

LOPEN PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL ROOM

At 7pm Monday 19 August 2013

MINUTES

Present : Cllr. B. Davolls (Chairman)

Cllr. P. Finlayson

Cllr. N. Norman

Cllr. T. Sienkiewicz

Cllr. S. Crane

Cllr. Christopher Le Hardy SCC

Cllr. Paul Thompson SSDC

Ms. Kim McDonald (Clerk)

Members of the public: 4

38/13 Apologies

Cllr. Barry Walker unable to attend. Cllr. Le Hardy and Cllr. Nicola Norman would join the meeting later due to other parish council commitments.

39/13 Declarations of Interest (resulting in non-voting)

Cllr. Stephen Crane in respect of item 45/13.

Cllrs. Barry Davolls, Nicola Norman and Teresa Sienkiewicz in respect of planning application 13/02787/FUL Lopen Head Nursery.

Cllr. Peggie Finlayson in respect of planning application 13/03100/FUL Oswalds Church Street.

Cllr. Nicola Norman in respect of planning application 13/02872/FUL The Trading Post Lopenhead

40/13 To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 20th May 2013

Approved following an amendment to include Cllr. Stephen Crane as attending. In all other respects the minutes were considered to be a true record and were duly signed by the Parish Chairman.

41/13 Matters arising from the Minutes of 20th May 2013

There were none.

42/13 County Councillor's Report

Delayed to later in the meeting to accommodate Cllr. Le Hardy's other commitments on the night.

County Council Plan Consultations. Cllr. Le Hardy presented the plans for the forthcoming public consultation process for the draft County Council Plan, which would be made available to the public through open events throughout the county. Officers would be present at these events to respond to general questions. The known dates set for Yeovil were September 5th and 6th lunchtime in the town centre. Further detail would be made available. Cllr. Le Hardy was aware of the limitations of these dates and times for those who could not get to Yeovil at lunchtime and was working on securing another date - to be advised.

Highways matters. The Cllr. had prepared a summary document of all Parish requirements, including Lopen's (given below in brief and detailed in the minutes of meeting 20.05.13). This summary was to form the core of a meeting to be had with Highways at the end of August and Cllr. Le Hardy would report back via the Chairman.

1. Traffic calming on Holloway

2. Road Surface Holloway

3. Water Issue – near Church Street on Holloway. There is a water leak near the BT phone box

4. Lorries leaving Lopen Mill who are unable to turn left are opting to reverse into Frog Street as a quicker option causing a hazard and a nuisance to villagers.

In addition to these and also to be raised was the issue of the hazardous bend at Snapant (see 45/13) and obstructions along Higgins Grave Lane (see 50/13).

43/13 District Councillor's Report

Cllr. Barry Davolls congratulated Cllr. Paul Thompson on his appointment as Vice Chair Area North Committee.

Emerging Local Plan. Cllr. Paul Thompson updated the meeting on the Local Plan examination by the Plan Inspector. The Inspector found the Local Plan unsound in that several aspects were criticised for lack of proper evidence. These were: The Yeovil Urban Extension East Coker, Assessment of employment land requirements and location for the Ilminster housing allocation.

Cllr. Thompson said that the Plan Inspector had wanted the plan withdrawn, but the DC disagreed and this had resulted in an 8-month suspension of the plan for a review of the evidence. There were concerns expressed that the individuals who oversaw the submitted flawed plan would make up the project board to manage this review process to rework the plan. Cllr. Thompson reported that the Conservative party were undertaking to rework their own plan to run along side the formal review as a checking mechanism.

Area North Meeting – August 28th. Cllr. Thompson said as part of this meeting there would be a tour of some of the sites where grants had been given. Planning matters would commence from 4pm.

44/13 To agree Lopen Parish Councils response to planning applications:

13/03100/FUL Oswalds Church Street. The erection of a timber summerhouse (Revised application)

Cllr. Finalyson was excluded from voting. After a presentation by Cllr. Davolls and questions to the property owner, this application was approved unanimously.

13/02787/FUL Lopen Head Nursery. The erection of a single storey Industrial building B1 and B2 use.

As Cllrs. Davolls, Norman and Sienkiewicz were all excluded from voting, this left the Council inquorate. So after a public debate, which included all Councillors, the Parish Council's formal response was delegated to the Clerk to undertake following the meeting, in consultation with members.

7.40pm formal meeting closed for a public debate. Public and Councillor reaction to the application was that the planning permission had lapsed on Building B and now the application as presented did not comply with the NPPF for a number of reasons, including sustainability, lack of demonstrable need, size and appearance of development, speculative nature of development, and further environmental impact. The DC came under attack for its management of the planning process for the site including its lack of consideration for local views and transparency in decision-making, which was generally seen as being perverse.

