

SHEBBEAR PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting held at 7-40 pm on Tuesday January 8th 2008
in the Church Room. Shebbear.

At 7pm, before the main meeting, an informal discussion took place when councillors were able to voice their concerns at the effect the Code of Conduct was having in connection with the efficient conduct of meetings where instances of Predjudicial Interest caused councillors to have to leave the room on occasions. Mr Ken Miles, Torridge D.C. Solicitor and District Monitoring Officer for the Standards Board was present to answer these concerns and said that councils had no option but to comply with the requirements of the Code which were enforceable through the legislation which created the Code. The main purpose of the Code of Conduct being to apply the same standards to all Councils in order to reassure the public that proper procedures were being carried out and that councillors, as well as members of the public, were allowed fair participation during meetings. In connection with concerns raised over the cost of investigating any complaints under the Code, Mr Miles said that efforts were made to filter out frivolous or unsubstantiated complaints at an early stage by the Standards Board in Manchester, the cost being borne by the general taxpayer, however, there were plans for the whole process to be dealt with locally in which case the local council tax payer would pay. Councillors were shocked to hear the cost implications involved which arose mainly through the need to take outside legal advice. When problems arise as a result of cases of predjudicial interest, there is a procedure for dispensations to be authorised by a convened panel, but as this procedure could take 6 weeks to implement, those present felt that this would be too cumbersome to be of much use.

In conclusion Chairman thanked Mr Miles for attending and addressing members concerns.

At 7-40pm Chairman opened the Monthly Meeting for agenda business.

Present: Chairman: R.Johns. Cllrs: L.Quance. E.Haste. P.Lomax. H.Davis. G.Slade.
R.Clark. District Cllr A. Saywell. 7 Members of the Public.

Agenda. 2008.

- 1. Apologies for Absence.** Cllr R.Gliddon.(Unwell).Cllr N.Jeffers.(Unwell). PCSO Baker.
Cllr S. Hillier. (Late finishing work.)
- 2. Declarations of Interest in items on the Agenda/ Any variations to Members Registration of Interests.**
Cllr Haste felt that he may have an interest to declare in connection with item 5(a) the Local Development Framework, depending on what topics were discussed, as he owned land on the edge of the village.
- 3. Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday December 11th 2007,** which had been previously circulated, were approved and signed.
- 4. Any matters arising from the Minutes.**
Cllr Lomax noted that the suggestion to form a committee for the Stone Turning Evening had not been put on the agenda. Clerk said that it had been deferred to next month due to the lengthy topics in this evenings business.
- 5..Agenda items for Discussion and Resolution.**
(a)The Local Development Framework. **7-45 pm meeting adjourned for public participation in discussion.**
The initial stages of the discussion were mainly taken up with concerns that any decisions taken now would be binding for 20 years or so. **Comments.-** How can such far reaching decisions be made now, circumstances can change practically overnight. The Government makes decisions, after consulting experts and holding enquiries, and frequently has to reverse or modify their proposals within a very short time frame so it is deemed to be unfair to expect ordinary people to accept plans which may be valid for 20 years. Things can't be set in stone when change is constant. The view was expressed that most people want things to stay much as they are, witness the fuss there was when they wanted to impose 41 extra houses on us, we couldn't stop it because we were deemed to be in a development area. It will mean another 100 cars or so on the roads which are inadequate already, there are no jobs for people, things need to stay much as they are. (This drew a round of applause from the gathering.)

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In 1999 when the present Local Plan was drawn up we were assured that places like Shebbear would only have new developments if the existing infrastructure was capable of supporting it. This hasn't happened, we have in fact lost some facilities.

Despite these misgivings it was accepted that there would have to be some natural advancements, maybe a new primary school or a new business start-up, so we could not expect to be totally inflexible. Also, instead of housing developments there should be the opportunities for individual "self build" projects which would be a way of addressing the affordable housing issue, and this type of build would be more in tune with the financial constraints of local earners, particularly the young.

We need to move with the times and retain and improve the facilities we are lucky enough to still have in Shebbear. There are too many " developer led" projects with only profit in mind.

The document was criticised for being too full of "professional speak", and that a lot of people would be turned off by the complexity of the contents, it having been reported that 22 % of the Torridge population were in one way or other deficient in literacy which meant that to them this document was gobbledegook and disenfranchises large parts of the population, which isn't democratic.

