

MINUTES OF THE CROSSWAYS PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT 7PM THURSDAY
31st MARCH 2011 IN THE VILLAGE HALL

Present: Cllr Andrew Brewer (Chairman) Cllr Terrie Connor (Vice Chairman) Cllr Elaine Stenning (Vice Chairman (Finance)), Cllr Daphne Bearman, Cllr Dave Harris (Chairman, Sports Field Management Committee) Cllr Ted Rowley, Cllr Barry Thomas, Cllr Ron Arnold and Cllr Kathy Foster

PUBLIC INFORMATION ANNOUNCEMENTS There were no public announcements.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PERIOD

a. Representation on Item 11c was received from residents who asked the Council to object to this application giving their reasons; those being that the development did not enhance the natural beauty of the area, and quoting similar applications which were subject to a considerable longer consultancy period. Concerns were also raised about the adequate screening and the impact this screening would have on the vista of the area, and the possible change of use impact once the solar farm ceased to operated.

b. Item 11b – Cllr Stenning advised that the plans to be reviewed under this item were merely showing drainage and did not need any further discussion.

REPORT BY COMMUNITY POLICE OFFICER PCSO Vickie Hedges spoke about the glass on the MUGA incident which will noted in the Chairman's report and advised the Police are still hoping to speak to one other person involved in the incident. PCSO Hedges also spoke about the PACT events held in the Library and the impact the Library closure would have on the children who regularly use the Library for events such as these.

REPORT BY COUNTY COUNCILLOR Attached at Annex A

REPORT BY DISTRICT COUNCILLORS Cllr Seall's report to follow.

REPORT BY LIZ CALLISTER – AD LIB/CHAIRMAN FRIENDS OF CROSSWAYS LIBRARY Councillors agreed to hear this report under Item 8. Liz's full report is at Annex B to these minutes.

THE MEETING

ITEM 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE No apologies were received.

ITEM 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

a. Cllr Brewer declared a Personal and Prejudicial interest in Item 13 and elected to leave the room whilst this item was discussed.

b. Cllr Brewer declared a Personal and Prejudicial interest in Item 11c as the Group Scout Leader to Scouts with an interested in Brownjohns Copse which abuts the area of land under discussion.

c. Cllr Stenning declared a personal interest in Item 11b electing to stay in the room but not take part in any discussion.

d. Cllr Arnold declared a Personal and Prejudicial interest in Item 11c living abutting the site and elected to leave the room whilst this item was discussed.

ITEM 3 DECLARATIONS OF PREDETERMINATION There were no Declarations of Predetermination.

ITEM 4 TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING – 24th FEBRUARY 2011
The minutes of this meeting were accepted as a true record and duly signed.

Proposed: Cllr Rowley

Seconded: Cllr Stenning

AGREED

ITEM 5 MATTERS ARISING There were no matters arising.

ITEM 6 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT Most issues which have been brought to me since the last meeting are already covered in tonight's agenda or reports that have been received. I commend the work of the Friends of Crossways Library and the ongoing campaign and thanks to Cllr Rowley for liaising on behalf of the Council. There is such a plethora of information and yet more surveys and questionnaires and I wonder if my fellow Councillors have a feeling of 'déjà vu' as I think we have been through these consultations the last time our Library was threatened with closure. But

do you, like me, wonder how much all of this is costing or where the value for money was when this was carried out before ?

I received notification from our Community Support Officer regarding broken glass on the skate bowl. Thanks to Stella the area was cleared promptly and I am grateful to her for responding so quickly. A week or so later a young man was brought by his Father to my door to apologise for his part in what had happened. Having already been spoken to by the police he came to apologise to me as representative of the council. His Father had imposed an additional punishment to grounding and asked if he could accompany his son around the village to do 14 hours of litter picking. The young man was told in no uncertain terms that his action and that of others had been very silly and dangerous and could have caused serious injury. I gather that another young man involved is from another village and has received a similar visit and warning. I have asked Vickie to keep me posted on all actions but I reiterate the Council's policy that we will not hesitate to use legal means to protect the property we hold in trust for the village. I am also painfully aware that the actions of a minority give credence to those who were opposed to this development. As with the Dorchester skate bowl and others an early message needs to be sent to those who are determined to damage that this will not be tolerated.

The clerk has also received a suggestion from Broadway Malyan about the possibility of a meeting to update us on West Dorset District Council's planning policy. I must admit I did query this as I feel that the Council already keep us fully in the loop. The Company are obviously looking to future planning applications however I gather there is no pressing needs in that regard. I hope Council will agree in the need to balance courtesy to Broadway Malyan without conveying support either implicitly or overtly towards any further building in Crossways. I do not feel that we fully know how the community would react to large scale development. I have suggested that any such update would be more appropriate after elections have taken place in May. I also think the 'new' Council needs to engage with WDDC to begin consulting our electorate to establish a new community design statement.

The new arrangements with DCC regarding the grass cutting commences tomorrow and I foresee the reduction in the number of cuts will lead to comment and complaint as it cannot be to the same level of service that we obtained through Steve Manuel. This will be a case of 'watch this space' or 'watch the grass grow – because it will be a long time until it is cut !'

The Council has received an invitation to a gathering at the First School to mark the wedding of Prince William to Miss Catharine Middleton on 29 April in the afternoon. I am sure we all wish the event well as well as to the couple themselves.

ITEM 7 TO CONSIDER COMMUNITY RESILIENCE PLANNING LETTER It was agreed to contact the Operations Manager at WDDC and review the plan for Crossways.

ACTION: Clerk/Cllr Brewer/New Emergency Contact Officer Post May 2011 Annual Meeting

ITEM 8 TO CONSIDER DCC LIBRARY SERVICE CONSULTATION AND COLLATE RESPONSE TO THE EXPRESSION OF INTEREST/INTENT QUESTIONNAIRE

The meeting was suspended to allow participation by Liz Callister, Chairman FOCL and Cllr Crowhurst.

Cllr Brewer asked Mrs Callister to advise the Council on the response to the questionnaire and thanked her for her comprehensive reports. Cllr Brewer agreed the request to hold a public meeting* with members and officers from DCC, the Friends of Crossways Library, and interested parties from surrounding parishes effected by the proposed closure of Crossways Library. Liz Callister's report is attached at Annex B to these minutes.

ACTION: LIZ CALLISTER/CLERK/CLLR CROWHURST/LIBRARY SERVICES DCC

* **Post meeting note:** The public meeting will be held at 7pm in the Village Hall on Monday 23rd May.

ITEM 9 TO RECEIVE AND ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE SPORTS FIELD MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE DATED 22ND FEBRUARY 2011 – CLLR HARRIS presented the minutes for approval.

Cllr Stenning asked Councillors to consider the item regarding the accounts and were supplied with a copy of the account in question. Cllr Arnold questioned if the balances of the account included monies raised by the fund raising committee were still held in this account. The Clerk advised that all funding raised for the MUGA and Skate Bowl was spent on same. Cllr Arnold questioned Item 9 'Tennis storage' stating Maverick were contracted to supply this storage container. The Clerk was unable to confirm and agreed to check. Cllr Harris advised that he and Cllr Thomas had visited Outdoor Gyms and their report would be taken to the next Sports Field Management Committee.

The minutes were accepted.

Proposed Cllr Connor, seconded Cllr Foster
Cllr Arnold voted against acceptance



David Crowhurst **Reports to Parish Councils**

The following report gives a snapshot over main heads of activity within the County and the area that I cover. The report has been circulated to each Parish Council Clerk for the information of members. It should help to limit the time taken to report at the meeting, but with the opportunity for members of the Parish Council to ask questions.

Funding and Salary and Wage increases

The latest information on Council Tax increases for 2010-11 shows a range of increases for County Councils of 0% to 3.5%. At 2.97% Dorset's increase is towards the upper end of this range. In the past Dorset has received the lowest amount of grant per head of population of any of the shire counties with the result that a higher proportion of our net expenditure has fallen upon local taxpayers. The government formula for grant distribution includes a 'resources' element that attempts to equalise the effect of differences in tax base across the country. The effect of this is that those councils with high rateable values receive a lower level of grant compared to those with low rateable values. Unfortunately the complexity of this formula, together with other elements to cover certain needs e.g. deprivation factors, tends to favour urban rather than rural areas. This Council has consistently lobbied for a fairer distribution of government grant, and at the last review of the formula in 2007 we began to see some improvement. This has resulted in a better grant settlement for Dorset (we are now only the third lowest county in terms of grant per head). However, in order to protect the losers under the new formula Dorset is obliged to pay back around 11% of its grant into a protection Fund which is distributed to other councils. In 2010/11 and 2011/12 Dorset will be contributing around £7m each year to the Fund.

Of the increase in council tax, around 1% is attributable to the estimated cost of pay and price increases. Most of the remaining increase is due to the cost of meeting service pressures, mainly in the areas of Child Protection and Adult Social Care as a result of a growing population and increasing demands. Other factors include commitments arising from financing the cost of capital projects to replace and improve our buildings and roads, and meeting the extra costs of waste disposal e.g. landfill tax increases.

The national pay settlement for local government employees last year was just over 1%. Chief officers including the Chief Executive received no increase. Next year it is likely that there will be no increase for local government employees generally and for the following two years the Chancellor in his Pre Budget Report in December announced a cap of 1% per annum on public sector pay.

Press reports regarding the proposal to publicise the salaries of those earning over £50,000 per annum are misleading. At no stage has this Council sought to suppress any information regarding the remuneration of such employees. We simply responded to the government consultation on this matter to suggest that post titles be used instead of names. In fact details of the salaries and benefits paid to the County Councils directors and the Chief Executive are already published on our web site www.dorsetforyou.com, and are freely available for people to see.

The County Council have resolved that any increase in the level of members' allowances should be linked to the annual pay settlement for local government officers which, this year, is set to be 0%.

Youth Offending

As a result of a recent inspection the County Youth Offending Team were rated at the highest level for organisation and performance.

Children in Care Council

In February the Council was formed and involves 23 young people working together to improve circumstances for young people in care in Dorset. The charity Action for Children has been commissioned to take the work forward.

No Excuses

Excessive speed on the roads in Dorset, particularly through villages, continues to be high on the list for members in their divisions. The exercise carried out during February and March this year involving the Police and County Council was aimed at reducing the level of Killed and Seriously Injured on the roads of Dorset. Using the latest technology a number of offences were identified including no insurance, no licence and use of mobile phones while driving. Around 10% of motorists stopped were not wearing seat belts. A car was stopped that had been travelling at 95mph on the dual carriageway approaching Overmoigne. Residents in Warmwell have commenced their work of monitoring speed through the Village. Using hand held devices vehicle speeds are recorded and details forwarded to the Police who then follow up with appropriate action.

Friends of Crossways Library (FCL) Report–March 31st 2011

Update on campaign to date

1. As per the report given to Crossways Parish Council in February, an invitation was sent to all of the Parish Councils in the catchment area for Crossways Library to attend a meeting on March 23rd with the Friends of Crossways Library Committee (FCL) in Crossways to discuss the Library Service proposals, to share the views of AdLib and to ascertain their views as to the situation. Co-incidentally, an invitation was also sent by the County Library Service to the Friends groups and Parish/Town Councils of the 20 affected libraries to attend a consultation meeting on the same day.
2. Two FCL Committee members and a Crossways Parish Councillor attended the DLS consultation meeting in Dorchester. All 20 libraries were well represented. The aim of the consultation was for the Library Service to ascertain our views on their three proposals for the future of the Library Service. It was made very clear by all present that the desired outcome for the 20 libraries was to continue the service as before with no libraries being forced to close. The question was raised as to why all 34 libraries were not being consulted at the same time and the reply was that they felt they needed to consult with the 14 libraries separately. The meeting was informed that further consultations were planned to include the 14 libraries and by sending out questionnaires to members of libraries, members of the public and that Parish/Town Councils were going to be approached to offer expressions of interest in taking over their library by the 5th May 2011. By the end of the meeting the DLS agreed they would hold a further consultation meeting with all 34 libraries present.

