

**Lopen Parish Council meeting
At 7pm Tuesday 2nd September
Sunday School Room**

Present: Cllr. B. Davolls (Chairman)
Cllr. N. Norman
Cllr. Teresa Sienkiewicz
Cllr. Sarah Mason
Cllr. Stephen Crane (from 19.20pm)
Cllr. Christopher Le Hardy (SCC)

Ms. Kim McDonald (Clerk)

Members of the public: 2

45/14 Apologies

District Cllrs. Barry Walker and Paul Thompson

46/14 Declarations of Interest

None

47/14 District Councillors' Reports

None provided

48/14 County Councillor Report

Cllr. Le Hardy reported that the project to introduce high speed broadband (superfast fibre optic cable) to Somerset was progressing well. £38M has been found to allow 95% of the roll-out plans to be achieved by 2016. The target was for 100% by 2020. £3M is now required to attract match funding to complete the 100% of Connecting Devon and Somerset (CD&S) plans. Cllr. Le Hardy said that CD&S website had undergone a revamp and Broadband details for most areas was now available and it is easy to use. The level of speed depends on how far from a main cabinet residences are. All cabinets will have the superfast fibre optic cable installed, those closer will achieve greatest speeds. Somerset (along with Devon) is one of the best funded broadband projects in the country.

Highways – Cllr. Le Hardy now has a complete review of the local road structure and areas of concern. Stage 1 of the plan was to discuss with South Petherton their concerns and then to look in detail at the surrounding area and villages. A committee of local people will work with Cllr. Le Hardy to progress works. South Petherton will have 3 representatives and surrounding villages will have a single representative. Lopen Councillors expressed concern over this as it could lead to unfair influence when voting on priorities, and that as a rural committee, all interested parties should have an equal say. Cllr. Le Hardy confirmed that work will be carried out where practical and financially possible and on a fair basis.

Lopen 7.5 weight limit restriction – there was discussion about what this meant and where it applied along local roads. Lopen PC was disappointed to see Highways making a representation on a local planning application that incorrectly stated that overweight vehicles could travel through Lopen. Cllr. Le Hardy was asked in the strongest terms to ensure that this was corrected, not only for the application under discussion (AD in Hinton) but so that it would not be used as a precedent for future applications. County Highways cannot approve schemes that infringe laws. Cllr. Le Hardy agreed.

Mill Lane Resurfacing – It was with some dismay that LPC learned that Mill Lane had been resurfaced without the agreement of, or even prior notification to the parish council. Mill Lane had never appeared on any schedule of works agreed with Cllr. Le Hardy and LPC, aware of tight budgets, was concerned that this unapproved and unscheduled work should not be seen as coming out of any allocation for work in Lopen, when there were more important priorities to be undertaken. Cllr. Le Hardy agreed and said strongest representations had already been made to Highways that such an approach was totally unacceptable and very disappointing. A number of County Councillors were coming to together to hold Highways to account on a number of issues.

49/14 To approve the Minutes of the last meeting (8th July)

These were approved as a true statement of the meeting and were duly signed.

50/14 Matters Arising from the minutes

None were known

51/14 Understanding and enforcing Lopen's weight restriction - agree approach

Cllr. Davolls set out the actual situation with the 7.5 tonne weight restriction through Lopen, which in effect acts as a plug protecting not just Lopen, but also the villages of Merriott and Hinton St George. He explained the history to the restriction that came into law about 20 years ago, before many of the current Councillors took up residence in the village. A copy of the restriction notice is available from Cllr. Davolls on request. Cllr. Davolls said there were 3 options that the village could consider:

1. Do nothing to enforce restriction – which all agreed was not an option
2. Self enforcement with speed watch revived - not an option as all equipment had been returned to the CC.
3. Self enforcement - 2 sets of villagers, sited at either end of village with digital cameras, calibrated with dates and times to capture the moment of entry and exit of larger lorries. This would enable number plates to be logged, dates and times to be recorded, and should show whether the vehicle was also speeding (albeit this aspect would not be enforceable).

Cllr. Le Hardy supports the 3rd option and it was agreed that volunteers would be requested in Lopen EYE. Cllr. Sienkiewicz would take this forward.

On other points, it was noted that the reversing of vehicles into Frog Street was already noted on Lopen's Highways matters job list.

