

COMBERTON PARISH COUNCIL
The minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 12 December 2007
in the Village Hall at 7.30pm

Members present:	Dr C Chambers	Mr D Charge
Councillors:	Mr D Ellis	Mr A Hollick
	Mrs J Horne	Dr J McCabe
	Mrs D Morison	Dr R Rintoul
	Dr R Roscoe	Mr R Rowlands
	Mr J Walsh	Miss C Westgarth (Chairman)

In attendance: 2 members of the public and Mrs G Stoehr (Clerk).

Comments & observations from members of the public

The following residents concerns were noted:

- The hearing loop still does not work properly.
- Overhanging hedging in South Street opposite the Butchers. This is to be referred to Mr Vacher, Highways Supervisor.
- Vandalism of road name signs in South Street opposite Swaynes Land and Hines Lane. This is to be reported to SCDC.
- A vehicle damaged the adjacent streetlight and the road name sign when leaving the pub.
- Dr Rintoul exercised his right to speak as a member of the public. He expressed his concerns over the proposed expansion of Comberton Village College (CVC), including the proposal for a 6th form and the suggestion that CVC might manage a secondary school at Cambourne. It was noted that when the Governors applied several years ago the application was rejected by the Secretary of State.

1. To approve apologies for absence and declarations of interest

1.0.1 Mrs S Hyde (out of parish).

1.0.2 Mrs Morison declared a personal and prejudicial interest in 3.1 as her daughter has an interest in affordable housing.

Mr Charge declared a personal and prejudicial interest in item 3.1 as he lives in St Thomas Close.

2. To approve the minutes of the meeting 14 November 2007

On a proposition by Dr Rintoul, seconded by Dr McCabe the minutes of 14 November 2007 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

3. Matters arising or carried forward from the meeting or a previous meeting for discussion or decision including

3.1 (6.2.1) Northern Affordable Homes application update

Mr Charge and Mrs Morison having declared an interest left the room.

The following was noted:

- Letter dated 9 December 2007 and a plan enclosure from Mr Drummond-Hay Northern Affordable Homes (NAH)¹. It was noted that the Chairman had not received the copy addressed to her.
- The recently application had now been withdrawn.
- The Chairman and Vice-Chairman both attended the SCDC Housing Panel meeting where the application and its implications were discussed. Nigel Blazeby is to send a report of the meeting to the Parish Council.

- The Highway Department has looked at traffic/access implications and had not raised concerns. John Finney is to be asked for a copy of the CCC comments on the application.

Mr Hollick's proposal that no development at all should be permitted on this site off The Valley was not seconded. Mrs Horne proposed and Mr Rowlands seconded, that the Parish Council should only permit up to 12 rental houses and no free market dwellings, on the site. The vote was recorded as 2 in favour 4 against the remaining members abstained. Mr Hollick asked that his vote against the proposal be recorded.

With the defeat of these two motions the Parish Council's current policy and stance remains unchanged.

In response to Mr Drummond-Hay's request to install a car park on public open space in The Valley and meet with the Parish Council on a proposition by Miss Westgarth, seconded by Dr Chambers it was agreed to reply that the Parish Council would welcome an opportunity for some of its representatives to meet with him and Mr Blazeby to discuss further his plans for a smaller and revised scheme..

Given the long standing parking problems in The Valley the Parish Council has already looked into providing additional parking space on its public open space and taken legal advice on it. Regrettably the advice states 'the proposed car parking shall not exceed one-eighth of its total area or 800 square feet, whichever is the less' means that the part of the land which is to be appropriated for a car park must not exceed those limitations in relation to this particular piece of open space. For the avoidance of doubt it does not mean all of the land which has the status of open space that lies within the council's ownership'. This therefore prohibits the Parish Council supporting the suggestion of constructing, at NAH's own cost parking on the area indicated on the plan which accompanied the letter as the land is registered as public open space.

There is however a process whereby the Parish Council could change the status of the public open space but this requires advertising the intension and undertaking a consultation and if the outcome is favorable selling the land. The outcome of the consultation can not be pre-empted and at this stage the Parish Council is reluctant to enter into this process, which is costly. However it may be considered further depending on your proposals and discussions with the Parish Council's representatives. Mr Ellis, Miss Westgarth (convenor), Dr Roscoe and Dr McCabe were elected to represent the Council at this meeting.

