

## **FERNHURST PARISH COUNCIL**

MINUTES of the meeting of the Parish Council  
held at Fernhurst Village Hall on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup>  
June 2013 at 7.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Mr. J. Cottam (Chairman)  
Mrs. H. Bicknell (Vice Chairman)  
Mr. R. Chapman  
Mr. K. Harding  
Mr. A. Moncreiff  
Mrs. S. Ogilvy  
Mrs. H. Pezier  
Mr. J. Smith  
Mrs. M. Timms  
Mr. G. Walls

### APLOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Mrs. N. Braithwaite

### IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr. D. Bleach (Clerk & Executive Officer)  
Mrs. H. Caird (District Councillor)  
Mr. M. Brown (County Councillor)  
Mrs. S. McCallum (Chairman of Lynchmere Parish Council)  
Approx. 50 members of the public  
Mrs. J. Turner (Press)

## **1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEEETING**

It was proposed by Mrs. Timms and seconded by Mr. Walls that the minutes of the meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2013 be signed as correct. Carried.

## **2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

### **a) Fernhurst Public Toilets**

The Clerk reported that he would be meeting with District Council officers on 17<sup>th</sup> June to discuss the terms of the lease.

### **b) Allotments**

Nothing to report.

2.

**c) Neighbourhood Plan**

The Chairman reported that the Steering Group had published the draft Neighbourhood Plan for consultation and that comments had been invited from landowners, businesses, organisations and statutory consultees. Any comments will be considered and a revised draft sent out to various public bodies for formal consultation.

**d) Code of Conduct**

Deferred.

**e) Fernhurst Millennium Sign**

This had now been erected at its new site.

**3. COUNTY COUNCIL COMMENTARY**

Mr. Brown reported that County Highways had objected to the St. Cuthman's proposal due to highways safety issues.

Mr. Brown stated that he would take an active interest in the potential application to develop the Syngenta site.

Mr. Brown had been invited to the opening of the new football ground on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> June.

Mr. Brown had been invited to a site visit of the Celtique Energie site next week.

**4. DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMENTARY**

Mrs. Caird reported that there had been a cross-border meeting last week involving Police and officers from Waverley Borough, East Hampshire and Chichester District Councils to discuss antisocial behaviour. Many types of offence had reduced except theft from motor vehicles. South West Trains had been speaking to passengers to see how people were behaving on the trains.

At a recent meeting with the parishes proposed changes to the Development Control Committees were discussed.

There had recently been a number of problems with travellers' sites.

There is good news housing as the new homes bonus will be made available to communities that build new houses in their areas.

Rugby in the Community and Football in the Community events will take place during August.

**5. CORRESPONDENCE/OTHER MATTERS**

**From**

**Subject**

MADhurst Festival 2013

Request for funding. **Copies of letter to Mr. Chapman, Mr. Smith & Mr. Walls.**

Mr. A. Lawes

Estimate for re-roofing bus shelters. **Two estimates for the repair of two bus shelter roofs had been received in the sums of £410 and £590 per shelter, the higher of the two estimates using better quality materials. It was proposed by Mrs.**

3.

**Bicknell and seconded by Mrs. Timms that the higher of the two estimates be accepted. Carried.**

W.S. Rural Mobile Youth Trust

**The Purple Bus. The Clerk reported that at their invitation, he had applied for the Purple Bus to visit Fernhurst during the autumn term 2013. Mr. Smith commented that he wished to discuss the matter with the Youth Club.**

Mr. P. Hudson

**Proposal for 20 mph speed limit – Vann Road/Crossfield area. Mr. Brown commented that if this was to be pursued, it would be necessary to obtain a Road Traffic Order through the County Local Committee. It was proposed by Mrs. Ogilvy and seconded by Mrs. Bicknell that the matter be supported and an application made to create the 20 mph speed limit. Carried.**

Mr. R. Smalley

**Copies of letters to SDNPA expressing concern about increased traffic in Vann Road due to proposed developments. Noted.**

Mr. J. Spiers

**Replacement of Royal Mail letter box. Noted.**

Chichester District Council

**North West Parishes Forum – Cocking – 18<sup>th</sup> June. Mrs. Ogilvy to attend.**

Navigus Planning Ltd.

**Journal of Local Planning – Summer 2013 issue. Noted.**

### **Available for Reading**

SALC

May & June newsletters.

## **6. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Mr. Cottam first declared a personal interest in the application by Celtique Energie for permission to drill a test well at a site off Vann Road, Fernhurst, as his house is one of the nearest to the site.

Mr. Cottam then made the following statement:

Celtique Energie recently held a public exhibition of their proposals to carry out exploration drilling for oil and gas on a site adjacent to Vann Road. The first that Fernhurst Parish Council was aware of this proposal was when we received a letter by email on 22<sup>nd</sup> May announcing the public exhibition.

The location of the proposed drilling is in Lynchmere Parish and the houses most affected are also in Lynchmere Parish. I have been asked by Lynchmere Parish Council to make clear that they wish to operate jointly with Fernhurst Parish Council in dealing with this matter.

Since the public exhibition was held I have received a number of emails and telephone calls objecting to the proposals. It is a very complicated matter and we are all learning what the implications are and what the ramifications might be.

4.

However because of the strength of feeling already expressed to me I wrote last week to Andrew Tyrie, our MP, inviting him to come and hear first-hand the concerns of people in Fernhurst. I am waiting to hear from him when he will be coming.

