

DAWLEY HAMLETS PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL
held on Wednesday 27th February 2002 at Aqueduct Community Centre
at 7.30 p.m.

PRESENT: Cllr. S. Woodvine - Chairman
Cllrs. A. M. Jeffs, A. Chetwood, D. Gibson, G. Onions,
R. Pritchard, R. Haire and A. Hickie.
Clerk: Mr. M. Goldstraw

In attendance Sgt Paul Franks
Nine members of the public
Shropshire Star reporter

1. PUBLIC - The members of the public who were present expressed a great deal of concern over planning applications for yet more commercial activity in the Lightmoor area. The Clerk explained that the planning application to which they were referring (a waste transfer station and ancillary buildings) had been dealt with by the council and objections had been sent to T&WC who were the determining body.

The public were concerned about heavy goods vehicles on what is thought to be a country lane. It was stated by those present that objections and representations had been made to Members of T&WC and planning officers. The Chairman welcomed their interest in the matter, commended their approach to T&WC Councillors and stated that in order to ensure their protests were heard, they were quite correct in directing their concerns to T&WC Members.

Cllr. Jeffs referred to proposed commercial development of the area by E.P. and stated that if they (E.P.) had done their job properly in the first place and upgraded the road prior to allowing all this commercial development, there would not now be this problem, instead they had taken the profits and put nothing back.

A discussion was held on the general safety aspects relating to the increase of HGV's on the road. The Chairman concluded by stating that the Parish Council had objected and it was now up to the public, if they wished, to campaign against the proposals.

Concerns over the closure of the waste transfer station were expressed. Members informed the public that the council had objected to the proposal and had grave concerns over the likely increase of fly tipping as a result of the closure.

2. POLICE -Sgt Franks stated that there had been a recent police presence on Lightmoor Road in response to complaints over speeding vehicles. Some motorists had been reported for speeding but on the whole, it was more a case of inappropriate speed as opposed to excessive speed as the area was de- restricted. He agreed to speak to WPC Micky Riggs over the perceived HGV problems.

Sgt Franks then gave a general policing report where crime statistics were reported. It was stated that there had been a small increase in criminal activity in January but targeted patrols (esp in Aqueduct) had resulted in a 58% reduction over recent months. Little Dawley and Horsehay, he reported as having very little criminal activity.

Cllr. Chetwood asked for details of response rates to 999 calls and related an incident which had come to his attention. Sgt Franks responded by outlining the response guidelines and stated that he would follow up and investigate the matter which Cllr Chetwood had concerns.

Cllr. Onions asked if it would be possible to do speed checks on vehicles approaching Horsehay Traffic Island. Sgt Franks explained the difficulties encountered in places which did not have a 3/4 mile distance in which to measure speed but stated that he would get someone to look into the problems encountered with speeding traffic approaching the island.

8.07 Sgt Franks, having been thanked by the Chairman for his attendance, left the meeting.

02/14 APOLOGIES -

Apologies were received from Cllr. Mrs Swain.

02/15 Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd January 2002 were confirmed and signed as a true record.

02/16 Lightmoor Village

The Clerk reported that the meeting which had been arranged with members of DHPC and BVT officers had been postponed at their request and a date for any new meeting was yet to be finalised. The Clerk stated that the only indication he had received for the postponement was that BVT had not been ready to proceed with the planning application. Members accepted that there was little they could be but await a suggested new meeting date from BVT.

02/17 Traffic Matters

Cllr Jeffs gave a report on the public meeting held on Monday February 11th where residents who were present at the meeting agreed that they wished the Parish Council to approach T&WC with a slightly altered version of the original plan number one. Cllr. Jeffs gave members details of the plan and the Clerk informed the meeting that a letter had been forwarded to T&WC to ask for their comments as to the feasibility of the (new) plan. When the comments of T&WC have been received, the matter would be put before council for discussion.

02/18 The Parish Councils (Model Code of Conduct) Order 2001

The Clerk requested that Members look in some greater detail at the disclosures (or otherwise) which had been made in the Register of Members Interest, stating

that it was not (in his opinion) sufficient to merely state "nothing to declare". All Members had received the NALC guidance.

The Chairman stated that she would be attending a training meeting to be hosted by T&WC which it was hoped would clarify many of the grey areas which Members were concerned about.

Cllr. Jeffs felt that the new requirements expected too much information on peoples private lives. He requested that the Clerk provide a list of questions which members could answer.

