



# NORTHCHURCH PARISH COUNCIL

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**MINUTES of the MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL held at Northchurch Social Centre, Bell Lane on Monday October 24 2011, commencing at 7.30pm.**

**Members present:**

Councillors           Fantham (Chairman)  
                              Pike  
                              Dunbavand  
                              Etheridge  
                              Godfrey  
                              Hooper  
                              Lee  
                              Pocock

Officers                Yvonne Crocker (Clerk) took minutes of the meeting.

There were five members of the public present.

**MINUTE**

- 83/11           Apologies for absence**  
None
- 84/11           Minutes of the previous meeting held on September 19 2011**  
With no alterations, the minutes were signed as a true and correct record of the meeting held on Sep 19 2011.
- 85/11           Matters arising from the Minutes**  
In reference to the hedge in the George and Dragon pub overhanging in Duncombe Road, Cllr Pike confirmed that it will be cut back by the pub owner.
- 86/11           Declarations of interest regarding items on the agenda**  
None
- 87/11           Chairman's Report**
- (a) Parking at Shops**  
The Chairman has had several emails on this issue. NPC can only make recommendations to DBC and HCC, and can write to these bodies to state that there is a problem and to suggest solutions. Congestion is partly due to people parking their cars there all day, especially the section opposite the shops. A two-hour parking limit should be in place.

Some people living in the flats and some people working in the shops do have other dedicated parking areas behind the shops.

It was pointed out that some people park there and lift-share to the train station. The Chairman suggested a possible solution of payment after 1 or 2 hours of parking. The council decided to leave the issue, see if it settles down and then come up with recommendations.

Cllr Etheridge pointed out that the disabled parking spaces are being abused.

ACTION: Write to council (Julie Laws) suggesting re-marking of the disabled areas and ask for a parking attendant to keep an eye on the area.

The possibility of a residents' permit was raised, however this does result in a cost to the residents.

Other parking issues:

Parking on grass verges is another problem. However people are not committing an offence unless there are double yellow lines.

Cars parking on Darrs Lane are causing an obstruction. Having single or double yellow lines outside residents' houses is a possible solution.

ACTION: Ask people on both sides of Darrs Lane about yellow lines on one or both sides.

The Chairman suggested that the council also takes advice from the police on parking.

#### **(b) Cemetery Gates**

The Chairman reported that Tesco donated £500 to Northchurch School, so NPC are not going to get any more from Tesco for the cemetery gates. Mr Eggleton has been instructed to proceed with replacing the gates.

#### **(c) High Street bins**

The Chairman reported that there are green and black bins plus boxes and baskets staying out on the High Street throughout the week; these are an eyesore.

#### **(d) Report on Tesco donation**

The Chairman reported that in addition to the £500 given to the school, Tesco donated £200 to the Allotment Association to plant the flowers beds outside the shop. Cllr. Godfrey spoke to the Allotment Association – they will weed the area and plant bulbs very soon. He also commented on the remaining bed which is a maintained by Sunnyside.

#### **(e) St. Mary's Avenue tree**

The Chairman reported that a tree is 10-15 yards into St. Mary's Avenue and needed pruning. DBC said it shouldn't be there anyway but residents don't want it removed. DBC will prune it.

The Chairman reported that the bus shelter light is not working.

ACTION: Clerk will arrange for David Roberts (163 High Street) to fix it.

**Financial matters****(a) Approval of payments made since last meeting.**

The Chairman asked for any comments and proposed that the accounts summary for October be approved. Seconded by Cllr Godfrey.  
Approved unanimously.

**(b) DTTS and Sunnyside Rent**

Sunnyside should pay back the increased rent as agreed in the February NPC meeting, effective as from 1 Mar 2011.

DTTS rent to be set at £50 per month from Nov 1<sup>st</sup> 2011.

ACTION: Clerk to invoice Sunnyside and DTTS.

**(c) Parish Paths Partnership Grant**

Alan Sweetman Groundworks: Cllr. Pike confirmed that she and the Chairman will meet with him regarding the grant for improving paths. Do not know yet if we pay first then get money back, or get the grant upfront. The meeting will take place on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> October 2011.

