

**LOPEN PARISH COUNCIL  
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

**MINUTES OF MEETING HELD IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL ROOM,  
CHURCH STREET, LOPEN  
AT 7PM ON TUESDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2016.**

**Present:**

Cllr. N Jones (Chairman)  
Cllr. S Mason  
Cllr. T Sienkiewicz  
Cllr. J Feeney

**Minutes:** Transcribed by Mr Les Morton

**Members of the public:** 10

**County Councillor's Report**

Cllr Le Hardy mentioned the Small Improvement Scheme (to be covered later in the agenda)

Broadband – SCC had a meeting with 'Connecting Devon & Somerset' (CDS) on 12<sup>th</sup> August 2016. It was felt there was no reason why Lopen shouldn't be included in Phase 2 of the scheme. Phase 1 will end in December 2016 when 90% of the 'CDS' area should have access to faster broadband. Phase 2 will be completed by the end of 2017 when there should be 95% coverage. Cllr. N Jones asked if bids are back in by early September? Cllr. Le Hardy replied that CDS rejected the BT bid so there is currently a delay on the 2<sup>nd</sup> contract, We await further update from SCC in due course.

Cllr. Le Hardy reported that due to the Brexit situation and the change of minister responsibilities they are currently spending time establishing new contacts with central government. This particularly applies to Highways and Hinckley Point issues.

There is a new Travel Somerset web site that will give up-to-date information on road works, detours, etc. Cllr. T Sienkiewicz commented on problems with the recent road closure in Broomhill Lane and the lack of notice to the residents. This wasn't mentioned on the new web site!

Childhood Health – a new App has been launched to assist parents with diagnosing child health issues.

Devolution and Combined Authority - Cllr Le Hardy confirmed that in their bid they don't want a new Mayor or extra bureaucracy.

Learning Listening Roadshows – these are still running. SCC would like to hear from the public.

Adult Learning Difficulties – this is to go to a social enterprise.

### **District Councillor's Report**

CEO – SSDC are expecting the appointment of a new CEO (from Eastleigh).

Gold Star Awards – for Extraordinary Young People in our area, these will take place in October.

Yeovil Literary Festival – this will take place at the Yeovil Octagon Theatre on October 20-24th.

Play Days – these have been well attended.

Dog Bins – Chris Cooper of SSDC has been contacted by Cllr Dance and is happy for us to have a dog bin in Lopen. SSDC need to know where we would like it located in the village. It must be easily accessible by the collection van. LPC need to agree a location and let Cllr Dance know.

Trading Post – Possible planning/licensing issue at the Trading Post. There had been a noise problem with a late night function to the rear of the property outside the double decker bus. Cllr. T Sienkiewicz commented that there had been loud music, live band, food being sold, etc. It appears they have been granted a licence for such events however LPC were not aware of the granting of such a licence. It would appear the LPC do not need to be told? The owner/proprietor is happy to attend an LPC meeting to answer any questions. LPC to contact Cllr Adam Dance so he can make suitable arrangements.

Broadband – Cllr Le Hardy asked where SSDC stand on the contribution to broadband. SSDC stated that they would contribute, but not 'blindly'. They want to know that SSDC money is being spent in South Somerset.

**1) Apologies:** Cllr. S Crane, Cllr. E Moore, Cllr. M Burrows

### **2) Declaration of Interests**

None.

### **3) To approve the minutes of the Meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2016.**

Minutes approved and signed off by Chairman Cllr. N Jones.

Question from public whether the two planning applications (16/01997/FUL and 16/01998/FUL) had been passed with 'no comment'? Cllr Nick Jones confirmed that the application for the house had been approved (as per the minutes) with no conditions.

Regarding the application for the barn, LPC had raised concerns about the appearance and that the applicant had volunteered to landscape/screen the building with trees.

#### **4) Matters Arising from the Minutes**

Councillor training had been cancelled by the provider. Instead they have offered LPC a bespoke session at the Sunday School Room at a special rate. Date TBA.

#### **5) To agree and accept new Disciplinary and Grievance procedure.**

Cllr. T Sienkiewicz commented that the proposed LPC procedure is based upon the South Petherton model and is a standard procedure. Cllr. N Jones passed on comments from Cllr. E Moore (not present) suggesting that there should be separation between those doing any investigating and those sitting in the hearing – that someone from outside the LPC should be involved on the investigative side. It was considered that the proposed procedure does allow for this. Cllr. J Feeney asked if any disciplinary documentation should be hand delivered, partially to ensure the documents arrive and also the cost issue to the LPC. After some discussion it was agreed that any documentation should be delivered using Royal Mail documented delivery – ie. Signed For, Recorded Delivery, Registered Post, etc. With this proviso and one minor typographical correction the Disciplinary & Grievance procedure was accepted unanimously.