It was noted that several Co-Op lorries had been seen travelling through to Merriott and breaking the weight limit. It was agreed that if evidence of this was provided, the Co-Op would be written to with a request that their drivers respect the weight limit through Lopen.

Cllr. Le Hardy left the meeting c 19.30.

52/14 Lengthsman Provision Update

A meeting had been arranged for September 11th with the SSDC Rangers to review the work that Lopen would like to be undertaken and to better understand the service offered and costs. Cllr. Norman was tasked with providing a starter for 10 scope of works having discussed with our outgoing Lengthsman. Scope of works would also include winter maintenance of drains when other works were not possible due to weather.

Villagers are reminded that the parish council will not have the same level of funding for work moving forward and that it may be necessary for villagers to help out where they can.

It was important to report any work they see may need to be done to Cllr. Norman who makes herself available at most coffee mornings. Messages can also be emailed direct or sent through the website. It was noted at the meeting from the floor that the Kitchen Lane footpaths are poorly maintained.

Lopen PC was awaiting a cheque from South Petherton Council for a share of the surplus funds on the closing of the SPPC Led scheme.

53/14 Defibrillator provision- update and agree the way forward

Installation of the unit in the church porch has been verbally agreed by the PPC and the Diocese under a minor works scheme, but an electrician would be required to ensure the installation was carried out to the appropriate standards. Once confirmed, the case for the unit can be ordered as per previous minuted agreements and Cllr. Davolls as a competent person in this respect, undertook to complete the installation. Cllr. Crane (also serving on the PPC) undertook to arrange an appropriately qualified electrician to sign off the work in accordance with PPC approval. These plans were agreed by all.

54/14 LPC Finance Update

The current position with the council's finances was outlined by Cllr. Davolls. A healthy position of £12,241 on the balance sheet but with some major expenses to come before the close of the year.

Cllr. Davolls requested that c.£100.00 for printing paper and printing cartridges be approved by the Councillors for the LPC printer, and this was agreed.

55/14 To agree the Parish Council's response to planning applications:

· 14/03189/FUL The Bakery, 7 Holloway, Lopen. Demolition of existing outbuilding and the erection of a replacement building for use as ancillary workshop/annex.

Cllr. Davolls outlined the application using plans and drawings projected onto a screen and the changes that had been made to the scheme to address the earlier concerns expressed by the Conservation officer which led the PC to reject the earlier scheme. It was noted that the Conservation officer was now in support of the application and Highways had expressed no objections to the scheme. LPC Councillors had no major concerns with the proposal now before them, except that there was a wish to preserve as much off-road parking as possible along this stretch of Holloway.

The proposal was put to the Council that the application should be approved, but with a request that as much off-road parking be retained as possible. This was unanimously agreed.

56/14 Other matters to note

- Cllr. Sienkiewicz updated the council on her objection to the District Auditor on various SSDC account issues including the reduction in planned S106 monies for Lyde Road. Millions of pounds worth of S106 monies were lost when Councillors voted to reduce Developers obligations that was supposed to support infrastructure projects in the district. Cllr. Sienkiewicz would keep the meeting updated with progress.
- WW1 Centenary Recommendation. Was it thought appropriate for LPC to mark this landmark year, and if so what form should this take. After a discussion it was agreed that it was and that although LPC undertook not to have a donation budget, this was an occasion where a small donation to a military charity would be appropriate to

mark the sacrifice of people from Lopen. Kim McDonald would review the regulations under section 137 and report back to the next meeting when a formal decision would be taken on whether or not donate to SAFA to support current service men and women.

Cllr. Mason also suggested that maybe donations could be requested at first-aid training.

- It was noted that some drains on Holloway were being blocked by materials falling from farm traffic travelling through the village, what was possible to do about this? Farmers are responsible for clearing up behind them, but in this instance it was very difficult to prove who was responsible and when. It was concluded that to an extent this was part of living in a rural village and that there was nothing practical or effective that LPC could do on this occasion outside of reporting blocked drains to Highways.
- External Audit. LPC passed its external audit of accounts.
- Standing Orders. The LPC Standing Orders need to be updated to reflect recent changes. One of which was the entitlement for anyone to record with or without permission our public meetings.
- Cllr. Crane confirmed that the PPC had kindly agreed to provide the Sunday School Room for free for the forthcoming first-aid and defibrillator training sessions. LPC formally thank the PPC for this kind consideration.

There were no further matters to discuss and the meeting concluded at 20.08pm.