Action: CW, HR, DE JM – next meeting

On a proposal by Miss Westgarth, seconded by Mr Ellis it was agreed that the Transport Working Group (Dr Roscoe, Cllr Harangozo, Dr Rintoul), should meet with John Finney CCC to discuss access issues to the proposed site and report back to the next Council meeting.

Action: HR, RRin – next meeting

Mr Charge and Mrs Morison rejoined the meeting.

4. County Councillor and District Councillor reports & questions

Cllr Harangozo's report² was noted. On a proposition by Miss Westgarth, seconded by Dr Chambers it was agreed to send a letter to Mr A Lansley MP informing him that the Parish Council are disappointed that Cllr Baldwin has missed so many meetings.

5. Finance, procedure & risk assessment³

- 5.0 On a proposition by Mr Ellis seconded by Dr Roscoe it was agreed that the Parish Council should include in bold after each minute where members are asked to do something an action by, initials and date by'. The vote was recorded as 11 for and 1 abstention. Members should report accordingly within the timescale agreed.

5.1 To receive the financial report and approve the payment of bills

The financial report was received and considered and checked by a member against the invoices and statements before the cheques were signed. On a proposition by Miss Westgarth, seconded by Dr Rintoul it was agreed that the payments as listed in the financial report should be paid plus: MD Landscapes £864 (grounds maintenance) and Nutcomb £178.60 (pavilion shower)

SCDC (rates)	£124.00
Royal Mail Group Ltd (post box)	£115.70
R T Abraham (handyman)	£42.00
LGS Services (admin support)	£1054.56
LG Stoehr (salary)	£207.65
A Marsh (pavilion cleaning)	£120.00

The following was noted:

- The cheque for £37.50 had been cancelled as the application cost was based on annual expenditure.
- The Quality Council application had been paid for by LGS Services and it was agreed that they would be reimbursed.
- The Chairman asked that the Council's thanks to the Clerk for all the preparation of the Quality Council application be formally recorded.

5.2 Budget 2009 - to consider if a working group should be set up & its terms of reference

On a proposition by Miss Westgarth, seconded by Mr Ellis it was agreed to set up a working group to prepare a recommendation to the next Parish Council meeting on the budget for 2009. Membership will be Mrs Morison, Mr Walsh, Mrs Horne, Dr Chambers (convenor) and Mr Rowlands. The working group meeting was arranged for Monday 7 January 2008 at 8.00pm to convene and the Clerk will prepare a copy of the baseline budget and in preparation of the meeting. The working group are to be asked to take the baseline budget consider this against the principles that were agreed last year and add any special projects etc to it before making recommendation to the Council.

Action: DM, JW, JH, CC, RRow. – next meeting

5.3 Parish Council duty Biodiversity

The Parish Council formally noted its duty⁴ and agreed to have due regard for this in its decision making process.

5.4 Leach Homes land transfer update

It was noted that work had now been completed to remove the brambles and the majority of debris from the site and given this the Council's solicitor had been advised to accept transfer of the land in accordance with the Section 106 Agreement. It was noted that the commuted sum was index linked and that Leach Homes would be responsible for the maintenance of the areas for three years from the date of the transfer. A neighbourhood dispute between a resident and Leach Homes over an overhanging tree was noted:

5.5 Quality council application update

It was noted that the application⁵ had been submitted and would be considered by the panel on 19 December.

5.6 Connections Bus

The Connections Bus report⁶ was noted. On a proposition by Miss Westgarth, it was agreed to extend the Connections Bus contract until the end of February. The budget working group are to consider the implications for the Connections Bus and youth provision generally when it considers the budget recommendation

Action: Budget working group – next meeting

6. To receive reports and members items and consider recommendations contained therein

6.1 Planning Committee including:

6.1.1 Merrys Farm Eversden – Windfarm

The Scoping Report⁷ was noted. On a proposition by Dr Chambers, seconded by Dr Roscoe it was agreed that while the list of consultees was comprehensive to reply that it should also include mobile phone operators and all parties at the radio telescope site.

6.1.2 Consultation on Planning Applications⁸

On a proposition by Dr Charge, seconded by Miss Westgarth it was agreed that the proposals appeared well structured however concern was expressed that the proposal that plans should be electronic may preclude involvement by some members of the community and that also larger paper plans were easier to follow.

