



Lilleshall & Donnington Parish Council

Minutes of a Full Council Meeting held at Turreff Hall on 20th September 2004 at 7.00pm

Present:

Councillors Mrs V Verster (Chair), A Baker, Mrs V Brown, Mrs E A Clare, Mrs R Gregory, R Pitt, C Mason, M Skelton, K Watkins.

Also Present:

M Hosken, A England, Miss S Williams (Borough of Telford and Wrekin Scrutiny Commission 2 Committee), Councillor A Lawrence and G Whyte.

1. Apologies: Councillors B Green (Holiday), Mrs P A Green (Holiday), Miss C Mason (Holiday), P Norton (Ill), J Thompson (Childminding).

Resolved - that the apologies be accepted.

2. Declaration of Interest: R Pitt – Shrewsbury and Newport Canal Trust.

3. Granville Country Park

The Chair welcomed Scrutiny 2 Commission to the Parish Council meeting and then asked M Hosken to proceed in asking the Council questions regarding Granville Country Park:

Do you think that Granville Park is well used by the community?

People from the local area, i.e. Donnington, Donnington Wood and Muxton, do use the park for recreational use, largely walking the dog. However, the wider Telford community does not use the park because they are not sufficiently aware of it. The Parish Council has received complaints that the bridleways are not kept to by horse riders, and there are also motorbikes causing problems to pedestrians. There are some safety issues at the park which are difficult to solve – one solution might be lighting, but this might spoil the appearance.

Possible ways to make people more aware of the park would be to produce leaflets exclusively to promote the park, articles and a map of the park in the parish magazine and Insight, and liaising with schools to increase their usage of the park as it is not sufficiently used. If people knew what was on offer, they might be more likely to use the park. The Parish Council discussed an article along with a small survey in the Parish newsletter to gather local views on Granville, which would also help raise the profile of the park.



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The Chair proposed that the Council adjourns the meeting so that Mr. G Whyle could speak and provide a background and brief history of the Park. **Resolved** – that the meeting be adjourned.

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George Whyle then gave a brief history of some aspects of the park. Before being transferred to the then Wrekin Council, the land belonged to the National Coal Board. The furnaces produced pig iron. As well as the main site, the park is peppered with small pits which were used for iron stone. The paths which exist in and around the park today were created by the miners going to work the Freehold and the Granville Pit. Cllr Clare also described how the land now used for waste disposal was originally leased from the Wrekin District Council with an agreement that when the lease finished, the land would become part of the park. At the same time, the management of the site was transferred to the Shropshire Wildlife Trust.

The park used to extend to Lodge Woods and was meant to include Granville Colliery and the Windings. Originally there was a park ranger who helped to keep it well maintained, improved safety and provided information for visitors on the ecological and historical features. At this time, the park was also used by schools to a much greater extent. One of the main problems faced by Granville is that today people are less interested in walking.

The Chair proposed that the Council reconvene the meeting. **Resolved** – that the meeting reconvene.

Do you think the current management arrangement works effectively? If not, how could it be improved?

The Parish Council has concerns about the management of the park which it feels does not seem to work particularly well. It feels that Granville is a lower priority for the Shropshire Wildlife Trust than other sites across the county and the borough. It also feels that their suggestions regarding the park have not been listened to. For example, when the management of the park was first handed over to the SWT, the Parish Council suggested putting hedges at the boundaries of the park. Instead, fences were installed which are now in need of repair. The Parish Council felt that as the owners of the land, the Borough Council must ensure that the money it is putting into the park is spent appropriately, and questioned what methods are in place to monitor the activities of the Shropshire Wildlife Trust in Granville.

What do you see as the key areas for future preservation and/or development of Granville?

- The Parish Council has concerns that Granville will be swallowed up by developments across the Borough similar to what they have seen with other



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leisure facilities in the past. It and St. Georges Parish Council have previously tried to get help for the park but achieved nothing. There is a need for the Borough to show greater interest as the owners of the land, rather than focusing on Ironbridge and the Town Park. While the Town Park is a valuable asset, Granville is equally so, and provides an alternative type of park, being completely natural.

- If facilities are going to be improved and advertised, some thought will need to go into how people will access the park. There is a need to improve the footpath markings to show where paths are and where they lead to.

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- The canal basin and Muxton marsh tend to become filled with rubbish and need to be kept tidy.
- It would be of benefit to assess the historical value of the site and potential for use by schools and develop these aspects. Cllr. Pitt said that there are funds available to carry out full ecological and archaeological surveys.
- Initially it was envisaged that the park would have a visitor centre containing educational information. This would be ideal, particularly for use by school groups.
- The horse and cart sculpture that now stands on the roundabout by Asda attracted people into the park when it was situated there. The Lodge Furnace Site is also a great attraction. Such things need to be made the most of to draw visitors in.
- The riding school uses the park to a great extent, but they are not always using the bridleways properly, which needs to be addressed.

What impact do you think existing and future developments encroaching on the park have?

The housing developments which have been built already and are planned for the future are not encroaching on the park itself. The land around the park was originally identified to be used for housing and industry. Since some of this land could not find use as industrial land and might consequently have been transferred to housing, but no development is on the park itself.

However, development close to the park will still have an effect and disrupt the wildlife and natural balance of the park. The Parish Council has previously asked for a badger crossing to enable the animals to cross a development, but this has never been put in. Such considerations should be made in the case of further development, to assist the park to exist as far as possible in its natural state. Every planning application



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should include planning gain to be spent within the park itself to counteract the negative effects of the development.

The Clerk was asked:

1. To contact Robin Mager (BT&W) to arrange a meeting to discuss the above issues.
2. Enquire if park rangers were still employed at the Park
3. To invite Shropshire Wildlife Trust to a meeting to discuss the above.

Meeting closed at 2010hrs.

Signed:

Date: