

QUORNDON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Quorn Parish Council held on Tuesday 3rd June 2003.

PRESENT

Cllr J Hutchinson (Chairman)	Cllr Mrs J Backus
Cllr P Child (Vice-chairman)	Cllr T Tyler
Cllr I Bexon	Cllr K Croysdale
Cllr Mrs S Templeman	Cllr Mrs E Harrison
Cllr J Maltby	Cllr Mrs J Bloodworth
Cllr T Stirling (arrived after the Barrow Road discussion)	

Fenella Bellinger – landscape architect
Richard Guise – footpath warden
Members of the public

County Councillor T Kershaw
Borough Councillor R Shepherd

03/72 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from the police and Borough Councillor D Slater.

03/73 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13th MAY 2003

The Minutes of the previous meeting were approved and signed as a correct record subject to the following amendments:

03/60 Appointment of committees – The Finance and Village Hall committees are now properly constituted committees

03/64 (3) Barrow Road closure – Cllr Mrs Harrison's name added to the list of those who abstained from voting.

03/74 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Further to last month's meeting when the view was expressed that Cllr Stirling may have a personal and prejudicial interest in the Barrow Road experimental closure, the Chairman and the Clerk met with Mrs Christine Taylor, the Standards Monitoring Officer at Charnwood Borough Council.

It was Mrs Taylor's opinion upon the facts presented, that Cllr Stirling does have a personal interest which is also prejudicial and he should have left the council chamber and taken no part in the debate.

It is incumbent upon the Council to report alleged breaches of the code of conduct to the Standards Board, and this has been done on behalf of the Council by the Chairman. An acknowledgement of the complaint has been received with the note that the board aims to make a decision within 20 working days.

Barrow Road – members interests

The Clerk read out the following statement:

Each councillor must ask him or herself the following questions:

'Do I live or own a business in a property on a road which has been affected either adversely or positively by the temporary road closure? Have I noticed a difference in traffic flows or movements since the implementation of the order?'

If the answer is 'yes' you have a personal interest which you must declare. If you then consider that your interest is such that you may be perceived to have your ability to make judgments or decisions about the future of Barrow Road impaired, then you have a prejudicial interest and you must withdraw from the room and take no part in the debate or any subsequent voting.

Cllr Mrs Backus reiterated her personal interest in Barrow Road and chose to leave the room during the discussion and voting.

03/75 POLICING MATTERS

There were no policing matters raised.

03/76 MATTERS ARISING

- 1 Village Hall subcommittee. The Minutes of the meeting held on 19th May had been previously circulated. Cllr Tyler has been requested to act as Vice-chairman of the committee.
- 2 Barrow Road closure Cllr Hutchinson reported that the Clerk was unable to cope with the constant request for information and responses to letters, telephone calls and e-mails received about the road closure from residents. He noted that she was concerned that the rest of the parish work was suffering due to the amount of time being spent on Barrow Road. It was agreed that the Clerk should attend to work and business authorised only by the Council on the Barrow Road issue.

A report of a meeting held on 21st May with Leicestershire County Council officers, County Councillor Kershaw and representatives of the Parish Council had been enclosed with the Minutes.

Cllr Bexon read a prepared statement:

‘Mr Chairman,

In the past two years or so, the Council has vigorously explored every suggestion put forward for ameliorating the traffic problems in Barrow Road in an attempt to find a compromise solution. Calming, cameras, speed limits and a dozen other potential options have ultimately proved to be implausible, impractical, unacceptable or unattainable. The recent Annual Parish Meeting expressed no enthusiasm for yet another trial based on a ‘half-closure’ idea at the Farley Way roundabout. We are therefore left only with closure or (at least for the time being) doing nothing. But making that decision has proved controversial.

Thus far I have abstained from voting in Council on the Barrow Road closure issue because I had concerns about the consultation process and its outcome. Echoing this, all the parties involved have subsequently criticised the survey and the decisions made on the basis of it, culminating in some rather unsavoury scenes at the recent Annual Parish Meeting.

In particular, legitimate concerns have been expressed about:

The questions asked in the consultation survey
The nature of the sample polled and the low level of response
The interpretation of the result, the conclusions reached and the decisions made on the basis of those conclusions.

I believe that the Council has to react to these concerns, and re-establish the basis on which a final decision on the closure issue be made’.

It was proposed by Cllr Bexon, seconded by Cllr Maltby and resolved to suspend Standing Orders.

It was proposed by Cllr Bexon, seconded by Cllr Croysdale and resolved that all decisions and recommendations presently made by Council in respect of the Barrow Road closure be rescinded in order to facilitate a review and a re-examination of the issues and, if appropriate, to undertake a more acceptable, more transparent but binding, consultation exercise on whether to close Barrow Road to through traffic, or not.

Cllr Child commented that it was clear that the previous consultation was less than perfect. He noted however, that the exercise was carried out by Parish Councillors without professional assistance. The response was poor and the

questions were too complex. It was noted that at the Annual Parish Meeting there was a consensus that acceptance would be given to the result of another consultation asking a simpler question such as ‘do you want Barrow Road closed or not?’

Cllr Child proposed, seconded by Cllr Mrs Harrison that a door to door referendum be carried out with the question asked ‘do you want Barrow Road closed to through traffic?’ The Clerk as an independent person will visit each person on the electoral roll within the previous consultation area of Barrow Road and the feeder roads off it twice. If she has not ascertained the elector’s view on the second visit – a form will be left inviting a vote before the end of the consultation period – 27th June. The Council will abide by the majority vote of the referendum. The proposal was carried unanimously.

- 3 Footpath Wardens. Richard Guise presented a comprehensive report on the condition of footpaths within the parish. Mr. Guise highlighted two problems which require urgent attention: K33 (near Beacon View Farm) is impeded in two places by a mound of earth and a barbed wire and electric fence and the gates on K43 (Meynell Road to the Slabs) are in a dangerous condition. The Clerk will forward the report to the footpaths officer at Melton with the request for immediate action. The report will be left for the council to consider.

Laurence Coe, the other new volunteer footpath warden has offered to lead an annual parish walk around the boundaries. Cllr Bexon recalled the Council previous intention of publishing a pamphlet on walks of interest around the village. He felt that this could be achieved with the input of Peter Gamble for environmental and conservation features and Don Wix for historical notes. Mr. Guise agreed to give this idea his consideration.

It was noted that Keith Collie on behalf of the explorer scouts would be prepared to assist in any future footpath project.

- 4 FLAG grant Fenella Bellinger, the landscape architect appointed by the Council presented a draft landscaping ‘vision’ for the village. Due to the scale of the proposals, it would only be possible to implement one part of the scheme in this financial year and qualify for the maximum FLAG grant of £50,000. After discussion it was agreed that the Jubilee Gardens/Church Lane area would comprise this year’s application. Time is of the essence since the last meeting of the grant committee is due to meet in mid-June. It was proposed by Cllr Mrs Backus, seconded by Cllr Mrs Harrison and resolved that an application be made to the FLAG grant scheme in line with costings on the project to be prepared by Fenella Bellinger.
- 5 Staff contracts of employment The staff contracts of employment are yet to be received. Cllr Bexon noted that he had recently spoken to Mr Roy Jessop who

assured him that they are nearly completed.

- 6 Audit Course Due to the problems experienced last year by so many local councils in completing the new audit regulations, a course was held in Leicester and the Clerk, Cllr Bexon and Mr Southwart attended. Mr Southwart has since e-mailed the council warning that a risk assessment must encompass more than financial implications as in the public perception of the council over the Barrow Road issue. Cllr Bexon commented that the feed back from the course implied that a risk assessment can cover as little or much as desired. The current risk assessment has satisfied the audit on last year's accounts
- 7 Christmas lights Cllr Mrs Templeman reported that the Borough Council holds an 'assistance to parishes' fund from which a grant of up to £2,000 may be available in matched funding for Christmas lighting. Quotes and designs are being sought from three companies. Cllr Mrs Bloodworth noted that the businesses in the centre of the village have indicated a willingness in principle to support new lighting.
- 8 Artists in Quorn Cllr Mrs Backus has referred this matter back to the Council as she felt in retrospect that the Council should continue to fund the donation to the Sileby Photographic Society for the loan of the display screens. The exhibition is advertised as a Parish Council sponsored event and she requests that the donation be given out of the small grants fund. It was agreed to make a donation of £40 out of the Parish Council fund.
- 9 CCTV Cllr Croysdale has undertaken some investigation into the provision of CCTV in the village. He estimates the cost to be between £1,000-£1,500. Any scheme must have the approval of the police and be for a trial period. The risks were assessed as a) cost b) statutory signage c) legal implications and d) possible conflict with the Jubilee Gardens project. A working party of Cllrs Croysdale, Mrs Harrison and Mrs Templeman would meet to discuss and explore these risks.
- 10 Signage for new Epinal Way extension A strongly worded letter will be sent to Leicestershire County Council deploring the size and intrusiveness of the new signs on the bypass and in the area of the new road. .
- 11 Rawlins hanging baskets. A letter of thanks has been received from Mr John Siddons for the grant towards the hanging baskets
- 12 Fund raising for the May Fair Cllr Mrs Bloodworth is organizing a bric-a-brac market to raise funds for the May Fair. It was agreed that the Parish Council would control the event for insurance purposes.

03/77 COUNTY COUNCIL MATTERS

- 1 Request for pedestrian crossing at Farley Way. The department of Highways, Transportation and Waste Management has agreed to undertake traffic counts at the crossroads to determine whether the site meets the criteria for a pedestrian crossing. A request will be made that the count is undertaken at the beginning or end of the school day, when the danger is at its peak.
- 2 Leics & Rutland Minerals Local Plan – key issues consultation. Tabled for information
- 3 ‘Branchline’ magazine. Tabled for information
- 4 Bus shelter outside Rawlins. County Councillor Kershaw reported that the shelter would be removed and replaced with one without end panels or seats. The suggestion was made that the shelter should be repositioned so that it is cantilevered across the pavement thus preventing an obscured view from the college. It was hoped that the redundant shelter might be relocated to Wood Lane, where requests for a shelter have been received.

03/78 BOROUGH COUNCIL MATTERS

- 1 Charnwood Wildlife Project. Officers have written to inform the parish of a survey of 200+ year old trees as part of the Biodiversity Action Plan. Another survey to identify Japanese knotweed infestation is also underway. The footpath officers will be alerted.
- 2 Street cleansing. The streets should be cleaned on a 12 week cycle but Cllr Stirling did not believe that the village has been cleaned at all this year. The Clerk had made inquiries and Quorn is scheduled for cleaning during week 10 which is in a couple of weeks time. Cllr Shepherd noted that he has arranged for extra cleaning on Orchard Estate and that the Borough Council has agreed to monitor the cleanliness of the area. Cllr Shepherd agreed to arrange for a ‘user-friendly’ street cleaning schedule to be forwarded to the parish.
- 3 The new Mayor of Charnwood A letter introducing Cllr Jack Moore as the new Mayor of Charnwood has been received.

03/79 CORRESPONDENCE

- 1 Cossington Civic Service An invitation to attend Cossington Civic Service on 15th June has been received. Cllr and Mrs T Tyler agreed to attend.
- 2 Leicestershire Crime Stoppers – appeal for funding Deferred for Cllr Mrs Harrison to

make inquiries as to the nature of the group and its activities.

