

LYDFORD PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Held in The Nicholls Hall
Tuesday 20th September 2005

89-2005 Present:

Mrs L Cole: Mrs P Martyn: Mrs K Boyd (Vice-Chairman): Mrs S Holland:
Mrs L Ellicott: Mr S Powne (Chairman): Mr P Fletcher
Mr DG Evans (Clerk)

Parishioners in attendance:

Fifteen members of the public were present, Cllrs A Hosking DCC &
R Williamson WDBC and Mr J Packer Housing manager WDBC

90-2005 Apologies for absence:

None

91-2005 Parishioners and Visitors time:

91.1 The Chairman welcomed Mr J Packer and the members of the public, he explained about the recent housing survey conducted by WDBC and read out an e-mail from Cllr Williamson to a Dick Eberlie which had been copied to the PC. In it Cllr Williamson intimates that he has been instrumental in getting Lydford identified as a priority area for six new homes to meet local need. The Chairman then offered the floor to Mr Packer. Mr Packer stated that WDBC is striving to put solutions into place to satisfy rural need and that Cllr Williamsons comments are correct and that he (Cllr Williamson) has requested that WDBC support this need. However, as earlier plans for this had fallen through because of a lack of suitable sites it was unlikely to be forthcoming at this point. He stated that potential sites and the money to develop them need finding first. Mr Packer then explained that the results of the survey showed that ten people needed housing now or within the next five years and of these 80% wished to live in Lydford. This figure is then reduced to fulfil the DNPA requirement of having lived, or worked, in the village for five years. WDBC then call on their experience in other cases which suggests that only 50% of these will require housing and arrive at a final figure, which in Lydford's case would be six. The Chairman asked if these would be for rent or available to purchase. Mr Packer stated that the majority would wish to purchase however as 48% of respondents earn less than the minimum figure needed to arrange a mortgage, it was felt that the final figure would be four for rent and two for shared ownership purchase. The Chairman sought clarification of the criteria for the renting/buying of these properties. Mr Packer detailed DNPA requirements regarding 'exception sites' and that the five year residency/working requirement would be controlled under a section 106 agreement. He reiterated that for anyone to be considered for this form of housing they would have had to have lived or worked in the parish for a minimum of five years. Mrs Ellicott queried that as 84% of the respondents to the survey are retired this highlights the need for sheltered accommodation. Mr Packer stated that WDBC no longer provide sheltered accommodation and prefer to refer to it as 'supported housing'. The aim being to bring support from outside rather than have support on site, this meant that their was nothing to stop these proposed houses being occupied by retired people.

91.1 Contd. Mrs Ellicott questioned why current property owners would be given the opportunity to occupy affordable housing when they would have an asset to sell which would enable them to afford main stream housing. She continued by reiterating the need, as clearly identified in the survey, for some form of sheltered housing in the village. Mrs Holland, along with all parishioners present, agreed stating that many people can't cope with their current situation, need help but wish to stay in the village. She enquired why, when the survey indicates that this need exists, it is not being considered, in fact you (Mr Packer) are saying that it will not be built. Mrs Holland questioned having the survey in the first place if, no matter what the results show, WDBC ignore them and state that this is what you will get, regardless of identified need. Mrs Ellicott again stated that if people own an asset in a large house they can afford to buy a smaller house and have no need to rent an 'affordable home'. Mrs Holland stated that two years ago this whole project was 'kicked into touch' and asked what has changed for it to be resurrected. Mr Packer stated that there is only one property in Lydford for rent via West Devon Homes (WDH). Mrs Holland stated that this is quite correct and why, when it became vacant recently, was it offered to someone outside of Lydford. Mr Packer stated that at the time there was no local need and the five year rule, under a section 106 agreement, doesn't apply to existing properties, only newly built ones. Mrs Holland asked why it was felt desirous to go down this route again when no sites are available that are acceptable to the Planning Authority (DNPA). Mr Packer responded by stating that it is their (WDBC Housing) role to identify need. Mr Fletcher enquired if a points system was used to ascertain who should be offered an empty home. Mr Packer stated that a points system was used but that this did not override the local need which was always the first priority. Mr Fletcher stated that this meant that anyone in Lydford would qualify first then, to which Mr Packer stated that the local need is always the first priority for new housing in a parish. Mr Fletcher enquired as to why twelve months ago at a meeting at WDH, attended by Cllr Williamson and himself, it was stated that no need existed in Lydford, yet we are now told a need for six houses exists. Mr Packer stated that rather than take the numbers from the housing list this survey was conducted to ascertain if a need exists. Mrs Ellicott stated that the figures produced suggest that retired people wish to downsize. Mr Fletcher agreed and enquired as to what happens if a house is empty and no local need exists. Mr Packer stated that it would 'cascade' out to neighbouring parishes until someone was found. Mrs Holland enquired as to the sense in going down this route again without first having consulted DNPA as two years ago a similar survey was conducted, costing (she stated) £25k and DNPA refused permission to build on the sites suggested. Mr Packer stated that he couldn't comment on the figures quoted as the previous survey had been conducted by WDH. Mrs McMullen asked, in light of Lydford's ageing population, as to what will happen in the future. Mr Packer stated that they would re-visit and, if required, build more houses to accommodate the need at that time. Mr Packer continued by stating that no sites have as yet been identified. Mrs McMullen thought it was pointless then, to which Mr Packer stated that it was not and that you conduct the survey first then identify the sites. Mrs Boyd felt that decisions were being based on a 35% return of survey forms.

91.1 Contd. Mr Packer stated that he too was equally concerned at the level of response, however, WDBC has informed the PC out of courtesy and no building work will commence at the moment. Mr Fletcher stated that two plus years ago the first anyone in this village, parish council included, knew about this project was when a man with a theodolite was sighted in a field, hence the current suspicion. Mr Packer agreed and stated that WDH acted badly last time and also had plans showing a site with plans for further development in the future. Cllr Williamson stated that the reason for the survey being carried out now was as a result of the meeting he and Mr Fletcher attended at WDH some two years ago following DNPA turning down suggested sites. As a consequence he had progressed, what he thought to be the view of the PC, and had pushed for a survey on housing needs to be carried out in Lydford, which has identified a need for six dwellings. This was disputed by Mrs Ellicott and the majority of those (parishioners and councillors) present. The Chairman stated that last time WDH had said that these houses would only be available for rent and not a shared ownership scheme. Cllr Williamson stated that two years ago, at the public meeting held in the village, a need for this sort of housing was identified. Mrs Holland asked Cllr Williamson as to the current numbers on the housing register seeking housing in Lydford. Cllr Williamson did not know and passed the question to Mr Packer who also could not answer. Mr Fletcher said that at that meeting with WDH two years ago they had stated that no need existed for rented housing as the need was identified for shared ownership. Mrs Ellicott felt that the comment made by Mr Packer that the statistics obtained from the survey were 'statistically robust' was simply not acceptable. Cllr Williamson stated that the survey was only conducted on a 'sample' basis. This was refuted by Mr Packer who stated that this was not the case and that the survey had been hand delivered by West Den, on behalf of WDBC, to every house in the parish. Many people present (Councillors and parishioners) disputed this and several people present stated that they had not received a copy. Mr Packer promised to investigate this further. Cllr Williamson felt that the survey, as carried out, had been submitted to the PC for comments. No evil 'super body' is trying to impose something that no-one wants. He has several of the parishes he is responsible for who would welcome a survey like this. The Chairman asked Cllr Williamson why the nominations of sites, according to his e-mail to a Dick Eberlie, had stated that it was the role of the PC to find and propose suitable sites. Cllr Williamson at the time he thought it was and that since he realised that he was wrong.

The Chairman thanked Mr Packer for attending and hoped that he had attained a flavour of the feeling within the village regarding 'affordable housing.'

91.2 The Chairman asked those present if anyone had any other items they wished to raise. Mr Hannaford raised his concern that nothing seemed to be happening regarding the cutting of hedges in the field at the side of The Nicholls Hall. The Chairman explained the talks he's had with SWW, EH, DEFRA and Lydford Commoners. It is hoped that these will be attended to shortly and he will progress this with the various authorities. No other questions were forthcoming so the Chairman officially opened the meeting at 7.55pm. (*Cllr Williamson left the room at this point with Mr Packer.*)

92-2005 To approve the minutes of the previous meeting:

92.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 20th July were signed as a true and accurate record.

93-2005 Matters arising:

93.1 Dartmoor Inn Crossing – A petition was received from parishioners living on the A386 at Vale Down requesting that the speed limit of 40mph be enforced. It was agreed that the clerk should write to Inspector Sherwood-Davies of Devon & Cornwall Constabulary and Mr Brian George of Okehampton Local Services Group enclosing copies of this petition. It was also agreed that copies should be sent to the respective councillors for this parish at DCC and WDBC along with the MP for the area. Mrs Holland raised the problem of the parking of cars from the War Memorial to the top of the hill just past the school and the speed of traffic through the village as a whole. It was considered by the members that the problem of car parking was giving rise to problems for all vehicles, especially the local bus and that this should be investigated by the police, especially around 3.30pm when children are leaving the school and being collected by parents with even more cars being parked in this already congested area. Mrs Martyn enquired as to the possibility of the bank, just below the school, being removed to effectively widen this part of the road. The clerk was requested to write to the various authorities seeking assistance on this matter. All members agreed that this whole area of the village needs looking at before an accident occurs. (*Cllr Williamson returned to the meeting at this point.*)

93.2 Waste Treatment Works – The clerk was requested to seek from DNPA the progress on the enforcement order supposedly being issued by them on SWW. Regarding the Camping & Caravan Club and the reported problems of smells emanating from their holding tanks, it was reported that since the clerk had spoken to the Site Director, requesting that the de-odourising regime was in place, this problem appears to have been eradicated.

94-2005 Receive reports from Councillors on respective outside bodies:

94.1 DNPA – No meetings held.

94.2 Police Authority – Tended apologies for the meeting to be held on the 27th September as attending another meeting that night.

94.3 Southern Link Committee – The minutes of the last meeting will be circulated to members when received.

94.4 Nicholls Hall Committee – Mrs Boyd reported that all was well and on behalf of the committee thanked the parish council for allowing the Nicholls Hall to conduct a raffle at the recent VJ Day Celebration which raised £380. This, coupled with their share of donations received of £58 was gratefully received. Mrs Boyd detailed the forthcoming theatre productions planned and that the aim was to improve the catering facilities in line with the other improvements carried out to the hall.

95.2005 - Receive financial report:

95.1 The clerk circulated balances as follows;

Current - £2267.87

Flexi - £6584.35

95.2 The following payments were authorised for September:

Clerk – £256.30 – Grass cutting £30 – Grant for H&S checks on Tombstones to St Petros £162.73 – Mainly Stationery £11.09 – VJ Day prizes £52.31 – VJ Day expenditure (Marquee, Band, Hog Roast etc.) £2926.39: St Dunstons £60.00 (received from street party collection VE Day)

95.3 Income during the period was: Proceeds from Hog Roast £251.34 – Grant from DNPA towards keeping the toilets cleaned and opened during the winter period £632.00 – Interest received £34.60 – Collection at VE Day street party for St Dunstons £60.00.

95.4 A detailed breakdown of costs and income for the recent VJ Day celebrations was presented to members showing, at worst, the likelihood of a shortfall to funding already received of £17.34.

95.5 Audit – The Financial Officer detailed the recently received report from the Audit Commission which raised no areas of concern and had passed the figures for 2004/05 as accurate and complete with no comments being made.

96.2005 - Correspondence:

96.1 The Chairman thanked everyone for the effort they had put into making VJ Day such a huge success and that he, along with many other members, had received many positive comments from people as to the professional and thoroughly enjoyable day enjoyed by those who attended. The final two items for completion are the book and audio tape of recollections. He has obtained quotations for the book which amount to £287 for a sixty page black & white production. He felt, in light of the money left for these items, that it should contain some colour photographs, perhaps depicting the celebration itself. This was agreed. Mrs Martyn stated that she has several pages of recollections that currently are in long hand, however, it was the intention of Mrs Cole and her to put these into a Word Format ready for compilation into the overall book.

The dates for taking people to the recording studios to enable the compilation of the audio book of memories was discussed with the clerk explaining that he had spoken to Colin Friend who, along with Mrs Holland, would transport people to the studios to enable the recording of their memories. It was agreed that the clerk would confirm available dates and liaise with Mrs Holland and Colin Friend, enabling them to arrange with the various people willing to share memories in this way. It was agreed that the finished book and tape should be available for distribution to all households in Lydford before Christmas 2005.

96.2 The clerk confirmed that he had sent out a tender form to three other parties for the upkeep of the parish council Web Site and that he had received the following responses:

Western Web - £250 per annum. – Qwerty and Dr Palmer – Do not wish to tender. It was unanimously agreed that the upkeep of the www.lydfordparishcouncil.co.uk web site, for the next two years, should be awarded to Hepworth Workshops at a cost of £150 per annum payable in the April of each year (in arrears) commencing in April 2006.

97.2005 - Planning applications:

97.1 Hope cottage – extension to living area – It was noted that this application has been withdrawn.

98.2005 - Items raised for inclusion on the October agenda:

98.1 Sign at Castle Park

98.2 English Heritage re: trees

98.3 Parking between War Memorial and School

99.2005 - To agree the date of the next meeting:

99.1 The date of **Tuesday 18th October 2005** was agreed commencing at 7.00pm

Before the close of business a vote of thanks was proposed by Mrs Ellicott, to the clerk, for his work in securing the grant from Home Front Recall to enable the recent 60th Anniversary of VJ Day celebrations to be enjoyed by the hundreds of villagers who attended them. This was unanimously agreed and the clerk thanked the members.

There being no further business the meeting was formally closed by the Chairman at 9.35 pm.

DG Evans
Clerk to the Parish Council

23 September 2005

Signed as a true and accurate record.....Date.....
(Mr S Powne - Chairman)

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