

45/12 Year-end financial report

The R.F.O. Mrs C. Mansfield itemised the income and expenditure from the final reconciled accounts sheet. Questions were invited. There being none, the accounts were accepted and a copy is to be filed with the minutes.

46/12 Annual Audit and Return

The R.F.O. Outlined the requirements and statutory obligations regarding the Parish Annual return. The Notice of Appointment of Date for the Exercise of Electors' Rights was displayed on the village notice board on April 12th. The date of commencement of availability of accounts documents and paperwork pertaining to the accounts was 25th April. Availability as per the notice, until 25th May, in the Parish, and thereafter at the offices of Moore Stephens until the audit is complete. (Acc. and Audit (Eng reg s))
The Annual Governance Statement was read and completed by the Clerk under the instructions of the Councillors, signed by the Chairman and countersigned by the Clerk.

47/12 County Councillors Report

Cllr Paul Maxwell gave a brief overview of his year as SCC Councillor and SSDC Cllr for Eggwood ward. He was instrumental in keeping both the library at South Petherton and the Crewkerne waste plant open. He worked to have the speed limit at Watergore reduced to 40MPH, fought for the free Merriott school bus, is instrumental in negotiating for retaining a bus service to South Petherton Hospital, and agreed to get more exact information regarding route numbers 81 and 91. He has worked for improvement on highways, lighting, and particularly for the Lengthsman scheme. He was able to report that he helped obtain funding for this scheme for the next year from Area North (£1500.00) and also from Area West (£500.00). Lopen's share of this will enable Lopen's use of the Lengthsman to carry on for another year.

Other items mentioned were the grant secured for the shop in Hinton St George, and improvements to the playground there.

Asked by the Chairman what further funding may be available to LPC towards the cost of installing a Hearing Loop in the Sunday School room (in conjunction with the PCC) , Cllr Maxwell offered to look into the possibility of securing a further discretionary grant to enable the LPC to meet its funding target .

Cllr. Maxwell outlined County Council areas in which he is active , Chair Area West, Scrutiny Committee, Waste, and Lighting.

He closed by commenting that there would be a continued strain on local resources and all councils need to be co-operative and resourceful,taking initiatives as there will be tough choices and decisions ahead.

Regarding the ongoing issue at Eggwood. Cllr Maxwell reported on the most recent developments , including a site visit by County Enforcement officers. Health and educational reports are pending and will be taken into consideration before any action is taken. It seems likely that the District Council will offer the family in occupation,an alternative pitch.

A vote of thanks from the chair, endorsed by Parish Council members,was offered to all 3 county and district councillors who worked so hard on our behalf to continue the funding of the Lengthsman scheme for this year.

48/12 District Councillor's Report

Barry Walker gave some insights into his experiences as a newly elected councillor, and the amount of work required to keep abreast of local Government changes, for example the National Planning Policy Framework, the Community Infrastructure Levy, Universal Credit etc.

Cllr Walker pointed out that the process of decision making is necessarily long to take account of the interconnectedness of many of the issues, as there are radiating effects of decisions that need to be accounted for in advance of a decision being taken. He pointed out that the best routes to decision making need to be found, and congratulated Cllr Davolls for his hard-working and co-operative contribution at the local level. In support of the Lengthsman scheme, Cllr Walker had argued that timely and inexpensive repairs and maintenance effected under the scheme, could produce a substantial saving in the long run over the alternative (emergency or urgent work requiring contractor's expense). He was pleased that the fight to provide some funding (£2000) was successful, at least for one year.

Cllr. Finlayson made the point that, as Extraordinary meetings deal with urgent matters of local concern it would be informative for County and District councillors if they could attend these on occasions. Cllr. Walker agreed the importance of this, and given the difficulties of work loads, and newness to the position, he would see what could be done.

49/12 Planning-Core Strategy and Lopenhead update

The Chairman and Cllr. Walker outlined the situation that an amendment to the Core Strategy was sought on the grounds that the revised Core Strategy was based on predicted figures now out of date owing to a down turn in the economy and therefore the number of houses and amount of employment land being proposed are questionable.

(8.00 PM Cllr Maxwell left the meeting)

There will be no revisiting of the strategy. The plan is to build houses to kick-start the economy in the short term, and the Draft Core Strategy in its revised form was passed. There will be 6 weeks public consultation on the final submission document, to be collated by SSDC and sent to the Planning Inspector, this will be the last chance to object. It was pointed out by Cllr. Walker that although Lopen would have the right to some housing allocation it would be community led and, as Lopen does not have shops or schools, Lopen's expansion would be very limited.

Lopenhead

The Chairman displayed the amended plans for Lopenhead (building E).

Concerns were raised and discussed varying from the function of proposed wash-down area and air-lock, to the proposed sewage treatment site etc. The Chairman read out a letter of further information provided by the applicant relating to the reasons for the scale of the building proposed.

The Chairman declared that much of the difficulty in dealing with Lopenhead planning issues, stems from apparent unwillingness on the part of the applicant to engage in dialogue with LPC. Although invited to attend meetings there has been no takeup to date.

8.30PM Cllr. B Walker left the meeting .

50/12 Jubilee Party Committee Report

Cllr. S. Crane reported on behalf of the committee, that everything was in hand for the street party, and all necessary steps taken to comply with the requirements of the PC's Insurance policy. The Clerk confirmed that permission had been granted by SSDC to close the road as asked for .

51/12 Bulk Buying Energy Scheme

Cllr. Finlayson reported on the concept of a bulk energy purchasing (gas and electric) scheme for the village.

After some investigation, it became clear that such a scheme is not currently available (although it is with oil) from any of the major suppliers. Further stating that "Which" Magazine claim there are no Bulk Buy schemes, and that the best individual deals can be sought through the Energy Help-line.

52/12 Police-New beat manager

The Clerk read an introductory letter from the newly appointed Beat manager, Lisa Wright, and LPC's reply, inviting her to one of our future meetings to meet us in person and say a few words about her role in the community.

53/12 SID results April/May

The Chairman reported that the Speed Indicator Device was installed in Lopen for 15 days during April and early May.

27% of all movements were below 30mph, 59% were between 30 and 40mph, 13% were between 40 and 50mph and 1% were greater than 50mph (=252 occasions).

The total number of movements (in one direction only) was 20,344 which equates to a daily throughput of 1,355. This is a 38% increase in movements over the February figure. The Chairman commented that given the lack of pavements in part, there are far too many vehicles travelling in excess of 50mph. Road closures in the vicinity may have caused heavier than normal use of Holloway.

54/12 The Year Ahead

The Chairman stated that Lopen will have to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan. It is believed that the opportunity to prepare a plan has been delayed by 9 months. The content of any plan does depend upon the District council adopting it .

55/12 Future Meeting dates and times

The chairman stated that the next scheduled meeting would normally be in September, but a meeting earlier may be necessary. The date to be set when further details are known.

56/12 Any other Business

A member of the public drew the council's attention to the state of Kitchen Lane .

He reported that the road is sinking at one point, that there are 2 pot-holes, the drains are blocked with mud and the bank is collapsing again at the narrow point due to the passage of tractors.

The Chairman said that Mike Fear from Highways dept. was aware of issues in this area and would be alerted to the pot-holes. The position with the drainage is that the drains are currently cleared every two years and that the council will deal with drains that are blocked

or flooding on demand only.

The Chairman offered to speak to the appropriate authority.

The Chairman read a letter from Mrs Felicity Thomas, drawing the Council's attention to the difficulties incurred by herself and some residents of Church St because there is no pavement on the main road between the junction of Church St and the bus stop on that side of the road.

There was discussion and suggestions for possible solutions, and the Chairman stated his intention of speaking to Mike Fear of Highways Dept, to clarify the position and discuss possibilities.

A suggestion from Cllr. Sienkiewicz for a Diamond Jubilee tree planting scheme, for children and grandchildren of the village, was discussed but found no support as it was felt that there were already enough trees planted at all acceptable locations.

The meeting closed at 9.00PM