesting to learn that of 176 parishes in the South Downs National Park, Worldham is one of only four to have produced a Village Design Statement.

Despite stringent control of costs, expenditure has exceeded income for several years running and the Council has reluctantly been obliged to seek an increase in the precept for this

coming year of just under 12%. Whilst this sounds a lot, due to the relatively small number of households in the parish, it raises only around £1000, which is less than the deficit.

Once again, I wish to thank our Parish Clerk, Robin Twining for his unstinting service to the Council, and for the enthusiastic and professional way in which he carries out his duties. Much of the increased workload we have experienced this year has fallen on Robin's shoulders and I am aware that he has put in many more hours of work than is covered by his remuneration.

Finally, I wish to thank my fellow councillors for their hard work over the past year in dealing with the essential business required for the running of the parish's affairs, and for being prepared to continue serving the community in their roles as Parish Councillors.

8. Reports from Councillors

a) East Worldham Village Hall - Cllr Gaffney

The Hall continues to play an important role providing the Parish Community with an Independent space where large groups can gather for meetings, and all kinds of other events. A good example of this was the Get Together last spring when the hall filled to capacity with newcomers, long standing residents, old friends and new.

Each Year the hall subcommittee meets during the autumn to review the condition of the hall, make recommendations for maintenance work and consider possible improvements within a tight budget. During the last year the exterior painting was completed and the selected improvement was the floor which has been a matter of concern for some time. Not only is it difficult to clean easily but it appeared to be gradually dropping in the south east corner. Floorboards in that area were taken up and a preliminary inspection showed that there was some rot at the end of joists and the flooring plates were in a poor state. Temporary repairs were made and we decided to leave further work until after the usual winter time activities.

In November a particularly enthusiastic and effective working party in just 3 hours gave the hall a thorough spring clean and dealt with a number of outstanding odd jobs.

Our thanks are due to all the volunteers, especially to Phil Harding and Nick Tupper who have spent many hours repainting damp patches and generally touching up the interior of the hall, to Mike Walker who manages bookings and Kate Denyer who makes sure the hall is clean and ready for us.

b) Village Design Statement- Cllr Terry Blake

The Village Design Statement has been adopted by EHDC and the SDNPA as supplementary planning documents. The VDS is a material planning document. The SDNPA, because they cover so many parishes, do put quite a lot of weight on a VDS when considering planning. There are copies at the back if you would like one as there are plenty more in store.

9. Financial Statement of the Accounts for the year 2015/16 – The Clerk

I have pleasure in presenting the financial report for 2015-16

In November last year when I presented the budget proposals to your Councillors and with my recommendations for setting the 2016-17 precept, because our costs have risen I was projecting a large operating deficit. The only way to meet this deficit was to increase the precept. This is why your Councillors took the decision to increase the precept from £9,177 to £10,278, a headline rise of 11.4%. We are fortunate that East Hampshire District Council passes onto the Parish Council the full Council Tax Support Grant, which amounts to £273. Across the country, not all Councils are passing onto the Parishes this grant.

To put the precept in context, for a band F dwelling, the cost of this year's precept is £74.03 compared to six years ago in 2008 of £66.51 A rise of £7.52 over 6 years.

You should have a copy of the Summary of Income and Expenditure of Worldham Parish Council for the year ending 31 March 2016. As usual I will not go through each item but will

highlight the main features. I have also included this year some notes to the accounts which explains the major income and expenditure items.

You may recall that in 2013-14 the Parish Council managed 3 one off projects, including the Village Design Statement, which has now been completed. As the projects were outside the normal income and expenditure profile of the Council, in order for parishioners to compare the normal income and expenditure from one year to another, I have in the past shown the costs and grants of those projects separately in the accounts to reflect this, and I have carried on this practice this year. You will see that £350 was spent printing 125 copies of the Village Design Statement. If the Parish Council had not spent this money, it would have had to be returned to East Hants District Council.

The Parish Council received a grant of £262 from the East Worldham School Educational Charity to help pay for the gates for the playground in East Worldham.

