

Minutes of the Annual Village Meeting of Hook Parish Council
Tuesday 30th April 2002
Elizabeth Hall, Raven Road, Hook
at 8.00 pm

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor M Whittaker and District Councillor F Kirkham.

2 Chairman to Welcome the Public to the Meeting

The Chairman welcomed 54 Parishioners to the meeting together with 9 Parish Councillors. He explained that there were legal procedures to follow during the meeting and its format.

The Chairman introduced all the Parish Councillors present, together with The Clerk, Mr David Ridley and Deputy Clerk, Mrs Anne Atkins. He went on to introduce County Councillor J Glen and District Councillor A Henderson. He also introduced Mr Frank Sopwith who administers the Parish Cemetery. Finally, he introduced Sgt Doug Dickson, responsible for community policing and Sue Gibson, Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator.

3 Minutes of the Meeting of 10th April 2001

The Clerk read the minutes of the meeting held on 10th April 2001. These were confirmed as a correct record of the meeting.

4 Financial Report.

The Clerk reported that the external Auditors, Moore Stephens had concluded the Parish Accounts for the year ending 31st March 2001 and these represented fairly the financial position of Hook Parish Council.

The Chairman stated that it was planned to publish future Parish Accounts on the Parish website.

The Chairman explained the situation with regard to the Parish precept in relation to the Community Charge and put this in context with the neighbouring Parishes, explaining how the Parish is funded and mentioned the concern over rising costs.

5 Committee Chairmen to Report

The Chairman, referred to the sad loss of the previous Clerk, Mr David Deadman who died only a week after last year's meeting after over 30 years service. He also mentioned the loss of Anne Pitcher who is also very much missed.

The Chairman went on to comment on the following:

1. Increased administration - Over the past year there have been a number of additional procedures imposed on Councillors. The requirement to provide best value is expensive and involves increased documentation and administration, the cost of which is borne by residents.
2. Housing developments - The Parish Council are fundamentally opposed to new housing developments on green fields. Whilst accepting the need for more housing, it should not be necessary to build on green field sites. Brown fields are felt to be reasonable. However, developers are still pursuing all the green fields around Hook.

The Holt Lane development is part of the District Plan and the plans were available to view at the meeting. The role of the Parish Council at this stage is to ensure that the developers contribute to the infrastructure required to support the new housing.

3. Best Value Survey – Feedback from the survey in the 2001 Annual Report indicated that the main concerns were road safety and traffic calming. Second were parks and gardens. Some responses indicated youth facilities were important and we are trying to get a youth council established.

5.1 Amenity Committee

Councillor A Saltmarsh reported that:

Drainage - Soak-aways have been completed in Wellworth Park and Hartletts Park to prevent flooding of footpaths in wet weather

Seating – Three seats have been installed in Wellworth Park.

Signs – New signs are being prepared for open spaces and play areas, which will include contact details to help the public to know who to inform if there is a problem.

Play areas – Last Autumn a risk assessment was conducted on the play areas and a number of maintenance tasks were carried out. Due to complex guidelines and legislation, training has been undertaken, with RoSPA making a formal inspection of all the play areas in May.

Elizabeth Hall – It was recognised that this area was showing signs of fatigue and it will be replaced in May. The refurbishment will include the installation of CCTV cameras.

Hop Garden Road – For some time the Parish has been trying to obtain legal possession of the land. Once obtained it is planned to form a working party with residents to work together on the proposed design.

Skateboard ramps – The gravelled areas have been concreted in order to maintain safety.

Dog bins – Four new dog bins are to be fitted in the Hartletts Park and Mitchells Field areas the near future.

Councillor Saltmarsh then reported on plans for future work.

Grand Parade Landscaping – A working party has drawn up for proposals for re-landscaping the area. These are to be considered by the Parish Council

Public Rights of Way – With the help of our footpath warden and the Ramblers Association, a review of footpaths was completed.. Funding has been obtained for materials to resurface two paths through woodland. Councillor Saltmarsh pointed out that this can not be undertaken without volunteers and appealed to any dog owners or walkers to contact the Deputy Clerk if they are able to help.

Tennis Courts – Councillor C Brown announced the intention last year to convert one court into a multi-sport facility. The plans are now in progress and include floodlighting and improvements to the community centre.

Mapping – The parish now has a digital mapping database, which will enable an audit of the parish to be carried out to improve the management of parish assets.

5.2 *Planning Committee*

Councillor A Hunter reported that:

Outline planning permission for Holt Lane was granted in 2000 and not 2001 as stated in the Annual Report.

Woodland Café – Gareth Morris dentist has acquired an interest with the aim of providing a larger surgery on the site.

