

003/06

Novington Sandpit Residents' Committee

Minutes of Meeting Held on Thursday 21st September 2006 7.30pm, Plumpton Village Hall – Committee Room

Present: Mike and Julie Barnard; Jean and Neville Eagle; Jane George; John & Carol Hendry; Nigel Hills; Tony Hutson; Jeanie Muddle; Paul & Carole Nicholson; John Sheeran; Christine Thompson; Graham Whittaker (in place of Charles Dampney) Katie Wride.

Apologies: Mr & Mrs Robin Akers; Gordon Barr; John and Sue Bonnett; Barbara Cheal; Kevin Cohen; Laurie Collins; Charles Dampney; Tim Davies; Mr & Mrs Stephen Galletly; Jane Gane; Veronica Harris; David Holmes; Sally Huband; Graham Inglis; Rod MacLaren; Mr & Mrs Clive Mountford; John Muddle; Mr & Mrs Richard Muirhead; Julie Russell; Mr & Mrs Scott-Moncrief; Gary & Lindsey Smith; Sue Smyth; David Tetley; Teresa Wells; Dominic Williams.

(All of the above listed residents will receive a copy of these minutes)

1. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 22nd August were approved by those present.

2. Matters Arising

a) Paul Nicholson said that in spite of meeting the deadline for submissions to the September Parish Magazine, he was disappointed that the article had not been printed. He had received assurances that an update would appear in the October magazine. In addition minutes are now published on the Plumpton PC website and put on the Parish noticeboards in Plumpton and East Chiltington. The meeting expressed satisfaction with these means of communication. Paul indicated that he would continue to try to get a monthly article in the Parish magazine.

Action: Paul Nicholson

b) A question had been raised last meeting as to whether the working hours during the preparation of the site would be extended. Paul Nicholson reported that he had taken this matter up with ESCC, who had confirmed that the working hours during the preparatory stage would be limited to the same as in the planning consent.

c) Tony Hutson said at the last meeting that he would undertake to meet with the site ecologist. He reported that he had been in touch with the ecologist, who had indicated that he would be willing to meet with Tony. Tony said that he saw this as positive and requested that members of the committee advise him of particular issues that they wanted him to review with the ecologist. The

meeting encouraged Tony to meet the ecologist on site as soon as possible. Paul Nicholson said that he would also ask Jeremy Patterson to see if he could speed this up.

Action: Tony Hutson and Paul Nicholson

- d) At the last meeting the committee had requested Paul Nicholson to pursue the possibility of starting a petition in the village to seek a reduction of the speed limit to 30 mph throughout the lane. Paul said he had a great deal to report on this and would come back to the issue later in the meeting.
- e) A few members of the committee indicated that they had seen one or two Dudman lorries moving along Plumpton Lane. Whilst most of those that had been seen had been using the southern end of the lane, there had been reports that one or two Dudman lorries had been spotted moving south through the Northern end of the village. However, no number plates or photographs had been taken and so nothing could be proven. The meeting agreed that it was **essential** that such reports are logged with the time, the number plate and preferably a photograph so that evidence can be reported to Dudman and the council immediately. **Action: All**
- f) On the subject of lorries using the northern part of the village, Paul Nicholson said that he would talk to Stuart who worked in the signal box to see if he would be willing to act as watchman for lorries incorrectly travelling over the level crossing. **Action: Paul Nicholson**
- g) Nigel Hills offered to pursue whether it might be possible to set up a website to record lorry movements recorded along the lane and through the village. **Action: Nigel Hills**
- h) It had been agreed at the last meeting that submissions should be made to both Plumpton and East Chiltington Parish Councils to help the Sussex Ouse Conservation Society buy a turbidity meter for measuring the level of suspended solids in the stream emanating from the sandpit which joins the Bevern. Paul Nicholson was able to report that each Parish Council had agreed to donate £150 towards the purchase of the meter and that both had been extremely supportive of the work of the residents' committee. The meeting expressed grateful thanks to the respective Councils.

3. Activities on Site

Paul Nicholson said that ESCC had given permission to Dudman to bring a site hut to the site. This had now been done. Dudman also planned to re tarmac the entrance track to the site. No other work would be permitted on site until all the nine conditions precedent had been signed off by ESCC.

4. Ownership

Paul Nicholson reported that he had confirmed that the Dudman Group does own the freehold of the site and the two fields to the south. It will be

registered in the name of Dudman Environmental (Properties) Ltd which is currently a dormant company.

