

Minutes of AGM Meeting held on Saturday, 18th July 2009 at the Old Dairy, Chapmore End.

Present: Wendy Clarke (Chairman)
Andy Batty
Colin Kemp
Jan Pledger
Alison Sheldrick

34 members

1. Welcome by the Chair. Wendy welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2. Apologies for absence. Apologies were received from Anne & Vaughn, Rupert & Jan, Neil & Mandy, Jo & Chris, Sarah & Alistair, Jane & Gary, Frank & Florrie.
3. Election of new Secretary. Jan Pledger has agreed to become the new Secretary.
4. Approval of minutes from pervious AGM and Matters Arising. The approval was proposed by Helen Mansfield, and seconded by Bob Sheldrick. The motion was carried and there were no matters arising.

5. Chairman's Report -

Wendy opened her report by saying how pleased she was to have had such a welcoming response from all in Chapmore End. She has tried to work hard and has received great support from the Committee and would like to offer her thanks to Mandy, Neil and Jo, who are now standing down after many years of good service. Last year, Andy was voted in as Vice Chairman, and he has been a huge inspiration, giving 100% support.

The Gravel issue continues to be an important issue for us all. Planning permission has been granted, although subject to about 50 conditions, which have been negotiated through liaison meetings, were we have been represented by David Townsend, Terry Mansfield, and, of course, Colin Kemp. I wish to thank these three for their on-going effort.

On 29th September, Andy and I were invited to attend the Parish Council meeting. We presented these requests to the council.

1. Grass verge opposite Staff Cottages to be maintained
2. Improvement to the pond island
3. Dog Waste sign on FP9
4. Telephone Box to be adopted and refurbished
5. Chapmore End sign and Chevron to be replaced
6. FP9 to be restored
7. Safety sign to pond
8. Replacement tree for front of White House

A number of these requests have been fulfilled and the remainder are in the pipeline. Both Andy and I feel that the relationship with the Parish Council has improved and wish that to continue. I would like to thank Michael McMullin for his support and the time he has taken to help us understand the process. As a result our relationship with the Highways Department has improved.

When we first mentioned the Neighbourhood Watch, everyone was very enthusiastic and this is now running smoothly. I would like to thank Tony from the Woodman for being responsible for this and Tony Oakley for agreeing to lead the Rural Watch. Tony W has set up a website for the CEA and the minutes of all our meetings will be accessible via this site.

The Village sign was a huge challenge, but has proved to be a fabulous asset to the village and I would like to express my thanks to Joy and Russell for all their assistance. Thank you also, Joy, for the wonderful water-colour and cards that were printed off, which has enabled us to boost the fund raising.

The Christmas Party held at Janet and Andy's was a huge success and a great time was had by all.

My thanks also go to Terry Mansfield for organising the grime weekend on 9th and 10th May. A great deal of effort was put in and it made a massive improvement to the appearance of the village. Terry felt that Spring was the right time of year to run this as the Village was agreeably set up for the summer. Thank you to Harry and Elissa, who were in the village visiting and ended up cutting hedgerows, scraping paint off the pond railings with smiles on their faces.

My apologies for not arranging a summer event this year, due to personal commitments, but next year, will be looking to organise a Christmas Party, a car boot sale, grime weekend and a Summer Ball.

Sadly, some of our residents are moving away, and I would like to thank Rupert, Janet and Linda for all their support. They go with our best wishes to their new homes.

To conclude I would also like to thank John and Janet for their patience when Andy and I have been immersed in CEA business.

6. Treasurer's Report (delivered by Wendy, in the absence of Jo Leary)

Jo Leary has resigned from her post and Wendy thanked her for all the hard work she has put in over the past years.

Thanks go to Peter B for all his help in auditing the accounts, and he agreed to continue in this role.

Subscriptions for 2009/10

It was proposed that the subscriptions be set at the previous amount, i.e. £20 per household and £10 per single.

It was proposed that the set target of £10,000 remain. This sum had been depleted by the expenses incurred by provision of the sign, and this will need to be replaced.

These two items were proposed by Andy and seconded by Peter. The motion was carried.

7. Gravel Report

Colin presented his report.

Since the last AGM, there has been much development as we at RCG see it, but not much is visible. He was delighted that George Sandell and Tony Vickers were at the meeting, as they have more intimate knowledge of the situation and will be able to answer any questions.

