

Poulshot Parish Council

Minutes of Meeting Held at Poulshot Village Hall
At 19:30 on Tuesday 3rd July 2007.

Parish Council Meeting

1. Attendance

Attending -

Mr Michael Hues (MH) Chairman
Mrs Sue Aldridge (SA) Councillor
Mr Steve Housby (SH) Councillor
Mr Malcolm Nixon (MN) Vice Chairman
Mr Geoffrey Collett (GC) Councillor
Mr Nicky Hunloke (NH) Councillor
Mr Joe Baber (JB) Councillor
Mr Michael Wilson (MW) Parish Clerk

Mrs P Rugg (PR) (Wiltshire County Council)

Apologies - Anthony Lake (AL) (Kennet District Councillor)
Wiltshire Police

Absent -

Visitors - There were 9 members of the public in attendance.

2. Public meeting

The Chairman welcomed the public and informed the meeting that a new layout was being tried in order to improve communication. The Council were now facing the members of the public. MH informed the meeting that the Police had sent their apologies; however they had appointed a Community Support Officer for Poulshot, PCSO Amanda Parkes, contact details have been forwarded to the Parish Magazine. She was hoping to attend the Village Fete, where she would have been available for security tagging bicycles; however she has volunteered to attend at any time if a special event is arranged. Mrs Curnow informed the meeting that building materials had been stolen from Higher Green Farm, and that suspicious characters had been enquiring about purchasing items. MH asked that all keep a look out and contact him or the Police if they see anything. The chairman thanked those participating and closed the public meeting.

3. Minutes of Last Meeting

The Minutes of last meeting 1/05/07, were reviewed and no comments were received. The minutes were then approved by the council and signed by MH in the presence of the council.

4. Matters arising

4.1. Playground safety

SA reported all is well.

4.2. Quality Parish Councils

The Clerk reported that he had been in touch with Community First regarding the relevance of Quality Status to Poulshot, and whilst there might be grants that are unavailable to non-qualifying councils, as Poulshot had no projects at this time this did not seem to be a factor. The Government is introducing a Well Being program that at the moment only applies to District Councils and above, might at some point allow Parish Councils to be involved. This program would allow Councils to spend money in excess of its S137 allowance towards the benefit of the Parish. However the extra money cannot be raised through the precept and would involve the Parish Council in some form of trading. The Clerk also pointed out that the proposed Unitary Authority would have a large effect on the Parish and the proposed Community Area boards could be over thirty strong and be composed of largely unelected members. The Parish might be invited to have a seat. PR stated that the Government would be making a decision regarding unitary status before the end of July. She would leave various briefing papers for the Councils information..

4.3. Lengths Man report

GC noted that the weeds in paths were growing well, and that there was a spraying program for the summer. He reported that the Parish Steward was to be given more autonomy in making decisions about what work

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he undertook when no clear plan had been given from the Parish. GC also reported that the railings at Planks dairy were to be painted. A member of the public stated that the verges in Barley Hill lane were being damaged by vehicles. MH stated that the verges did not belong to the Parish or private owners but the Highways were responsible.

