

Shadoxhurst Village Forum

Notes from the 10th Village Forum meeting held in the Pavilion on Thursday 16th March 2017

- To maintain the quality of life for all in the village
- To generate issues that could be put to the Parish Council
- To re-kindle community spirit and engender friendship
- To build a social feeling in the village
- To suggest things that will bring people together
- **With a vision to create and develop a positive community spirit.**

1) Welcome and Notes from last meeting

21 villagers attended the meeting. David Ledger, chairing the meeting, welcomed everyone.

A summary of notes from the last meeting had been circulated and there were no comments or further additions to them.

Following a question, David said he had now received details of the person organising the neighbourhood watch scheme and would be contacting him shortly.

2) Review of the Table Top Sale and the Village Spring Clean event.

i) Table Top Sale

Carol thanked everyone who had been involved with the sale. People commented that they had enjoyed it very much, saying that it had been fun. £170 had been raised for village projects. Some people asked if there could be another one, perhaps towards the end of the year.

ii) Village Spring Clean

David thanked everyone who had contributed to the spring clean – Beavers & Cubs, Baden-Powell Scouts and villagers – it had been very successful, with 30 bags of rubbish collected.

Simon told us that the Beavers & Cubs had enjoyed being involved, but they had been appalled at the amount of dog mess on the recreation ground. Because of this, and as part of their badge work, the children had made some posters to remind people to clean up after their dogs. We all felt that they were excellent posters and should be displayed in the pavilion windows so that people who walked their dogs on the recreation ground would be able to see them. David asked that thanks be passed on to the artists.

3) Report on the Planning Committee result on Woodchuch Road

The planning application had been granted by Ashford Borough Council planning committee, despite strong objections from the village. The building would have to start within 3 years of the decision notice being issued. David will write to Lois Jarrett about the inadequate village sewerage system – rectifying this may delay the start. Aline said there was a need to ensure that a company is responsible for SUDs maintenance rather than residents.

Aline, in her capacity as Borough Councillor, had spoken against the proposal and Ian thanked her for doing this. Apparently Mr Jarvis had not yet withdrawn his appeal because he was waiting for the decision notice to be issued by the Council first.

Forum members queried where the shortage of housing was, and it was agreed any shortage was actually of **affordable** housing. People commented on the large amount of

unsold housing (including affordable housing) still remaining at Oak View, and how in any case a lot of so called 'affordable' housing wasn't really affordable to young people.

Colin said he was very upset that it had been one of our own Ward Borough Councillors, Brad, who had proposed that the development should be approved. He had given no warning of what he intended to do, it would have been common decency to forewarn us. People had no recourse to what he was saying and Brad should explain himself.

It was strongly felt that Brad's behaviour had let us all down, especially as he had previously assured Parish Councillors that he would support them regardless of their decision and speak on the Parish Council's behalf at the planning committee meeting – as recorded in the 8th February Parish Council minutes.

There was a general feeling of no confidence in Brad. Ian felt Brad was taking us for granted, and that we should be able to expect some integrity from our leaders. After discussion it was agreed that Cheryl and Ian should draft a letter expressing people's concerns for circulation to Forum members.

4) What do you want for the King's Head pub field?

It was felt unrealistic to expect no development on this site, because it was included in Ashford's draft local plan and there is severe pressure to build houses. People discussed what they would like to see on the field, which included a village green at the front, and questions were raised about the type of houses wanted and whether there were places available at the local schools or doctors. How would development affect the pub?

In general people preferred much less than 24 houses on the site, although Aline thought we may have no choice as it's in the local plan as 24. However, if there is room for manoeuvre Aline agreed to contact Pentland homes and see what they say. Planning Officers, the Parish Council and Aline are all unhappy with the present layout of the site.

5) Discussions about Nickley Wood

Stuart and Margaret live in Nickley Wood, and they explained that the vast majority of the Travellers there are making good use of their land, and they felt it would be good if some of these Travellers would be willing to come along to the Forum meetings. However, it was felt that a couple of families were not making good use of their land, and despite concerns, Ashford Borough Council failed to enforce anything – that they seemed afraid to tackle the situation.

6) Village events

i) The Baden Powell Scouts

They are holding a coffee morning event at the Village Hall this Saturday 18th March.

ii) Showcasing Shadoxhurst

Ron was thanked for his poster and artwork. Posters are currently being distributed. The big sign for the railings will go up on Sunday.

David will contact Nick from the Scout Explorers to go ahead with the BBQ in the car park. Some vegetarian options would be required too.

Teas and coffees will be on sale in the hall, and if people were able to make cakes that would be really good, please.

Several people were willing to help out on the day. David will keep in touch with everyone to coordinate these things.

iii) Harvest Festival Event

Simon explained they would like to use the recreation field (with the Parish Council's permission) and the scout hut for an event, proposed date is Saturday 23rd September.

Plots of land would be hired out to stall holders – and this money would all go to the village, stall holders would keep money from their own sales. Stall holders could be commercial, and anything (legal and decent!) could be sold.

iv) Other suggestions

A quiz night to be held in November. Ron & Karen have quiz questions. Could bring our own food and drink to the event.

A Race Night in May. Alan has contacted a friend to see if we can loan race equipment for this event.

A murder mystery night was also suggested.

The firework event used to be very popular. Perhaps in a year's time, when we have some money, we could consider whether this is something we would be willing and able to organise.

7) Improving Communications.

Take up for newsletter by email had been disappointingly low. To help improve this, it was suggested that, at the Showcasing Shadoxhurst event, people could receive a free raffle ticket for a bottle of whisky or wine in return for giving their email address and signing up for an e-newsletter.

8) Village updates

We are still waiting for the bus shelter and street name signs to be fixed.

9) Date of next meeting

To be confirmed.