The situation is the same as at the last AGM, i.e. no official permission has yet been granted as all the conditions have still not been agreed, nor have the details of the 106 agreement been examined. Once official permission is granted, the project must commence within 3 years and complete within a maximum of 6 years from the start date. Colin feels that the conditions agreed (bar one) mean that we will have the best conditions laid out for any quarry in the UK.

However, Saturday working is still to be formally agreed. At the Special Parish Council meeting we had to choose from 3 options agreed by the RCG and there was a majority in favour of the RCG preferred option. Hanson have tried to water this down, but George and Tony will be able to advise further.

Hanson have declared that the existing plant will need major refurbishment, costing so much that they are much more likely to opt for new plant or one which may be available from a completed pit. This will need planning permission, but we note that new plant should be quieter, more efficient and smaller. Nevertheless, we shall study the application in detail. A meeting of the RCG will be held next week, with a liaison meeting in August. Please contact me if you have any issues to raise. In addition, I have recently been in communication with Hanson on general housekeeping matters, as I feel they have not been particularly good at this and state that they have carried out work which they have not. I intend to make strong representation on this at the liaison meeting.

The items in question include:-

- Fences, where Hanson claim they have a weekly check, but some fences are still as bad as they were a year ago.
- Ragwort, where Hanson claim this is in hand. Barrie Goldsmith, the Civic Society ecologist, is dealing with this, as it must be pulled and burnt, not cut. I understand Tony is charged with this, but only specific areas.
- Thistles, where I believe that treatment last year has helped.
- Scrambling bike signs, where I am led to believe that they will soon be replaced, with slightly different wording after complaints from ramblers, although there has been less activity of late.
- Footpath 12, which has been widened, but I shall be asking Hanson to do undertake remedial work as that it is impassable in wet weather adjacent to their spoil heap.

Future Action.

Hanson are likely to start boring in 2010 in the next field to current application, a precursor to another addition or larger application, which will probably occur in 2012 at the earliest. Hanson have confirmed to me that they do not expect to start quarrying until 2011 at the earliest. We must also remember that the Minerals Local Plan will soon need updating and we must be prepared to fight against a larger area. We are hoping that the Operations Manager of the quarry will be at the next liaison meeting and this will give us the opportunity to quiz him/her on their systems.

Colin concluded his report by offering thanks to Tony and George for all their hard work and experience they offer.

Tony then spoke. He began by informing the meeting that the Association benefited from having Colin, and that the Association was seen as a major player. It was thought by HCC and Hanson that the objections and problems were from a few individuals, but it is now apparent that there is strong support against the permission, from the Community. The next application will need someone else to generate expertise and continue the work done over the last 21 years.

Saturday Working

We have the option of fighting the Saturday morning working, and have tried to negotiate a compromise, so that Saturday is restricted to loading and no extraction or processing will take place. There should be fewer hours and due care and attention should be paid to B158. There has also been an increase in traffic due to the use of the Sports Ground. It is suggested that there be a trial period to monitor noise and pollution. Dust is difficult to control and road safety difficult to deal with. We need volunteers to act with confidence and to decide reasonable or non-reasonable action.

Question from Terry Mansfield

What happens if Hanson decide there is no demand for gravel? Could they withdraw and then submit a totally different application? What happens to the conditions, do they stay or disintegrate? Why has there been a long time lapse from the Council for the meeting, rather casual approach, change of dates etc? Why do they treat us in such an inconsiderate manner?

Answer

The Council are looking to provide a model set of conditions, and our conditions will act as the new model for the County - to be applied County wide, although each application will have its own conditions.

Also they have other things to worry about - there is no pressure from Hanson (due to the economic downturn)

Question from Terry Mansfield

If the holding company sells the business does the position of permission go with it?

Answer

Yes. It will be offered to the successor in title, as obviously the business is worth more.

Question from Jim Frith

With regard to the removal of the plant, are there any benefits to us as a community?

Answer

Extension is given until present application is granted.

Question from John Clarke

Have Hanson bought the land?

Answer

No, have licence from the landowner. The title of the land belongs to Abel Smith.

Question from Terry Mansfield

What happens when the rights are sold?

Answer from George Sandell

On signing money passes hands.

Question from Terry Mansfield

If permission is not granted does reimbursement take place?

