

**LOPEN PARISH COUNCIL
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

**MINUTES OF MEETING HELD IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL ROOM,
CHURCH STREET, LOPEN
AT 7PM ON MONDAY 13TH JUNE 2016.**

Present:

Cllr. N Jones (Chairman)
Cllr. S Crane
Cllr. T Sienkiewicz
Cllr. J Feeney
Cllr. E Moore
Cllr. M. Burrows (after co-option)

Minutes: Transcribed by Mr Les Morton

Members of the public: 9

57/16 Apologies: Cllr. S Mason, Cllr. A Dance, Cllr. C Raikes.

58/16 County Councillor's Report

Cllr Le Hardy reported on the Food for Thought initiative for children. Ideas are still required for the Small Improvement Scheme. Cllr. T Sienkiewicz confirmed that the consultation Sienkiewicz have previously been carried out. We need to check and review the results of these – one suggestion was Countdown Markers at each end of the village, approaching the existing 30mph signs. Cllr. N Jones summarised that a £25,000 budget was available for speed improvements in the village. Regarding prices, Cllr. Le Hardy recommended visiting the 'Traffic Choices' web site. Cllr S Crane and Peter Little are to discuss and report to Cllr. Le Hardy. Issues with the 6ft 6" width restricted access to Frogmary Farm and the 7.5 ton weight limit through Lopen were raised – LPC and Cllr. Le Hardy to 'get together' in the next month to discuss.

Broadband – SCC agree with the latest situation update issued by Cllr. N Jones and that Lopen is connected through two different cabinets. Cllr. Le Hardy pointed out that the 'Connected Devon & Somerset' scheme is available to all residents, however it was pointed out that everyone in Lopen receives over 1.5Mbs so therefore don't qualify for the scheme. SCC are aware that there is a major issue with broadband speed in the village and have put it 'at the top of their agenda'. Cllr. Le Hardy will be pursuing the matter with his contact at BT.

59/16 District Councillor's Report

There was no report due to the absence of Cllr. A Dance.

60/16 Declaration of Interests

Cllr. T Sienkiewicz declared an interest in the two planning applications in Broomhill Lane.

61/16 To approve the minutes of the Meeting held on 12th May 2016.

Minutes approved and signed off by Chairman Cllr. N Jones

62/16 Matters Arising

Further to the recent Licensing Application by the Lopen Raj, they had volunteered to shorten the opening hours, as requested by the LPC.

The Battle of Jutland service was held on 31st May 2016. The names of two people who lost their lives in the Great War are to be added to the War Memorial – subscriptions are still being sought towards the total cost of £650. Donations should be made via the Treasurer of the LPPC, Stephen Chapman.

63/16 Agreement to co-opt a new member to LPC.

Mark Burrows was co-opted to the LPC. Cllr. N Jones signed the relevant paperwork.

64/16 Councillor Training

It was recommended that all new councillors embark on the training offered by Somerset Association of Local Councils (SALC), which deals with the processes, rules and conduct of being a Councillor. There are local courses on July 7th and 21st. It was agreed that Cllr. N Jones, Cllr. Mark Burrows, Cllr. J Feeny and Cllr. E Moore would attend. Cllr. S Mason will also be invited.

65/16 Frog Street flooding

Peter Little and Cllr. S Crane had met on site with SCC Highways due to the blockages in the culverts and gullies affecting parts of Lopen. Some clearing had been completed but the next downpour exposed more problems with flooding. The next course of action is for the drain sumps to be jetted to clear the silt that is the cause of the problem – Peter Little will be emailing Highways. It seems the main cause of the problem is lorries squeezing past traffic and damaging the earth banks along Hollow Lane and Holloway causing the earth to wash down the roads and become silt that washes into the drainage system. At present Highways only sweep the roads twice a year. Cllr. Le Hardy suggested we could ‘help ourselves’ as is done in some other parishes by paying for additional road sweeping to reduce the amount of silt and grit getting into the drains. This would have to be paid for from the LPC precept and thus require budgeting for. To be considered further.