It was even suggested that, if you make a document hard to understand people will give up and allow the professionals to do what they want and say that they gave the public a chance to have their say.

This might account for the fact that only 100 out of 45000 electors had so far responded to the survey. It was widely held that there should be no houses without the jobs to support the occupiers. It is no good building houses in Shebbear and places of employment in Barnstaple or Bideford, especially now that "carbon footprints" are taken so seriously, the roads disintegrating, and the cost of fuel soaring.

A worry was expressed that if we want to restrict things too much we won't be allowed to do anything. What we do want is natural moderate growth based on sound commercial demand, with sensible pre planning.

Clerk was instructed to compose a letter reflecting the aforementioned views in response to the L.D.F. Survey. (Copy to be attached to the Minutes.)

8-43

pm. Chairman brought the Meeting back into session.

6. District Councillors Report.

Mr Saywell reported that he had spoken to the Planners about the proposed development off Balleroy Close after concerns had been raised of works having been started on site on a number of occasions recently. The Resolution to Approve the permission was still in force and the legal process was still ongoing, consequently it would be unlawful for any work to commence at this stage. However, if any work was of a minor nature such as soil testing or similar evaluation procedures there is not much that could be done about it. The Planning Officer would like to hear of any major work starting.

7. Planning.

- (a) 1/1421/2007/OHL. Installation of 11kV o/head line. Hollygrove House. Rowden. Shebbear. For Western Power Distribution. No Objections raised.
- (b) (c) & (d) received and noted by Councillors.
- (e) Caute Cottage. Shebbear. Complaint re erection of storage shed. Following the receipt of the complaint Cllr Lomax had spoken to Mr M. Shailer, the occupier of Caute Cottage, and informed him that a complaint had been received. Mr Shailer took Cllr Lomax to see the shed which is situated approx 200 yards from the highway and screened from majority view by hedges. Mr Shailer said that he had spoken to the planners and he was confident the shed complied with requirements, in that, it was less than 4m in height, had a natural earth floor, was of temporary construction even though the supports were embedded 3 ft in the ground, was well screened from view, and had no sides. Councillors decided that there was a duty to follow up a complaint and treat each case equally, Clerk therefore instructed to check with T.D.C. Planning that the shed was lawful and whether the matter should be taken further.

8. Finance.

- (a) Council unanimously agreed that the £1000.00 grant towards the new Covered Area at Shebbear School be paid.
- (b) It was proposed by Cllr Davis and seconded by Cllr Lomax, with all in favour, that the tendering threshold be raised to £250.00.
- (c) Village Website. Councillors agreed that the annual payment of £60.00 for the use of webspace represented a very acceptable agreement with Mr Watts.
- (d) It was proposed by Cllr Haste and seconded by Cllr Slade that the sums of 160.84 (Wages) and 30.00 (Xmas Tree purchase) be paid to Clerk. All in favour.

9. Correspondence.

- (a) N.Devon Biosphere Discovery Day. It was suggested that Mr Jenkinson might like to display some of his collection, and Reflecting Shebbear to carry an article. Clerk also informed Ron Ackland and Cllr Jeffers (The Gallery.)
 - (b) Gt Torrington M.C.T.A.L.C.P. No one was available to attend the meeting on Jan 29th.
 - (c) Invitation to Petrockstowe P.C. meeting on Jan 15th. Cllr Clark and / or Clerk hoped to attend.
- 3 items received after agenda issue. Letters from C.A.B. and N. Tamar Community Transport thanking Council for offer of this years grants. Also letter from Mrs C.Broyd (former Clerk) saying she had come across further items of Shebbear property which she wanted to return.

10. Items for next Meetings Agenda on Tuesday February 12th 2008, and any other business at the Chairmans discretion.

It had been noted that a planning application for West Folly, Shebbear had been wrongly advertised under "Northam" by the Planning Dept. As no application had been received in Shebbear, Clerk will ask Planners to investigate.

B.T. Payphones had been in touch to say that preparatory works for the reinstatement of the T.K. were taking longer than expected, but it had not been forgotten.

2 further Quotes for the removal of the dying tree were being awaited.

There being no other Business the Meeting ended at **9-36pm**.