

**Minutes of Meeting of Long Sutton Parish Council**  
**Held at the Hall on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2015 at 7.30 pm**

**Present:** Councillors, Mr R W Fry (Chairman), Mr N A Gould, Mr T P Shire, Mr P A F Godfrey, Mr D R C Agnew, Mr J A Ellerbeck, Mr J Foy and Mr N E Pomeroy. County Councillor Mr D Ruddle and 13 members of the public.

A Declaration of Acceptance of Office was signed by new Councillor Mr Foy.

**Apologies for Absence:** Councillor Mr G Farenden and District Councillor Mr S Pledger.

**Public Observations/Question Time:**

Before commencement of the public participation the Chairman read from the PC's Standing Orders regarding the protocol for members of the public's participation at a meeting.

The Chairman then invited members of the public to address the Council. Residents of Crouds Lane expressed their concerns regarding the continuous building work and development being carried out on the farmland adjacent to Long Sutton House and Crouds Lane for which there appeared to be no planning permission. It was alleged that there was damage to the road and verges and people's property etc. by vehicles and that there was disruption from construction activities which was claimed to have occurred for a considerable number of months.

A planning application was originally submitted for the site and subsequently withdrawn. They claimed they had been given to understand by the Planning Officer that no further work will take place on the unauthorised development until a regularising application has been made.

Two letters have been received by the PC regarding these matters, one anonymous. The author of the signed letter presented the PC with another letter as he said that he had inadvertently posted the wrong one, for which he apologised.

Councillor Gould, as the owner of the land, was invited to respond to the complaints. He said that he had given a detailed response within 24 hours of receiving the letter of complaint before the PC. A retrospective application has been submitted but in view of the representations such an application has to have sufficient content and clarity. Officers from various departments of South Somerset District Council have visited the site. He explained that a lot of the works being undertaken were permitted under their General Permitted Development Order and that there has been no enforcement action.

He said that he and his office dealt with a considerable amount of representations from some residents and that there was regular communication with South Somerset District Council. Some of the residents of Crouds Lane expressed concern about his involvement in the democratic process of planning but Councillor Gould stated that this is a Council governed by a Code of Conduct and each member makes its own decision with an open mind.

Councillor Gould explained that sometimes the outcomes and decisions of planning and building works may not accord with the opinions of some residents. He explained that he and his wife had been subjected to repeated complaints, some anonymous.

He stated that, due to the conduct of the complainants, he was concerned that the matter may escalate to the point when there was reputational risk to the Council, the Village and

himself. Therefore Councillor Gould felt it best to resign with immediate effect to ensure that the good name of the Council, the village and his own reputation were preserved.

He then left the room.

The Chairman said that he had received a communication from Stephen Bainbridge who deals with planning enforcement complaints on behalf of the DC and there has been unauthorised development for which a retrospective application is expected to be open for public scrutiny next month subject to administration matters. There has been no enforcement order. The site has and continues to be inspected regularly as part of the planning process. Work has ceased in respect of the unauthorised use but there has been no breach in respect of other work taking place. They are not responsible for traffic movement in this respect.

It was felt that the signed letter should be forwarded to the DC.

### **1. Declarations of Interest**

Mr Godfrey and Mr Shire declared personal interests regarding the land opposite the Village Hall to be discussed later on the agenda.

**2. Minutes of meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2015** (previously circulated) were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

### **3. Matters Arising**

**Boarded up property at Martock Road:** Nothing has been heard regarding this. It was reported that the Rev Jane Twitty has written to the Diocese. It was, however, felt that this was a matter that should be persevered with as the property is falling into a serious state of disrepair.

**The Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebrations** - The WI will discuss plans at their next meeting and forward ideas to the PC for consideration.

South Somerset Together's Housing Assembly 12<sup>th</sup> November. Mr Godfrey said he would represent the PC. The Clerk passed the details to him.

### **4. County Councillor's Report**

Mr Ruddle reported on the Health & Wellbeing Grant and said he has allocated £600 to LS. He also reported on the Chancellor's decision regarding Business rates and the effect this will have.

As District Councillor Mr Pledger was absent Mr Ruddle also reported that there is to be a meeting on the 13<sup>th</sup> October at the Gateway Community Centre in Yeovil to discuss the future of Westland Sports Club which the DC are considering taking on.

There is also discussion going on as to whether the DC goes in with another Authority in order to save money.

**5. District Councillor's Report** - Mr Pledger was unable to attend the meeting.

### **6. Planning**

**Application No: 15/04061/LBC Structural remedial (Helifix) to provide lateral restraint and tie chimney breast to gable; repointing of dwelling where necessary. Greystones, Shute Lane.**

It was proposed, seconded and unanimously resolved that there was no objection to this application.

**Application No: 15/04068/FUL Erection of Extension to form annexe at Appledoor Barn, Langport Road (Somerton Parish)**

It was proposed seconded and unanimously resolved that the PC support this application.

**Possible Development of Land Opposite the Village Hall.**

An email has been received from Mr C Woodhead of Greatworth who would like to come and discuss the possibility of developing all or part of the land in the light of the 5 year land supply issues faced by SSDC. The PC carried out a housing survey at one time and this was satisfied by affordable housing at Parsons Close and has in the past opposed development of this land in view of drainage problems. There was discussion regarding the development that has already taken place in LS and that proposed bearing in mind that LS only has limited facilities. Mr & Mrs Haines, the owners of the land were invited to address the PC. Mr Haines said that they have considered the building of 3 or 4 decent houses on the land and some affordable. An offer has also been received for the purchase of the land. During further discussion it was proposed and seconded that Mr Woodhead be invited to come and address the PC. This proposal was however defeated and the Chairman agreed to respond to Mr Whitehead on the lines of the draft letter before the PC.

**Letter Re Village Shop**

An anonymous letter has been received purporting to be on behalf of concerned residents of LS, requesting that the PC make an enforcement complaint regarding unauthorised works at Long Sutton Stores. Stephen Baimbridge from the DC's Planning & Enforcement Dept has however visited the property and has confirmed that investigation was carried out and that no planning breaches were found and the enforcement case has been closed accordingly.

The PC agreed that anonymous letters should be disregarded.

It was agreed that item11 Village Hall should be discussed next on the agenda as Mr Pomeroy had to leave the meeting.

**7. Village Hall**

The PC went on to discuss the provision of PV Panels to the roof of the Hall.

Mr Godfrey said that he had been asked by Mr Farenden to present a proposal to the Council with regard to the PV panels as he (Mr Farenden) was abroad and the matter needed to be resolved urgently. Mr Godfrey reported that Mr Farenden had done a lot of research regarding this project. In order to take advantage of the Governments contribution to green energy projects the panels would have to be ordered, installed, commissioned and certified before the 31<sup>st</sup> December as the present tariff is 12.47p kw/hour but drops to 1.63p kw/hour on 1<sup>st</sup> January. Western Power have been contacted regarding the amount of power expected from the array and they have agreed to accept this level of feed-in. 4 Companies have surveyed the hall and provided fairly similar quotations and all are inclusive of VAT.

UK Debt Management are set up to provide public works loans to Local Authorities at preferential rates either fixed or variable and a loan of £30,000 at a fixed rate of 2.91% over 9 years would require a half yearly repayment of £1843. It was suggested that the money received from the solar development at Tengore Lane be used towards these repayments.

The loan would have to be taken out through the PC who would be responsible for the project costs and any profit should go to the PC. Concerns were raised regarding the orientation of the panels and the insurance implications if the panels are damaged or vandalised. It was also suggested that it might be prudent to go for a slightly higher loan of £33,000 to cover contingencies. Mr Godfrey therefore made a proposal that the PC authorise in principal, subject to a small group to work with Mr Farenden, and that the loan be increased to £33,000 to provide a small contingency.

Any contract with the supplier should contain in writing a guarantee that they can make the installation date requested. The proposal was seconded by Mr Agnew and agreed.

To recap, it was agreed in principle to purchase and install a solar panel array with a loan of £33,000 to be obtained subject to the questions being satisfactorily resolved (regarding insurance and VAT) the money being received from the Tengore Lane project to be used towards the repayments. The PC to take ownership of the scheme and any excess income will come back to the PC. Messrs Ellerbeck, Godfrey and Pomeroy agreed to work with Mr Farenden with regard to the project.

Mr Pomeroy then left the meeting

**Review of Procedures:** Nothing to report.

**Single Fire Door, rear of stage:** This was something Mr Gould was dealing with.

**Any Other Village Hall Matters:** Mr Pomeroy's report was sent to Councillors shortly before the meeting. This contained various works to be undertaken and quotations to be obtained.

## **8. Finance:**

### **8.1 Balances and Accounts for Payment**

Business Reserve Alc		<b><u>18169.46</u></b>
Current A/c		10577.03
<b>Less</b> Alc paid last meeting	600.00	
Pd Grant Thornton LLP out of meeting (External audit fees)	<u>240.00</u>	<u>840.00</u>
		<b><u>9737.03</u></b>
<b>Lengthsman Alc</b>		17343.43
<b>Less</b> Paid to CW for Aug		<u>1656.94</u>
		<b><u>15686.49</u></b>
<b>A/cs for payment:</b>		
Clerk's Salary		300.00
HMRC Tax on Clerk's Salary (2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter)		225.00
Lengthsman A/c:		
CW's fee for Sept	1874.49	
Materials - Village Hall	99.95	
Materials - Aller	19.50	
Materials - Huish Episcopi	<u>19.50</u>	2013.44

It was proposed Mr Agnew, seconded Mr Ellerbeck and unanimously agreed that the accounts be paid.

Mr Ellerbeck reported that the Community Warden had requested permission to purchase flashing lights and warning signs for work on the highway. This was also agreed. Mr Ellerbeck will mention this to the other members of the scheme.