66/16 Visibility from Nick Wakefield’s field

Trees bordering Nick Wakely’s field have grown and are causing visibility problems from the exit of his field onto the main road. Some of the trees have been trimmed, however more could be trimmed. Nick Wakely has suggested they could be moved, without killing them – probably 4-5 trees. The 2nd & 3rd trees are particularly problematic as they lean out towards the road. This is a work in progress and will be revisited in late July before the field is harvested.

67/16 Recruitment of LPC Clerk

Kim McDonald is currently acting as interim Clerk, however she has now moved out of the village so the task is not too easy for her, emphasising the urgency to appoint a Clerk. There is currently no recruitment advertisement on the SSDC or SPDC web sites though SSDC have twice sent the job advertisement to all the other clerks in their area. Cllr. N Jones felt there should be more information supplied about the duties involved and that LPC should consider a professional Clerk. There were concerns as to the limited amount of hours offered (due to the size of our Parish) and subsequent reward. Cllr. T Sienkiewicz to investigate the current rules (with SALC) to see if hours and pay can be increased. Kim McDonald is to be agree wording/job responsibilities for the position. Final wording for a recruitment advertisement is to be agreed by Cllr. N Jones, then and advertisement will be placed in the Lopen Eye, The Lopen web site, on the village

notice board and possibly in local libraries. A Recruitment committee, comprising Cllr. N Jones, Cllr. S Crane and Cllr. T Sienkiewicz, will handle the whole process including interviewing and recommendations. The full LPC committee will approve the final appointment.

68/16 Footpaths

SSDC had sent LPC a footpath diversion notice for North Haselbury. LPC not sure why it was sent to us, Cllr. N Jones to contact them. Cllr. J Feeney asked if we are able to clear footpaths ourselves, if needed, to which Cllr. N Jones confirmed that it is allowed. Cllr. Le Hardy commented that the SSC Rangers scheme will lend tools & equipment. Cllr. E Moore is to walk all the local footpaths and report to LPC. He will also be contacting SSDC for up-to-date footpaths maps of our area – a large one for the Sunday School Room and a smaller one for the village notice board. Information showing any current work on footpaths is available on the SSC web site.

69/16 Defibrillator maintenance process

As Cllr. S Mason wasn't at the meeting this was postponed.

70/16 Planning

1. Response to 16/01924/FUL planning application - relating to Frogmary Green Farm "Retention of use of meeting rooms and cookery school and erection of single storey classroom building, decking raised beds and formation of parking area" David Glasson, on behalf of Frogmary Green Farm, made a presentation regarding the planning consent for the new classroom & gardens facility at Frogmary Green Farm. The original application was made in September 2014, and after subsequent revisions a second application was made in May 2015. LPC raised concerns about the approach road, the additional traffic, and the fact that the existing Cookery School already allowed for school visits. This new application is asking LPC to consider both this classroom and the existing Cookery School as one entity including the parking and traffic issues. As the site is within the South Petherton Parish boundary LPC is being asked due to the main approach roads lying within Lopen Parish. It was asked if SSDC and SPDC had already discussed and approved this application and it was confirmed by David Glasson that this was the case, subject to a new Transport Statement. Cllr. T Sienkiewicz asked if the new School Classroom was to be used exclusively for schools or to also be used for conferences/ entertainment etc. David Glasson replied that it was for SSDC to decide. Several comments from the LPC and public that it was a commendable scheme, but there were also concerns about this being another greenfield site being developed and that further development on this particular site would increase. There was discussion about requesting a condition be attached that if the School Classroom use should cease that the site be returned to greenfield. David Glasson replied that any changes of use or development would need to go through the due planning process. Cllr. T Sienkiewicz asked where the children, who will be using the site, are coming from. David Glasson said from Crewkerne, Ilminster, South Petherton, etc. This was a scheme run by volunteers and is offered free to local school, with the aim of educating children about the production and harvesting of food, the preparation of food and to ultimately reduce the levels of child obesity. All of which is part of current Government policy. The question was raised about parking and David Glasson confirmed that parking for three mini-buses was next to the new classroom, but larger coaches would need to drop-off children next to the current Cookery School and they would have to be walked over the main entry road. This is also used by heavy trucks to supply fuel for the nearby Anaerobic Digester,

which presents a safety hazard. Cllr. N Jones asked where traffic volume numbers were coming from as LPC and Lopen residents don't believe the numbers calculated so far and they exclude traffic associated with the new AD plant. David Glasson replied that a new Transport Statement is being prepared at the request of SSDC to include traffic associated with the AD plant and will be made available shortly. Cllr. N Jones commented that the current road monitoring strip are positioned between the entry and exit of Frogmary Green Farm and are therefore not counting all of the traffic movements to/from the Farm. It was noted that volumes of traffic vary with the seasons due to the nature of farming and harvesting.

