

**CROOKHAM VILLAGE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY, 8 APRIL 2002, AT 7.15 PM
IN THE W.I. HALL, THE STREET,**

In accordance with the Local Government Act the Chairman of the Parish Council, Cllr. Paul Collins, presided.

Present: County Councillor Carol Leversha
District Councillor Brian Leversha
District Councillor Norman Lambert
Members of the Parish Council
Residents of Crookham Village

Refreshments were provided from 6.30 pm with the compliments of the Chairman.

1. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of 5 March 2001

The Chairman welcomed the large number of residents in attendance and gave all present time to read the Minutes - copies of which had been displayed on the four noticeboards.. The Chairman then asked for a proposer and seconder that the Minutes were a true record and Cllr. Crawley proposed and Cllr. Pearson seconded this and the Chairman duly signed the original Minutes.

2. Chairmans Report

“Good evening fellow councillors and parishioners. Thank you for taking the time out to attend tonight’s Annual Parish Meeting. I hope you enjoyed the victuals. As you will have read tonight’s APM precedes a monthly parish meeting and I hope you will stay but I do not expect you to still to be here at 11 pm. Crawford Morrow, our previous chairperson, wishes to express his thanks for the present he received and advises us that he spent the money on computerish things.

Parish Report

My report began life as four pages but it grew to 11 pages after I changed the font. We have a Council, and I hope you with me will thank them for their enthusiastic help throughout the year. A year, which saw me, elected by the current council to act as their chairperson. I hope I have fulfilled their expectations. Well at the AGM they can always get rid of me.

We have our unsolicited, but arm –twisted supporters, who advise and/or represent the Parish Council as Trustees and Representatives on outside bodies. They are:

Ann Kay – Cottrells Almshouse Trust and Crookham, Crondall & Fleet Welfare Trust

Stan Knight – Basingstoke Canal Authority and Crookham Memorial Hall

Paul Dickinson – Honorary Planning Consultant and technical letter writer extraordinaire.

Patrick Cdmr/Cmdr Grace for his untiring vigil on flooding and now is a recognised advisor to HDC when flooding is discussed at the Environment PRP.

(Cmdr Grace advised that he has resigned from that position.)

Richard Hellier – environmental expert who assisted in writing a report for protecting the strategic gap.

David Reader – member of the Planning Committee and Chairman of the CVA.

And last, but not least, Tony Farmer our Honorary Treasurer and financial advisor, without whom no budget meeting would be complete.

I thank them all.

Oh yes, the most under appreciated and least influential of the council team, would, I suppose, be the Clerk. After having seen her den, where all the council matters are pursued in between council meetings, I know now how her mind works. I am ever grateful for her assistance in this my first year for guiding me through the protocol, politics and stone walling which often can deter or dishearten the uninformed.

Welcome to the Crondall and Crookham Village District Councillors Leversha and Lambert. For those of you who do not know they have been re-elected to the district council by being unopposed in the election. Unopposed obviously because they have performed so well in their respective posts that prospective councillors saw the prospect of an election fight to be too daunting. My congratulations. A certain councillor stopped canvassing – mid-canvassing when by virtue of a mobile phone call it was discovered he had been elected as unopposed – his electioneering material may become collectable items.

Finally the County Council is represented by Cllr. Carol Leversha who has graced us in a secondary role with her presence and by doing so rounds off a full suite of you the parishioners elected representatives.

A Year of Council Activities

Traffic Calming

Following last year's public meeting the views of the public, both at the meeting and all written correspondence were circulated to all council members. A meeting was held to progress the way ahead. It was unanimously decided to proceed with the schemes which were proposed by the highways department and are currently manifesting themselves on the roads within the parish – Zebon Copse included. There are additional measures to be installed on Crondall Road and these are simply awaiting the availability of hardware. On completion of the trial a further public meeting will be held and pending the results of the meeting a way ahead will be determined.

Planning Gain

Following a release of information from the Head of Finance at Hart District Council it was apparent that monies classified as planning gain relevant to the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 were paid by the developer for the development of leisure facilities on the Zebon Copse estate. These monies amount to approximately £300,000. Your council has vigorously sought to ascertain the availability of these funds with a view to utilising them for the enhancement of facilities, youth development, sports provision, access and use of open spaces within Zebon Copse. We asked for a meeting with the Chief Executive of Hart Council to clarify the best approach. The meeting was attended, without prior notice, by a Cabinet Member whose portfolio was Development Control and the Chairperson of the Development Control Cttee. Why Development Control !! or was it politics, even perhaps a hidden agenda!! Surprisingly, as the mentioned portfolio holder in full Council stated it was none of his responsibility. In subsequent correspondence the responsibility was to fall within the portfolio of Leisure Services. After a number of requests for information to the officers of HDC were not replied to, it was considered necessary to flag up our concern to both the HDC Full Council and Leisure strategy PRP. A question was put to Full Council to open formal discussions and to highlight legal criteria relating to the use of Planning Gain monies. We have subsequent to this, had discussion with the Cabinet portfolio holder for Leisure and the appropriate first tier officer at Hart Council. Armed with a list of potential projects and service provision issues which this Council considered to be justifiable we have had written assurance that most schemes fall within the scope of the Arts Strategy (1:0) to Crookham Village. Our proposals are to be costed and if deemed appropriate put to the District Council for approval. There is a feeling of disbelief and shock, that we the Parish Council have the audacity to insist that all, or at least the lions share of the monies should be spent within the Zebon Copse community. Why not!!

