

CODSALL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes

**Council Meeting to be held in the Parish Chambers,
Station Road, Codsall**

on Wednesday 8th October 2008 at 7.30pm. following Planning

PRESENT

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

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Ewart, Chapman, Campbell, Etheridge and Holland.

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Limited to 2 minutes per speaker and 15 minutes overall.

There were approximately 38 members of the public present this evening, 30 of these with concerns relating to possible development of the Wheelfield.

The Chairman Councillor John Michell welcomed the members of the Public and in view of the concern for the Wheelfield brought forward this item from the Open Spaces Committee Report inviting Councillor Paul Kenyon, the Chairman of the Open Spaces Committee, to outline the proposals being considered on the Wheelfield.

Councillor Kenyon advised that the Bowling Club currently sited on Wood Road are having difficulties with their current location and are wishing to relocate to a more central secure environment the proposal was to be considered for relocation to part of the Wheelfield. The proposal will also provide additional parking for the village and would help satisfy the demand for parking by many residents. This scheme would also consider some improvements to the remainder of the Wheelfield to make the facility more accessible to the majority of local residents.

Councillor Kenyon advised that the recent Survey of Open Spaces conducted by South Staffordshire Council had highlighted the inadequacies of the Wheelfield and consequently it had received a poor score.

Councillor Kenyon advised that consultation would be undertaken with many parties including the Planning Department, Schools, Traders and Residents. Mr Stephen Skinner a resident recommended that consultation also takes place with the Codsall and Bilbrook History Society. This was acknowledged by Councillor Kenyon.

The Chairman then asked residents for their observations several residents spoke expressing their concern at the loss of the green open space albeit to a bowling green, but there would be a pavilion attached and a car park which would undoubtedly be of tarmac. Many residents believe that this would attract noise and nuisance, particularly in the evening and would prove a magnet for youth problems.

Mr Stephen Wildman the main spokesman for concerned residents advised the meeting that he had requested the support of many residents as he has some major concerns, he also pointed out that he lives in the house immediately adjacent to the field and any problems would have a major impact on his quality of life. Mr Wildman then went on to outline the reason for the purchase of the Wheelfield by the Parish Council which at the time was driven by residents concern that the field had been acquired by the Housing Association and could be earmarked for potential housing development. It was resident's pressure at that time that persuaded the Parish Council into entering negotiations and eventually purchase the field from the Housing Association at a cost of £1. With various covenants attaching including the maintenance of the field as open space.

Mr Wildman also expressed his concern that whilst the bowling green could be argued that it is retaining the open space aspect it would not be open and available to all members of the public and this he believes contravenes the original reason for buying the field. He further wished that the Parish Council to consider that any development even a small pavilion would create a precedent for the future and could eventually albeit in many years time lead to the complete loss of this green open space. Mr Wildman also expressed his concern that the Parish Council had not sought public consultation and it was on only hearsay that it had brought him to enquire of the Parish Council Clerk as to whether there was any basis behind the rumours.

Chairman Councillor Michell advised that it was always difficult to know exactly when to go to public consultation and whilst the Parish Council is looking at a proposal, the proposal is far from anything that could be exhibited to the public or indeed as to whether the proposal would be acceptable to the Parish Council for it to be brought to public consultation.

Other residents questioned the costing of the proposal and how much the Parish Council would have to find.

Councillor Paul Kenyon advised that no costing had been prepared at this stage but that the Parish Council would not be paying anything towards this outline proposal. Funding if ever the proposal were

agreed would have to be found by the Bowling Club and other outside grants.

Mr Derek Buxton President of the Bowling Club advised members and residents that should the proposal go forward all of the funding would be provided by the Club and he stressed that he would welcome and encourage all residents to join the club and make use of the facilities if they ever come to fruition. The Club was not seeking any financing from the Parish Council or local residents.

Many residents expressed their concern that should the remainder of the site be improved in particularly with the placing of benches and the use of the car park for the village that this would attract Youth and anti social activities to the detriment of the residents who live around this field. Residents also expressed their views that additional parking should not be encouraged and that residents should walk. The school Walking Bus should continue to use the Village Hall car park but and not introduce another road to cross. Parents should be encouraged to walk their children from home to school and not cause parking problems throughout the area at school times.

The Secretary of the Ex Servicemen's Club of which the Bowling Club is a section advised the meeting that they currently have a 140 members and are seeking a home for the club and asked residents present this evening as to whether they would have a strong objections to a club house/pavilion on the Wheelfield. Residents present unanimously and strongly affirmed their objections.

The Chairman Councillor John Michell, thanked all of the residents for attending this evening and airing their views and concerns and advised that no further discussion would take place this evening on this subject. Councillors will consider what has been said and may possibly bring this item back to next months Agenda for further consideration.