**8.2 Financial Regulations:** The Chairman, Clerk and Mr Agnew will review these in due course. The PC had previously agreed to retain the two signatories in respect of cheques etc and Mr Ellerbeck and Mr Godfrey have been added to the Bank's mandate as signatories.

### **8.3 Review of PC Assets**

Mr Agnew suggested that these should be left as they are. There are only the 3 items, namely the War Memorial, the Pump House and the Allotment land which are valued at £1 each for accounting purposes as these are items which the Council cannot dispose of. The Clerk is however investigating with the Insurance Company why the latest Schedule received includes cover reduced to £36,000 for the War Memorial when this was previously £47,775. It was felt the higher figure should be reinstated.

### **9. PC Equipment (Printer/Scanner)**

Mr Ellerbeck said that he has a spare printer/scanner and this also duplexes.

Mr Godfrey said that he had made a recommendation to the Clerk and she is going to meet with him to discuss.

### **10. Standing Orders**

Mr Ellerbeck said that he had received various suggestions from Mr Godfrey and also comments from Mr Gould and he felt that there were various alterations that could be made to make these more workable. He therefore proposed that the PC agree these in principle and they will then come out with a new backing sheet. This was seconded by Mr Agnew and unanimously agreed.

### **11. Recording of meetings.**

The recording of meetings has already been agreed in principle.

Mr Godfrey said that he has undertaken some research and some of the equipment is rather complicated if he was not able to attend a meeting. He will discuss further with the Clerk when they meet.

### **12. Community Warden Scheme**

The CW's hours for the last month have been received.

Mr Shire said that he had discussed with the CW the planting of bulbs/flowers and it has been suggested that these be around the signs coming into the village. Having spoken to a lady in the DC they are encouraging more villages to have wild flowers rather than bulbs. They will also come and give a talk but they would like to do it as a community and he is suggesting the gardening club and getting the school involved. He also suggested seeds should be sowed outside the village hall.

The CW is concerned regarding the area near the Tennis Court. He has now bought his own chipper and would therefore require to be paid for this sort of work. Mr Shire will enquire the cost.

### **13. Parish Website**

Mr Godfrey said he had contacted the School regarding the Nature page but they declined to take responsibility. It was noted that David Francis, who previously took responsibility for this page, was possible back from his overseas commitments. Mr Shire stated that there was someone else that he would contact who is also very knowledgeable on nature issues.

Mr Godfrey asked if there was an electronic copy of the Parish Plan. He was referred to the SSDC website and he will also check this with regard to members Declaration of Interest Forms. There is also now nothing on the website regarding the Freedom of Information Act.

## **14. Neighbourhood Watch/Community Safety/Civil Contingencies**

### **14.1 First Aid Courses and Defibrillators**

Mr Ellerbeck said that he had recently attended a course given by St John's Ambulance and was shown how to do First Aid and resuscitation. They would be prepared to do a course for 10-12 people for £300. It is a 3 hour course and you are then certified for 3 years as a First Aider. He has had six people say they would like to pay for the course but he wondered if the PC would like to subsidise the course for some people.

There was also a talk regarding defibrillators. They are however expensive. They come in a lockable container and the emergency services are aware of the location and code for these. He enquired the reaction of the PC regarding this. This was felt a good idea but volunteers would be required. A note will therefore put in the Newsletter/Roundabout seeking volunteers and saying that we are looking to raise funds for defibrillators.

The Police Report for Area North for September is 112 investigated crime reported, 27 arrests and 23 reports of ASB.

It was reported that there have been a spate of thefts from sheds on the west side of Shute Lane.

## **15. Representative Reports and any other matters regarding:**

**15.1 Highways:** There are various outstanding matters in the Parish. Mr Foy agreed to take on highways matters and will meet with Mr Shire to explain those which are outstanding.

SCC Highways have sent details regarding their winter service and are also offering Parishes the opportunity to collect 10 20kg bags of de-icing materials on the 21 November 2015.

**15.2 Footpaths:** Emails have taken place with a Parishioner at Knole with regard to the footpath which runs from 1 Council Houses. It was confirmed that this was slightly overgrown in places but is passable and the matter is therefore considered closed.

**15.3 Environment:** The Chairman read the response to Mrs Matthews from Chris Holley Street Cleaning & Car Park Supervisor SSDC regarding the spraying at Knole. Mr Agnew agreed to take the matter up with Holley.

## **16. Correspondence**

SCC will in future be communicating confidential information or large files by Egress Switch.

SCC/NHS regarding Somerset Choices regarding care and support.

**17. Date of next meeting** - 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2015

## **18. Any Other Business/Items for next meeting**

The Chairman was asked to send a vote of thanks to Mr Gould on behalf of the PC for all his work. The vacancy will be advertised.

Concern was expressed regarding the wall bordering the field at Martock Road. The Chairman will speak to the landowner.

The meeting closed at 9.25 pm