#### **6) To review the budget available for the Parish Clerk**

The recruitment committee (Cllrs Jones, Sienkiewicz & Crane) have met and reviewed the salary and hours of the current contract. Cllr Sienkiewicz has been in contact with SALC and established that the council is free to set rates of pay and hours within its means. Given the difficulties experienced finding a suitable candidate and that the position of Parish Clerk is a legal requirement and vital to the function of the LPC, the committee proposed that the hourly rate is increased from £8.82 to £9.90 and that the hours are increased from 2.25 to 2.5 per week. This would not be covered by the existing clerk budget so it is proposed that the shortfall should be partly financed from funds that were remaining in the Egwood legal budget (£150) as this matter is now closed, with the balance being covered by savings made from Kim McDonald very generously working for the last four months on a voluntary, unpaid basis. Cllr. J Feeney requested confirmation that this will be a sustainable salary in future years. Cllr Jones explained that the demise of the Egwood project means sums set aside for it this year (£ 150 + £ 200 to reserve) will not be needed for it next year and will more than cover the extra needed for the clerk, meaning the proposed rises are sustainable.

Cllr. T Sienkiewicz commented that Haselbury Plucknett pay £12.50 per hour and that South Petherton currently pay about £25-£30 per hour for a 20 hour week. She also

confirmed that LPC do not have to pay towards a pension for the PC as the wage budget is below £10,000pa.

It was unanimously agreed to accept the proposed increases.

#### **7) To review budget available for Councillor and Clerk training**

It was agreed that five councillors and one Parish Clerk will need training. The Parish Clerk will also need to be paid for their time and mileage to attend. This will exceed the allowance made in this year's budget. Cllr. Jones proposed that the budget set aside for the Egwood running costs reserve (£200) be used to cover any shortfall, which is expected to be considerably less than this. It was also pointed out that the training courses arranged for the last clerk were repeatedly cancelled and SALC had previously agreed to waive the charges as recompense. This may be transferrable. Cllr Jones to check with SALC. It was unanimously agreed to use the Egwood reserve to cover any shortfall in training budget.

#### **8) To receive update on the recruitment of LPC Clerk**

Following an expression of interest in the clerk position from village resident Lisa Wilson to Cllr N Jones, the other recruitment committee members Cllr S Crane and Cllr. T Sienkiewicz were informed and a CV provided. Two satisfactory meetings with the candidate have taken place and references provided. Provisional contract details have been agreed with the candidate subject to agreement by the full council. The recruitment committee propose that the position of Parish Clerk be offered to Lisa Wilson.

It was unanimously agreed to offer the position to Lisa Wilson.

#### **9) Subject to acceptance, as above, to make an offer to the candidate**

Cllr Jones formally offered the post to Lisa Wilson. She accepts the post and will start with immediate effect. Cllr. N Jones will complete the paperwork and formalities ASAP.

#### **10) Review and agree bank mandate details**

This has become necessary due to the change of Clerk and also concern from the bank that the signing arrangement (any two of listed signatories) is not clearly shown on the current form. It was agreed that the current signatories (Cllrs Jones, Sienkiewicz, Crane and Mason) are happy to continue and no others are needed. Parish Clerk details to be updated. Relevant forms are to be completed by Cllr. N Jones & Clerk Lisa Wilson, who will obtain necessary signatures.

#### **12) Review and agree councillor duties**

For future discussion when all LPC committee members are present. At present the Park Ranger liaison duty isn't assigned to anyone.

### **13) To agree defibrillator maintenance process and member responsibility**

Cllr. S Mason has responsibility for this and stated that a spare set of pads are required. It was reported that there is currently £1000 in the reserve fund, which can be used towards the capital costs, but a grant will be requested for the pads as these are considered to be running costs. A set of pads will cost about £120. Cllr. S Mason will obtain a written quote to support the grant application. Cllr. S Feeney asked if signage was needed to inform where the Defibrillator is located (in the Church entrance porch) – Cllr. S Mason to investigate. A member of the public suggested a notice on the village notice board at Crosstrees. It was also agreed that a regular notice in the Lopen Eye would be useful and that a mention in the Lopen Eye regarding training on how to use of the Defibrillator would also be useful – Cllr. S Mason to look into providing further training opportunities.

### **14) To receive an update regarding the War Memorial**

The work on the war memorial is now complete and an invoice for £656.56 has been received by the LPCC. LPC to forward a £100 donation towards the cost as previously agreed. To date public donations of £145 have been received (4 donations). Cllr S Crane will be trying to contact existing relatives of the people recently added to the war memorial and to see if they can attend Remembrance Day on November 11<sup>th</sup>. This will be a good time to make a final appeal for donations - to be mentioned in the October issue of the Lopen Eye. The original war memorial was fully funded through public subscription. Historical England are offering grants, although their website states these are not awarded retrospectively - they will be contacted anyway. Cllr Jones to action.