Firstly looking at the income side, our total income for 2015-16, excluding project grants was £10,534 compared to £9,952 for the previous year. This is partially due to a larger refund of VAT £493 compared to last years £374, and to an increase in the income received from hiring out the East Worldham village hall. Thanks to Mike Walker for this. However the hall is still not covering all its costs and is being subsidised via the precept.

Turning to the expenditure side, total expenditure, excluding the one off projects for the year increased slightly from £12,137 in 2014/15 to £12,701 in 2015/16. This is primarily due to a number of factors:

There was a one off cost for the Parish Council elections of £119, rather than if they had been contested a cost in the region of £2,000. An increase in the Clerk's salary due to the implementation of the increase in the National scales of pay for Clerk's.

Other expenses included £849 payable for legal expenses incurred by the Parish Council on determining the Parish Council's responsibility for the hall at West Worldham/Hartley Mauditt. A slightly higher VAT bill of £501 compared to £366 for last year. But this is countered by the higher Vat repayment already mentioned.

I am pleased to say that transitional business tax relief the business rates for the village hall was again zero.

Our balances stand at £12,872 compared to last year's end of year balances of £15,389. The problem that your Council faces is that the majority of our costs are non discretionary and are fixed with little scope for any savings. I am projecting a further deficit for this year and this is why your Councillors took the difficult decision to raise the precept to help reduce the operating deficit.

To end on a positive note the Parish Council has signed up to the Lengthsman's scheme. The Parish is provided with a budget of £1000 (equivalent to 50 hours of labour a year) and the duties that the Parish Lengthsman may undertake includes:

- Drainage – maintaining ditches, cleaning channels
- Signage – cleaning, minor repairs
- Other minor works – cutting back vegetation overhanging the road or footway; grass strimming, minor repairs to street furniture, repairs to parish owned notice boards, bus shelters.
- Work on Rights of Way and Public Footpaths

I will be happy to answer any questions regarding the accounts during the Open Forum.

10. Reports from Officials

a) Footpaths- Carolyn Wilson-Webb

On 22nd September 2015 a problem was reported of horse riders using footpath 35 and 36, the track between Wyck Lane and Clays Lane and due to the wet nature of the ground was becoming difficult for walkers.

On 25th September 2015, 2 stiles on footpath 67 near Priory Farm were reported as being in need of repair and these have since been dealt with satisfactorily.

On 28th September an application has been made to modify the Definitive map to add a restricted byway from Clays Lane to Sturvills Copse, beyond Wyck. The current status is unrecorded but is based on historical evidence submitted by PATHH, an organisation Discovering Lost Ways. A restricted byway is one on which it is legal to travel by any mode of transport unless it is mechanically propelled.

3rd October more reports of horse riders on footpath 35 and 36 so I put up a sign notifying riders that this is a footpath only. Then a dog walker from Worldham confronted the perpetrators and the activity ceased.

Bridleway 30. A bridge in Binswood was reported in April 2014 as being unusable but the Chairman of the Worldham Parish Council has recently received information that there is now a budget available to effect this repair, along with 34 other bridges in the county. HCC Countryside Services has gone out to tender for all this work and when a contractor is appointed it is hoped to repair this particular bridge by mid to late summer.

March 2016. BOAT 750, Pookles Lane has been reported as being severely rutted by motor bikes making it almost impassable by walkers. One of the Worldham parishioners has sent photographs of the track to the Rights of Way and Countryside HQ who said they will contact her 'in due course'.

A new 20 mile circular route for walkers, cyclists and horse riders is being constructed in order to make Alton a gateway to the SDNP. It is to run from Alton station along Water Lane to West Worldham, to Selborne, via Candovers and Priory Farm, onto Upper Farrington, Telegraph Lane, Chawton Woods, Beech, The Butts and back to the station. It is being funded by the Government Local Sustainable Transport Fund and is due to open in May 2016. It is to be called the Writers Way as it passes close to Jane Austen's house in Chawton, Gilbert Whites in Selborne and includes parts of Hampshire described in William Cobbetts 'Rural Rides'. It is hoped that the route will be closed to 4 X 4 vehicles which at present use two of the BAOTS on this route.

I have not been notified of any other issues but if you are aware of any problems let me know.