**(d) Website Grant**

Cllr. Pike confirmed that NPC will receive a grant of £2,200 for a new website and asked for input and ideas. Cllr Pike and Cllr. Lee proposed that we use a local resident (Mark who lives in the Meads) who has agreed to build and back-up the website and provide ongoing management. This was seconded by Cllr. Dunbavand. Cllr. Lee commented that Mark made it interesting and was very keen. He is also willing to let people sit in and learn.

The website could provide information on local road conditions. Also residents could report faults and problems online through links to DBC.

The grant money ought to be deposited in a separate account and payment from grant money should be by way of signed cheque, and not money transfer.

**(e) Donation to Northchurch School re Presentation evening**

The chairman praised the school choir and proposed a £50 donation to the school. Unanimously supported.

**Planning Committee****(a) Update on New Road, Cemetery Gates**

Dealt with below.

**(b) Update on Durrants Lane and Egerton Rothesay Development**

Cllr. Dunbavand advised the council of when we were likely to get a planning application for the Durrants Lane site: it could be close to December 2012.

Berkhamsted Town Council gave an indication of how the Shootersway site should look: "green and rustic". No further contact expected until summer 2012.

**(c) Update on Lock Field**

The Chairman opined that Lock Field should not be developed until the Link road is built. DBC has stated that one safe route would involve pulling down houses. Lock Field planners would be willing to make a donation to a link road. However, the Core Strategy document does not mention a link road. The Chairman proposed that this issue should be on the agenda for the next NPC meeting, specifically:

- Should it be developed?
- The percentage of affordable housing.
- Linking approval of this development to approval of the link road.

The council approved of putting it on the agenda for the Dec 5<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Developers mention improving quality of air in Northchurch New Road. Air quality on New Road is already one of 3 worst in Dacorum, and developers have not made any suggestions to improve the situation.

**(d) Rivington Gardens**

Cllr. Dunbavand explained that the architects' plans are not exact. The oak tree with a TPO is in the wrong place on the plans. The planning inspector visited the site. Planning may be refused. (*Subsequently the application was withdrawn.*)

Cllr. Dunbavand advised the council that Tesco's manager signed off the site and that the ramp has been built. DBC permitted it, however it does not own that land. It is not clear whether or not Highways approved it.

90/11

**Reports from Council Representative on outside bodies**

(a) **Footpaths and Bridleways** – The Chairman stated that the proposed footpath on cemetery land is an ongoing issue and is currently with Herts CC and the Church authorities; it is proving to be a long process.

(b) **Northchurch and District Association** – Cllr. Godfrey stated that the association is on a sound financial footing for the next 6 months. However, it is difficult to let out the large hall. It has been redecorated.

(c) **Northchurch United Charities** – Cllr. Lee and Cllr. Hooper: the annual meeting takes place next Wednesday in the parish rooms. The Chairman requested that if anyone requires a donation to let the committee know now.

(d) **Canal and Bulbourne Liaison** – Cllr. Etheridge reported that every offending vessel from Cow Roast marina to end of NPC's area of responsibility has been ticketed, with court proceedings to follow. 4 vessels have well overstayed their welcome, but others are liable too. Vessels have also been moved from Aldbury bridge. Cllr. Etheridge is NPC's representative on the *Berkhamsted and Northchurch Transport Group*. The recent meeting did not take place since HCC did not turn up and sent no apology.

Cllr. Dunbavand stated that in relation to the field between the sports ground and Dudswell, the owner has fenced off an area to house miniature donkeys. The shed to house them has wheels on, so there is no need for planning permission. It may not require permission anyway as it relates to agricultural land.

