

Denby Parish Community Action Group

The Combined Community Association of Denby, Birdsedge and High Flatts

Minutes of the Steering Committee
Tuesday 27th February 2007 at 19:00
At The Friends Meeting House High Flatts

Opening:

The meeting of the Denby Parish Community Action Group was called to order at 19:00 on Tuesday 27th February 2007 in Friends Meeting House High Flatts by the Chairman, David Cook.

Present:

Guy Ellis, Andy Asher, Andrew Brown, Joe Price, David Smith, Dawn Smith, John Cook, David Cook [Chair], Sue Daws, Gwen Nicholls, Tim Pearson.

A. Apologies

Apologies were accepted from Allan and Jane Fish and from John Perry.

B. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting on 23rd January 2007 were unanimously approved as distributed.

C. Matters Arising

Sue Daws read replies from Kirklees MC regarding the location of the Planning Inspectorate hearing, and from West Yorkshire Accident Reduction Unit regarding speed cameras. David Cook confirmed he had recently met with Jane Durkin of KMC about the location of the hearing, and had discussed other sites with her, such as the Fountain in Ingbirchworth, which might be suitable.

David Cook also reported that he had received agreement from Chris Platts to attend one of the committee meetings to talk about road safety measures.

Andrew Brown reported that the bank account for the Action Group had been set up.

D. Issues discussed

1. Conservation Area

The extension of the Conservation Area in High Flatts to include all houses on the west side of the A629 was discussed. There has been a total lack of public consultation on this matter. The fact that the houses now included in the CA had nearly all been altered already meant that the extension of the CA was too late. Tim Pearson reported he had already written to the council on his own behalf expressing his opinions on this, since he is affected by the decision. The situation in Upper Denby was described, where the plans for extending the Conservation Area there were displayed locally on a Saturday with objections and comments to be received by the following Tuesday, allowing no time for people to be properly engaged, and preventing people on holiday from even knowing of the plans let alone commenting on them.

Decision: To write a letter to the Council complaining of the lack of consultation, the fact that due process was not followed, expressing the belief that the extension was pointless since all houses had already been altered, and asking why there had been no consultation (as there had been in Upper Denby, however minimal). The local residents of High Flatts felt they had been steamrollered. The Council needs to show the benefit of the extension, and the action group asks can this decision be reversed.

The letter should also encompass the poor consultation at Upper Denby – why was it rushed through with such haste.

Action: Sue Daws to draft a letter to Kirklees MC.

2. Community Plan

The Group welcomed Tom O'Donovan and Derek Liddell from Yorkshire Rural Community Council to speak of the steps we need to take to get the Plan started. The forms to apply for a grant need to be completed and returned within two weeks; Andrew Brown elected to do this and will liaise with Tom O'Donovan. Tom asked how we would go about gathering local opinion. A questionnaire, with an additional one to be completed by children in order to engage their ideas, was suggested, together with public meetings, a newsletter and website. There was a general discussion on items that could be included in the questionnaire, such as the provision of bus shelters, public seating, crossing refuges, rubbish tipping, dog fouling. Producing a Village Design Statement will help identify trends that should be preserved, and could become part of supplementary planning guidance for future planning decisions, helping to eliminate proposals which would “reduce the visual amenity” of the area, ensure that the local community can influence the design of everything from road signs to seating, bus shelters, window designs and so on. Tom suggested giving local residents cheap disposable cameras for them to record the things they like and those they do not. Combining all the pictures can help to formulate the requirements for the look of an area. Tom expressed the opinion that we could expect to receive up to £3,000 in grants for the Community Plan from YRCC.

Derek Liddell also introduced the work he does in helping to create networks for local communities, the provision of training and other services, help with the management organisation and constitution of a community. There is a programme to hold themed meetings, e.g. Rural Community Buildings, which will give information and help on management, licensing, health and safety, etc. The action group will be invited to attend these meetings.

Other topics discussed were the Village of the Year contest (should we enter?), the Parish Government Conference in Scarborough, the possibility of forming a break-away parish council, and the standards of public behaviour for local councillors.

Action: Tom O'Donovan to supply the YRCC Newsletter to the action group. Andrew Brown to complete the YRCC forms.

3. Birdsedge Planning

There have been no further developments on Mr Sellars' planning appeal. Scouts were planting trees on the “wildlife field” in Birdsedge Lane and this was reported in the local paper.

4. Firth Lane footpath

This is the lane leading from the A629 to the Friends Meeting House. It is a footpath but seems to have been omitted from the footpath map, and it needs to be included on the map. In order to do this, it is necessary to submit a number of completed forms to the landowner, John Sykes. (Could a form be submitted on behalf of the action group?) David Cook distributed copies of the form to volunteers to fill in.

5. Firth Lane maintenance

Firth Lane is an unadopted road, and despite efforts by the owner John Sykes, the drainage is bad and the surface poor. Whilst a letter would describe the opinions of the action group, it was decided that a personal approach was best.

Decision: David Cook and Dawn Smith to make personal representations to John Sykes regarding the state of the road and pointing out that Mr Sykes would be liable for any accidents befalling people using the road.