In summary, there was support for the class room and the benefits for local children, but also concerns that the application should be considered as part of the whole Frogmary Green Farm site development. In particular the approach road, narrow, with very few formal passing places and 6'6" width restriction, is an issue, and the development of yet another greenfield site was not good. However, the latter matter has already been accepted by SPPC.

A motion was proposed to support the application subject to the new Transport Statement, with recommendations to be made to add more passing places to the approach road, to provide some form of separation between pedestrians and traffic in the farm parking area, especially at the entrance, and to provide some form of formal crossing point across the lane between farmyard and classroom, to include warnings to approaching traffic. Vote: 4 for – 2 objecting.

2. Response to 16/01997/FUL planning application - Broomhill Lane

"Demolition of existing farm buildings. Alterations, conversion and extension to existing farm building to form 1 No. dwelling house"

The existing site has a selection of farm buildings and the proposal is to demolish some of these and build a new, 4-bedroom residential property substantially based on an existing former cold store, with an additional extension at the side/rear. Cllr. Jones asked whether Permitted Planning Rights route had been investigated, the applicant said she was just following advice on which route to take from her planning consultant. Concerns raised included:

- Not a sustainable location and does not meet the requirements set out in SS2
- Significant risk of precedent setting
- The main existing barn will remain and will be very close to the development.

(The applicant proposes limiting livestock to horses and sheep only.)

- EA Surface water flooding category for adjacent fields. Cllr. Sienkiewicz confirmed that there is significant run-off from the fields alongside in time of heavy rain leading to flooding in Broomhill Lane (photographs shown). However the applicant stated that the site itself does not flood and any run-off from it will be reduced by reduction of hard surfaces.

- That the plan uses land that is currently used as access by the adjoining cottages. The applicant confirmed that the cottages would have the same access after the development is completed and more space directly behind them due to demolition of existing sheds. She also commented that a nearby property had won planning permission to develop a barn to residential use but had not yet done so.

LPC vote to support the application on the basis that it re-uses an existing building as a single dwelling and reduces the overall built footprint on the site: 5 for – 0 objecting. Cllr. T Sienkiewicz had no vote due to declared interest.

3. Response to the application 16/01998/FUL Broomhill Lane *"Erection of new agricultural building for housing sheep, horses, for general storage."*

Formation of access " LPC asked about water drainage from the new barn and applicant replied that Highways will dictate how this is dealt with. Concerns were raised over the proximity of a livestock barn to dwellings. Cllr. S Crane commented that this is a farming community and that Equestrian is part of it, therefore a barn next to a farmhouse shouldn't be an issue. It was pointed out that permission has already exists for the erection of a smaller barn (non-livestock use, considerably smaller) just across the lane from the proposed site. The size of the barn was questioned (over 5 metres tall) and would this mean that this is unlikely to be expanded on the future. Screening of the barn would also be helpful, which the applicant agreed to do by way of trees. LPC vote to accept application with agreed landscaping: For 5 – objecting 0. Cllr. T Sienkiewicz had no vote due to declared interest.

4. Enforcement appeal lodged by Mrs Beehive Storage against the demolition order issued by SSDC for the new building on Mill Lane industrial estate. LPC have been invited to comment on this. It was agreed that Cllr Jones would write to the planning inspectorate to express LPC support for the SSDC demolition order.

71/16 Any Other Matters

Cllr. T Sienkiewicz raised the traffic speed issue through the village, and also confirmed that LPC had to register with the Pensions Regulator even though it is not applicable to LPC.

Meeting closed.