

LOPEN PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Extraordinary meeting held in the Sunday School Room
at 7.00 pm Friday 13th July

Present : Cllr. B. Davolls (Chairman) Dist Councillor Barry Walker
 Cllr. Norman (Vice Chairman) Mrs C. Mansfield (Clerk)
 Cllr. P. Finlayson
 Cllr. T. Sienkiewicz
 Cllr. S. Crane

Members of the public : 7

69/12 Apologies for absence.

Cllr. Paul Maxwell
 Cllr. P. Thompson

70/12 Declaration of interest.

The Chairman declared a personal and prejudicial interest in item 10 (Appointment of a new Clerk)
 The Chairman and Cllr Sienkiewicz declared a personal interest in planning application 12/02213/FUL Lopen House

71/12 To approve the minutes of the meeting held on Friday 15th June 2012

The minutes of the meeting of 15th June 2012 were approved by the meeting and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

72/12 Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising .

73/12 To agree and adopt LPC revised Code of Conduct and Standing Orders

The Chairman explained that the new localism legislation requires all councils to re write, their Code of Conduct and Standing orders, with a requirement to take account of some aspects of criminal law particularly .

Councils have three options ,1. make up their own independent documents, giving full attention to the required elements. 2. Adopt the basic format offered by SSDC. or 3. Adopt the basic format produced by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC)

The NALC model being simplest, was taken and the Chairman outlined where the new documents differed from the previous ones. The proposed documents having been circulated previously, the proposal to adopt the new standing orders was made by Cllr. Davolls and seconded by Cllr S. Crane and the motion carried unanimously. The new code of Conduct and Standing orders supersede all previous ones.

The Chairman reminded Councillors that the standing orders can be adjusted (through correct process) as needed, to more closely suit our particular needs as time goes on.

74/12 District Councillor Barry Walker's report.

Cllr. Walker declared that there was little new to report as most issues were still going forward . However Cllr. Walker drew the attention of the meeting to housing development issues in Illminster, which, while not directly involving Lopen, might be of interest in a wider view.

The proposed allocation of the development of 300+ houses and a relief road near the Tesco site, is to be added to by 300+ proposed houses on the old Powermatic site. Cllr Walker expressed the view that despite the new medical centre and pharmacy, schools are at capacity now, and his proposed development would not constitute sustainable growth.

Cllr. Walker went on to say that Ric Pallister has agreed to attend a public meeting at the Shrubbery Hotel, Illminster, in respect of these proposals. 7.00PM Tuesday July 17th.

On the subject of proposed workshops to assist with the drawing up of and possible funding assistance for, Neighbourhood Plans, SSDC has deferred these until September (dates to be notified).

There is some possibility that a SSDC representative might be able to travel out to the villages to provide the advice if needed.

The Chairman expressed some concern that the Neighbourhood Plan has to be agreed by SSDC .

Public consultation concerning the Core strategy (SSLP- Local plan) is taking place now (from June 28th to 10th August).

A brief discussion followed on the historical development of the probiotics business at Lopenhead.

Cllr. Walker touched briefly on a topic raised at Sth. Petherton PC meeting recently. The County Council is reconsidering the concept of the Lengthsman. It appears that loss of Lengthsman services in other areas has seriously increased the cost of maintenance. Emergency call outs and sub-contractor's fees have escalated the costs above those of the traditional Lengthsman scheme. Some Councils are reinstating the scheme as a cost cutting measure and this lends weight to the local argument against abolishing the scheme in Sth Petherton and Lopen.

75/12 To agree Council's response to planning applications:

All applications were discussed and plans etc shown to the meeting via the projector .

12/02536/LBC Ballarat Farm House Frog St Lopen, removal of internal walls .
The Council unanimously recommended approval

12/02031/LBC Ballarat Farm House Frog St Lopen, replacement of windows .
The Council unanimously recommended approval

12/02149/LBC Shores Farm ,Frog St Lopen ,replacement of five windows .
The Council unanimously recommended approval

12/02278/FUL and 12/02125/LBC Shores Farm Frog St Lopen ,solar panels to roof of garage fronting frog St.

