

Colney Heath Parish Council



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JULY 2010

Minutes of a Special Public Meeting for High Street Residents

Present:- Cllr D Horner-Chair Cllr D Crump-Vice Chair-Cllr Brazier-Cllr J Day
Clerk-Mr J Dean & Assistant Clerk-Mrs K Parker-Mead

Public Attendance-As listed and available for inspection

Date of Meeting-8th July 2010 at 7pm-8.30pm Village Hall Community Room.

PARKING AND OTHER ISSUES ON COMMON LAND

A meeting was offered to local residents mainly to properties no 3-85 in an effort to outline the council position on use of common land, following a letter sent from our Solicitors in line with council requirements and approval at a previous meeting. The letter had caused misunderstandings over the use of the land, which is subject to by-laws and AOP- council should according to Legal advice uphold. A number of responses had been received after the letters were sent out in two tranches many of which complained about the rigid action we had taken and against residents custom and practise of past years. Cllr Horner said several issues had been raised after council had carried out the annual beating of Bounds Ceremony around the common on 9th May and pictures of various inappropriate uses were displayed to the meeting. These included horse box, skip, loose rubble, general rubbish, wood, trailers, vans, lorry, car left weeks with owner away. Untaxed vehicle and trampoline, small shed, paddling pool, dog jump fence, toys etc. He added all sorts of legal and consequential issues arise and council have to act within their powers on their land. It cannot be ignored.

The Chair Cllr D Horner went on to say clearly this was unacceptable for quite a number of reasons, public safety, liability, breach of the By-Laws and council had to draw this to a halt. Some of the residents complained about the action saying it was unnecessary and heavy handed and had costs attached. The Clerk explained how we have to act and after sending various warnings plus an article he had put in the Chronicle about the issue no notice had been taken. We had also received complaints from residents who did not breach the rules and said it was unfair others got away with clear breaches. Clerk also had been verbally abused when offering polite advice to a person who was possibly infringing the by-laws, such action along with other employees such as Common Ranger and Commons Warden is their duty to council.

When faced with a majority of resident's disapproval Cllr Horner took this on board and apologised for the ill feeling it had raised. Several other complaints were levelled at the Clerk and Treasure Tots for parking there as well. In reply the Clerk said it was a work place, staff & visitors expect to be able to park. It was also a disabled entrance.

Cllr Horner asked the meeting for views on how this can be settled as council clearly wanted to see fairness but not abuse on common land. Strictly motor vehicles should not use common land other than for access to properties. We had no issue with those who wished to do so in a reasonable manner. Cllr Crump commented about the parish boundary marker posts asking how did residents feel about parking or using the land which is not owned by them. It was also clear Estate Agents regularly stated in their sales promotion "Parking at rear" This is totally incorrect we often had to ring them. The abuse was not shown by all residents only a few and many of the reasonable and abiding residents felt penalised by this. Some of the residents had lived here for decades had been careful and not overstretch the privilege of overnight or occasional parking. This saved the potential damage and vandalism exposure by leaving their cars on the High Street sat night. The recent issues clearly troubled them suggesting that some in ways it can be solved quite easily by others in keeping to the rules

The matter of Way leaves was raised and council have no problems with upholding a legal access to those who wish to use their own land for parking. The wayleave was not to be claimed as a parking permit. Council, in fact any council cannot give that assurance. Paul Claydon in 2005 at an earlier Commons/residents open meeting on a similar vein, suggested we did not renew Wayleaves as it raised many problems.

After various exchanges some rather forceful and angered the Chair said he would make a suggestion to all those present- as a possible compromise to set up a commons association the council can recognise where we can have a mutual exchange of ideas and set rules for limited and regulated use of the area. He asked those present to come back with ideas to us by the next full council meeting on 9th September and we will consider them. He instructed the Clerk to speak tomorrow with our legal advisors and see about lifting the deadline of the parking ban for the time being. He agreed council might in hindsight have chosen a different route to implement necessary & reasonable but regulatory control. A council letter will now be sent to all residents by Friday 9th July stating the position and extending the consultation period.

The Clerk said if the residents wished to present details to him at the office in time for the next meeting on 9th September he will be including the matter in the Agenda.

The Meeting ended at 8.30pm



John Dean
Clerk to the Council
28th July 2010

Copies available at the parish office.