

These are the unadopted minutes of
**THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF
CROOKHAM VILLAGE, NETHERHOUSE MOOR & ZEBON COPSE
HELD ON TUESDAY, 4 APRIL 2006
AT 7.30 PM IN
THE VELMEAD COMMUNITY CENTRE**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and said he proposed to get the normal business out of the way first and then to give the remainder of the meeting over to the Parish Plan to allow interactive participation by residents. Items 3, 4 and 5 of the original Agenda were then brought forward and the Chairman said there would be plenty of time for residents to ask questions.

There were approximately 18 residents and 2 young people present.
District Councillors Radley & Ambler were present.

1. CHAIRMAN`S REPORT

Good evening ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the annual parish meeting for Crookham Village Parish Council.

As we have a fairly full evening, I will keep my report brief, especially as you will hear from me again in the next item, the reports from district councillors.

Before giving you a brief resume of the activities of the Parish Council in the past year, I would like to thank the many people who have given their time to help the Parish Council in its work over the past year.

During the year, Tony Farmer our Honorary Treasurer resigned, after almost 30 years carrying out the role. Before that Tony was himself a Parish Councillor and Chairman. Our Assistant Clerk, Anne has stepped into the breach to take over this role. I know Anne finds it reassuring that Tony is only a couple of doors away to assist when required, calling upon his wealth of experience.

Paul Dickinson, our honorary planning consultant, provides invaluable expertise to our planning committee, to help them review and comment on planning applications, some of which contain a lot of complex technical detail.

Our internal auditor, Phil du Gay, helps us to meet our obligations on a financial front.

I should also like to thank our various representatives on local bodies including Ann Kay who represents the council on the Cottrells Almshouses Trust and the Fleet, Crondall & Crookham Welfare Trust. Our thanks also go to Jean and Alan Symes for their continued upkeep of the Crossways flowerbed.

I should also like to thank my fellow councillors for their hard work over the last year. Like all the other people I have mentioned, their time is given on a voluntary basis and is unpaid. In particular I would like to thank David Jackson, chairman of the planning committee, an essential and particularly time consuming task.

Also as you will see from their presentation, the team working on the Parish Plan Questionnaire are putting in an enormous amount of time on this project.

I would also like to thank those of our District Councillors who have given us their support over the year.

That brings me on to a final thank you to our overworked clerks, Carol and Anne who, despite their many other activities, manage to keep on top of all the Parish work.

On to your Parish Council's activities over the past year.

Traffic Calming

The various additional speed restrictions are now in place.

Transport

As reported last year, the Call and Go project which consists of mini buses to provide Rural Transport links has been successful. The original funding agreements, which covered an initial two year period, have now come to an end and the scheme is currently under review. Our thanks are due in particular to Cllr Brooks who has put in an enormous amount of time and effort as our representative on this forum. I will say a little more about this later.

Malthouse Bridge

Although the project to get a much needed footway over the canal at Malthouse Bridge seemed to take a long time to plan, and even longer to implement, I think everyone would agree that the end result is a great success and fully in keeping with the historic bridge.

Pilcot Hill Footway

This is a project which some may wonder why it is dragging on. There are a number of reasons for the delay, one being that Hampshire County Council are not as convinced as the local people and the Parish Council of the need for this footway. We are still actively pursuing this project which will improve the safety for people walking between Crookham Village and Dogmersfield, in particular for children going to school. Councillor Sinka has done much work with the school to help them produce a school travel plan which will assist with the justification for the path.

Velmead Community Centre

Much has been said about this topic. The longer discussions go on the more complex it gets, but that was to be expected when discussing the transfer of a significant facility. All I will say is that for the future, a group of six or more volunteers will be needed to sit on the management committee. If any one feels they are both qualified and enthusiastic to get involved, please contact me.

Youth Facilities

Unfortunately I see that I mentioned last year that we hoped to be working with the Youth Services to put on some summer activities. It didn't happen last summer but we are hopeful that we will have more success this summer.

The mobile bus has now been purchased and is currently being fully equipped. It will be manned by professional youth workers and will visit the area on a regular basis. I understand work is still going on to refurbish this bus.

TRICT & COUNTY CLLRS REPORTS

Apologies received from Cllrs. Hutcheson and Singh.

Cllr Hutcheson will endeavour to attend after his earlier engagement finishes.

Cllr. Jenny Radley addressed the meeting.

Good evening. As you may know my name is Jenny Radley, and I am one of the two district ward councillors for Church Crookham West.