The Council unanimously recommended approval subject to a robust condition, to ensure that the mounting arrangements for the solar panels as detailed in this application, cannot be adjusted or revised (angular or other)without further planning approval. Reason: To protect and preserve the visual amenity of the surrounding listed properties and the wider conservation area.

In the event that such a condition is not incorporated into any permission granted , LPC withdraws its support for the proposal and recommends refusal .

12/02213/FUL Lopen House, Church St Lopen -conversion of a redundant building to holiday-let.

After clarification of the nature of the Leylandii trees destined for removal within this application, Cllr. B.Davolls and Cllr.T.Sienkiewicz declared personal interests with respect to visual aspects from their properties being altered .

(Cllr.N Norman arrived). Questions and clarification from the applicant were considered.

The Council recommended approval subject to robust conditions as follows :

With regard to protecting the conservation area and nearby listed buildings together with the somewhat restricted access, lack of public transport, schools and shops etc this location would be unsuitable for a permanent dwelling . Therefore the proposed holiday let should be tied to the main dwelling with a robust condition to ensure that the premises remain as a holiday let on a permanent basis and is for use of bona-fide holiday makers only.

As to whether the restricted access to this site is considered sufficient to serve this proposal, LPC accepted that this is a matter for County Highways to decide, and will be guided by their response .

To protect the conservation area and nearby listed buildings, there shall be no extension of the holiday-let building without the prior express grant of planning permission.

To protect the conservation area and nearby listed buildings, no additional windows, including dormer windows, or other openings (including doors) shall be formed in the building, or other external alteration made without the prior express grant of planning permission.

In the event that any or all of these conditions are not incorporated into any planning permission granted, LPC will withdraw its support for the proposal and recommend refusal.

Cllr. Walker left at 8.00PM

76/12 Delegation of some planning responses to the Clerk

The Chairman pointed out that there is a case, on occasion, to delegate minor planning applications to the Clerk for response (with due consultation with officers).The reason being that often there are minor applications that would, in order to comply with response deadlines, require an extraordinary meeting to be held.

Where there is no likely contentious issue, it unnecessarily delays work for the applicant, and incurs costs and time for LPC to arrange a special meeting to consider.

Comments from LPC on planning applications are required often in 14 days from receipt of an application, and often a weeks extension has to be sought in order to be

able to convene an Extraordinary meeting to deal with these applications. To reduce the increasing frequency of meetings, it was proposed that, in principal, the Clerk could be empowered to respond to some routine planning applications, as is the case in some other councils. The Chairman pointed out that this would need an adjustment to LPC's standing orders and some tight controls before this could come into effect.

The members supported the proposal unanimously agreeing that such a procedure should be put in place.

77/12 To appoint a new Parish Clerk/ RFO to commence 1st Oct.2012

With the resignation of the present Clerk, Mrs C Mansfield, the post has been advertised locally and one application has been received .

Cllr. N Norman proposed, and Cllr. S. Crane seconded the proposal that Ms K Mc Donald be appointed Clerk, to take office from Oct 1st 2012.

Ms. K. Mc Donald is authorised to attend the upcoming training sessions, offered by County and District concerning various changes in legislation .

78/12 Future meetings and times

Next meeting to be advised.

79/12 Any other business

Cllr N Norman , raised the issue of the problematic increase in the weed, Ragwort. Dangerous to live stock, this noxious weed is legally required to be controlled. The flourishing and seeding of Ragwort on the land at Lopen head industrial site is a concern and Cllr. Norman requested that a letter be sent to Andrew Whitehouse, encouraging him to assume his legal responsibilities and make an effort to control the Ragwort on his land. If there is no action, LPC will enlist the help of the SSDC to enforce the legal requirements concerning Ragwort control.

The meeting ended at 8.30 PM