3 Rural Leicestershire Annual Conference Previous attendance at this conference has demonstrated that it is directed at rural communities and not appropriate for Quorn.

4 Mr M Wright. Mr Wright has written to the Council expressing his concern that the Council seems to hold the dam/weir through Stafford Orchard responsible as one of the primary causes of surface water flooding in the village. Mr Wright suggests that there may be an issue with the efficiency of the non-return flap in the stream. It was noted that this dam or weir was never the subject of the debate, Members felt that the problems were being caused by a dam artificially created in the Quorn Park estate, affecting the Elms Drive area of the village. Mr Wright's comments over the efficiency of the flaps will be referred to Severn Trent and the Environment Agency.

5 Mr Chris Rigby has e-mailed the Council requesting permission for a hot-air balloon to launch from the park. This has been allowed in the past. Mr Rigby assures the Council of his insurance cover and that all precautions will be taken. Agreed to trial for a six-month period.

6 Station Road new planters Some of the residents on Station Road have liaised with Cllr Mrs Backus and offered to plant and maintain the flower beds which form part of the Station Road entrance. This was gratefully accepted

7 Mr Byron Chatburn has e-mailed the Council indicating his daughter's willingness become involved with plans to extend the youth provision to include for the mid-age range of 10-14yrs. It was suggested that she be put in touch with Alan Wills, the Youth Tutor at Rawlins. Cllr Croysdale wished to become involved with the project. It was noted however, that there is only limited budget allocation for play provision this year.

8 L&RAPLC is running a one-evening course for new councillors during July. It was agreed to fund Cllrs Stirling and Mrs Bloodworth's attendance at a cost of £10 each.

9 CPRE The annual meeting of the local branch is due to take place at Holly Hayes in Birstall on 11th June. Cllrs Child and Croysdale agreed to attend.

03/80 PARISH COUNCIL AGENDA (Cllr K Croysdale)

Cllr Croysdale felt that a 'vast amount of trivial communications' is discussed by the Parish Council and that the meetings go on for far too long. He proposed that County and Borough correspondence is listed or summarised by the Clerk and only discussed if a Councillor or the Clerk deems it necessary. All other correspondence is copied and sent out in advance with the agenda if appropriate and then just listed on the agenda. No item of correspondence to be included if not received prior to the setting of the Agenda.

Cllr Croysdale also proposed that committee reports should just comprise a statement by the Chairman, not to be contributed to by other members of the subcommittee nor the

debate to be repeated in Council. A statement of recommendations to the Council to be highlighted in the Committee Minutes or report. Any Other Business to be deleted. A break of 10minutes at a suitable time during the evening and water on the table was also proposed.

These proposals were seconded by Cllr Stirling and agreed by Council.

03/81 CONFIDENTIAL ITEM (APPENDED FOR MEMBERS ONLY)

03/82 PLANNING MATTERS

The following applications were considered but no comment passed to the planning authority other than those applications for new dwellings where it will be noted that the Parish Council does not consider that the village facilities can cope with any new development:

03/1225 Erection of two storey extension to side of semi-detached house at 7 Poulteney Drive, Quorn

03/1271 Erection of single storey extension to side and rear of village hall and alterations to improve access at Village Hall, Leicester Road, Quorn

03/83 PAYMENTS

The following payments were approved:

Allianze & Cornhill - insurance	£2,620.73
Post Office – redirection service	£21.60
L&RAPLC – audit notes x 3	£35.97
CBC – May Fair road closure	£225.00
E Hassall & Son – Station Road entrance	£14,653.86
J Hutchinson – chairman’s allowance	£350.00
BT x 3	£301.38
Quorn Home & Garden – summer planting	£599.60
Salaries & expenses	£2,233.97
Inland Revenue	£740.69
Sibley Photographic Society	£40.00
E Wodke – returned deposit	£30.00

TOTAL = £21,852.80

03/84 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

The meeting concluded at 22.20

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Chairman.....

Date.....