Cllr Trigwell-Jones reported that the problem regarding the horse riders using footpath 35/36 has arisen again. This is unacceptable behaviour and in breach of the byelaws.

b) Neighbourhood Watch -report produced by Kate Denyer

The report was read out by Cllr Blake on behalf of Kate Denyer
Numbers of people participating in the Watch have again risen slightly, with new residents arriving.

As with other parts of the Alton Rural communities, crime reported has been associated with theft of tools from outbuildings. Following the resignation of the Alton Rural area coordinator, reports relayed from the police of interest have become spasmodic. Police resources dealing with Neighbourhood Watch reporting have been re-organised, but will hopefully settle down in due course.

Within Worldham, we continue to communicate - a recent example being the re-uniting of a lost dog with his owner.

c) Speedwatch Co-ordinator - produced by John Denyer

The report was read out by the Clerk on behalf of John Denyer

The Clerk and his deputy, John Denyer, thank our volunteers, who regularly donate a couple of hours of their time to help keep Worldham safe. We stopped operating between September

and March but are now out on the B3004 again and try to man a speed check at least once in most of the summer months

We thought you may find a few statistics interesting. During 2015, we deployed in the village 29 times. During that time 5,900 cars passed us, of which 370 were speeding – that's just 6%. That is a significant reduction on the proportion speeding when we started 2 years ago.

The number of cars passing per hour averaged 300 (in each direction), though that figure ranged from 1,170 in the morning rush hour to 110 in a weekday mid-morning.

The worst place for cars speeding appears to be the hill with the proportion of cars caught speeding in our four locations as follows, though as sample sizes are small you shouldn't infer too much from this information:

- Bus stop traffic towards Alton – 5%
- Bus stop traffic towards Kingsley – 7%
- Hill traffic towards Alton – 10%
- Hill traffic towards Kingsley – 11%

Since Speedwatch started in 2013, we have been out at the roadside 274 times for a total of 356 hours. I don't know if it is connected, but the Police speed camera van appears to have been deployed beside the village hall rather more frequently in the last couple of years, so perhaps they use our data to prioritise where they send the van to.

As like with most voluntary organisations the scheme is experiencing some challenges. We need further volunteers to be able to provide a more consistent presence on the roadside to act as a useful deterrent against speeding. If anyone is prepared to volunteer, please either contact myself, Robin Twining or John Denyer. There is a simple police form to complete, and training is provided. Those who are already on the team would agree that it is both a rewarding and sociable experience.

Again, thank you all for your efforts, and on a personal note to John Denyer for undertaking the majority of the co-ordination and inputting of the data at the police station.

11. Open Forum and Public Questions

Cllr Blake stated that he would like to thank Chris Kehoe for picking up the litter around the village.

Chris Kehoe commented that he is concerned that parishioners are in danger of being run down by cyclists and asked if anything can be done to contact the cycling clubs. Cllr Aldridge commented that when he lived in Froyle they had the same issue, and had looked into this but there are no byelaws being broken. It is a mis match of different groups using the same country lanes. It was suggested that the Alton Herald be contacted and run an article on the danger of using roads and pavements for different purposes.

Chris Kehoe commented that Pookles Lane, at the Wyck's Lane end, has become a site for fly tipping, and that he found it impossible to report the incidents to the appropriate authorities as they did not respond to his calls. The Clerk asked Mr Kehoe to report any fly tipping to him, and he will contact the appropriate authorities. Dcllr Ashcroft asked the Clerk to copy him into any of the reports.

Mary Blake reported that there had been incidents of fly tipping at the entrance to the lane at Binswood and they had put up notice saying that CCTV was in operation, which had reduced the number of incidents.

Dcllr Ashcroft commented that the Solent devolution bid is in trouble and that personally he thinks any devolution bid should be a county wide bid. The reason why EHDC is involved in the Solent bid is to find out what is being proposed.

He thanked the Parish Councillors and the Clerk for all the hard work that they do, and that it is much appreciated by the community.

Cllr Trigwell-Jones reported on the proposed celebrations for the Queens official birthday on the weekend of 11/12th June. There will be a church service in East Worldham at 9.30 followed by a jamboree in the playground from 10.30 to 12.00. West Worldham and Hartley Mauditt will be holding a tea party in the afternoon followed by evensong.

The meeting closed at 9.12pm