Malthouse Bridge

It was erroneously reported in the press by a Hart Councillor seeking election as a county councillor that Malthouse Bridge was to be knocked down and widened to allow two way traffic. All those at the site meeting were in agreement and refute that this option was proposed. The Parish Council and the Village Association have strongly supported the rebuild of the bridge with a footpath on both sides and a single carriageway, which is prioritised. We are anticipating funds by HCC have been earmarked for the 2003/04 financial year.

Village Hall

Following discussions with the previous chairperson a suggestion was made that a joint venture with the Crookham Street Social Club and the Parish Council into the provision of a village hall to replace the existing WI hut. The Parish Council would be the lead agency. It was evident from the earliest discussions that parking space would present a problem. It was envisioned that the only solution would be to build on top of the existing structure. It was presumed that an intransigence would exist with the landowner to the rear and a shoe horned solution would have to be accepted. A pathetic response from the architect that we first approached lost us six months. We approached another architect and as a result of existing professional relationships it was possible to enter into communication with the land agent of Messrs Whites. Discussions were held and an offer was made by the Whites which the Parish Council is appraising in terms of acceptability and legality. Either way, a limited study has been jointly funded by the Parish Council and the Crookham Village Association commissioned to establish potential solutions. On receipt of a scheme and on clarification of legal issues the facts and proposals shall be presented to the parish and interested parties in the form of a public meeting.

Hart Urban Capacity Study

This was commissioned by Hart Council and was undertaken by KF Baker and Associates of Hartley Wintney in December. The results are now in and of relevance to this parish it identified the site of the WI hut as a brownfield site of potential redevelopment.

Tree Preservation Order

A blanket TPO was placed on Zebon Copse Estate, which roused a lot of discussion into what was a tree and what was not. Bureaucratic yes/no but I commend Hart District Council for showing a progressive approach to tree preservation. We are assured that any objections will be duly scrutinised and sympathetically dealt with.

Hedges

The Government guidelines, which set out width of footpaths and encroachments found upon them, are there to help each one of us not to impose hardship on others, either inadvertently or not. Hedges fall into the category of encroachments, where they are left unmanaged and restrict use. The guidelines embrace the need of wheelchair users and parents with double buggies. For your information there are two standards 750 mm for wheelchairs and 1000 mm for double buggies. This Council does not endorse the philosophy of having to cross the road when faced with an obstruction. There are three courses of action for the Council:

1. Do nothing.
2. Name and shame.
3. Enforcement of the guidelines – which means cutting back to legal boundary lines. The highways agency at this Council's request is prepared to enforce the third action.

I would like to put a resolution to this meeting that we enact enforcement based on the guidelines and I wish to propose a vote accordingly at the appropriate point on the agenda.

Footway Lights

Silvester Way, we have budgeted for the provision of footway lights to enhance public safety and will expect them to be in place before the autumn equinox.

Council Officers

There are a whole swage of new district and county officers:

Head of Planning

RoW Officers

Highways Officer

New Chief Executive pending

New Strategy Officers

And in one months time there will probably be a new Cabinet.

This indicates the fluidity and sometimes slowness of progress with respect to Council dealings that at the Parish Council level have to face. It has been cited as an excuse for inaction.

Public Inquiries

There will be two public inquiries this year:

- a) Redfields Garden Centre relocation which has gone to appeal.
 - b) The application by Hancocks Farm for a heavy goods vehicle operating license.
- The Action Group to contest the application by Redfields will be financially supported, in part, by this Council.

There are two public inquiries with results pending:

- a) Hitches Lane inquiry was last week and I hope one of our District Councillors will appraise us of the discussion that took place.
- b) The Hitches Lane strategic gap, although I have been advised that on adoption of the structure plan which is in existence until 2006 there is no likelihood of development taking place. The land which was upheld by the Inspector is classified as Class B2 agricultural land and there are no district pressures to utilise this. New structure plans supersede this so there is always a need to be vigilant as one Plan's strategic gap can easily be the next development zone.

Transportation Survey

Funds became available from the Countryside Agency to commission a transportation survey for the parish and there are ongoing meetings to develop it into a policy from which action can be taken. It is likely that combined action with Dogmersfield, Winchfield and Crondall will be required and co-ordination meetings with HDC Strategy are taking place. I would like to thank Cllr. Joan Brooks for being so pro-active.

Canal Society

At the CVA AGM the Canal Society alluded to the fact that a reduction by the District Council to their funding results in a £40,000 shortfall. This somewhat surprised members, it was considered that such a shortfall could be managed by asking for a contribution from the parishes through which the canal runs as it is a significant leisure amenity. My view is that Crookham Village parish is enhanced by the presence of the canal and as such should be supported financially. I would again like to propose a Resolution for that Council via the precept to annually contribute £1,000 to the Canal Society, which would help them approach other parish councils to secure similar funding.