The outcome of the meeting from the 20 libraries' point of view was that given the current level of statistics, financial information and the lack of detail about how communities could take over their library this option would need far more work before any proper decisions could be made.

A proposal was made from the floor directly to the County Councillors present that as it had become clear during the course of the consultation that there were two competing objectives under discussion - one to make immediate budget reductions and the other to recommend a strategy for a new Library Service to avoid the need to repeat the situation the DLS find themselves in currently it was obvious that a quick fix plus a long term strategy were required. The proposal was that as it is a totally unrealistic expectation to present a new Library service strategy under the current time limit that the elected members consider implementing the AdLib proposals for the financial year 2012/13 which would give the savings they have to achieve and then use this time plus the financial year 2011/12 to put in place a properly planned strategy for the future that treats all 34 libraries in the same way and achieves their objective of not having to come back time and again with plans to close libraries because of budget constraints. This proposal met with unanimous approval from the floor and appeared to have been taken on board by both Library Service staff and County Councillors as the questionnaires to the public that had been circulated were withdrawn and new questionnaires invite respondents to give their views on two proposals - the DLS one and the AdLib one.

3. The FCL Committee went ahead with their consultation the evening of the same day with Parish Council representatives from Crossways, Owermoigne and an observer from Moreton present. The importance of all the PCs engaging with the County Council consultation process was agreed especially as the FCL has no authority as a statutory body. Although the Councillors present could not speak for their full Council their feeling was that with the current lack of detail it would be very difficult to agree to taking over Crossways Library. The councillors present agreed to explain the position to their individual PCs to ensure their engagement and input. It was agreed that a copy of the Bridge article will be sent to other Parish magazines for circulation to ensure all Crossways Library users are kept informed.
4. Councillor Crowhurst has offered to meet with the community to ascertain our views and I would strongly urge we take up that offer as soon as possible either as a joint PC and FCL meeting or a public meeting.

FCL Update

1. We are now a fully recognised Friends group by DLS. Members are entitled to one free DVD hire for every three they currently hire. We are able to use the Library for functions and events free of charge and can hold such meetings outside of library opening hours.
2. The problems regarding the training for volunteers to extend the opening hours for the library have now been resolved and training is taking place. The Library will open an additional 4 ½ hours per week from mid May.

Liz Callister
Chairman of the Friends of Crossways Library
31st March 2011

Additional information for consideration of the request for the expression of interest

The offers:

Proposal 1.

The proposal omits to mention the fact that closing the 20 libraries will remove Internet access via the Library network in their area, the Peoples Network. Thus people in rural areas who do not have a computer with an Internet access connection will be cut off from the Internet access altogether unless they visit 'a town or market town'.

The 'Community Library' concept put forward by the Library Service is a local Book Club, which would not attract support from a community stripped of its local library. The one county to have established genuine community libraries is Buckinghamshire. This has three such libraries, Chalfont St. Giles, Little Chalfont and West Wycombe. Initially the Bucks Library Service charged for any library services required by the three. This involved the three sites in fund raising on a heroic scale. One thing that all three are agreed upon is that community libraries can only function if they have access to the central Library system that provides stock control and stock issue. This then enables a common library ticket across both Public and Community libraries, the return of books at any library, and book return to the 'owning' library. While all three libraries received local community donations with a selection of fiction paperbacks, there were problems with children's books (received in poor and unusable condition), and large print books and audio books (essentially none). Because of the self achieved success of the three libraries, Bucks have completely changed their approach to setting up further community libraries. They are now offering access to the central library computer system, so that a common library card can be used, and it is possible to reserve/borrow books via the community libraries. Funding is also provided for some specific services. Currently there is also a 'start up' grant offered by the County Council.