6.1.3 CVC Consultation⁹

The letter from Stephen Munday outlining the Village Colleges proposal for expansion, a 6th form, the college's involvement with a proposed secondary school at Cambourne and an educational trust was considered. On a proposition by Mr. Ellis, seconded by Dr Roscoe it was agreed to reply thanking CVC for consulting with the Council but highlighting the lack of information and the short consultation time. Also advising CVC that the infrastructure is insufficient and proposed expansion and 6th form would be difficult to accommodate in Comberton due to lack of infrastructure. The vote was recorded as 9 for, 1 against and 2 abstentions.

Dr Chambers proposed that the Parish Council should support the proposal for the change of the trust status if this would help the governors manage the school more effectively and benefit the pupils directly. This was not seconded.

6.2 Affordable Housing Working Group

Nothing further to report.

6.3 Parish Plan working group

Members of this group are to consider if any of the proposals still require pursuing and if so feed a budget implication to the Budget working group.

Action by CC, CW, DE (convenor) and RRow. – 8 January

Dr Chambers and Mrs Horne left the meeting.

6.4 Assets review¹⁰

The report was considered. The Parish Council is to consider if a review of its land holdings including the Long Road Allotments site should be included the annual assets review. The work identified is to be allocated to Mr Abraham and or other contractors as appropriate in accordance with financial regulations.

6.5 Tree group

In response to a complaint received from a resident the Tree Warden, Mr Robert Cook had looked at the recently planted trees in the Valley and found that they appeared to be good strong whips. There is a little stem die-back on a couple of them, which is not likely to kill the trees. However, one on the east side of the path shows severe laceration at the base of the stem and is likely to die possibly having been hit by a mower or a strimmer. The second plant on the east has a split stem base. The injury might well be consistent with the stem being bent over, for example by vandalism or being driven over. One also shows evidence of pruning. The two damaged trees were not staked which could have contributed to the damage. It was agreed that a letter should be sent to MD Landscapes regarding the damage. This item is to be carried forward to the next meeting.

6.6 Recreation working group

Mr Rowland's reported that nothing further had happened since his last report and that another meeting with the Clubs and the Clerk was still required. The budget working group is to look at the fees and the implications for the budget when it meets.

Action: Budget working group – next meeting

6.7 Village Hall representatives report

Mr Hollick reported that the hall had been open over a year now and that it is well booked. Correspondence from Brian Cook¹¹ saying that the pipes had been lagged and the upstairs meeting room was more comfortable now and that the hearing loop had been inspected and slightly modified was noted. It was also noted that Brian Burton¹² had emailed to report that the lease had been formally vested with the Official Custodian.

7. To consider matters arising out of correspondence/communications received including

7.1 Jane Snaith - request to use recreation ground car park¹³

Dr McCabe declared a personal interest as her daughter has been invited to the wedding

In response to Mrs Snaith's request to use the recreation ground car park in August to park vehicles belonging to guests attending her daughter's wedding on a proposition by Mrs Morison, seconded by Mr Charge it was agreed that the Parish Council has no objection to Jane Snaith using the car park on the day however the car park would also be open to members of the public and the clubs as normal. The vote was recorded as 11 for and 1 against.

7.2 South Street notice board site

It was noted that Land Registry had written confirming that the Parish Council is now the registered proprietor of the land. Thanks were expressed to all those who assisted with the matter.

8. Closure of meeting

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 10.05pm.

SignedChairmandate

NB:

- Unless indicated otherwise all actions arising from the Council's decisions in these minutes will be carried out by the Clerk as Proper Officer on the Parish Council's behalf as part of her normal duties
- These reports are listed as background information to the correspondence and documents that the Council considered and do not form part of the minutes.

¹ Letter dated /12/07 and a plan enclosure from Mrs S Hyde re:Northern Affordable Homes application

² Mrs Hyde's Report on District/County Councillors

³ Finance, procedure & risk assessment

⁴ Parish Council duty Biodiversity

⁵ Quality council application update

⁶ Connections Bus Report

⁷ Merrys Farm Eversden – Wind farm - Scoping Report

⁸ Consultation on Planning Applications

⁹ CVC Consultation

¹⁰ Assets review

¹¹ Correspondence from Brian Cook re: village hall - lagging of pies etc

¹² E-mail Brian Burton confirming VH lease has been formally vested with Official Custodian

¹³ Jane Snaith - request to use recreation ground car park