Precept

This financial year the Council considered it not appropriate to raise the precept. With the prospect of capital leisure spending it is likely that in order to secure maintenance and insurance of any

schemes that this will rise. Incidentally, Crookham Village parish is the second lowest in the District with only Rotherwick below us.

Residents Associations

I find it encouraging to see two active village associations in the parish who have a stewarding role. I attended both the ZCRA and CVA AGMs and it appeared that apart from the selfishness of a minority, a strong community spirit prevailed. Both Associations are strong in their peripheral view and give good counsel to the Parish Council and I thank them both.

Note the Village Fete will be organised by ZCRA this year on the 7 July and a Jubilee Children's Party on 4 June, the Tuesday of the Jubilee Weekend.

I hope the twinning weekend passes enjoyably and smoothly on the weekend of 10 to 13 May.

Close

My final words are to thank two esteemed members of the community who have acted and given their time for many years and indeed both have chaired this Council. Stan Knight and Peter Crawley have unselfishly, from planning to tree planting, helped this parish. I would like to close my report by asking for a round of applause for these two gentlemen and given that the Government are now imposing a moral code of conduct on us parish councillors, I implore Peter not to let principle stand in the way of passion so that he can continue to offer his services as a councillor as Stan does as honorary planning advisor, towards the betterment of the parish. THANK YOU.

3. District & County Councillors Reports

Cllr. Lambert advised the meeting why the Council Tax had to increase by 27.5% due to the dictates forced upon HDC by the Government. Benefit Fraud and Best Value impositions were a large drain on finances and the benefit fraud cost exceeded the return on investment. He then went on to speak about Waste and advise residents that residents of Hart generate more waste than any other district in Hampshire. He advised that the Urban Capacity Study was a public document which would need to be accepted by Members before it could be incorporated in the Local Plan which has still to be adopted.

He invited questions from the floor.

Cllr. Leversha gave a brief resume on the new Cabinet system at Hart which replaces the old committee system. There is now a Leader and seven Portfolio Holders and the committees have been replaced by Policy Review Panels. He also advised on the current situation with the QE Barracks site in that English Nature have concerns about the impact on an adjacent Special Protection Area and those concerns may mean that the numbers of dwellings on site have to be reduced. Touching on waste he advised that there is an issue with the disposal of fridge's – to comply with new regulations they will have to go to a special disposal facility but in the meantime they have to be stockpiled around the county.

He invited questions from the floor.

County Cllr. Leversha expressed her deepest thanks to Peter Crawley and Stan Knight for the wealth of knowledge they had imparted to her in her 17 years service as Clerk, and which was one of the reasons she had sought election to the County Council. She gave a resume of the Policy Review Committees she sits on and urged those present to recycle as much as possible in order to protect the environment.

She then invited questions from the floor.

4. Trustees and Appointees Reports

Mrs. Kay reported that the Crondall Crookham and Fleet Welfare Trust had given out as Christmas boxes the sum of £20 to 20 recipients, 7 of whom had come from the village. She expressed her

sincere thanks to the Mummers and said the Trust relied totally on the Mummers contributions. This Christmas they had collected £409 from their Boxing Day recital. With regard to the Cottrells Almshouse Trust there had only been one change of occupancy in the past year. There was a 10 year rolling programme for maintenance and repairs. Mr. Knight said he attends the monthly meetings of the Memorial Hall which has an excellent committee and he is very impressed by the way it has managed improvements on the inside and outside of the hall – all done by volunteers. He wished to remind people that the CVA and ZCRA could use the hall at reduced rates because he served on the Committee. The hall was a memorial to the men of the village in the first World War. With regard to the Canal Authority there has not been a joint meeting recently, there is usually one a year which he normally attends. The question was asked was there an out of hours facility for complaints to be made to the Canal Authority and the answer was no. The problem of rubbish on the canal banks after fishing matches was raised and this is something which should be raised with Hart Council which issues the permits.

5. Additional street light in The Street

Support was sought for an additional light in The Street near to the Black Horse. Patrick Grace said he had done a survey of the lights 10 years ago there they were randomly sited. There was no support from the floor for an additional street light.

6. Consider Resolutions of which written notice has been received

None.

The Chairman then proposed that the Parish Council adopt a policy as follows: “All pavements in the parish be kept clear of vegetation to the minimum of one metre width where available”. This was seconded by Stan Knight and supported by the majority of those present.

Darren Pearson then proposed that the Parish Council consider supporting the Canal Authority financially for work on the canal within the parish environs. An amendment was proposed and accepted that “This Council consider ways to support the Canal Authority for projects which enhance the canal over and above the regular works. This was seconded by Paul Collins and supported by the majority of those present.

The Parish Meeting agreed the principle of seeking further information from the Canal Authority on whether there are any specific works they would like to do with this parish.

7. Any other business

Residents wished to know when the traffic calming was going into Crondall Road and the Chairman advised that this is imminent.

The meeting closed at 9.12 pm

HAMPSHIRE