The Parish Council will also be writing to Margaret Paren who is the chair of the South Downs National Park, Andrew Shaxson who is chair of the planning committee of the SDNPA, and also to Tim Slaney who is head of planning at SDNPA inviting them to a public meeting to hear the concerns of people in Fernhurst.

## **MONTHLY EXECUTIVE REPORTS/COMMITTEE MATTERS**

### **7. FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE**

#### **a) Minutes of Meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2013**

It was proposed by Mr. Chapman and seconded by Mr. Walls that the minutes be signed as correct. Carried.

#### **b) Payments**

It was proposed by Mr. Chapman and seconded by Mrs. Bicknell that the list of payments and cheques shown at Annex 'A' be approved and signed. Carried

#### **Receipts**

See schedule also attached at Annex 'A'.

#### **c) Bank Reconciliation**

The Clerk presented a bank reconciliation report, attached at Annex 'B', which was accepted.

#### **d) Monthly Budget Report**

The Clerk presented the report, shown at Annex 'C', which was accepted.

#### **e) Approval and signing of Annual Accounts and Audit Return for 2012/2013**

The accounts and audit return had been examined in detail by the Finance Committee on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2013. It was proposed by Mr. Chapman and seconded by Mr. Walls that the Annual Accounts and the Audit Return for 2012/2013 be approved and signed by the Chairman and Clerk. Carried.

### **8. PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE**

It was proposed by Mr. Cottam and seconded by Mr. Harding that the minutes of the meetings held on 29<sup>th</sup> April, 20<sup>th</sup> May and 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2013 be signed as correct. Carried.

### **9. PROPERTY, HIGHWAYS AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

The Clerk reported that he had discussed with County Highways the winter maintenance plan, including the provision of salt bags and additional gritting and snow clearance.

## **10. FERNHURST RECREATION GROUND**

The new football pitch will shortly be formally opened and launched.

## **11. UPDATES ON LOCAL ISSUES**

### **a) Services for young people and the Youth Club**

Mr. Smith reported that a family fun day had been booked for 31<sup>st</sup> August from 10.00a.m. to 4.00p.m.

BMX track - there would be a meeting in two weeks' time with Playsafe, including a site visit. Hyde Housing to be involved with Mr. Smith and Mr. Inns.

### **b) Fernhurst Village Hall**

Nothing to report.

### **c) Policing**

The Chairman reported that the Police are under pressure with a shortage of staff, having lost a number of PCSO's and Police Officers who are not being replaced when they leave.

### **d) Fernhurst Primary School and Pre-School**

Building of the new classrooms is to start in July and be finished by the end of the year.

## **9. QUESTIONTIME FOR PARISHIONERS**

A large number of people wished to express their concerns about the proposal to drill a test well at a site off Vann Road, Fernhurst to explore for oil and gas. The initial drilling would be exploratory and would involve both vertical and horizontal drilling. If shale gas is found, the company, Celtique Energie may then make a further application to carry out hydraulic fracturing (fracking) to access the gas.

Most of those present were opposed to the whole process, having concerns about noise, light and water pollution, the effects on health and wildlife, the effects of fracking, including earth tremors, if that was carried out and the effects of additional extra-large vehicles using Vann Road and Fernhurst generally for access to the site.

Mrs. Judy Adams advised that residents would be forming an action group and that she had received a statement from the MEP for the area that he would support the group.

There were claims that the company has very limited funds and there were concerns about who would clean up the site if everything goes wrong. The Cowdray Estate called upon Celtique Energie to make a public commitment, supported by evidence, that they will fulfil their liabilities in the event of contamination, given the potential impact their activities may have on the local community.

Asked how the situation had arisen, Mr. Cottam explained that the Department of Energy and Climate Change had granted a licence to the company to carry out drilling in the area. This will require planning permission and as yet no application had been made.

6.

Asked whether the Parish Council would represent the parishioners' views, Mr. Cottam confirmed that it would do so and would work together with Lynchmere Parish Council in whose are the site is situated.

Mr. Cottam further explained that Celtique Energie are claiming that they are only exploring for conventional oil and gas but would take information from their tests to see if fracking would be possible. If shale gas is found, he understood that they would build a mini power station and feed the power into the national grid. If a normal well, it would be fairly unobtrusive, but fracking wells need to be arranged every 2 – 5 miles. He questioned how this meets with the objectives of the South Downs National Park.

Mr. Walls asked whether the company's licence, which expires in July 2014, can be renewed and was told 'probably'.

Mr. Cottam had asked the company whether they had a fall-back site if they did not get planning permission for this one, but they had been non-committal.

Asked whether the exploration is against planning policy, Mr. Cottam replied that the SDNPA has inherited the WSCC minerals policy, but there could be conflict between that policy and the objectives of the national park.

Asked how the matter would proceed from now, Mr. Cottam replied that when a planning application is received, Fernhurst Parish Council will convene a meeting to examine the application and will ask people at the meeting for their views. The meeting will be publicised by posters. Some people felt that everyone should get a letter but Mr. Cottam said that the cost of delivery would be several hundred pounds which would need to be considered.

Finally, Mrs. McCallum, Chairman of Lynchmere Parish Council confirmed that both Lynchmere and Fernhurst Parish Councils would work closely together to collate letters from parishioners from both parishes.