

Minutes of Meeting of Long Sutton Parish Council
Held at the Hall on Tuesday 5th September 2017 at 7.30pm

Present: Councillors: Mr R W Fry (Chairman), Mr J A Ellerbeck, Mr P A F Godfrey, Mr T Brand, Mrs H Ibbotson and Mr J Foy. County Councillor Mr D Ruddle, District Councillor Mr G Tucker (8.30pm) and 14 members of the public.

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Mr T P Shire, Mr G R Cox and Mr M Turpin. Dist Councillor Mr Tucker will also be arriving later in the meeting.

Public Observations/Question Time: A member of the public said that the property nextdoor to him looks like a bomb site and has been like it for the last 18 months. Mr Godfrey said that he would check to see if there are any time constraints on the planning permission. The Chairman said that any comments on the Planning application before the Council would be taken under Planning.

1. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2. Minutes of meeting held on 1st August 2017 - It was unanimously resolved that these be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

3. Matters Arising

Advertising Protocol: It has been confirmed that this relates to the use of advertising by commercial ventures not the advertising of local community events.

Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators: Mr Ellerbeck confirmed he now has the names of these.

4. County Councillor's Report

Mr Ruddle reported that there is now a page on the County Council's website regarding finger posts and how a Parish can maintain these if they wish.

Mr Foy raised the matter of a finger post in the Parish which had been taken for repair a couple of years ago and lost in the yard.

Mr Ruddle said that a letter had been received from Jeremy Hunt, Secretary of State for Health, praising the County Council for the progress being made in getting people back home from hospital earlier.

He said that he was not aware of any highways works around the area other than those in Somerton.

Regarding the proposal for a speed restriction, this is understood to be from South Hill to Sutton Road in Somerton and a consultation is in progress.

5. District Councillor's Report - This was postponed until later in the meeting, Mr Tucker having not yet arrived.

6. Planning:

6.1. Applications for consideration:

Application No: 17/03020/FUL Erection of 4 detached dwelling houses with associated external works. Land at Little Upton Bridge Farm, Langport Road.

Mr Godfrey outlined the application in detail to the Council and said that he and Tim Shire had made a visit to the site. The Chairman also attended as Mr Ellerbeck, the third member of the planning group, was on holiday.

The Chairman invited the applicant and other interested parties to address the PC. The applicant gave details of how the design was arrived at. Among the objections raised by other members of the public who spoke were the change of the land from agricultural to residential, the type and style of the proposed dwellings, the entrance arrangements and parking.

The PC then went into discussion regarding the application as a result of which it being proposed by the Chairman, seconded Mr Ellerbeck and unanimously resolved that:

“The Parish Council does not support this proposal on the following grounds:

- That we do not see the justification for turning agricultural land into residential development.
- That the design of the dwellings is not in keeping with the general character of the rest of the village.
- That the green open spaces, typical of that part of the village, are maintained within the village boundaries.
- That the proposal does not meet the housing need of the local community.

If planning permission is however granted, the Council requests that tree preservation orders are imposed to ensure adequate screening of the site from the highways.”

Permissions granted by SSDC:

Application No: 17/02463/FUL Erection of an implement store. Land adjoining The Dairy House, Bineham Court.

Application Nos: 17/02518/FUL and 17/03030/LBC 1 Sunpipe and 2 casement windows at The Stables, Martock Road.

Application No: 17/01453/COL for a proposed Certificate of Lawfulness for the conversion of agricultural building into 1 dwelling on land at Vedal Drove. Permission refused by SSDC.

6.2 Parish Plan - This to be postponed for further discussion until the next meeting.

7. Village Hall and Recreation Ground:

Mr Ellerbeck gave details of the break-in at the Hall and Pavilion which occurred. This was found at 6.30 in the morning by the cleaner. Every cupboard that was locked had been broken into and also all the First Aid Boxes. The only thing found to have been taken was a phone used to change the cricket scores but the Agricultural Society subsequently suspect that a projector and associated equipment has been taken. The window that was used to gain entry was repaired by Somerton Windows. An insurance claim will be formulated in due course.

7.1 Formation of Committee

A new Treasurer has been appointed – Mr Graham Stoddart-Stones and he will take over once registration with Unity Bank has taken place.

There are two people interested in the post of Booking Clerk and this will be finalised later this week.

7.2 Interim Arrangements

Further volunteers are needed and there is a Parish meeting in this respect on the 12th September.

7.3 Finances

Mr Ellerbeck said these are good and as of lunchtime the balance stands at £7,692.

7.4 Security

Two quotes have been received so far indicating a likely cost of £1700 for a security system. To install cameras could cost as much as £7,500. The VHC also feel that a telephone line and broadband is required.

A great deal of discussion ensued regarding the security required, the immediate action which needs to be taken and the sources of funding. Mr Turpin has said that he will help explore the sources. Mr Tucker who was now present at the meeting and who has given advice regarding funding sources, said that he would be happy to meet with Mr Ellerbeck in order to go through grant applications.

The VHC want to put in a telephone without delay and broadband. This was felt to be a good idea by the PC.

A rent review will be necessary once the additional security has been provided.

7.5 Steering Group - Review of Operation of VH

Mr Brand said that he and Mr Foy had met and have started to come up with ideas, which he went through in detail, to include reviewing the operation and discussing the way forward by establishing the facilities required over the next 25 years etc.

He will forward Councillors a copy of the suggestions for their comments and this will also form part of the meeting on the 12th September.

A survey of the Hall has taken place which shows this to be in good condition and it is just a case of keeping on top of matters.

There was also discussion regarding how to engage people who do not attend the meeting on the 12th.

7.6 Other VH Matters

Mr Ellerbeck said the threat has receded regarding closure of the Hall but volunteers are still required. A Chairman and Secretary are needed and also a Cleaner as of today.

A designated laptop has been purchased for the use of the Booking Clerk in order to provide continuity in the future.

Mr Tucker now being present, the Chairman invited him to give his report.

He reported as follows:

The Area North meeting in August was postponed as there were no planning applications to consider.

Within Full Council, there are a couple of things that may impact on the rural parishes:

The pending review of the Boundary Commission. They have responded positively to the request to retain 60 Councillors in South Somerset. The next stage of the review provides an opportunity for Town and PCs to respond.

The Council has agreed to seek projects that are income generating with the idea of investing funds to generate a higher than average return. The minimum return is expected to be 7% and an example of project investment is the purchase of a retail premises lease which has been evaluated and expected to return far more than the minimum expectation and he gave an example of this.

He said he was pleased LS had been represented at the Langport & Somerton Links meeting last month. The service is scheduled to close in October mainly due to this being underused and the management moving away from being local in Langport to Yeovil. There

is also competition in business coming from other directions. Currently information is being gathered to determine the viability of running a service aimed predominately to wheelchair bound and other passengers with disabilities. There are currently 7 wheelchair bound people in the Somerton/Langport area who use the service. He said that the Langport & Somerton Rotary Club were represented at the meeting and were giving consideration to taking on a vehicle for those with disabilities.

He sits on the board of the LEADER programme which oversees grants through the Levels and Moors Partnership and said that there are still plenty of funds available for businesses in the rural community to apply for and that if anyone knew of a farmer or rural business requiring funding to encourage them to contact him.

Finally, he said he was sad to learn of the break in to both the Hall and Pavilion and has provided some potential grant sources that could be applied for to meet some of the overheads of installing security systems. He has also alerted Area North to the problem who have responded positively to Tony Ellerbeck.

He said that Langport Town Council have had an enormous amount of resignations to the extent that they are not quorate and, as a District Councillor, he has been asked to input until such time as they find their feet. Their meetings are on the same night as LS and if he agrees to do this he will be unable to attend LS's October meeting.

