

Denby Parish Community Action Group

Minutes of the Steering Committee

Tuesday 23rd January 2007 at 19:30

At The Friends Meeting House High Flatts

Opening:

The meeting of the Denby Parish Community Action Group was called to order at 19:30 on Tuesday 23rd January 2007 in Friends Meeting House High Flatts by David Cook.

Present:

Allan Fish, Jane Fish, Guy Ellis, John Perry, Andy Asher, Andrew Brown, Joe Price, David Smith, Dawn Smith, John Cook, David Cook [Chair], Sue Daws.

A. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was unanimously approved.

B. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting on 30th November 2006 were unanimously approved as distributed.

C. Issues Discussed

1. Name of the Group

The first discussion centred on the need for a name for the group. One piece of correspondence had already been sent with the name Denby Parish Action Group, but it was felt that the addition of the word Community would better describe the group. The extent of the boundaries surrounding the Parish was also discussed.

Decision: That the group will be now known as the Denby Parish Community Action Group

2. Officers of the Group

The following Officers were proposed, seconded, and duly elected:

Decision:

Chairman:	David Cook
Vice-Chairman:	John Cook
Secretary:	Sue Daws
Treasurer:	Andrew Brown
Publicity Officer:	Alan Fish

3. Current Planning Issues

The planning permission for turning a 14-acre field on the north side of Birdsedge Lane in Birdsedge Village into a "Nature Reserve" was discussed at some length. It was the feeling of a number of residents of the village that the real intention of the owner was to build a house on Greenbelt Land. Permission for a warden's house on the land had been refused by Kirklees Planning Department but the owner has appealed to the Planning Inspectorate and the time for submission of objections had now passed; no extension of the period was possible. The Group felt that the Planning Inspectorate should be encouraged to hold the hearing locally, possibly at Skelmanthorpe but preferably at the Birdsedge Village Hall, where it was felt a good

attendance from the village would help to influence the eventual decision. The Group heard that there is another group within Birdseye Village itself that is also interested in this matter, and there could be a possibility of joining forces with them in order to provide a more united front.

Further discussion took place on the observations of some village residents on activities on the land, as it was felt that some of the works may be outside the planning permission already granted for the land.

Decision: (a) It was decided to send a letter to the Planning Inspectorate, copying Kirklees Planning Department, asking the location of the meeting and if it can be held in Birdseye Village Hall, Secretary to draft a letter. (b) The Chairman to furnish the Secretary with a copy of the Planning Application refusal from Kirklees so that draft representations can be drawn up. (c) Secretary to draft a letter asking that the Planning Enforcement Officer from Kirklees should establish exactly what is happening on the land and to ensure that the planning permission is being observed.

Action: Sue Daws [letters]; David Cook [documentation]

4. Community Plan

The Community Plan for Birdseye, High Flatts and Upper Denby was briefly discussed and it was decided that the Group certainly wishes to go ahead with producing such a Plan for the three villages. It was decided to write a formal letter of intent to Tom O'Donovan at the Yorkshire Rural Community Council. The Group will request funding but need to know what they may expect to receive, so it was decided to ask Tom O'Donovan to attend the next meeting to outline what is feasible. The Chairman has written to Mrs Wood (Denby Dale Parish Council) asking for a copy of the DD Parish Plan but this had not been forthcoming.

It was reiterated that the long-term objective of the Group is to form a Parish Council covering the three villages.

Decision: To write a formal Letter of Intent and request for funding to the YRCC in preparation for producing a Community Plan.

Action: Sue Daws to draft a Letter of Intent to the YRCC and an invitation to Tom O'Donovan.

5. Parish Council

How we go about becoming a Parish Council in our own right was discussed at some length. Under the 1997 Local Government and Ratings Act, Kirklees Council is empowered to review the status of the existing Parish Council and recommend to Central Government that we can set up a new Parish Council. At the moment, the Government has recommended that Kirklees does nothing, and a meeting at Kirklees on 24th January will probably advise a review some time after the May Elections this year.

A member of the Group asked how we raise money for a Parish Council; the existing council takes a precept from the Community Charge; would Central Government or Kirklees fund the council?

6. Road Markings

This topic led to a lively debate on the poor driving witnessed on the A629 through Birdseye and High Flatts, with the speed limit of 40mph regularly broken and many instances of overtaking using the newly painted hatched area in the centre of the road. The various advantages and disadvantages of cameras and other traffic calming measures were discussed. Although Kirklees had considered setting a camera on the

road in Birdsedge, Central Government would not allow it as it was felt that the A629 was too important a trunk road to be "slowed down". A member of the Group suggested average-speed cameras at the Sovereign crossroads and the end of High Flatts village as a better way of keeping traffic to the speed limit, and this idea found favour. It was reported that Kirklees were planning to introduce flashing school warning lights outside Birdsedge Primary School, but no reduction in the speed limit. According to current regulations, school environs were supposed to be protected by a 20 mph limit. Since no one in the Group knew what was feasible in the situation, it was decided to invite a traffic expert from Kirklees Council to come to the next meeting to advise. A member of the Group asked if it would be possible to hire an independent highway safety consultant to give expert advice.

Decision: To invite Chris Platts from Kirklees to come to the next meeting and speak to the Group, the Chairman to contact him and discuss the possibility.

Action: David Cook [invitation]

7. Publicity

Arising from the discussion about road markings, it was felt that a Newsletter would be an excellent way of communicating with the residents of the villages and encouraging support for action on matters affecting the villages. The Vice-Chairman told the Group of an offer of help from a retired journalist, Gillian Haynes, who was willing to write copy for a publication. Alan Fish volunteered to produce the newsletter and he was unanimously elected as Publications Officer.

Decision: To elect Alan Fish as Publicity Officer for the Group; to produce a monthly Newsletter for distribution.

D. Any Other Business

A member of the Group asked how often the Group meeting would be held, and it was felt that monthly would be a good interval, at least initially. The last Tuesday of each month was settled on, since it would allow for discussion of matters arising from Denby Dale Parish Council meetings held earlier in the month. All interested parties from the three villages would be welcome to attend meetings, although numbers could be restricted by the choice of venue, and it may be necessary to limit numbers if the meetings became too large and unwieldy. It was also decided that the Group would draw up a Constitution.

Decision: That Group meetings will be held on the last Tuesday of each month. A formal Constitution will be drawn up for the Group, details to be discussed at the next meeting.

E. Agenda for Next Meeting

Approval of the Agenda.

Approval of the Minutes of the last meeting.

Possible attendance by Tom O'Donovan to advise on YRCC funding.

Possible attendance by Chris Platts to advise on Highway Safety.

Group Constitution.

Adjournment:

Meeting was adjourned at 21:35 by the Chairman. The next general meeting will be held on Tuesday 27th February 2007 in a place and time to be decided.

Minutes submitted by: Sue Daws [Secretary]

Approved by: David Cook [Chairman]