

KILMINGTON ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2014

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON 7.30 P.M. THURSDAY, 24TH APRIL 2014 IN THE MAIN HALL, AT KILMINGTON VILLAGE HALL

1. PRESENT: Cllr. M. Collier (Chairman), Cllrs. Bolton, Hodges, Newbery, Penzer, Tattershall, Trott, Vickers, the Clerk (Miss H. Kirkcaldie) and 33 members of the public.

2. APOLOGIES: Apologies were received from Cllr. Huscroft and Mr. Huscroft, P.C.S.O. Wooster, Mr. O'Flaherty, Mrs. Penzer and Mr. and Mrs. Lavender.

3. GUEST SPEAKER: The Chairman introduced the guest speakers, Mr. John Scott, the Rural Housing Enabling Officer from the Community Council of Devon and Mr. Peter Friend from Hastoe Housing Association.

Mr. Scott explained that before any affordable housing was built it was necessary to establish the existence of a need. The procedure for carrying out such a survey was laid down by Central Government. He then gave details of the latest survey in Kilmington. All households were issued with a questionnaire. The response rate was 42% and 89% of those responding indicated that they supported the principle of providing affordable housing. As a result of further information received following a public consultation held in March, it had been determined that the need was for 11 rented homes and 2 shared ownership properties.

Mr. Friend then gave a brief presentation which included the recent history of the present attempt to find a suitable site for affordable housing in the village. This had started with the Parish Council working with the now-defunct Rural Housing Trust to develop a site off Meadow Bank. Hastoe Housing Association had stepped into the breach but, for a number of reasons, the proposed site for the housing had shifted slightly to the west so that it could be accessed from George Lane. He went on to give details on the draft proposals for the lay-out of the site and said that it was hoped that a formal application would be submitted towards the end of May. He said that it was intended to undertake a traffic survey on George Lane to address issues relating to traffic.

The Chairman then invited the audience to put questions to the two speakers. Among issues raised were:

That the reason the site off George Lane was preferred to that accessed off Meadow Bank was because the sewer for the houses in Meadow Bank was a private sewer, and that the site off George Lane was more accessible and would cause less traffic impact in the village over all, both during and after construction. In addition, the landowners had refused to agree to the resiting of the ransom strip owned by the Parish Council at the top of Meadow Bank to an equivalent position protecting against further ingress to develop field beyond the affordable housing site once that had been completed.

That the reason the houses could not be accessed directly from the A35 was that the various highway authorities felt this would be dangerous and the houses would not be sufficiently integrated into the village community.

That the reason the site was to be accessed directly from George Lane rather than via The Orchard was that The Orchard is not an adopted road and an access from The Orchard would involve breaching the existing belt of trees adjacent to that road.

That the developers of any site would be required to make a contribution towards improvement of other infrastructure needed, such as schools, recreation and medical facilities.

That although several sites in the village had been identified when the possibility of building an affordable housing scheme was first mooted, the sites which had been acceptable to the local planning authority were the one at Meadow Bank and the one off George Lane. Other sites, which may have been suitable had had to be ruled out as the owners had not been prepared to make the land available at less than market value.

That the procedure for determining what constituted a "local connection" for the purposes of allocating the houses had been set out for permanent record by the local Planning Authority via the Section 106 Agreement.

That the responsibility for maintaining the communal areas on the site and the exterior of the houses would lie with the Housing Association and may be funded via a service charge payable by the resident.

The Chairman thanked the speakers for coming and for their detailed responses to the questions from the audience.

Refreshments were taken at this point, after which the guest speakers left the meeting.

4. MINUTES OF THE 2013 ANNUAL PARISH MEETING: Cllr. Hodges, seconded by Mr. Hurford proposed that these be approved. Agreed.

The Chairman proposed that item 11 relating to the Speed Limit and Road Safety on the A35 be brought forward for consideration. Agreed.

5. SPEED LIMIT AND ROAD SAFETY ON A35: The Chairman introduced Mesdames Styles, Sandford-Smyth and Hillier who, as parents of young children, had launched a campaign to reduce the speed limit on the A35 and for the introduction of other safety improvements.

Ms. Styles referred to the work done in 2007 by the Parish Council which had resulted in the speed limit being reduced to 50 m.p.h. and the provision of an anti-skid surface at the crossroads and dropped kerbs at approved crossing points. However, she said, the promised review of the effectiveness of the changes had not been carried out.

She said that as a new-comer to the village and a parent of young children she and her fellow-campaigners felt that further improvements were needed, such the reduction of the speed limit to 30 m.p.h., a light-controlled pedestrian crossing, removal/relocation of street furniture which obstructed sight lines at the junctions and the provision of street lighting at Kilmington Cross. She said that all these suggestions were in accordance with the Highways Agency's own evidence. She indicated that support for the campaign could be shown by signing the e-petition, the paper petition or through the various social media and urged residents to show their endorsement for these improvements.

Ms. Sandford-Smyth then explained what progress had been made to date in making the wider community aware of the campaign and seeking its support. She said that a major step forward was that the number of properties fronting the road was no longer the sole determinant taken into consideration when setting the speed limit. She pointed out that since 2007 there had been a considerable increase in traffic to local shops and that during wet weather cyclists would use the road or pavement if the cycle route across the Yarty flood plain was out of commission. In addition there were numbers of horse riders because of the local equine related business.

Ms. Hillier concluded the presentation by stating that the next steps would be to contact the local Member of Parliament and write to Connect, which manages and maintains the A35, and the Highways Agency.

The Chairman thanked the group for giving such an informative and well-set out presentation.

6. MATTERS ARISING: None.

7. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: the Chairman began his report by referring to the continuing negotiations to achieve an affordable housing development for local people in the village.

Cllr. Collier went on to say that one of the highlights of the year had been winning the first prize in the Larger Villages Past Winners category of the Devon Best Kept Village Competition. This success had been marked by a presentation by East Devon District Council and a special event in the Village Hall at which the organisers had presented the trophy. Cllr Collier paid tribute to all those organisations whose efforts had been specially commended by the judges.

The Chairmen continued by welcoming the fact that work had started on the new Baptist chapel on a site to the north of the Village Hall.

A more worrying topic mentioned by Cllr. Collier was the regrettable increase in the incidence of dog fouling in the village and he asked dog owners to try to ensure that they cleared up any fouling from their dogs. Another problem in some areas of the village was that of parking congestion and Cllr. Collier said that this was being monitored by the police and residents spoken to where necessary.

The Chairman thanked County Councillor Moulding for providing packets of Flanders Poppy seeds to be sown around the village to mark the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War. He had contributed also to funding new signage at Silver Street and for flashing lights to warn drivers of the approach to the school. The Parishes Together funding scheme, run jointly by the District and County Councils, had approved funding for Kilmington and Shute Parish Councils to work together in clearing the ground vegetation on the Hitchcock Trust Land.

The leaflet showing footpath walks in Kilmington had been so successful that it had been decided to reprint it ready for the coming season.

Cllr. Collier concluded by thanking County. Cllr. Moulding and District Cllr. Chubb for their help during the year and all the local residents who, both as individuals and as members of village organisations, contributed in so many ways to making Kilmington such a thriving community, and, finally, paid particular thanks to his wife for her support.

8. PLAYING FIELD REPORT : for the benefit of those in the audience who were new to the village, Cllr. Bolton explained that the Playing Field was run by a Charity, having been given to the village by Mr. Arthur Hitchcock, local resident, at the turn of the twentieth century. He said that wherever possible any necessary work in maintenance, particularly the cutting of the grass, was done by volunteers. The pavilion was available for hire when not in use for sporting purposes and the income from lettings covered the cost of its maintenance and running.

In conclusion, Cllr. Bolton, reiterating what a problem highlighted earlier by Cllr. Collier, said that dog fouling was an increasing problem, despite the fact that the Parish Council had provided a special dog bin with the field itself. He asked that anyone observing dog owners failing to clean up after their dogs should let him know. He said that it was most unpleasant for the volunteers who cut the grass to have to cope with the problem.

9. SCHOOL REPORT : Cllr. Trott said that the school roll stood at 91, with 51% coming from the village itself. Standards continued to be very high, with the school being ranked third in Devon and 41st in England as a whole on the basis of its results.

He said that a new library facility had been provided and new computers purchased. The new system of federation was working well with each school within the group benefiting from the co-operation but still able to maintain its own identity.

Cllr. Trott said at the end of the summer term, 2 pupils had gone on to Colyton Grammar School, 9 to The Woodroffe School and 4 to The Axe Valley Community College.

He went on to speak of the wide range of sporting and other activities in which the school participated, including bikeability, maypole dancing, Christmas musicals and life skills workshops. The P.T.F.A. continued to support the school, including through the running of fund raising events.

10. THE COMMON : The Clerk said that the Parish Council had gifted £114 worth of maintenance works to the Common during the course of the year. This had included cutting of grass and clearance of vegetation and fallen trees. In the course of the coming year it was intended to refresh the special heathland area in the middle of The Common in line with advice given by the County Council.

11. WEBSITE REPORT: In a written report read out by the Chairman, the webmaster, Mrs. Vickers, stated that the website, which had been in operation for seven years, continued to attract much interest from both this country and abroad. She said that she wished to step down as webmaster and that anyone interested in taking over should contact her or a member of the Parish Council.

12. COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT : Cty. Cllr. Moulding said that he was chairman of Place Scrutiny and, as such involved in scrutinising the services of Economy and Enterprise; Highways and Traffic Management; Capital Development and Waste Management; Planning, Transportation and Environment and Services for Communities. He had been much involved in considering the County Council budget. He spoke of the cuts in financial support from Central Government and the need these had imposed to cut spending. As part of that process the County Council was consulting on the way the running of its Youth Service, Library Service, Children's Centres, Meals on Wheels, Adult Care Homes and Day Centres.

On a more positive note, Cllr. Moulding said that additional funds had been allocated from Central Government towards the cost of repairing the huge amount of damage caused to the roads by the abnormally heavy rain during the winter. He said that he had just completed an inspection of the parish roads with the Chairman and the Neighbourhood Highway Officer and said that he liaised with Cllr. Newbury on highway matters on a regular basis.

Cllr. Moulding continued by giving an update on the Travellers' encampment on Roman Road and expressed his concern that the County Council Officers were not taking a strong enough line to keep it to the agreed number of units.

Cllr. Moulding ended his report by stating that other initiatives, such as the Parishes Together Funding scheme, had been referred to in reports earlier in the meeting.

13. DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT : Dist. Cllr. Chubb said that the District Council element of the Council tax had been frozen for the present financial year. He said that 55% of domestic refuse collected was recycled, making the District top in Devon and 4th in the United Kingdom. Like his colleague Cllr. Moulding, he referred to the cost of damage which had resulted from winter storm damage, particularly along the coastline. He concluded by thanking the Parish Council for the work it does for the good of local residents.

14. FOOTPATH REPORT : Cllr. Penzer read out the Footpath Warden's report on behalf of his wife, who was unable to be present. Mrs. Penzer made mention of damage to paths during the winter storms as a result of fallen trees but said that this damage had been made good and the paths were in a reasonable condition. She had been undertaking some clearance of brambles from beside stiles and gates. The winter surveys had indicated that some waymarking work was required and this was in hand. She said that there continued to be problems regarding the footpath at Nower Farm and that the county Public Rights of Way officers were investigating this.

Mrs. Penzer's report concluded by urging residents who had any matters of concern regarding paths to let her know as soon as they arose.

15. PUBLIC FORUM :

In response to a question regarding the encampment on Roman Road, the Chairman said that the number of caravans had increased from nine to eleven. He said that Cty. Cllr. Moulding and Dist. Cllr. Chubb monitored the situation on a regular basis and made site visits with the Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Officer. He said that Cllr. Moulding had sent a letter recently to a senior lawyer at the County Council to highlight various matters of concern.

A resident raised concerns regarding the effect of the proposed affordable housing development on traffic in George Lane and the fear that there would be an increased risk of accidents at the awkward junction of George Lane with Shute Road and the A35 by the War Memorial.

Cllr. Hurford proposed a vote of thanks to the Parish Council.

The meeting concluded at 21.20 hours.