The Chairman raised the letter regarding planning matters which had been sent to David Norris of which Mr Tucker was aware. Mr Tucker said that he had spoken with Mr Norris regarding this. In his reply Mr Norris has defended the action of the Planning Officer. The time for comment regarding amendments to applications is however conceded. The lateness of notification of applications from their date of validation by the DC was also raised.

8. Links Local Transport Closure

This was dealt with by Mr Tucker in his report above.

The Clerk reminded the PC of Mr Cox's email in which he says he has spoken to some of the people in the village who use the Friday bus that is a Community Transport Scheme where a private operator from Isle Abbots is subsidised by the County Council. This vehicle will not take disabled or chair-ridden client. The service is delivered to various villages in the Langport Area.

Regarding the sustainability of the Links service; this has now gone. Mr Tucker said that Mr Cox who was present at the meeting had offered specifically to take on any future budget.

9. Finance:

9.1 Balances and Accounts for Payment

Unity Trust Account		43,559.03
Less Payments agreed last meeting:	692.41	
Paid out of Meeting		
N C Murrell - Fee for VH Survey	200.00	
Clerk's Salary paid by SO	<u>300.00</u>	<u>1,192.41</u>
		42,366.62
Add SSE Energy Payment		<u>2,277.88</u>
		<u>£44,644.50</u>

A/cs for Payment:

CW's fee for Aug £564.63 + materials £32.36	£596.99
Community Heartbeat – Basic Membership Annual Cost 2 nd Site	£104.00

Certain Councillors raised the issue of the balance held in the PC's account in relation to the VH and the Loan regarding the solar panels. Mr Tucker said that if the PC was holding more than 3 times its Precept then this would be questionable. It also has to be borne in mind that the PC will be taking on more and more responsibilities which are coming down from other authorities. It is therefore necessary to keep a surplus. Regarding grants for the VH, he said these would be based on the funds held by the VH, the PC would however have to be prepared to contribute some funding. Discussion culminated in the Chairman saying that he felt this should be discussed at the next budget meeting.

It was proposed Mr Ellerbeck seconded Mr Godfrey and resolved that the accounts be paid.

9.2 Solar Generation/PWB Loan Update

The Clerk provided Councillors with an up to date statement. As at the 31st March 2017 the income received did not cover the loan repayments without the Tengore community benefit. The question of the loan was again raised and Mr Ellerbeck said that, as pointed out by the Clerk when a reduction in principal of £3500 was made, this reduced the principal of future repayments and this should perhaps have been requested to remain the same, also perhaps a sum should be repaid out of PC funds. The principal amount owing at 31st March was £26,150. The present balance is estimated at £24,648. He said that as at the present date we appear to have paid out more than has been received.

It was agreed that a further review of the situation should be taken at the next budget meeting.

10. Community Warden Scheme

The CW has continued with vegetation management: Applied weed killer to the encroaching grass in Peace Lane as well as ivy which is beginning to regrow up the wall of the Devonshire Arms. He also applied weed killer around the War memorial, on the footpath through the churchyard and around the VH car park. He has removed the ragwort that was growing on the visibility splay on the junction of Martock/Langport road.

He has finished painting the finger post in Upton, applied more grass seed to the triangle in Shute Lane and lifted the crown on the Lime Trees on the Green opposite the Devonshire Arms so the signs on the junction are visible and also to improve visibility for vehicles using the junction.

A quote for the pollarding of the Lime Trees on the Village Green has been received from the CW in the sum of £380. It was proposed Ellerbeck, seconded Mr Brand and unanimously resolved this be accepted. Mr Ellerbeck will speak to the CW.

11. Parish Website - Mr Godfrey said that there was nothing to report.

12. Neighbourhood Watch/Community Safety/Civil Contingencies

The Clerk reported that an email had been received from the Community Safety Officer who says that, historically, LS Village Hall was designated as a Rest Centre/ Place of Safety. The hall had funding for that purpose.

Following the last incident that the Hall was used, there were representations about not utilising the Hall further for that purpose.

There are other sites within the village which would fulfil that role and he is going to send a separate report on this but says this may be an opportune time, to look at civil contingencies

again and what with the challenges for the future of the village hall, this may be a good discussion point as to this potential use.

Mr Godfrey also informed the PC of another email received from the CSO with community safety updates:-

Neighbourhood Watch:

A suspect for a non-dwelling criminal damage has been charged for an offence within LS. Despite extensive CCTV footage, the case was subsequently dropped due to the suspect's defence. This has now been appealed to the Chief Prosecutor for the CPS for the South West and is pending.

Place of Safety:

I forwarded an email from Civil Contingencies regarding the use of the village hall as a place of safety. Perhaps a small working group could be formed to evaluate that, as historically this was always the case but following its last operational use, there were representations for the hall to be discontinued for this purpose.

Revision of Parish Emergency Plan and Community Safety Training:

What would be useful is to revisit these plans and to have a small working group with which to undertake that. It would just need say a couple of members to sit down say once a month, review and update some sections with me, and then ultimately present to the Council an updated plan for approval.

What would also be beneficial is that once approved, to continue some training for parishioners including defibrillator training.

If there were some members interested in forming a small working group, I'm sure we could break the back of this over the next few months.

It was agreed that these matters should be placed on the next agenda.

13. Representative Reports and any other matters regarding:

13.1 Highways

13.1.1 Work to lower end of Village Green: Mr Shire has said that he has contacted Avalon Surfacing but has not yet had confirmation when the work is to be carried out. It was agreed that this needs to be done as soon as possible.

13.1.2 Update on other highways matters.

Mr Foy reported that Highways are to take action regarding the overhanging hedge at Crouds Lane.

Dave Grabham of SCC has confirmed in writing that the speed indicator post at Upton Bridge Farm will be in place by 29th September.

He said that he will look at some of SCC's document regarding finger posts. The one at the bottom of Hardings Hill is in bad condition. Advertising signs also still continue to be placed on this triangle. Mr Foy said that when he drives past if it is there, he will report it but anyone who sees it can report it.

Mr Ellerbeck said that at the last meeting he had stated that there are no signs pointing to the VH. This is however not the case and there is a sign on the A372, one straight across from the hall and one on the finger post on the Village Green.

Access 20 Langport Road: It was confirmed that there has been no sighting of cars continuing to be parked there.

13.2 Environment

13.2.1 Water running down Ilchester Lane: Mr Cox has said that he has spoken to Peter Tulk who is going to have a look at this.

13.2.2. Any other Environment matters

Mr Shire says that he has again spoken to Wessex Water regarding the pumping station in Crouds Lane.

Following discussion, Mr Ellerbeck agreed to draft a letter to the MP regarding the unacceptable state of the sewerage system in LS. It was felt that Parishioners should also be encouraged to write.

13.3 Footpaths: Proposed new Footpath at Hammocks Drove

The Clerk reported that the matter has been passed to Mr Andrew Saint, County Council Rights of Way Officer for attention. He has apologised for the delay in responding and said that he is about to go on annual leave but should be able to spend more time on the matter on his return.

14. Correspondence

Cath Holloway – Village Agent: She would like to come and meet with the PC again to discuss if there is anything she could offer the village in terms of group and activity organising and to raise her profile so that people are aware of the service they offer for free. It was agreed that she should be invited to the November PC meeting.

SHP Construction Ltd of Somerton who carry out work to include ground maintenance, arboriculture maintenance, land drainage, flail hedge cutting, dredging, ground work, fencing and building.

South Somerset Electoral Review Consultation. This will be put on the next agenda.

15. Date of next meeting - 3rd October 2017.

16. Any Other Business/Items for next meeting - No further matters were raised.

The meeting closed at 10.08 pm