- (e) **Herts. County Council Liaison** – The Chairman had nothing to report.
- (f) **Allotment Committee** – The Chairman reported that the allotments are in good order. However a recent delivery of manure had a high percentage of rubbish, bricks and plastic bags etc. Cllr. Hooper pointed out that the Lock House in Dudswell has organic manure available for anyone who requires it.  
The Chairman also noted that the allotment holders will be written to by the Clerk to advise them of rental increases due primarily to higher water usage.
- (g) **Office Administration/Leaflet Editors** – Cllr. Pike reported that there would be an admin meeting during the week of 31/10/11, to discuss various issues.
- (h) **Recreation Ground Maintenance** – The Chairman reported that there was a fox problem on the football pitches; in fact referees have stopped 2 matches for health and safety issues. The ground will be sprayed to alleviate the issue at a cost of £150.
- (i) **Dacorum Environmental Forum** – Cllr Godfrey pointed out that there is an ongoing problem with the poor quality of air within Northchurch.
- (j) **Berk Youth Council** – Cllr. Pike: A £51k grant is due to be given by DBC to worthy causes. NPC have asked for a donation for the skateboard ramp, and Cllr. Pike is due to give a presentation at the Berkhamsted Civic Centre on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> October between 1:30-5:30pm.
- (k) **Youth Representative** – Cllr. Pike noted that St. Mary's head teacher will be returning to work following maternity leave, on a part-time basis (Mon, Tues, Wed from 31/10/11). St. Mary's School is facing an ongoing issue with a planning enforcement with respect to the window facing the top playground – it does not comply with planning for listed buildings; other windows could also be a problem. There is a meeting on 09/11/11 with DBC on this topic. The windows have been in for 15 years. It was queried whether or not a time limit applies; but unfortunately this is not the case for this issue. A question also arose as to the windows which form part of the extension to the existing listed building. Cllr. Dunbavand opined that an extension does come under listed legislation if it is part of an existing listed building. It was pointed out that the replacement cost of the windows is very high compared to the perceived benefit of replacing them.  
Cllr. Pike also noted that there had been proposals to enlarge Westfield and Greenway schools, but these have been cancelled for the time being. A 12-week public consultation on a new proposal takes place in early 2012. Potentially a new school may be built.
- (l) **Berkhamsted Town Hall Trust** – no update; Eric Cook not present.
- (m) **Northchurch New Road Cemetery** – The Chairman explained that there are problems on the unconsecrated ground where NPC would like to put a footpath. There are pipes underneath the land, however no one is claiming ownership. This is an ongoing issue.
- (n) **Police Liaison** – The Chairman proposed that this category should be on the next agenda; unanimous approval. Cllr. Pocock reported on a traffic accident whereby a child ran across the road outside the recreation ground; 6 cars were involved. The police are planning to give a road safety talk to the children at St. Mary's School.

91/11

**A.O.B**

Cllr. Lee noted that in the area close to the parish office, it is quite unsightly, with bins, motorbikes parked, and also children being taken by their parents to the area for a loo break, having been in the Bon Soiree cafe. The Chairman noted that, according to Eric Cook, if you have a certain number of tables in a food establishment, then there is no requirement for toilet amenities. Perhaps it is an issue for Dacorum Health & Safety.

The Chairman noted that Bert Hosier is currently not well. The NPC would like to extend their warm wishes to Bert by sending him a get-well card.

92/11

**Public Participation**

A lady had a query on the proposed NPC website. Apart from the donation which will pay for the build and development, she wanted to know what the ongoing running cost would be. The Chairman explained that NPC would pay for the ongoing running costs and that the Clerk would be responsible for updating and managing it. Cllr. Pike opined that potential advertising revenues should cover cost of website (c. £45.00 p.a.). Cllr. Etheridge pointed out that the newsletter could be made available on the website, saving certain postage costs p.a.

A lady is concerned about the Tesco milk lorry delivery coming down Darrs Lane. The Wiseman lorry blocks the road and parking bays in front of the shops. It has been seen at 7:30am and 9:30am.

ACTION: The Chairman advised that perhaps Cllr. Godfrey could speak to the manager of Tesco, perhaps recommending that the lorries should be driving round the back of the shop.

**The Chairman declared the meeting closed and the meeting ended at 8.50pm.**

**A part two confidential meeting was proposed by the Chairman and seconded by Cllr. Dunbavand. Meeting commenced at 9pm. Minutes were taken, and are confidential.**