

CODSALL PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES

Council Meeting held in the Parish Chambers,
Station Road, Codsall
on Wednesday 14th July 2010 at 7.30pm. following Planning

PRESENT

Parish Councillors Mrs C Millar (Chair), Mrs M Barrow, Mrs V Chapman, R Etheridge, Mrs E Forster, P Kenyon, L Stovin, D Walls, **District Councillors** Mrs P Campbell, J Michell, Mrs S Oatley **County Councillor** R Marshall

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Ewart, B Holland and G Owen.

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Codsall resident Mr Stephen Skinner asked the Chair if the term Declaration of Interest could be explained for the benefit of the public that were present this evening.

Councillor John Michell said that he would give a brief outline this evening, but it is a very complex area.

Councillor Michell then went onto explain two types of interest:

Pecuniary Interest, where a councillor will gain financially to an outcome and Non Pecuniary Interest, where a Councillor is a friend or an associate.

Councillor Michell went onto say that it is not necessary to declare an interest if you just happen to live in the same street as an applicant of a planning application, but if you socialised regularly i.e. went round for coffee, then you would need to declare an interest.

Councillor Michell said he hoped that this had clarified why and when members have to declare an interest.

Councillor Mrs V Chapman said that she had sought advise from Mrs Lin Robinson, head of Scrutiny at District Council and was advised that although Cllr Chapman was a neighbour of Mr Derek Buxton, Chairman of The Ex-Service Sports Club (proposal 6b), Cllr Chapman did not have to declare an interest as she did not socialise with Mr Buxton, or in being a neighbour would influence her decision this evening.

Chairman Mrs Christine Millar said it was up to Councillors to act on their conscience, and that she has full trust in her fellow Councillors that they would act appropriately.

Cllr Robert Marshall informed the meeting that he would have to declare an interest in the item discussed in confidential.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Limited to 2 minutes per speaker and 15 minutes overall.

43 members of the public were in the Chamber this evening with approximately 30 others who were outside due to lack of room in the Chamber, however they assigned two representatives.

The Clerk advised the meeting that the Parish Council had received a number of letters in support and objecting to item 6b on the agenda, as well as a petition with 111 signatories against the proposal outlined in item 6b.

As there were a large number of residents present this evening the Chairman advised that they would try to hear as many residents as possible, but undoubtedly would not be able to hear everyone.

Mr Stephen Skinner a resident said that if permission were granted to the bowling club to develop part of the Wheel Field this will set a precedent and leave the Parish Council no scope to refuse any future applications or proposals. He referred councillors to the continuing situation in Hushpins Lane.

Mr Skinner then went on to say in 2006 councillors said that they would object to the use of Oaken Drive field for parking which is a valuable open space for residents.

In allowing the bowling green, a precedent would be set that any organisations or individual could sell their land in Codsall, benefit financially and claim community land from the Parish Council to re-start.

The bowling green would increase road safety concerns; as the parish council is aware, there is already speeding problems on this section of the Wolverhampton Road.

He trusts that the proposal put forward by the Open Spaces Committee took into consideration the Parish Plan in 'Preserving the Character of the Village' and that 'retention of original open spaces further preserves the village character'.

Mr Skinner then went onto say there is much merit in Mr Wildmans proposal in that it would keep the Wheel Field as a natural and green open space at the heart of the village, it would help towards South Staffordshire Council Climate Change Policy objectives and most importantly show responsible stewardship of Codsall's green open spaces and preserve them for future generations to enjoy.

Resident Mr Don Poyner then spoke, he informed the meeting that he had no interest in the Bowling Club, or in bowling, but the Wheel Field is little used and the scheme would not erode the green belt or give any downside to the environment in increased traffic.

The bowling green to his mind would enhance the local scene and should be seen as an opportunity to create a village focal point at no expense to the taxpayer.

Stuart Wigman a resident said he has lived in Codsall a long time and has seen everything built on within the village and if the bowling green plans were approved then he can see this as ongoing with new development and changes, i.e. flood lights, toilets etc.

Joshua Noad a spokesperson for The Ex-service Sports Club said that their proposal has been met with a mixed response.

Many people have expressed support for their bowling green; others have shown apprehension or rejection. However it seems to him that the main reasons for apprehension or rejection is the fear that any change may compromise the existing nature of the open space, or even worse open the floodgates for unwanted future development. With these objections in mind he thought it is important to state that all members of the bowling club very much share the same views and do not wish to destroy a local asset but would like to enhance and safeguard the Wheel Field from any threats of future development.

What the club does want to do is work very closely with the Parish Council and the residents of Codsall and seize this opportunity to make the Wheel Field into an open space that can further benefit us all, with natural gardens, a village bowling green, dog walking facilities and benches, making the Wheel Field a real green heart to our village.

The Bowling Club honestly believe that through careful planning and open consultation, the right proposal could easily capture the needs and aspirations of all the people of Codsall and still maintain the character and identity that is so wonderfully preserved and loved by us all.

For a club that has been a part of Codsall for over 90 years, it now seems a great shame that its future is under threat when it is so well placed to give something back.

A representative from the Codsall High School Sixth Form, said that they are in support of the Bowling Green and feel that it would be another way to bring the community together.

Mr Wildman a resident said that the Parish Council had bought the land over 10 years ago to keep the field as a green open space, and this should not be hived off to other parties as there will be no green spaces left. He requested that the Parish Council bare in mind why the Wheel Field was bought in the first place.

Dan O'Connor a resident said that he had not heard a good enough answer against the bowling club being sited there.

The field is not loved and that is the view of the people he was there to represent this evening. The field always looks unkempt.

Mr O'Connor said he had surveyed the field on 103 separate occasions after the initial public meeting at differing times, the most people he saw on the field at any one time was 4, each with dogs, but most times there was nobody.

The field represents a 'dog in a manger', he would recommend that the Council accepts the bowling clubs proposal.

Mrs Askwith a resident said that the plans only show 10 parking spaces, where will the others park? – along the Wolverhampton Road? The plans do not show any toilets, how fast can the bowlers run?

Mr Broom a resident and a member of the Bowling Club said that they need only 8 parking spaces and that the plans are only outline.

Judy Davis representing Codsall & Bilbrook History Society, said that the Wheel Field highlighted Codsall's historic past of Open Field System and would not wish to denude the Ridge and Furrow or the open space, it should be kept and not lost for future generations.

Mr Wardon, a resident said he has seen twenty people use the field. He has seen no correspondence from the Parish Council relating to the proposals. The plans for the Bowling Green obstruct his right of access into the field.

Joanne Lloyd represented 27 disappointed people who were unable to gain entrance to this evenings meeting. This is the last open space now left in Codsall where you are able to walk your dogs.

The Chair then called an end to Public Participation as all residents who wanted to speak, had spoken.

4. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 9th June 2010 were received, approval proposed by Cllr Campbell, seconded by Cllr Walls, unanimously agreed by the meeting and immediately signed by the Chair.

5. POLICE REPORT

- a. A written report from the Police was received this evening; the Clerk gave a brief précis of the items that may give rise for concern to local residents.

Anti Social Behaviour appears high, however majority of the incidents reported have been down to youths around the village making too much noise, there appears to be no one particular place where the youths gather.

There has been three incidents of mainline burglaries in each case the properties were insecure. One had left the house keys in the front door, another a downstairs window was left open and another the conservatory door was unlocked.

Any residents concerned about policing or have any policing issues, Community Surgeries are taking place on the following dates at the Council Offices, Wolverhampton Road:

Tuesday 3rd August 10am – 12 noon
Thursday 2nd September 10am –12 noon.

Cllr Etheridge said he was aware of a number of youths riding inappropriately on small bikes, and he is aware that the Police were called, but the incident does not appear on the statistics in the Police report.

Cllr Etheridge asked the Clerk to clarify with the Police why the incident does not show on the Police report.

6. URGENT CORRESPONDENCE AND DISCUSSION TOPICS

Prior to the discussion the Chair, Cllr Millar, read out the three proposals in full, including the Minutes of the Open Spaces Meeting of the 16th June.

The Chair asked Councillors when discussing the Open Spaces proposal, they also reflect on the other two proposals.

- a. **The minutes** of the Open Spaces Committee meeting of the 16th June and to discuss the Open Spaces Committee proposal for the Wheel Field.
- b. **To receive** and discuss Codsall Ex-Servicemen's Club, Bowling Section request for use of part Wheel Field with 3 outline proposals.
- c. **To receive** and discuss a proposal received from Mr Wildman, (a Codsall resident), relating to the Wheel Field "keep it entirely green".

The Chair asked Cllr Kenyon, Chairman for the Open Spaces Committee, to give the reasoning behind the choice of a tarmac path instead of using more natural materials and why the installation of gates.

Cllr Kenyon said that other materials have huge ongoing maintenance costs. Tarmac is also easier to level and provides all weather access.

Gates have been suggested as the field is open and anyone can gain access in a vehicle; only the other day a 4x4 was parked in the field.

Cllr Don Walls said he understood that there were covenants on the field, could the Clerk clarify what they were.

The Clerk explained that there are a number of covenants placed on the field at differing transfers, but some of the covenants that may be breached by the Open Spaces proposal were briefly outlined:

- 1 No buildings can serve intoxicating liquor.
- 2 A lease may act as a disposal, which would need the consent of the Secretary of State.
- 3 No advertisement can be put on the property.
- 4 Not to construct or erect on the property any building or structure of any description.