Church Crookham West is just one of 3 Hart District wards that cover the Crookham Village Parish, the others being the Fleet West and Crondall wards. The Church Crookham West ward covers Zebon Copse which forms a significant part of the Crookham Village Parish Council area, as most of you will know.

As one of the local district councillors I do try to attend the monthly parish council meetings and have been following some issues with great interest. This is part of what I see to be my duty to help to represent the local residents and help to liaise between District and Parish Councils. I hope that I have demonstrated a level of motivation and action to show that I am keen to assist the Parish with their work.

I have come to realise just how important the Parish Council is for the area and how necessary the parish council is in representing local issues.

In fact, in my view, Fleet and the remainder of Church Crookham are severely disadvantaged by not having their own Town or Parish Council. Having seen how beneficial it is to have a Parish Council to represent the local area, we have joined the call for the currently un-parished areas of Church Crookham and southern Fleet to ask for a parish review. This would make much sense and would enable local people to elect local people to represent them, people they feel able to talk to and raise issues and concerns with; providing that direct contact for local issues. Having a uniform system of Parish/Town Councils across Hart would help to address the many imbalances that are apparent between the parished and un-parished areas.

I have to say that I have been very impressed by the steadfast work and commitment shown by Crookham Village Parish Council members. In fact I am still learning a lot about how best to deal with some issues through the advice and support from your Parish Councillors here.

I hope that I am able to offer further backup to raise important issues at the District Council level and to discuss matters with Council Officers and relevant others. I can help to add to the 'noise' to get some matters properly considered. However, all general issues are dealt with admirably by the Parish Council members themselves. It is also impressive to see the Parish Council dealing so well on the Parish Plan and all the aspirations that it stands for, as I trust we will shortly see.

However there are some important issues currently which need extra support; Maintenance, Highways, Planning, Lighting, Crime and Disorder amongst others. There are issues to do with the anti-social behaviour of some youngsters in the area and linking this in with the District Council based Community Safety Team and with the Police. They highlight just how important it is to report problems. In this time of prioritising resources based solely on the imposed need to achieve targets it is not until an issue becomes statistically relevant that it is seen to be important and the more reports of a problem the more notice is taken of it.

The main priority at the moment is to secure the future of the Velmead Community Centre. It was the Parish Council who brought the issue of the Velmead Community Centre to my notice soon after I was elected back in June 2004. They initially asked me to assist with following up on their requests for information from Officers at the District Council and when this finally started to come through the whole situation became quite intense as District Budget constraints kicked in.

It was clear from the words and actions of some members of the District Council that the continuation of this facility was under threat, and this attitude had to be challenged. This is still an on-going process, though hopefully it will bring about some tangible improvements not only of benefit to the Centre but also for the wider community. These may help towards addressing some of the problem issues to do with youth provision and anti-social behaviour in the vicinity. I have great hopes that this is the start of a significant improvement and is an important opportunity for this facility. However, there remain some particular issues which continue to be challenging.

I look forward to this coming year with a good deal of hope. There are real opportunities to make a difference for the Parish, with the steady and continued support of the Parish Council.

I also should raise some of the other issues related to the District level of responsibility. I have brought along some information about :

- The new Alternate Bin Collection Service (ABC) which is due to start in October
The waste collection service is to be changed along with a new fleet of refuse vehicles to alternate week bin collection service, one week general waste and the following week recyclable waste. It will be a change but one that is necessary.
- The QEB development application and other appeals and inquiries.
The site of the former Queen Elizabeth Barracks, which accommodated the Gurkha regiment until 2000, is currently being proposed for a development of 1132 residential dwellings.
The planning applications were finally discussed and the decision was made to refuse permission at a special Planning Committee meeting on 14th July last year, at the Princes Hall, Aldershot. This was the nearest facility that could be found at short notice to accommodate the more than 700 people who came to see and hear the meeting.
The applications will now be heard at a formal Inquiry to start in May 2007 and is likely to last for up to 2 months.
Also Redfields Garden Centre, 84-86 Crookham Road, Tweseldown Racecourse and Blue Prior at Redfields Industrial Estate.
- The nearby Bourley and Long Valley (Tweseldown area and beyond) Special Protection Area and the Delivery Plan which is being drawn up by English Nature. This should be published for consultation in the very near future.

Cllr. Radley then answered questions on her report.