6. Footpath 77

This footpath is marked on the map, and runs from Windmill Lane to the A629 in Birdsedge. However, there is an unresolved drafting error on the plan, which Kirklees Council is trying to rectify. The Area Committee has brought pressure to bear on the Kirklees Council to reopen the footpath; the action group needs to be kept informed of the progress of this matter.

Decision: A letter to be sent to the Rights of Way Department, Kirklees Council, asking to be kept informed of what is happening.

Action: Sue Daws to draft the letter.

7. Speeding on the A629

A number of group members attended the public meeting regarding traffic measures in the local area, and all declared it to be a waste of time, as all suggestions proposed by the public were rejected. It was suggested that the action group join forces with the Birdsedge and High Flatts Community Association in order to present a united front.

Dawn Smith presented a cutting regarding the relaxed legislation on speed cameras. It was decided that the group needs to do some more research into this topic, as we are still unsure about the possibility of having an independent survey performed, or a speed count by KMC. We need to persuade the Road Traffic Division of KMC to spend more time on investigating this, as well as tell us what their objections are to cameras. David Cook reported that there is a plan to erect school flashing lights on the A629. The idea of a meeting in Birdsedge was proposed.

Decisions: To organise a meeting in Birdsedge; to carry out more research on the question of cameras and the options for pushing this through the council.

Actions: Dawn Smith to speak to a member of the Birdsedge and High Flatts Community Association regarding a meeting; David Cook and Dawn Smith to organise the meeting, possible venues The Methodist Chapel or the Village Hall.

8. Dog Fouling

There have been some improvements in Upper Denby since the local dog wardens leafleted residents about this. However, Birdsedge, Lower Denby and High Flatts still suffer to some degree with fouled pavements.

Decision: To write a letter to the Dog Wardens asking them if they can do something about it.

Action: Sue Daws to draft a letter.

9. Denby Delph/Delf

Denby Delph (or Delf) is an area of some 30 acres stretching from Denby Lane to Quaker Bottom, which some years ago was sold to the Meadowlands Trust, run by Robert Hanna. When the Trust was found to be fraudulent, and Robert Hanna convicted and imprisoned for fraud, the land reverted to the Treasury. Local people had been watching developments, with a view to purchasing the land for the local community. On 23rd February, a newsletter from the local Labour Party stated that the land had “been saved from developers” by giving the land to the Garganey Trust. No one locally had been informed of the proposal before it was announced as a *fait accompli*. It transpired that Neil Windett, of the Countryside Unit of KMC, had been in negotiations with the Treasury Solicitor, although neither Jim Dodds, KMC

councillor, nor the chief executive of KMC knew anything of the agreement made between Mr Windett and the Treasury Solicitor. John Cook has written a letter to the Huddersfield and District Chronicle (published on Friday 2nd March) and he read this out at the meeting. The action group supports the local feeling that the land should be in local control, not managed by yet another faceless Trust. There has been no local consultation; the council officer responsible for this is not contactable; the whole thing smacks of maladministration. Are we too late to do anything about this?

Decision: To send a letter to KMC complaining that: there has been no local consultation; asking how the Garganey Trust become involved; ask for opportunity to put forward our own plans as custodian of the land to be managed for the benefit of local people. This letter is to be copied to the Treasury Solicitor.

Action: Sue Daws to draft letters.

10. Scrap Cars in High Flatts

David Cook reassured the committee that he was in the process of removing the scrap cars currently housed on spare land on Windmill Lane.

11. Jordan Bridge over the River Dearne

David Cook stated that was in negotiation with KMC regarding this bridge.

12. Haulage at Sunside Birdsedge

Guy Ellis reported that the planning application for parking of three goods vehicles had been turned down by the council, and the potential problem had gone away.

13. Application to the Parish Council for funding

Can we apply for funding, in addition to the money we can get from the YRCC? Discussion centred around the items we need to account for: postage, website, printing costs, requirements of the community plan, hire of meeting rooms, admin costs.

Decision: To apply to the Parish Council for £6,000 to cover the above costs

Action: Sue Daws to draft application

14. Constitution

Decision: To convene a separate meeting with one thing on the agenda, the wording of a Constitution; to ask for Derek Liddell's help in formulating the constitution.

Action: Andrew Brown to contact Derek Liddell and agree a date for the meeting

D. Any Other Business

Parish Plan: A personal letter written by Sue Daws to the Parish Council commenting on the Parish Plan was read out, and the views expressed in it were adopted by the action group.

Decision: Sue Daws to summarise the views as expressed in the letter and submit to the Parish Council as coming from the action group.

Newsletter: Items for the newsletter were discussed. Dawn Smith to give details of the new memorial seat in Birdsedge to Alan for inclusion in the newsletter.

Adjournment:

Meeting was adjourned at 22:20 by the Chairman. The next general meeting will be held on Tuesday 27th March 2007 at 19:00 in a place to be decided.

Minutes submitted by: Sue Daws [Secretary]
Approved by: David Cook [Chairman]