The Clerk went on to say that other covenants may apply, but covenants may be varied on application to the Secretary of State and or South Staffordshire Housing Association.

Cllr Paul Kenyon said that he could see that opinions are well divided, and a decision need not be made this evening, but the proposal accepted on principle could be put forward, and then a committee of all representatives could formulate a plan and the majority would be considered.

Cllr Michell said that the Parish Council could not consider Mr Wildmans proposal as they cannot make a decision today that will tie future Councillors; this is not allowed.

Cllr Stovin said that Mr Wildmans proposal was to do nothing, but the field has to be maintained and that the consensus of the meeting is to do something, even if it is to put in pathways, benches and bins.

Cllr Stovin also responded to an earlier question by a resident (what constitutes an Open Space?) he considered a bowling green still to be an open space.

Cllr Etheridge said that use of the field should be encouraged like tennis, bowling and cricket and even if the field is kept in perpetuity it still needs to be maintained.

The Ridge and Furrow has already been built on by the Wheel Estate. Cllr Etheridge said he would like to see the Ridge and Furrow covered over and the field smoothed out in order to see it being used by more people without risk of a twisted ankle.

Cllr Etheridge said that whilst he has extreme sympathy with the Bowling Club he feels the covenants prohibit the use of the field.

Cllr Marshall said that he feels the Wheel Field is not the ideal location for the Bowling Club. If he considers the proposal however, he would like to see the Bowling Green only, as it is close enough to the Village Hall Car Park which could be used with arrangement of the V.H.M.C. If this is acceptable it may be a middle ground, as the Bowling Green would only take up 10%, benefiting the Bowling Club and the community as a whole.

Cllr Michell made a proposal to defer the decision.

After further discussion many Councillors felt that they would like to retain the Bowling Club in the village but the Village Hall seems the most appropriate location, keeping all sporting leisure activities in one place.

Cllr Michell amended his proposal to defer the Open Spaces proposal and to request the Clerk write to the VHMC to reconsider the Bowling Green being sited on the Village Hall Playing fields, this was seconded by Councillor Marshall - a vote was taken:

In favour	11
Against	1
Abstentions	0

The Open Spaces Proposal, proposed by Cllr Kenyon was not seconded and was not discussed decided this evening.

7. ACCOUNTS

- a. **A report** on Council Finances for year to 30th June 2010 were received, approval proposed by Councillor Michell, seconded by Councillor Campbell and unanimously agreed by the meeting.
- b. **Approval** of the schedule of payments to 14th July 2010 was proposed by Councillor Michell, seconded by Councillor Campbell and unanimously agreed by the meeting.

8. COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

County Councillor Robert Marshall gave a brief report.

Flooding has now come under the domain of County Council.

Compulsory Spending Review, all departments except the NHS will have funding cuts of 25%.

Divisional Highways have some money to spend, therefore any specific areas i.e. Traffic Lights at Histons Hill contact County Council Highways who should consider the works.

9. CODSALL VILLAGE HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The minutes of V.H.M.C. meeting of the 17th May 2010 and attaching reports were received and noted.

10. DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

There was no written report from District Councillors this evening.

11. OTHER CORRESPONDENCE

a. Staffordshire County Council Staffordshire Local Flooding Survey

To receive a request from Staffordshire County Council seeking assistance from the Parish Council to help compile data for the Staffordshire Local Flooding Survey.

A number of Councillors volunteered to help with the Survey, forms to be obtained from the Parish Office.

b. To receive a letter from Gavin Williamson M.P. relating to Access/Parking at Chillington Drive/Walton Gardens Received and noted.

NEXT MEETING

8th September 2010

PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960

In pursuance of the powers contained in Section 1 of the above Act I move that the press and public be now excluded from the meeting on the grounds that the business about to be transacted is of a confidential nature and that publicity will be prejudicial to the public interest

Confidential**Pendrell Hall**

An update from Councillor Mrs P Campbell, of the closure of the above facility by Staffordshire County Council.

Councillor Marshall left the Chambers whilst the discussion took place.

Two weeks ago rumours surfaced of the closure and demolition of Pendrell Hall. Cllr Campbell contacted South Staffordshire Conservation Officers who confirmed that they had heard rumours and there may be substance to the rumours; it has been confirmed that Pendrell College will close 31st August 2010.

Pendrell Hall is not listed at present as buildings used as colleges were not listed, but the Conservation Officers will try to list the building as it is of historic interest to the village and has an association with the Gaskell family. The Conservation Officers will approach the Parish Council for support.

Cllr Matt Ewart has already said he would help.

After further discussion it was put forward that the Clerk write to Mark Winnington the Cabinet member for Assets at County Council for an update and comments about Pendrell Halls future.