Cllr. Simon Ambler then addressed the meeting. He advised of the things which Hart Councillors actually do – they have a responsibility for provision of housing, e.g. social housing, housing people in need. One of the things he particularly wanted to mention is the concessionary travel for over 60's which came into force on 1 April 2006 and this is on the website or speak to Barbara Williams at Hart Council on 622122. The Local Development Framework for Hart has taken up a lot of Councillors time during the past 12 months. There will be a new lot of Planning Policy documents which will make up the LDF which will replace the Local Plan and will guide the future development of Hart. It will consist of a Local Development Scheme which sets out the documents to be produced, there is core strategy and a proposals map which will be updated as policies emerge, a site allocation document and a series of planning documents e.g. design issues and there is also a statement of community involvement. The LDF is critical to the future development of the whole area. The Parish Plan, whilst it will not form part of the LDF, will be submitted in its final form to HDC and because the questionnaires which residents filled in support the fact that what we submit has the backing of residents that gives a great deal of weight to the submission of the Plan. Both Hart and the Parishes are involved in support for voluntary bodies by way of Grants. In particular he mentioned the CAB and the Hart Young Musician which is an excellent scheme for promoting young musicians in the area.

Cllr. Ambler then answered questions on his report.

3. PARISH PLAN

Cllr. Sinka thanked everyone for attending this evening and said what a wonderful response the Council had received to the questionnaire. 508 households had actually completed and returned the questionnaire. She then gave a power point presentation on the findings.

The Assistant Clerk, Mrs. Anne Murray, spoke to the final presentation. Mrs. Murray asked residents to please leave their contact details if they wished to have a hard copy of the actual presentation.

Cllr. Sinka then advised that the results of the questionnaires would be put on the web site. She then asked residents to get into groups of 4 people and to put post it notes with their ideas on the relevant issues on the posters on the walls. Each group should produce one or two issues to go on each item and she would allow them 10 minutes for discussion.

Each Group was then asked to report on one issue they had raised. Cllr. Sinka said all the comments posted on the boards would be taken into account in the Plan. She invited questions at the end and introduced the Councillors involved.

Group 1

Concerned about funding for the Basingstoke Canal being sustained. Cllr. Radley said the evidence from the survey showed that 90% of residents valued the Canal but there was concern about the funding being cut by various Councils.

Group 2

Traffic Calming – the use of Speed Indicator Devices – these would be welcome in the village and it would be good if they were mobile. The Chairman gave an explanation of how they worked and advised that the Parish Council had already submitted sites for the SIDs.

Group 3

Bus connection to get trains to London. Cllr. Brooks said there is a bus service but it has to cover the whole of Fleet and it takes 45 minutes to get to the station. It greets the London train 5 minutes after it has departed. In the Public Transport Group they are making the point that you cannot get into Fleet station car park. The group is working on innovative ways to resolve this issue.

Group 4

Schools – why do developers build houses and then do not provide the schools to accommodate the children of the district. This is an issue which is in the control of HCC. The Chairman gave a detailed reply.

Group 5

Wheelie bin alternative collections. Concern about the smells associated with keeping refuse over a 2 week period. Cllr. Radley said there was a roadshow team which would be educating people.

The Chairman expressed his sincere appreciation of the work done by the team in producing the Plan.

4. ALLOTMENTS

The Chairman explained why allotments were on the Agenda. Over the past few months there had been a number of enquiries for these. There are some in Hartley Wintney and Aldershot which has a waiting list of 12 months. Was there anyone present interested in allotments. One gentleman said he had recently moved to the Copse and had expected to be able to have an allotment – anything which the Parish Council could do to move this up the agenda would be welcome.

The resident said he understood that Hart now had more than the required number of inquiries which would generate a Report to Committee and the Chairman said he would follow this up.

5. TRUSTEES & APPOINTEES REPORTS

As the Appointee for the Memorial Hall Committee the Chairman said this was a long established and well run committee. He is hoping to use some of their expertise to help run the Velmead Hall facility in the event that the Parish Council take it over.

6 RESOLUTIONS

None received.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

A lady asked about the funding for the play area and other moneys from Zebon Copse – she understood it had all gone to Hart. The Chairman said yes there was a considerable amount of money (approximately £320,000) which is still in the pot at Hart and this is an interesting debate which is ongoing in the negotiations with regard to the Parish taking over this Community Centre. Further debate took place on the whole issue. The Chairman advised that one case taken to the House of Lords had arrived at a result that 30% would be spent in the vicinity and 70% in the parish. Another resident said he was organising a parish plan for the unparished area and he would like any information from the parishes which might lend weight to things which could be provided in Fleet and Church Crookham eg anything which would cover a district facility.

The meeting was then closed.