Answer from George Sandell

George did not know as money is paid up front so presumably have to bear loss. There is a royalty on tonnage, which is negotiable between company and landowner.

George informed the meeting that the next Minerals Local Plan is 8/9 million tons of gravel - 30 years worth. Next plan will show preferred area to be extended, probably to Stapleford, and we must be prepared to fight this.

Question from John Clarke

Will they be destroying the woodland?

Answer

The woodlands will be monitored as a condition and Rights of Access negotiated. External vigilance will be necessary.

The Chairman thanked George and Tony for their invaluable information, and they left the meeting.

8. Andy Batty presented his power point presentation

Last year we agreed to review the role of the CEA and a questionnaire was distributed to all members. This was to help use review the role and to identify our most important priorities. Fifteen questionnaires were received back and the feedback was amazingly consistent, and enabled us to formulate some suggestions for approval today.

For full details of the presentation please to refer to the website.

Conclusion

The Parish Council has universal approval and an important role to play and we should work closely with them. The gravel excavations are going to happen and is still an important issue but we must work hard to change the emphasis to the conditions, monitoring agreements, opposing future growth and to be open and honest in our dealings. As we are a small hamlet, the CEA should be kept simple, keeping our expectations within limits. We should focus on the social side. Neighbour disputes are best settled between neighbours. Buying energy together was considered, but needs further investigation. The general consensus about charity was that it was an individual choice and not within the mandate of the CEA. All were in favour of the Neighbourhood Watch as mentioned by Wendy earlier.

Andy presented the proposed new structure of the CEA as below, for details please see website.

To reiterate : no-one can represent the CEA unless elected or have a minuted mandate from the Committee to make representations on their behalf. Minutes will be published on the web and we would ask for all members to provide Email addresses. To simplify collections of subscriptions we would like members to complete a direct debit from their bank. Meetings of the CEA shall be scheduled quarterly.

To conclude Andy mentioned that the social aspects of the CEA provide a real fabric of sense of community, by knowing each other and having strong social links, we are better able to confront things like the impact of gravel excavations.

The Chairman thanks Andy for his hard work.

Rule Changes

Rule 7

It was agreed that this should read: Executive Committee of five executive members should be set up to administer the CEA. This number should include a Chairman and Treasurer. Any three members of the Executive Committee should constitute a quorum. Proposed by Terry Mansfield and seconded by Peter Long. The motion was carried.

Rule 9 - Funds

The target value of the funds held should be set at each AGM. The existing value is £10,000. This was proposed by Andy Batty and seconded by Jean Frith. The motion was carried.

Rule 11

Meetings will be open to all residents who qualify but only paid up members will be able to vote on resolutions proposed. (2 votes per household or 1 as in the case of single occupancy.) Proposed by Jim Frith and seconded by Wendy Clarke. The motion was carried.

Rule 13

The Annual General Meeting of the Association shall be held in the third quarter of each year. The meeting shall be open to all who qualify for resident membership. Only paid up members shall be able to vote. Full membership qualifies for 2 votes per household and a single membership qualifies for 1 vote per household. Proposed by Bob Sheldrick and seconded by Tony. The motion was carried.

9 Neighbourhood Watch and Website

Tony from the Woodman introduced himself and informed the meeting that only 12 households had taken up the opportunity to be part of the Neighbourhood Watch. He had further information packs for anyone who was interested. Tony has now set up the web site and is regularly Emailing details from Herts Constabulary about Neighbourhood Watch items that affect the area. Any contributions for the website would be gratefully received. Alison suggested a Memories Board - about the history of Chapmore End and the meeting agreed that this would be a good idea.

10. Any other business

1. There is to be a new post and chevron (waiting for new Chapmore End sign)

2. Pond - only 4 plants are allowed and those are already there. The plans were drawn by Willie Dunn, and we must ask Mandy for the original plans.
3. The telephone box is to be painted and a map of the footpaths is to be placed inside it.
4. Peter mentioned Linda - the longest serving member - who was now leaving the village and the CEA wished her good luck.

Terry Mansfield thanked all those who helped with the Grime Day, which took place with a good deal of humour and goodwill. Concerns were raised that the bins fill up quite quickly and there is a problem with foxes. Please empty rubbish where possible. On behalf of all the community, thanks for a fantastic job Wendy, and Andy for his advice and council.

Wendy declared the meeting closed.