Mr Stephen Skinner advised that the Speed Watch is continuing and hearing the comments on Suckling Green Lane will ensure that this is built into their programme in the very near future. Mr Stanley of Suckling Green Lane has volunteered to join the team.

Mrs Lin Griffith the Chairman of Codsall and Bilbrook Twinning Association made a brief appeal to ask if any Councillors could attend the visit to St - Prevyé St - Mesmin from the 24th to the 28th of October.

The French are providing a large Civic Reception in response to the 10th Anniversary Celebrations here and it would be appropriate for someone to represent Codsall and Bilbrook Parish Councils.

Chairman Councillor John Michell apologised he is in France on business that weekend and regrets that he is unlikely to be able to attend but if at all possible will do so. The Vice Chair Councillor Matt Ewart had advised the Clerk that he has commitments that weekend and has forwarded his apologies. Other Councillors are to check their

diaries. The Chairman did offer to fund any Councillors expenditure through his Chairmans allowance.

Lin Griffith thanked the Chairman for allowing her to make this appeal.

4. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10th September 2008, were unanimously approved and immediately signed by the Chairman.

5. POLICE REPORT

- a. **A written** report was received this evening

Statistics

Burglary dwelling	1
Burglary other	4
Theft of motor vehicle	0
Theft from motor vehicle	1
Criminal Damage	1
Anti Social Behaviour	6

Section 27 power under the Violent Crime Act 2006 which enables an officer to move on any number of people over a certain age if he believes there to be an issue and likely consequences if they are allowed to stay or remain where they are.

This will help local officers to disperse people from problem areas.

PC Bridgewater an ASBO Officer, has done a sterling job and made the local youths think twice about their behaviour; many have now been placed on behavioural agreements and of course they have no wish to breach this as it would mean progression to the next stage.

Underage drinking has not been any real issue for some time; it does still happen and the police are being vigilant. Trading Standards recent test purchasing was more than happy with the results.

Two matters raised recently concerning an RTC on Suckling Green Lane and parking for the train at a number of locations in particular Fairfield Drive, Highways have been advised and they may be able to help the situation.

- b. **A letter** from Mr & Mrs Stanley regarding Road Safety concerns in Suckling Green Road were received. Mr Stanley and several

other residents were present and they were asked to share their concerns.

Mr Stanley advised that the S bend on Suckling Green Lane near to Bentlands has had eight serious accidents in recent years with vehicles careering off the road and into peoples front gardens with vehicles over turning on several occasions. Many of these accidents have resulted in serious injury with some very close calls for pedestrians and residents, several of whom have been in their front garden at the time and have escaped serious injury by inches.

Mr Stanley went on to say that lighting was poor, the road signage of the bend was poor but in many incidents it was the sheer speed of the vehicles, well above the 30mph speed limit, was the major cause of the accidents. All the residents in the near vicinity are upset and feel threatened and are asking the Parish Council to lead the demand for County Council Highways to take some immediate and appropriate measures.

Flashing speed signs, chicanes, and humps have all been suggested by residents.

Mr Stanley further added that Suckling Green Lane is attracting high speed and not simply by cars and 4x4 but also very large vehicles that are ignoring the weight limit restrictions.

Several other residents spoke in support of Mr Stanley further endorsing the view that it is not acceptable to wait for a fatal accident before action is taken. Further suggestions included the closure of Suckling Green Lane to through traffic and also the possibility of making it a one way system as well as improving signage.

Other residents stressed that the major concern was for pedestrians and residents who are at grave risk walking along the pavement or even being in their front gardens. Drivers are relatively protected by the vehicle safety cells and air bags but being hit by a vehicle will undoubtedly cause a fatality.

A further resident called for a 20mph speed limit throughout Codsall.

Chairman Councillor John Michell called for comments from members; County Councillor Sonja Oatley advised the meeting that she would call for a site meeting at Suckling Green Lane with County Council Highways, Police, Parish Council, and residents to see if action cannot be taken to improve this dangerous situation. The Parish Council will be advised of the timing of the meeting.

6. URGENT CORRESPONDENCE AND DISCUSSION TOPICS

a. South Staffordshire Council

i. **Open Space Audit Consultation**

Councillor Walls had carefully studied this very large consultation document and wondered how appropriate this review was for Codsall and its residents where the Audit appears identical for every open space regardless of its location or other facilities within the area.

Councillor Walls believed it was more appropriate to listen to the needs and views of Codsall residents and not match what appears to be a centrally dictated format, which appears to seek to make every open space the same.

Councillor Walls also pointed out that dog fouling appeared high on most of the reports and this is an aspect that should be considered in the near future.

Members further discussed the Open Spaces within the Parish, maintained by County and District Council, which did not meet the audits required standard. It was agreed that it is appropriate to write to the District Council relating to their short comings and also raise the Parish Councils concern at the audit itself. Councillor Walls and Councillor Kenyon (Chairman of the Open Spaces Committee) agreed to write an appropriate letter.

ii. **Staffordshire Playbuilder Roadshows**

Invitation to roadshows – South Staffs- Perton 8th October.

Received and noted.

b. Open Spaces Committee

The minutes of Committee Meeting on 24th September were received and unanimously approved with the exception of item 6, which was agreed would be discussed in full council at a future date.

The Clerk in view of the expenditures asked approval for the record for 2 items of expenditure covered in the minutes.

Namely Codsall House Field emergency tree work at a cost of £1755 + VAT, approval proposed by Councillor Kenyon, seconded by Councillor Marshall and unanimously approved by the meeting.

Secondly a replacement bench by Hollybush at a cost of £600 + VAT + fitting, approval proposed by Councillor Kenyon, seconded by Councillor Walls and unanimously approved by the meeting. Members then asked if this bench could be dedicated to formal Councillor Mrs Jill Jones who had recently died, subject to the approval of her family. The Clerk advised that he would make the necessary arrangements subject to family approval.

c. South Staffordshire N.H.S

i. The Annual Report 2007/08

Received and noted.

ii. **Consultation on N.H.S. Constitution** (responses by 17th October)

Received and noted.

d. Communities and Local Government

Consultation on 'The Making and Enforcement of Bylaws'.

Received and noted.

e. Staffordshire Playing Fields Association

i. To receive notice of A.G.M on 16th October at Cannock together with Annual Report 2007/08.

Received and noted

ii. To approve renewal of annual subscription at £15 p.a. **unanimously** approved by the meeting.

f. Hatherton Parish Council re Incinerator at Four Ashes

A brief discussion took place on whether to support Hatherton Parish Council's request to write a letter to County.

Councillor Walls proposed that we write in support of Hatherton, seconded by Councillor Kenyon a vote was taken:

In favour of the proposal	1
Against	8
Abstention	1

No action to be taken but the Chairman reminded members that they could of course write individually if they are so minded.

7. ACCOUNTS

a. **A report** on Council Finances for year to 30th September 2008, was received, approval proposed by Councillor Kenyon, seconded by Councillor Oatley and unanimously approved by the meeting.

b. The schedule of payments to 8th October 2008, was received with a full explanation of each item by the Clerk, approval recommended by Councillor Walls, seconded by Councillor Millar and unanimously approved by the meeting.

8. COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

A written report was received from County Councillor Sonja Oatley

An intergeneration project with GCSE and A level students at the High School and the elderly in the village are organising a 'Tea Dance', at the High School on the 4th December.

A Tea Dance will be organised 4 times a year from 4pm to 6.30pm; Funds raised will be distributed amongst local charities in the two villages.

Bilbrook shops are on the agenda for planned improvement. The area has been plagued by anti-social behaviour in recent months. An important development is that all agencies are involved, no longer silo mentality but cross agency working, first positive step for a very long time. Although the area for concern is in Bilbrook, improvement will affect Codsall residence.

The Changing Lives Agenda and Partnership Working has caused many changes to the District. Plans for extra housing were outlined. The Fire Service brought us up to date on crime reduction initiatives by the service.

It was agreed that these Liaison meetings with our Partnerships should be held every six months in the future.

The Electric Blanket Campaign was very well attended with over 400 electric blankets handed out free in four areas.

We commence a First Aid course for student Fire Fighters next month. This gives these students another qualification. LMIS funded. This is another first for South Staffordshire Area Command.

Councillor Oatley received a copy of a letter sent to County about a bus stop placed in front of someone's drive in Oaken Lanes. This is being investigated.

Councillor Oatley spoke to Highways concerning a pedestrian Crossing on Bakers Way. It has been confirmed that in the fourth quarter of this financial year, plans will be started on a feasibility study on the crossing in front of the Doctors Surgery. Finances pending it could be started 2009/2010 budget.

9. CODSALL VILLAGE HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The minutes of V.H.M.C. meeting of the 15th September and attaching reports were received and noted.

10. DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

There was no written report this evening, but Councillor Marshall advised the meeting that the first Youth Championship evening had taken place, which is viewed as a successful evening and following from that Councillors have agreed to address various citizenship classes at Codsall Community High School to encourage younger people to become involved not only in the community but also to take an interest in the role of Local Councils.

Councillor Oatley advised that in the near future a Local Democracy Week is to be launched again, with Councillors talking to young people to encourage greater involvement in local government.

11. OTHER CORRESPONDENCE

a. **REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY, 9TH NOVEMBER**

Invitation from Revd. Simon Witcombe, St Nicholas Parish Church, to Councillors and residents to attend Service of Remembrance at 9.30 a.m. at St Nicholas, followed by procession at 10.45 a.m. from the Church to the War Memorial for Dedication and Two Minutes Silence.

Received and Noted with encouragement from the Chairman for as many Councillors as possible to attend the service and the dedication at the War Memorial.

NEXT MEETING

12th November 2008