

Thorncombe Village Trust

Minutes of a committee meeting held in the Community Room of the Thorncombe Village Hall at 7.30 pm on Tuesday the 25 January 2011.

Present: Linda Timms (Chairman), Lyn Kinsey, John Whitbread, Ruth Jacobson, Terry Bennett, Charlotte Bradley and Trust members Eve Higgs and Mark Agnew.

Item	Action
<p>1: Apologies for absence received from Rachael Whitbread and Sheila Moreland.</p> <p>2: Minutes of meeting held on the 30 November 2010. The committee approved the minutes as a true record, subject to the following amendments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>John Dalziel to be added to those present at the meeting.</i> • <i>2 i) Wallace to be altered to Wallis</i> <p>3: Members Democratic Period.</p> <p>Eve Higgs and Mark Agnew were present, at the invitation of the Chairman, to assist in the committee's deliberations with regard to Agenda Item 3 i) <i>Proposal from the DCC for a meeting to discuss the footpath network at Worcester.</i></p> <p>The Secretary had received a verbal invitation from J.Exton (ROW Enforcement Officer) for the Trust to send a single representative to a meeting to be held on the 7 February in the Thorncombe Village Hall and he had agreed to bring the request to the attention of the committee.</p> <p>He had however, pointed out to J.Exton that a single representative of the Trust would only be able to sensibly engage in any discussion if, prior to the meeting, he/she was fully aware of the corporate reaction of the committee to the proposals by the landowner. Obviously, therefore it was necessary for the committee to be able to examine the specific details of the landowner's proposals and to decide on the legitimacy of the meeting. He had requested J.Exton to provide the Trust with a detailed and informative agenda for the proposed meeting together with more detailed information of the landowner's proposals.</p> <p>J.Exton has responded to those requests by providing the Trust with a plain paper document that is unsigned and gives no indication that it is the agenda for a legitimate DCC meeting. It specifies one general item for discussion namely '<i>Mr Cunningham's proposal for potential footpath re- organisation</i>'. It does not list the individual elements of the proposal as items for specific consideration and no other information or plans of the proposal have been provided for examination.</p> <p>Terry Bennett suggested that the inadequate agenda and the refusal to provide any specific information of the landowner's proposal was an indication that the DCC and the landowner wished to keep his proposals under wraps. All of which made it untenable for the committee to make an informed corporate decision to be conveyed to the 7 February meeting,</p> <p>Mark Agnew stated that he had, as an individual parishioner, engaged in correspondence with the CEO of the Dorset County Council and with Roger Bell the officer responsible for overseeing ROW diversions, about the proposed meeting. He had raised various questions /concerns amongst which were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is such a meeting necessary, particularly at this time? • Why incur such an unnecessary financial cost to Community Charge payers? 	

3 cont:-

- How can the DCC justify a meeting with the landowner whilst he is refusing to obey a Legal Order to remove all the obstructions on FP T482 (now FP103) with a deadline for compliance that has been extended to the 31 January?

He expressed his view that the landowner seemed to have been a prime mover in persuading the DCC to hold the meeting. It is possible that the landowner sees it as a useful step in his consistent attempts to achieve footpath diversions at 'Worcester', particularly to FP T482. It is plain that the FP T482 diversion is essential if he is to achieve his principal objective of extending the curtilage of 'Worcester' onto 'Potters Field'.

With that in mind he has already twice attempted to obtain a diversion of T482 by using the Town & Country Planning Act. The WDDC has rejected those attempts by refusing to grant its permission to two separate development proposals. It now seems that he sees the Highways Act as a means of reaching his goal.

In conclusion Mark said that he believed that the proposed meeting lacked credibility and that it will be very unwise of the Trust to allow itself to be represented at that meeting,

Terry Bennett raised the subject of the list of invitees to the meeting. Apart from four officers' of the DCC the landowner has personally invited a DCC member who seems not to have any political connection with Thorncombe, but is a member of the DCC committee that is responsible for deciding applications related to changes to ROW. He has also invited the local WDDC member who has no particular interest in the DCC management of ROW and it seems logical to assume that his presence is required simply to provide support to the landowner. The local DCC member is not included on the list, but he has in the past given verbal support to the landowner at the ROW committee meeting considering the landowners objection to the inclusion of T482 on the DFM.

Arguably, the balance of invitees, whether arrived at deliberately or otherwise, suggests that the landowner will receive maximum support for his argument in favour of his objectives. If the Trust is represented it may find that it is in the position of a lone objector and that is a situation that the landowner may, in PR terms, use to the full.

After an extended discussion, that included Eve and Mark, the committee *agreed that it was impossible for it to accept the invitation to send a representative to the 7 February meeting. It could not do so because of the refusal of J.Exton to provide an adequate agenda for the meeting and any information or explanation of the landowner's proposals for changes to the footpath network at 'Worcester'.*

It is prepared to re-address the invitation, but only if the DCC will give an assurance that the following measures will be implemented prior to the proposed meeting.

- The DCC to issue a complete, detailed and official agenda that shows each ROW in the overall proposal as a specific agenda item in order to facilitate individual consideration.
- Any application to divert various ROW that is already in existence is made available to the meeting.
- The DCC appoints a Chairman of the meeting.
- In the interest of openness and transparency the public must be allowed to attend the meeting
- The DCC should appoint a minute's clerk and, in the interests of clarity and transparency, an official record of the meeting should be published.

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3 cont:-

- The TVT requires that two representatives attend the meeting.
- The Trust reserves the right, if it sees what it regards as a possible conflict of interest, to object to the presence of the individuals concerned.
- The Local DCC member must be invited to the meeting.

