

DANBURY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 28th March 2007
at 7.45pm in the Parish Office

Present: Cllrs S Berlyn (Chairman) D Powell
 A Allen M Telling
 D Bolwell J Thomson
 J Brooks D Whiteing
 D Hawkins A Wells
 A Keeler J Wells
 J Langley M Wood

In attendance: Mrs M Saunders, Clerk
 Mrs E Blyth, Assistant Clerk

Public Question Time

One member of the public attended.

143 The Chairman welcomed members to the last meeting of the Council year. The next meeting would be after the local elections on 3rd May.

144 Apologies for absence

All members were present.

145 Declarations of Interest

Members were reminded that they must declare any personal or prejudicial interests they know they may have in items of business on the meeting's agenda. They were reminded that they would need to repeat their declaration at the appropriate point in the meeting and to leave the room if the interest was a prejudicial one. Unforeseen interests must be declared similarly at the appropriate time.

146 Minutes

RESOLVED:

a) that the minutes of the meeting held on 31st January 2007 be approved and signed as a correct record;

b) that the minutes of the Extraordinary meetings held on 19th February 2007 and 28th February 2007 be approved and signed as correct records of those meetings.

147 Grants

147.1 Application form: The Clerk and Cllr Allen had amended the wording of the information sheet which accompanied the application form. The form had been made available at the Annual Parish Meeting recently. It would also be available for download from the Council's Web Site, and as hard copy from the Parish Office.

147.2 Grant to the Village Hall for 2007-08: A letter had been received from the Village Hall Committee indicating that it was unable to comply with a condition attached to the grant by the Council. After discussion, Cllr Hawkins proposed, seconded by Cllr Wood, that the grant be not be paid. Cllr Brooks, seconded by Cllr Thomson, proposed an amendment that half the grant be paid. In a vote the

amendment was lost by 10 votes to 2, with 2 abstentions. The main proposal was then put to the vote and was carried by 10 votes to 0, with 4 abstentions.

RESOLVED: that the grant awarded to the Village Hall for 2007-08 be not paid as the Hall Committee was unable to comply with a condition attached to the award.

148 Leases

148.1 Bowling Club Lease: A formal response from the Council's solicitor to the draft lease prepared by the Bowling Club was awaited. The Club had been unwilling to accept the Council's draft lease and had so far failed to submit a draft prepared by its own solicitor as it had agreed to do.

148.2 Lingwood Common: An update was received from the Clerk. There was no further action to be taken at the present time.

149 Corporate Identity of Parish Council

This item was being kept on the Agenda although no further work had been completed.

150 Danbury Medical Centre proposals

Three letters had been received objecting to the Medical Centre's preferred location for its proposed new building.

RESOLVED: that replies be sent indicating that there would be a further public meeting when a formal planning application was received, and that all residents would then have the opportunity to make their views known to Chelmsford Borough Council, which was the statutory planning authority, and to the Parish Council.

151 Publicity

151.1 Danbury Times: Cllr Wood thanked the members for the Publicity Group for their hard work over the last four years, and all councillors for assistance in ensuring that the recent issue was published and distributed in advance of the Annual Parish Meeting. The survey carried out at the APM had produced 16 responses. Cllr Wood outlined the suggestions received, which would be reviewed by the Publicity Group.

151.2 Annual Parish Meeting: Members agreed that the Village Hall had provided a pleasant and more intimate venue than the Sports & Social Centre, although there was less room for display tables. Attendance had been comparable to other years despite the date being brought forward at relatively short notice. Locating the speakers' table on the stage had not been satisfactory. Thanks were expressed to Cllr Bolwell for providing the sound system, and Cllr Wood thanked all councillors for their assistance before the start of the meeting and at the end of the evening.

151.3 Council discussed the use of 'straw polls' during the meeting to gauge public views. While some members thought that this provided useful feedback, it was agreed that the results must be treated with caution and could not, on their own, form the basis of Council policy.

151.4 It was noted that PC Bill Evans had expressed interest in attending and speaking at a Parish Council meeting, and this was discussed.

RESOLVED: that the Clerk and the Chairman arrange for PC Evans to attend either a Facilities or a Council meeting depending on his availability.

151.5 During public questions a number of issues had been raised which required further consideration by the Council.

RESOLVED: that the issues requiring attention be identified and referred to the appropriate committees.

152 Reports from village organisations

152.1 Neighbourhood Watch: Cllr Whiteing reported that 10 new members had registered at the Annual Meeting.

152.2 Danbury Community Association: The Chairman reported that agreement had been reached with the DCA that a representative of the Parish Council would attend one DCA committee meeting each quarter. Meetings at which no Councillor was present would be held at the Sports & Social Centre.