At the time of the Efficiency Review, Cambridgeshire had developed the Library Access Point (LAP) library. Dorset rejected this approach, without giving reasons. There are 9 such libraries operating within the Cambridgeshire Public Library service and they have arrived at a situation similar to the current Bucks community libraries. The LAPs started with access to the central Library system, so have a common ticket across both Public and LAP libraries. The Library Service provides a stock of 1000 books a year which are rotated in 100 book lots around the 9 LAPs on a monthly basis. Volunteers operate the LAPs, with about half trained to use the Library system. The volunteers are responsible for the upkeep and operation of the building. Some Parish Councils give a grant for this.

In the light of these models, if the Dorset Library Service is serious about community libraries it needs to investigate the Buckingham and Cambridge experiences, and define far more clearly what is meant by the term 'community library'. There also needs to be consideration of the possible need of independent community libraries to obtain a Public Lending licence. We are awaiting a reply from Burton Bradstock Friends group who are investigating this issue.

It is clear that if the current Dorset Library Service proposal were feasible then the community library model of independently operated 'libraries' would result in 21 library systems in Dorset which cannot be described as the 'efficient' service required by the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums act. Furthermore, the consultation period given of 13 weeks to allow 20 libraries to prepare detailed proposals that are 'realistic, achievable, timely and sustainable' and have them reviewed and discussed with the Policy Development Panel (PDP) would require the PDP to be in constant session.

The suggestion that the use of Mobile Libraries could provide an additional library service in the areas where the libraries are closed is difficult to sustain. There are 4 Mobile libraries which work 9 days out of 10 per fortnight, except the Bridport one which seems to work 8 days out of 10. Analysis of their routes shows that they achieve at best about 4 hours 20 minutes 'library time' per day. If all the Mobile Libraries were devoted to supporting the 20 'closed library' communities, then the total time generated would at a maximum be about 76 hours of 'library time'. This compares with the 291 hours a week when the 20 libraries are open. Clearly this total commitment of the Mobile Libraries will not happen. If all 15, 20, 25 and 30 minute stops (193) on the current routes were scrapped then this would release about 36 hours a week at best. It is clearly unacceptable to the 20 libraries to be offered a vague and unspecified 'local' service. At this stage the current recipients of the Mobile Library service are not fully aware of the proposals so they need to be told how they would be affected rather than be faced by a last minute fait accompli. As a matter of urgency the Library Service need to spell out what time periods they propose to provide as a local service for the 20 libraries facing closure and its impact on the current Mobile Library service.

There have been press reports that statements have been made that the virtual digital library service (e-books and e-audio books) could be used to provide a component of a library service in place of the closed libraries. Figures from 2009/2010 show that the 20 Ad Lib libraries were issuing approximately 10,118 books a week. A series of 'snap-shots' of the e-book library show that the most used sections have about 115 out of 297 titles available for downloading at any one time. Given that this service covers all 34 libraries, the numbers speak for themselves.

Option 2. Ad Lib has clearly stated that it accepts that savings must be made. What we strongly oppose is the means by which the Library Service proposes to achieve these savings. Closing the 20 libraries (60% of the network) in favour of 14 libraries 'centred in the towns and market towns' of Dorset is starkly discriminatory of rural areas and was last attempted with 14 libraries in the Efficiency Review (2006). It was rejected at that time. If the 20 libraries were closed they would be lost forever, and it is unnecessary course of action. The AdLib strategy would spread the reductions, keep all 34 libraries open and enable the officers and elected members of the DLS to properly consider the future of the library service which may well mean rebuilding the libraries the economy recovers.

The Ad Lib strategy is to spread the reductions over all the libraries by reducing the hours at all 34 libraries by 10%, reducing HQ costs by 10%, reducing the book fund by 40%.

Liz Callister

Chairman of the Friends of Crossways Library

31.3.2011