Holt lane – The plans of phase 1 were displayed. Flooding has been a constant concern and the Council have never been totally satisfied that the developer had sewers and drainage in control.

The application was deferred until the hydrology report is available thanks to District Councillor F Kirkham.

Foundry Site – The site has been approved for development. Barratts have put in an application for 64 dwellings with only 1.5 parking spaces per dwelling, in line with government guidelines. This caused concerns about vehicle overspill.

5.3 *Garden and Cemetery Committee*

Councillor G Morgan reported:

Cemetery Garden - The Cemetery Garden is well kept and thank Mr Frank Sopwith for all his hard work in administering the cemetery. During the year there has been some fee restructuring and the tap was moved to make water easier to access.—

5.4 *District and County Councillors Report*

5.5 County Councillor Jonathan Glen reported on

- Costs incurred on repeated planning appeals by developers.
- Best value and new Code of Conduct with resulting increase in workload.
- Grand opening of Dorchester Arms junction on 13th May.

5.6 District Councillor Andrew Henderson reported on

- The success of Councillor Glen's test surgery at Tesco to improve community liaison.
- Changes in the District Council from Committees to Cabinet structure.
- Progress towards bring Hart on-line to improve public access.

6 Chairman to Report

6.1 *Odiham Cottage Hospital* The Chairman invited Councillor Morgan to report.

The hospital is owned and run by OCHRE. It provides excellent facilities and is funded by letting the beds to the NHS, which contributes £55,000 pa to patient care. Additional funding sources include Millbank House (charity shop) in Hartley Wintney, the League of Friends and a contribution of £5000 from the Parish Council. A number of fund raising events also take place, such as a sponsored cycle ride on 12th May and Conker Championships in the autumn

Sister Rita Gray and her staff at the hospital were congratulated on being given an achievement award for Outstanding Dedication to Service by Surrey Hampshire Borders NHS Trust.

6.2 *District Policing* - Sgt D Dickson reported on the

- Current situation regarding policing staff supporting Hook.
- The Community Police Office in London Road.
- Crime in Hook and the changing crime patterns.

Open Meeting

Policing - Councillor D Burke asked why there was a Community Charge increase of 27% for police. Sgt Dickson agreed that this was high and suggested that contributing factors might be the Home office new radio system, the increase in risk assessment and the cost of personnel, support staff and administration.

Mr B Deller asked what additional services we were getting for our money. Sgt Dickson pointed out that some of the extra charge would fund the police station, which will have 9 officers dedicated to rural policing.

Comments were made by Mrs Sue Gibson, James Slocombe and Councillor T Taylor on the backing the police give to Neighbourhood Watch, youth groups and the Parish Council and praised the work done despite the limited resources available..

Cemetery and Village Garden – Mrs C Warren asked when the gate from the garden into the school car park would be re-opened to pedestrians. The circumstances leading to the closure were explained with no plans to re-open the gate at present.

Banking – Mr A Hoare remarked on the lack of a bank in Hook. He asked why, despite the fact the population of Hook exceeds that of both Odiham and Hartley Wintney and the number of businesses is greater, both had High Street banks. He went on to point out the difficulties faced by the elderly section of the Community in accessing banking facilities and asked what could be done to resolve the problem.

The Chairman agreed that a village the size of Hook should have a bank and agreed that there is a transport problem. Councillor Hunter responded that the banks, being commercial organisations, will not subsidise a new bank in Hook, particularly when many banks are trying to encourage internet banking. He offered to write to Bank of Scotland and to HSBC.

Traffic calming -

Mr B Deller, Welcomed the traffic lights at the Dorchester Arms. He questioned the justification for the Parish Council to spend £40k on traffic calming on Reading Road, which has no accident record.

Chairman explained the reason for the Traffic calming on Reading Road and the aim to get an enforceable 30 mph limit. He agreed there was a need to continue working with highways to try to solve this problem and the cost must be thought out carefully.

Parish Information – Mr D Friars asked, as new resident, how to get information about the Parish Council. The Chairman replied that all the information was on the website at www.hook.gov.uk in addition to Parish Notice Boards and Hook Focus. He reminded the audience that the public is welcome to Council meetings and that there is an opportunity under the 10 minutes rule to raise any issues.

CCTV – Mrs D Watts enquired about the effectiveness of the cameras around Hook. The Chairman responded that the main cameras are monitored from a control centre in Fleet to which the police have access.

8 Chairman to close meeting.

The minutes were confirmed as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman

The Chairman close the meeting at 10.10 pm

D Ridley
Parish Clerk

30th April 2002