4: Matters Arising

- a) *The removal of spoil heaps at Worcester and or obstructions to FP T482* – Terry Bennett reported that K.Perry continued to be evasive. His latest excuse for his lack of action is contained in an e-mail to Eve Higgs where he says, “The landowner is in communication with Dorset County Footpaths team and my planning colleagues with regard to some proposals to this parcel of land. I have therefore withheld any formal action at this time pending these discussions”.

With regard to the obstructions to FP T482 the landowner has simply disregarded the Legal Order that requires him to remove the obstructions. The final date for him to comply with the Order is now the 31 January.

- b) *An Assessment of the January members meeting* - The committee agreed that the audience seemed to find the ‘Poor Law’ an interesting subject, but it believed that the presentation would have benefited from the use of better visual aids.
- c) *Co-option of a Trust member to the committee* – the Chairman reported that she had not been able to speak directly to Tony Ford, but his wife had informed her that he was too busy to devote any time to the work of Trust committee.

- d) *Access path from Chard St to the Millennium Play Ground* – As agreed by the committee a letter dealing with this subject was posted on the 4 January to the Clerk of the Parish Council. The letter requests the council to consider making an application jointly with the Trust for the legal recognition of the access path by its inclusion on the Definitive Footpath Map for Thorncombe. The Trust informed the council that it is in a position to take unilateral action and make its own application, but it believed that an application made jointly by the council and the Trust will have added strength.

- e) *Chard Quarry Junction Event*- the Chairman informed the committee that Rachael Whitbread had received an enquiry from the University of 3rd Age expressing an interest in visiting the Quarry nature reserve and it appears that there is a member of staff who is very keen that the visit should be arranged. John Whitbread expressed the view that the proposed visit was a very good idea and that it may be possible to arrange to use the entrance to the quarry as a car park. It was suggested that the Easter Holiday appeared to be a suitable time for such a visit.

5: Finance Report

The Treasurer provided the committee with copies of a written financial report as at the 2010. The report forms part of these minutes.

Income	Expenditure	Assets		Santander
		[Current A/C	Nationwide]	
£	£	£	£	£
58.29	206.45	687.21	5487.48	636.61

The Treasurer drew the attention of the committee to a reduction to the total in the current account and linked that to membership subscriptions, pointing out that they had remained at their current level over a very long period of time.

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JW

<p>5 cont:- She explained that she had prepared a comparison between the cost of members meetings; during the period from May 2010 to January 2011 and the amount of subscriptions received during the same period.</p> <p>The total cost of Trust membership meetings was approximately £474.90 compared to membership subscriptions of £ 366.00 during the same period. She proposed that the committee should consider increasing subscriptions. <i>It was agreed that the question should be placed on the agenda for discussion at the next committee meeting</i></p>	TBB
<p>6: Current Planning Applications for Thorncombe – Terry Bennett informed the committee that currently there were no applications for them to consider.</p>	
<p>7: Committee member’s items for inclusion on the agenda.</p> <p>i) <i>Maintenance of hedgerows</i>– the Chairman reported that she had received a complaint illustrated with photographs, from Richard Holt, a member of the Trust. He had complained about the condition of the hedgerows in the area of land between the village and Hibbards Automotive, which he claimed are overgrown and badly in need of attention.</p> <p>The committee thanked Richard for bringing the matter to its attention and agreed that the photographs that he had supplied clearly illustrated that hedgerows had not been subject to cutting or layering. However, the condition of hedgerows was a matter for the landowner and he may have decided not cut them for a particular reason. As far as the committee was aware there does not exist a legal obligation on the landowner to maintain hedgerows in a specific manner and it did not believe that the Trust was empowered or had the right to make a direct appeal to the landowner in this matter.</p>	LT
<p>ii) <i>History Group Finances</i> – The Treasurer remind the committee that the Trust had given a small financial grant to the Local History Group (LHG) at its initial inauguration. Subsequently the Group had handed some money back and it had remained in the Trust’s accounts. She asked the committee to decide whether the money should be retained for the use of the Trust, or whether it should be returned to the LHG..</p> <p>Terry Bennett pointed out that it would not be possible to return the money as the LHG was defunct. <i>The committee agreed that the money should be retained for the use of the Trust.</i></p>	LT
<p>iii) <i>Members Meetings 2011/2012</i> – John Whitbread provided the committee with an initial draft schedule of subjects and speakers. The schedule indicated that details had been pencilled in for the following dates 12 May, 14 July, 8 Sept and 10 November. Members expressed the view that the topics so far included in the schedule were interesting and were likely to attract members to the meetings.</p>	JW
<p>8.: Chairman’s Report of the December 2010 meeting of the Thorncombe Parish Council.</p>	
<p>See appendix ‘A’ for the full text of the Chairman’s Report.</p>	
<p>9: Any Other Business</p>	
<p>It was agreed that the following items will be added to the agenda for discussion at the February meeting</p>	
<p>Spring Sale May 21st</p>	
<p>i) Administrative arrangements ii) To consider arranging a photo exhibition with the title ‘ A child’s impressions of being a child in Thorncombe in 2011 ‘</p>	JW

9 cont:-

iii) To investigate whether any of the stall holders at a recent Riding for the Disabled event, if suitable, will be prepared to attend the Spring Sale

LT

10: **Date & venue of the next meeting**

Tuesday the 22 February 2011 in the Thorncombe Village Hall.

Signed..... Date