153 Future of the Post Office network

The Council's response to the Government's consultation had been sent to the Department of Trade & Industry and an acknowledgment received. Further announcements were expected now that the closing date for the consultation – 8th March 2007 – had passed.

154 Christmas Tree at Eves Corner

It was reported that the Danbury Society had accepted the Council's offer of help to investigate the possibility of installing a permanent electrical supply for the Christmas Tree. In addition the Society had offered financial assistance up to £1500 with the expected costs. The Clerk pointed out that permission would be needed from the National Trust, as owners of the land, and that a professional risk assessment should be carried out.

RESOLVED: that the Danbury Society be thanked for their generous offer of financial support and that the Clerk approach the NT with a view to advancing the project.

155 Travel Plan for St John's School

Council received the recommendations of the Working Party regarding the Travel Plan. Members had been impressed with the presentation on the proposed scheme made by the school.

RESOLVED: that the recommendations be ratified and sent to the Head Teacher of St John's School.

156 Emergency Planning

Council noted that the Clerk was currently writing an emergency plan for the office and that Cllr Brooks was updating the accommodation and contacts lists for the village. Cllr Brooks suggested that registration cards should be kept in several locations rather than just at the Parish Office, and it was agreed that this be discussed with Kelvin Ward, CBC Emergency Planning Officer.

157 Model Code of Conduct – Consultation on amendments

The amended Code had been circulated to all members. One Councillor had returned comments. The Clerk explained that the new Code brought together and superseded four separate existing codes of conduct.

RESOLVED: that the Council did not wish to submit any comments in response to the consultation.

158 Review of the Quality Councils scheme

Council noted that the review by the Government had been delayed and that existing accreditations would be extended until any new provisions came into effect. One change which had already been agreed was that the requirement for 100% of councillors to be elected, as opposed to being co-opted, had been reduced to 80%. Consultation had shown that the 100% requirement was not practical for many councils.

159 Review of the Children and Young People's Plan

The Council did not have any comments to make in response to the review.

160 Drainage/Car Parking Project

It was noted that Total Turf Solutions had recently visited the site and had taken soil samples. Analysis of the results and preparation of a report was expected to take at least two weeks.

161 Reports from Committees and Sub-Committees

In addition to the Minutes received, the following reports were made:

161.1 Resources: Cllr Whiteing reminded members that the loans on the Sports & Social Centre would be paid off over the next financial year, ie by March 2008. On staffing matters, it was noted that Mary Moss had now left the Council's employment.

RESOLVED: that a letter of thanks and bouquet of flowers costing up to £25 be sent to Mrs Moss in appreciation of her work for the Parish Council over the past 18 months;

161.2 Environment: There were no matters to report. Cllr Wood requested that the condition of the roads in Simmonds Way and Hopping Jacks Lane be considered by the Committee;

161.3 Planning: Cllr Allen reported that information had been submitted to Derek Stebbing, Planning Policy Manager at CBC, to enable Chelmsford Environment Partnership to carry out a Sustainability Appraisal in support of the Danbury Planning Framework. In response to a request from CBC, the Committee was reviewing a number of completed building developments in order to provide feedback to the Borough.

162 Mid-Essex Area Forum

Cllr Powell was thanked for attending the meeting on behalf of the Parishes Transport Group, and he gave a verbal report. He had been struck by the lengthy timescales, arduous lobbying and high costs surrounding decision-making on highways matters, involving bodies at regional, county and local level.

163 St Georges Day – Monday 23rd April 2007

The Environment Committee, at its meeting on 7th March 2007, had referred to Council the question of whether to make any arrangements to commemorate St George's Day. The matter was briefly discussed.

RESOLVED: that there was insufficient time to take any action.

164 Matters for Report (for information only)

The Chairman reported that a number of applications had been received for the vacant post of Assistant Clerk, Facilities, and interviews would be held on Saturday 21st April;

Cllr Bolwell noted that the Danbury Footpaths leaflet had been very well received within the village;

Cllr Mrs Wells reported that cars had been parked for sale on verges in Main Road near her home. The Clerk confirmed that this issue had also been raised by Cllr C Kingsley and had been referred to CBC, although the Borough had limited powers;

Cllr Brooks informed the Council of a forthcoming Transport Information Day and indicated that he was willing to attend;

Cllr Bolwell raised the condition of the glebe field behind the Cricketers pub. It was noted that the field was managed by Strutt & Parker as agents for the Diocese of Chelmsford;

The Chairman thanked all members and staff for their support over the past four years. Cllr Powell expressed thanks to Cllr Berlyn for his leadership of the Council.

165 Dates of forthcoming meetings

9th May – Annual Parish Council Meeting;

25th July, 26th September and 28th November 2007

Business having been concluded, the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.43pm.

Signed: Chairman

Date: