

MINUTES OF COPYTHORNE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 13 MARCH 2013 AT 7.30 P.M. IN THE PARISH HALL

PRESENT: Parish Councillors S Bullen-Jarvis (Chairman), J Goodwin, Lady Kara Hawks,
G James and M Moriarty
County Councillors E Heron and K Mans
District Councillors L Puttock and D Tipp
7 parishioners
Apologies received from Councillors Riddoch and Andrews

MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 March 2012 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Councillor Stuart Bullen-Jarvis reported on Parish Council matters from the past year. These included: the sad deaths of Ron Townsend (former Parish Clerk for 16 years) and Grace Hollands (former Parish Councillor for 34 years); re-introduction of a modest grant budget in 2012/13; new Government rules for allocating housing benefit which could have implications for parish precepts; reductions in the mobile library service; opening of a new Post Office at the BP Garage in Romsey Road, Cadnam. Environmental matters included: the designation of Copythorne South Ward as the 8th highest flood risk area in the country and, in this context, the County Council's new flood risk duties; inspection of all parish footpaths by the Parish Council; the clearance of Splitwind Pond; the proposed new Lengthsman scheme. Highway issues included ongoing talks with the highway authority concerning Bartley crossroads and the new 30 mph speed limits. Extra "Think" signs were to be erected, with thanks to Councillors Heron and Mans for funding.

On local policing, the Parish Council extended good wishes to WPC Dee Faulkner on her recent retirement. The Speedwatch scheme continued to operate jointly with Bramshaw and Minstead.

In respect of Planning, the Council were disappointed at the outcome at the Copperfield site in Pollards Moor Road. Further discussions were to take place with the NPA on enforcement, particularly on Cadnam Lane issues.

COLLECTIVE ENERGY SWITCHING SCHEME

Councillor Heron outlined proposals for an energy switching scheme which would offer Hampshire residents a chance to switch to cheaper energy deals. The scheme covered both gas and electricity either in single or dual fuel packages. It was hoped to expand the scheme to oil and other fuels at a future date. The scheme covered the whole of Hampshire and would be advertised extensively in mid May. Residents could register an interest and then decide whether to join the scheme once detailed costs were available. The process of switching was undertaken on residents' behalf.

COUNTY COUNCIL REPORTS

Councillor Mans reported on County Council management structure changes aimed at financial savings. There would be no increase in the precept again in the next financial year. Staff savings should not impact significantly on services except perhaps for the mobile library. There would be increased expenditure on the elderly and highways, with flood prevention as a priority.

Councillor Heron also reported on County Council savings. There had been no library closures and more investment in some. The mobile library service had been reduced in part but the home lending service was available as an alternative. This was well advertised through libraries, meals on wheels and carers etc but Councillor Heron would supply further advertising material.

DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORTS

The following reports were presented on District Council matters:

Councillor Tipp: No increase in the NFDC precept proposed in the next financial year; no reserves being used in next year's budget albeit there are planned savings; a free glass collection service to be introduced in the summer with the help of a Government grant; grant received for improving/maintaining Eling Tide Mill; increased income from Health & Leisure Centres; completion of Ringwood offices which would offer joint use by Ringwood Town Council, HCC and NFDC; an increase in NFDC's housing stock.

Councillor Puttock: Various cost cutting measures and no increase in the NFDC precept; progress of the Localism Bill; increases in car park charges primarily due to a Government revision of rateable value of land used for car parking; relocation of the National Park Authority to Lymington Town Hall who would now share facilities with NFDC; presentation of the long term core strategy planning policy to central government for ratification; further consideration by the Highways Agency of the road surface on the M27 and related noise issues; ongoing monitoring of the speed and volume of traffic through Bartley crossroads; his membership of the General Purposes and Licensing Committee and Appeals Panel, plus formulation of various task and finish groups.

Councillors and residents raised a number of points on the report, including:

Parking charges: Whether increased charges for disabled parking were justified

Affordable housing: Whether there was a conflict of interest with the Localism Bill in the context of an affordable housing shortage. There were also differing views on the need for affordable housing.

OPEN FORUM

Parish Councillors expressed concerns about the proposed commoners dwelling at Brockishill Road. The Parish Council supported commoning but were opposed to a dwelling in this location. It was also felt that the Commoners Dwelling Scheme should be reviewed.

Councillor Heron commented on the very restrictive housing policies in the New Forest but expressed support for the commoning system. However, he respected the local view on the current application.

A resident also referred to a possible planning breach at Fuzzies Copse. Agreed, Clerk to refer to Planning Enforcement at the NPA.