

Pertenhall and Swineshead Quality Parish Council

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Minutes of meeting held on Thursday, Sept 25th, 2008, in Pertenhall Village Hall at 8.00.

Present were Councillors Herdan [JH], Kingham [TK], Pateman [NP], Pollard [SP], Whitlock [MW], Borough Councillor Ian Clifton and 3 members of the public. Brian Stevens [BS] was in the chair.

08.48 Apologies – Thomas Bates,[TB] County Councillor Wootton

08.49 Minutes of July meeting – already circulated. **08.49.01 Were signed as correct.**

08.50 Declarations of Interest in any agenda item. None.

At 8.30 speakers from EB Security came to discuss the **Confident Communities money**. Mr Robert Ludlow was Operations Manager for the Southern Region. The company were based in Leighton Buzzard. They had been contacted because they were being used by Marston PC and Lidlington were considering employing them

They gave a presentation about what they had to offer and how they would approach the matter of security in the two villages.

After they had left there was discussion. The points raised by councillors, and members of the public, were

- The ideal situation would be if someone local, known to and trusted by the community, could do this job. However no-one had agreed to accept this position. It was also pointed out that such a person would have to be trained because they could be put in potentially dangerous situations.
- It was felt by some that this was an opportunity to see what could be achieved, especially in areas like Wood End, Pertenhall, where the majority of the residents are out all day and the lane is very quiet.
- Others felt that these are the wrong type of villages for security of this nature. The only real concern was speeding and a private security company could do nothing to help this.
- The councillors were in favour of a PCSO but a private security company was a totally different concept. They were not at all the same thing.
- The reactions of residents to a private security firm in the villages should be considered. Their presence might cause alarm rather than calm fears, and antagonise rather than reassure people.
- A PCSO would have had a social role, chatting to residents and giving support. There was no evidence that this company could or would do that.
- If a situation should arise which caused concern the councillors felt that more presence and force would be needed than would be supplied by this company.
- These security officers were not known to the councillors or residents and could not impart the necessary feeling of safety in the community.

NP proposed that the council should not accept the money which had been offered by the County Council under the heading 'Confident Communities Money'. **This proposal was agreed with three councillors in favour and three abstaining.** The clerk was instructed to inform both EB Security and the County Council of this decision.

08.51 Brief discussions of matters arising from previous meeting

- Definitive Maps for North Beds Borough – these were made available to councillors at July meeting. Alterations were needed. MW will return these to clerk when required amendments have been pin pointed.

08.52 Correspondence – A. Requiring decisions or for information

- County Council invitation – Autumn reception – County Hall – 25th November – 6.00 for 6.30 – light buffet. **08.52.01 To be attended by BS and GT.**
- Payphone in Pertenhall – nothing to report
- Road closure notification due to flooding – available to those interested.
- Climate Change and Pollution – to be filed
- ‘Making and Enforcing of Bylaws – a Consultation’ – **08.52.02- to be passed round the councillors for consideration and discussed on November 20th.** Decisions to be sent that evening to ‘Communities and Local Government’ to meet the deadline, and also to ask for a day’s grace.

Correspondence – B. Available for those interested – see table at back of hall

08.53 Planning

A.

- Vine Cottage, Pertenhall – approved
- Yew Tree Cottage, Pertenhall – approved
- West Cottage, Swineshead - approved
- The Green, Pertenhall – approved. **08.53.01 SP commented on this application and reminded the council that it had been agreed to keep a close eye on what is built on this site.** The plot was big enough for a development and the councillors need to be sure of seeing all amended plans. This was reiterated by NP.

- B. Hill Farm, Riseley. Information available to those interested. Letter already emailed to Swineshead councillors. IC thought that the owners would eventually apply for planning permission. It was again stated that there is someone living there now. There is a generator running at night.

- C. Review of Settlement Policy Areas – questionnaire was discussed and **08.53.02 will be completed by the clerk following the instructions of the councillors.**

MW commented that Richard Chamberlain had spoken to him about the land off the High Street and off Green Lane. He has requested a variation in the SA boundary to include more land. The parish council will not comment or make decisions till definite proposals have been put forward or applications received.

08.54 Finance –

A.

- Clerk’s expenses – telephone and Broadband - £20.00
- Stamps –£2.70
- Clerk’s salary[for second quarter year 2008/9] - £891.80
- Pertenhall Village Hall rental - £10.00
- Photocopying paper - £10.47 – re-imbursed to clerk.
- Tophams – grass cutting – Cut 3 – £393.62
- Beds RCC membership for 5 years - £120
- Auditor – BDO - £188.00
- Printer toner - £357.45

08.54.01 Authorisation was granted for all the above SP/JH. SP offered to try to find a source of cheaper cartridges for the Samsung printer.

Balance carried forward – 31st July 2008 - £11,411.92

- B. Report on Audit. – The audit has been satisfactorily concluded
The notice of Conclusion of Audit has been displayed.

08.55 Highways – to include update on Highways Partnership money.

- For Swineshead – MW
Clerk asked to contact Helen Dow again about work scheduled for September in Swinehead.

- For Pertenhall – the work done on road between Pertenhall and Swineshead was of a poor standard. The holes have been filled in a manner which will not survive the first frost. NP to liaise with TB and see what action should be taken.

08.56 – Bletsoe and travellers/gypsies. IC will attend the Bushmead appeal next week and report on the outcome. The Bletsoe appeal will be in April/May next year. **08.56.01 Clerk to contact clerk in Bletsoe to offer assistance and to ask for advance information about the appeal.**

08.57 – Parish Plan review 08.57. 01 It was decided to review every 6 months. This process to start in November with discussion of minutes of the Health Section of the Parish Plan.

08.58 – Quality Parish Council – discussion of the way forward. **08.58.01 Clerk to inform meeting in November if she has decided it is useful to re-apply.** BS reported on the new and additional criteria, e.g. involvement of youth in the parishes, and training needs . Councillors asked what benefits are received from QPC status.

08.59 Open Forum – at which points may be raised by councillors or members of the public.

- TK commented on the very slow Broadband connection in the area, asking councillors to be aware of the situation and to use every opportunity to make the relevant authorities aware that the situation is unsatisfactory. Businesses in the region are at a disadvantage. Nov agenda.
 - SP asked about the KINS and JAGS which he and JH had heard discussed in January. IC thought that these plans had not yet been implemented by the police.
 - JH asked if money could be spent on speed cameras but the clerk had already been told by Angela Williamson that this was not possible.
 - IC suggested that when representatives went to the reception, [08.52], they should ask what happens to the money earmarked for Confident Communities if it is not spent for this purpose.
 - IC said he hoped that BBC [Beds Borough Council] would be able to have an increased police presence at meetings etc. when it became the Unitary Authority.
 - IC said that the grant for Pertenhall Village Hall had been passed. He was thanked for this.
 - NP raised the question of the bridleway at the far end of Wood End Lane, BW24. This had been extensively cut back. He requested that the clerk write a letter saying that
 - This had been done with no consultation
 - The R of W [Rights of Way] officer was under the impression that the contractor knew the land owner and had consulted with him, but this was erroneous. The R of W officer had not checked that consultation had taken place. There had been an assumption that the contractor would a, consult with the land owner and b, act in an acceptable fashion. In fact the work done caused considerable damage and more would have been destroyed but for the intervention of a resident.
 - What had been a green leafy bridleway was now a wide muddy path, about 8 metres wide, with mature trees lopped mercilessly and with no sensitivity .
 - Trees which had been originally supplied by the R of W department had been maturing for over a decade and were now ruthlessly slashed down.
 - The bridleway and the fields beyond were now open to large vehicles and to anyone wishing to drive onto the land beyond. This seemed not to have been considered by R of W officer or by the contractor. There are now plans for bollards/barriers to try to rectify this error but bollards need not have been erected in this quiet and beautiful spot.
 - There seems to have been a total lack of communication.
 - Trees should be supplied again and planted to replace those wantonly cut down.
- 08.59 01 This letter should be addressed to Mrs Rainbow**

The meeting closed at 9.55.

The next meeting will be in Pertenhall Village Hall on November 20th at 8.00
This is an open meeting and everyone is welcome to attend.