5. Pre-conditions

Paul Nicholson reported that of the nine pre-conditions, four have now been satisfied: dust, wheel washing, fencing along the southern boundary, and very recently the working programme. As regards the archaeology survey, Paul had been advised that a firm of archaeologists would be visiting the site within the next two weeks. Jeanie Muddle wanted to know who the firm is. Paul undertook to find out the name of the company and to seek a copy of their report. **Action: Paul Nicholson**

Paul also indicated that Dudman is still in negotiation with ESCC on satisfying the other pre-conditions. Paul said that he was being copied in on all communications between the parties, and was being given an opportunity to comment on behalf of the residents' committee, which was very welcome. Paul said that he was impressed by the thoroughness of Jeremy Patterson.

6. Parish Councils

The submission for funding towards a turbidity meter has been covered elsewhere. Paul Nicholson said that he had also discussed with Plumpton Parish Council, the issue of requesting a speed restriction throughout the whole village. Plumpton PC felt that there was no chance of obtaining a 30 mph speed restriction through the whole village, as Highways and the Police require a clear distinction to be made between built up areas and rural areas, so that drivers saw a separate demarcation. However, Plumpton PC agreed to approach Lewes District Council and Highways on a range of options for reducing the speed limit/imposing traffic calming measures in strategic areas at the Northern and Southern ends of Plumpton Lane.

7. Norman Baker

Paul Nicholson reported on a recent meeting he has had with Norman Baker. Mr Baker had indicated that he was aware of the site as Tom Hawthorne had briefed him. He was interested in progress to date and indicated that he would like to receive all future copies of the Liaison Group minutes.

Paul said that Mr Baker's approach was to be realistic – the situation being that consent had been granted, and therefore there was little point in residents arguing over the terms of the consent. The main effort should be on communicating to the Operator and to ESCC the concerns of residents, and hoping that they listened. Mr Baker seemed pleased that Meg Stroude was involved.

On the subject of speed restrictions Mr Baker expressed the view that there would be an uphill struggle to persuade ESCC to reduce the speed limit along the lane given the nature of the road and its low accident record. He thought

that there may be some merit in arguing for a 40 mph limit, but a reduction to 50 mph being the more likely outcome.

Action: Paul Nicholson

8. Novington Sandpit Liaison Group

Paul Nicholson said that there had been no further Liaison Group meetings as no significant progress had been made on site and therefore little point in the Group's meetings taking place. Paul thought that it was unlikely that there would be a need for such a meeting until at least November.

9. Any other business

9.1 Paul Nicholson reported that he had recently been invited by Mr Dudman to meet him at his offices and to visit his site at Minstead. Paul was able to report the following:

- Mr Dudman has several sites (sand and aggregates) around East and West Sussex, and one in East Yorkshire. These include 5 pre-mix sites, two bulk carrier ships and two wharfs (Shoreham and Southampton).
- The sand quarry at Minstead is approximately 10 times the size of Novington. The approach road (actually a very narrow quiet lane) was clean and in good condition. The site appeared to be run to strict health and safety rules and was in a tidy, clean condition. Paul thought that this bode well for the Novington site.
- Paul had queried the use of pre-mix plants as from his own knowledge these result in much more traffic. The nearest of these plants that Dudman owns is at Cowfold and Mr Dudman explained that this could easily serve the same area as the Novington site. Therefore he had no intention of setting up a pre-mix plant at Novington – there is no planning consent for this in any case.
- Paul had discussed the future restoration of the site and the residents' concerns, particularly in view of the abandonment of the site by the previous operator, with Mr Dudman. Mr Dudman had indicated that that he intended to carry out his promise and was 'a man of his word'. He thought that the previous operator had fallen foul of certain land covenants on the site, and that this was the reason why he had pulled out.

9.2 Mike Barnard said that there seemed to be confused signals coming from Mr Dudman and ESCC as to whether the Operator would be able to sell sand directly from the site. Mr Dudman had indicated that other operators, such as Travis Perkins, might come to site, but ESCC had indicated that Mr Dudman's planning consent did not permit this type of activity. The meeting requested Paul Nicholson to seek clarification on this issue as it was thought that this could make a significant difference to the volume of traffic on the lane.

Action: Paul Nicholson

9.3 Tony Hutson indicated that it might be worthwhile asking the Sussex Biodiversity Centre if they had any records at the Wood's Mill Record Centre.

He agreed to do this, but warned that there may be a small charge to pay in this regard.

Action: Paul Nicholson

10. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be at 7.30pm on Wednesday 15th November 2006 in the Village Hall.

Action: All