The Clerk stated that he was reluctant to deal with the register by way of a list of questions and explained that it must be for members, who were aware of the individual headings under the requirements, to make the appropriate declarations. If the matter was dealt with by way of questions and answers, this could lead to either deliberate or accidental avoidance of an issue if the correct question was not asked.

There was a general unease amongst Members as to the requirements and the need for disclosure but it was agreed that the matter should be more fully debated following the Chairman's attendance at the training session.

Cllr. Jeffs stated that although he was well aware of the efforts to ensure councillors were more and more "professional", he felt that the government were losing sight of the fact that Parish Councillors were volunteers and gave of their time freely for the benefit of their community.

02/19 Senior Citizens

Cllr. Chetwood explained that he had been approached by some pensioners with a request for a Christmas Party. He had advised that if there was a proper group or committee, which made application to the Council, a grant towards a Christmas Party may be considered.

The Chairman gave details of previous attempts to provide a solution to the occasional requests for a Christmas party and pointed out that despite the best efforts of the Council, no definitive plan of action was thought to be suitable. In the past, the Council had decided that rather than provide a Christmas Party to a few pensioners which were known or came forward and risk alienating others who could not be identified, the grant money would be redirected to other community funding which would benefit all including the elderly. One of the initiatives which had specifically been implemented as a result of these discussions was that of the Police community vehicle and the Council had also contributed to a scheme which replaced door locks for the elderly and vulnerable. It had been felt that owing to the almost unsolvable problem of providing a Christmas party for pensioners in the Parish, this had been a more acceptable use of funding.

The Clerk confirmed that on both occasions that the Council had requested feed back from pensioners, via the Parish Magazine, there had been at most three replies.

Members agreed to take no action other than asking the Clerk to write to the persons concerned to explain the position of the Council.

02/20 PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE

a) To receive the minutes of the PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE held on 7th January 2002, previously circulated. The minutes were received.

02/21 Countryside Officers Report

Cllr. Jeffs reported that the bushes and trees had now been planted on the War Memorial site and that he and the Clerk had met with the T&WC Countryside Officer on site to discuss the management of the wild flower meadow. He stated that a section of the wall was down and that it would be a good idea to reinstate it and add a proper gate for entry onto the site. The Countryside Officer had suggested various management schemes.

Members asked for the matter to be placed on the next Planning and environmental Committee agenda for proper discussion.

02/22 The Golden Jubilee of HM The Queen

Cllr. Haire reported that he had canvassed the opinions of residents of Aqueduct Village who had requested that the Council gives consideration to the provision of a plaque ,in Chapel Lane, which made reference to the old site of the chapel. The Clerk was asked to contact T&WC to check feasibility.

02/23 RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS- It was RESOLVED: that these be approved and paid as tabled.

STATEMENT 118 was tabled along with the reconciliations and was approved.

Play Equipment Aqueduct Primary School

The Chairman presented a request from the school for grant aid towards a project to provide play equipment for the school. Cllr. Chetwood proposed that one thousand pounds be granted, seconded by Cllr. Onions, it was resolved that one thousand pounds be granted to Aqueduct Primary School to fund play equipment.

02/24 CORRESPONDENCE

CPRE

Gov't Green Paper Briefing - noted

CVS

Support for Parish councils in developing Parish Plans - Cllr. Chetwood

02/25 ANY OTHER ITEMS OF INFORMATION

Cllr. Jeffs stated that he had been concerned that some rural Parish Councils had come under criticism (and even been branded sleepy) in the press following a report by the Countryside agency. He stated that parish councils were voluntary and Members gave of their time freely. Many Councillors worked tirelessly for their communities without their work ever coming to light or being recognised. He stated that it was outrageous that they should come under such criticism. He went on to say that this parish was fortunate in that it had a population and budget which allowed it to pay to get things done whereas some small parishes are so small, and may have little or no finances, that it was almost impossible to achieve anything other than minor aims, but their Councillors were still prepared to put themselves out for the community.

The Chairman agreed pointing out that the criteria which the CA used to judge the councils was not terribly fair.

The Clerk stated that it may have been that some of the councils who had been branded as lazy had not completed the questionnaire sent out by the Agency precisely because they were too busy to do so and in any event, Parish Councils were not answerable to the CA and so many may have simply ripped up the form.

Cllr. Chetwood requested that the Clerk be asked to write to T&WC expressing concern over fly tipping in the parish following the removal of the waste amenity site.

Cllr. Pritchard gave advance apologies for the next full meeting of Council.

02/26 Date of next meeting Wednesday 27th March 2002 at Aqueduct Community Centre at 7.30 p.m.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.00 pm.

Signed

Date