### **15) To receive an update regarding Churchyard wall repairs**

An invoice for the cost of the repairs has been forwarded to LPC by LPCC. Although discussed in previous meetings, no agreement to fund the repairs was ever reached. Although LPCC received three quotes for the work and LPC were informed of this, there has never been a formal request from LPCC to LPC or agreement from LPC and it has previously been made clear that this would be needed before any work could be started – therefore a breakdown in communications has occurred. Cllr Mason and Parish Clerk, Kim McDonald had started the process of applying for grant funding. However, now the work has been completed without the direct involvement of LPC, it cannot pay for all or part of the work with public money. Cllr. Sienkiewicz commented that LPC can't pay under the current circumstances but that LPC may be able to get a retrospective grant. Cllr Jones to speak with Justin Robinson of SALC to investigate the possibilities. Stephen Chapman (LPCC Treasurer) requested that LPC formally reply to LPCC in writing about the issue - Cllr Jones to action.

## **16) To agree the way forward regarding road improvements and how to liaise with Highways**

The road through Lopen is an everlasting issue. Cllr Le Hardy stated that there is money available under the improvement scheme and Somerset Highways are currently working on a scheme. Many families, particularly those in Holloway have problems with the main road. Cllr N Jones read out a letter he had received from one child, asking for the road to be made a safer place – please. Cllr. N Jones and Cllr Le Hardy have liaised on this issue and have approved a broad statement of needs, based on work done by previous councils. This has now gone to design stage. The next stage will be a safety audit on how to slow the traffic. Chicanes are not feasible. Agricultural vehicles do have access rights to the village, however this is only for access and not to pass through the village – Cllr. Le Hardy has been in contact with the NFU about the issue. Cllr. Le Hardy suggested the right of way at Snapant could be changed so that vehicles travelling north/south would need to stop to give way to vehicles travelling east west.

Public session:

Suggestions from the public included:

- white lines to one side of the road along Holloway to create a 'soft' pathway,
- a reduced speed limit through the village of 20mph,
- bigger speed limit signs throughout the village,
- average speed cameras at the start and end of the village
- white lines down the sides of the road

Concerns included:

- At present there are 16 children living in Lopen, most of whom live along Holloway where the speeding is a problem. Major safety hazard in combination with the absence of pavements in most places.
- traffic situation has worsened noticeably in last 18 months
- lorries come through the village as early as 5.30 am and
- cars racing through the village late at night & early morning.
- Would a 20 mph limit be enforced/enforceable?

Public session end

Cllr. Sienkiewicz commented that Haselbury Plucknett have a 20mph limit through the village and also have white lines to the side to create a soft pathway. She also commented that the speed limit sign at Snapant, that was recently knocked down, has not been replaced.

Cllr. J Feeney asked if traffic could be monitored between the hours of 7-9am and 3-6pm. Cllr. Le Hardy asked if the Speedwatch scheme operated within the village – it was confirmed that it has operated in the past but that a lack of volunteers (many who

would otherwise do it work full time) had prevented it continuing. It would be possible to restart it if sufficient volunteers can be found and there has been talk of this but not many volunteers. Data from the time the scheme operated data is still available. Cllr Jones summarised the situation by stating that we are awaiting SSC Highways for their design proposal. Cllr. Le Hardy added that this will hopefully be completed within two months and will be made available to LPC for comment. It is hoped that someone from Highways might attend a meeting to explain the proposal.

### **17) Planning**

**To consider and respond to 16/03101/FUL planning application - relating to Brooklyn, Holloway "*Demolish existing shed and erection of a garage/store*"** LPC have received no comments on this application. Cllr Jones has discussed application with the Planning Officer who has no particular concerns. There was some comment about its large size. Also some concern that it could be "a cottage in waiting" though it is to be timber-built so doesn't lend itself to residential use. There was discussion over whether to recommend restricting future permitted development rights to prevent this. The committee finally agreed to support the application subject to restriction of permitted development rights to prevent residential use without making a new application.

### **18) Any Other Matters**

- The issue of bonfires and smoke nuisance was raised – Cllr. Jones to supply a notice to appear in the Lopen Eye.
- Cllr. J Feeney commented on large pile of rubble restricting the public footpath at Hewins timber yard – about 10ft high. Hewins are to be contacted about this.
- A member of the public asked the Lopen Eye to be careful about naming people in complaints.
- A member of the public raised the issue of an enforcement notice he has been recently served by SSDC due to the removal of a hedge without planning permission some time ago. As he has, in effect, replaced the hedge with a large orchard he wondered if it might be possible for LPC to support him on this matter. Cllr N Jones commented that this is not an agenda item and agreed to add it to the agenda for the next LPC meeting (October 18<sup>th</sup>) where it could be discussed in more detail. Cllr Jones to discuss the matter with him further.
- Angela Naunton-Davis (public) asked if there could be a sign at the start of Church Street saying 'To the Church'? LPC commented that if there was a sign there previously it shouldn't be a problem. If there is photographic evidence of a previous sign it would assist – Angela to investigate.

Meeting closed 9pm.