4.4. Village Green

MH reported that the work completed by Wessex Water was complete and satisfactory; however members of the public disagreed, stating that the whole area was a mass of weeds. They requested that Wessex come back and reseed and get rid of the weeds. MH pointed out that spraying was not legally possible, although it would allow the grass to grow through. SH asked if Wessex could do the spraying. MN pointed out that after two or three cuts the weeds would be reduced and the grass encouraged, he did not see any need to spray; in fact after one cut it already looked better. NH stated that he would not be against spraying. JB noted that a certain amount of impatience was being expressed, grass grows more slowly, keep cutting and the weeds will disappear. MN suggested fertiliser might work, but better to let time do its work. MH reported that he had asked various parishioners around the green about the tracks and splays on the green, and found no enthusiasm for this expensive work. In fact he had received one letter very much against it. *(That letter was not read out but will be entered into the parish records)* He recognised the splays had become bigger but did not want to see concrete blocks. SH stated that he did not want to see any obstruction to vehicles on the green, but he wanted to see it smarter and it should be cut more often. MH pointed out that the green was the gem and pride of the village and in his opinion it should not be cut too often. SA stated that the villagers do have pride in the green, but it's the delivery drivers who abuse the green by driving on it. JB did not want it cut too often because it would encourage outsiders to use it. MH stated that the green is our green. SH asked if it could be cut every fortnight. SA asked about the cost, the clerk replied £110.00 per cut. NH does not want it too tidy, except where the football or cricket pitch was. A member of the public stated that if it was better kept perhaps the cricket would come back. Another member of the public asked if areas could be left uncut to preserve the butterflies. MH stated that it would look untidy then. MN stated that it should be cut regularly. MH suggested that during the peak growing season it should be cut frequently. There should be a happy medium. SH did not want to see a bowling green but he had feedback from parishioners suggesting it should be tidier. MH suggested areas by Hay lane could be kept longer, but NH pointed out that the Parish already had an area committed to this in the form of the Green Gardens. MH stated that he was strongly against any work on the splays, but perhaps the drainage in certain areas could be improved. A member of the public asked if the pond at the south of the Green could be improved. GC said that the charm of the Green was in the pooling water, and things should be left alone. He also stated that the tracks were maintained by the users but perhaps some work was needed. MH stated that things should be left alone. The Clerk then interjected to remind the Council of its legal duties to protect and maintain the Green. He also stated that the tracks and splays had been defined in terms of their width, make up and maintenance in the past (1995). The dimensions had now far exceeded those laid down by the Parish and were now all but uncontrolled. A member of the public suggested that the Clerk was trying to reduce widths. The Clerk denied this and reminded the meeting of the Councils responsibilities in setting standards, if the current situation was acceptable then the Council should redefine its specifications. MH did not accept that anything should be done. MN suggested that perhaps the council should re-specify the tracks. MH stated that all were now aware of the situation regarding stones on the Green; he reminded the meeting that parking on the Green was not allowed as a matter of course, but that the Council tried to be practical. SA stated that the pond was very overgrown; MH thought that it was alright.

4.5. Village Design Guide

NH reported showed the large amount of work completed by Mr Pope-Baron and that once this initial stage was completed the proposal would be put before the Village.

4.6. 74 The green

The Clerk reported no progress and he was still awaiting news from the land registry.

4.7. Townsend New footpath

MN pointed out that the work had now been completed, the footpath signs had been removed and the railings had been replaced with antique black posts. They looked very suitable.

4.8. Guest speakers

MH asked all for any suggestions for speakers in the future. The clerk suggested that perhaps the police could be re-invited.

4.9. Water in Green Gardens

The Clerk reported that he had now received an adjusted bill for the water but that this was as a result of charge scales and not for volume used. He had called Wessex in and they had found a leak and that the stop cock was faulty. It was his understanding that the problem was now solved.

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4.10. Footpath Signs

SA reported that she had nothing to say but that she wanted to see some "Farm Vehicles Only" signs.

4.11. Reorganisation of local government

PR was saddened that we were being given the wrong idea about the unitary bid, and that this was not an excuse for centralisation in Trowbridge. She reiterated that the decision would be made by the end of July and that the idea of Community Area Forums was being formed.

4.12. Footpath by Lodge Farm

GC expressed his disappointment that the path repair at Lodge Farm would not include tarmac. SH stated that for safety reasons the footpath should be on the other side of the road. MH wondered if this would be safer, and agreed that it would be better if the tarmac would be laid sooner than later. GC suggested that the road should be widened to improve safety. SA agreed that widening would be the best option. MN pointed out that the footpath was to be extended around the bend in the road, thus improving visibility and safety. MH pointed out that the hedge was going to be cut back. The Clerk pointed out that the council had already fully discussed this matter and had taken a vote at a previous meeting. MH suggested that the clerk write to Highways and ask if the tarmac work could be scheduled. SH suggested that the situation should be reviewed after the repairs are complete later in the year.

4.13. 17 Poulshot road.

The Clerk explained that after complaints regarding damage to verges the occupiers had made a vehicular entrance and hard standing, in contravention of the planning laws. KDC had asked the occupiers to retrospectively request planning permission, which would be granted. SH praised the work done by the occupier. MH asked how this reflected upon Belle Vue farm going ahead without planning permission. The Clerk stated that he had heard from KDC on this matter and as an application had been filed before the work commenced KDC considered this acceptable.

5. Plans

SA deplored the decision by KDC to ignore the wishes of the Parish Council and the Village regarding the 6 offices at Manor Farm. She felt we were not listened to. MN asked if we got a hearing, SH stated that he attended with NH. NH said that 4 people spoke at the meeting. MH felt that previous permissions from the 1980's had influenced the decision. MH suggested that the head of KDC planning be asked to comment and perhaps meet with the council.

There had been various plans presented in the interim, the status of which was reported in the agenda to the meeting.

- Tree works on Green - approved
- Belle Vue Farm – Withdrawn / reapplication
- Home Close new House – Approved
- Manor Farm Developments 6 offices – Approved
- 20 Poulshot Rd extension – Approved
- Tree works 11 Barley Hill. - pending

No further discussion of plans took place at the meeting.

6. Accounts

- 6.1. The Clerk presented the current financial position. SH asked that all work by the council be put out for Tender. The Clerk stated that it had been a few years since the tender process had been undertaken, so he would advertise in the Parish Magazine.
- 6.2. The Clerk asked the Council to revue the figures for 2006/7 and the statutory questions that were in their briefing pack. He then asked if there were any questions, and as there were none he asked if there were any objectors to the financial figure for the previous year. He then asked if there were any of the statutory questions that could not be answered "YES". There were no objections, therefore the Chairman signed the papers for the 2006/7 accounts.
- 6.3. Payable.
 1. Several accounts were payable; but no cheques were signed at the meeting;
 2. In the interim between meetings several cheques had been signed by Councillors.
 - a. JS Weeks – audit £58.75
 - b. Bobby Van - £50.00
 - c. Wessex Water - £84.30

7. Any Other Business.

7.1. Adoption of code of conduct

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The clerk pointed out that all had signed their acceptance of office and declared their interests. He also stated that the new code of conduct had been adopted and advertised as being adopted by the Parish Council.

7.2. Safety at Dual Carriageway Junction.

MH introduced this item in light of a recent accident involving one of the younger members of the village on a motor scooter. He stated that there is a blind spot created by overtaking vehicles, and whilst the ultimate responsibility must be with the drivers, he felt the problem should be explored. SH suggested that the problem was also caused by the positioning of one of the lights in the central reservation. MH suggested a stop sign rather than a give way sign. MN reminded every one that the junction was well marked and drivers should not take risks if they cannot see. The Clerk stated that he had been in touch with Highways, who had replied that the junction did not meet the criterion of a Stop sign. Members of the public suggested that the junction with the Seend/Worton road was more dangerous. MN suggested that the Council should write to Worton Parish Council in order to enlist support for safety measures at the junction. The Clerk was asked to write to Highways and request assistance.

7.3. Any Other Business

7.3.1. NH requested on behalf of the Village Trust that a memorial be considered for Nora Dixon. It had been suggested that a bench under the Chestnut trees on the Green and or a stone plinth/plaque in the Green Gardens. He requested that the crown of the Chestnut trees be raised in order to facilitate a bench and improve the vista at her cottage. The Council agreed and the Clerk was instructed to obtain a quotation for the tree work.

7.3.2. MH introduced Mr Sault as the new owner of Higher Green farmyard. He stated that Mr Sault was anxious to avoid the problems that had occurred at Manor Farm and wanted to fully engage the community in any development at Higher green. Mr Sault stated that the planners would prefer to see some form of industrial development or at least some form of development involving employment. MH stated that the village does not want offices or industrial sites. It wants to see houses, well designed that blend into the current environment. Mr Sault reminded the Parish Council that it had little or no influence on the planning process, rightly or wrongly. It is important to influence the District Councillors. SH agreed that housing would be preferable. Mr Sault stated that if the Parish wished it he would approach the planners with a proposal but that would probably involve affordable housing and it would be important to plan the development to prevent infilling. SA pointed out that ex farm buildings at Higher Green had received approval for holiday homes, and could not understand why different rules would apply. Mr Sault pointed out that tourism was a favoured application and in any case that particular project was within the limits of a house development. NH pointed out that there is little or no demand for offices but there is a huge demand for housing. SH stated that the Terraces are ghastly and in need of redevelopment, surely a combined scheme could be attempted with Sarsen housing to the benefit of the tenants and the village. Mr Sault agreed and stated that discussions would involve Sarsen. He assumed the entrance to the site would be the existing farm entrance and was not sure about the housing density but would like to see less than the Government recommendation of 17 per acre. SA surely this is in the conservation area and the statement recommends no further building. Mr Sault pointed out that KDC considered this development to be on the edge of the village and that the position would only be defined at the time of application. MH thanked Mr Sault and stated that it was better to cooperate, and encouraged Mr Sault to approach the planning authorities. MN stated that a happy medium could be obtained. Members of the public were asked their opinion and they reiterated that any development must fit in with the village and must not be a high density development.

7.3.3. There was no other business.

8. Next Meeting

Tuesday 4/9/07 at 18:30 Poulshot village hall.

The Chairman closed the meeting and thanked those attending.

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