Formal session restarted – 7.50pm and Cllr. Paul Thompson requested that Cllr. Davolls send him a detailed note of the village's objections to Building B.

13/02872/FUL The Trading Post Lopen Head. Construction of a pond and rainwater storage tanks.

Cllr. Nicola Norman was excluded from voting. The Parish Council was sympathetic to the plans for water harvesting and conservation, which in its opinion was amply met by the four surface water storage tanks. However, it did not support the plans for what was seen as being very much a public amenity/leisure pond, which had little value in conserving water as it was planned to be situated on the lower slopes of the property and was not a viable proposition to pump back to irrigate crops. Neither was the pond seen as being valuable in its current configuration for biodiversity as it was clearly designed for recreational use and was importing foreign matter onto grade 1 agricultural land. For these reasons, the Council agreed to recommend refusal of the application by a majority of 3 to 1.

45/13 To consider a donation to the PCC towards the cost of replacing the churchyard Southern pedestrian access gate and posts.

Cllr. Stephen Crane also serves on the PPC Committee and therefore declared his interest. With others he was responsible for manufacturing and fitting the replacement gate. The remaining councillors voted unanimously to support the PCC with a donation of £35.00 towards the cost of materials.

46/13 To consider the proposed installation of a mirror at Snapant with the aim of improving the safety of vehicles turning right toward Dinnington.

Cllr. Le Hardy reported back that the County Highways Dept would not provide a mirror/mirrors for Snapant but would be happy for local landowners to do so on their own land. Mirrors were thought to cost around £100 each. Cllr. Barry Davolls reported he had received an email from the Chairman of Dinnington PC reporting a conversation he had had with Colin Fletcher of Highways (which supported the position reported by Cllr. Le Hardy). He then presented to the meeting an earlier response from Highways rejecting a request to install mirrors as it was felt these could cause a glare hazard. Cllr. Davolls expressed his concern that Lopen PC should not undertake any corrective action at Snapant that was not sanctioned formally (and installed in the case of mirrors) by Highways operatives. Neither would Lopen PC feel able to sanction landowners doing this under their own responsibility. The meeting agreed with this stance. Cllr. Le Hardy said he would see if it was possible to gain an absolute indemnity for the Parish Council, which would make it possible for privately installed mirrors to be erected and would report back. Other solutions were discussed as an option to mirrors, including rumble strips, slow signs, stop and go signs to manage traffic through the bend and dropping the speed limit. Cllr. Le Hardy undertook to add this to his Highways summary for discussion with the team at the meeting to be held at the end of August. Cllr. Davolls undertook to write back to Dinnington Parish Council with an update on the situation.

47/13 Village Picnic-any final information/help needed

Cllr. Peggie Finlayson reported that all was progressing well. Lopen PC Clerk had informed the local police and checked insurance based on information provided by the picnic committee.

48/13 Various updates: Eggwood Hill site, Defibrillator

Eggwood Hill. Peter Little, who had been overseeing the matter on behalf of LPC, reported that the County Council had released the draft 999-year lease, which Peter had then circulated to the Parish Chairmen of Merriott, Hinton and Lopen. The draft lease was to be reviewed by a Lawyer working pro-bono on behalf of the Parishes. Once we had this response, Peter would arrange a meeting between the three Parish Chairman and Clerks to progress the matter, including setting up a management committee for the long term. Cllr. Davolls reiterated that there would be a public meeting where the opportunity to lease Eggwood would be debated thoroughly and a formal vote taken as to whether to proceed or not with the transfer of the lease to the Parishes once all final details are known.

It was noted that the land was not being kept cleared for public activity/walking. The agreement was that the land would be handed over in a maintained condition upon lease agreement after which the upkeep would become the joint responsibility of the three Parishes. Cllr. Davolls told the meeting that a small fund to cover maintenance had been put in place as part of the precept that would help to fund this. It was noted that footpaths remained under the control of the County Council to maintain at ground level. Due to cost cutting they were currently only maintaining the most used pathways. Landowners (lease owners as we would be in this case) are responsible for maintaining hedges and other growth on the site.

Defibrillator. Stalled, due to the recommendations of the scheme's proposed clinical administrator, who feels that option 2 as set out in the last minutes would be a better solution for Lopen. This was to be clarified at a meeting in September.

49/13 Parish Councillor vacancy

This was Cllr. Peggie Finlayson's last meeting prior to her moving to Hampshire. An advert for a new Councillor would be placed in the EYE, on the website and on the noticeboard, with details of the commitments required.

The Parish Council took the opportunity to thank Peggie for all her hard work and support – not just on

the Parish Council, but also on the many activities she has undertaken on behalf of the village. Teresa presented flowers and a card.

50/13 Any other business

Higgins Grave Lane. An email had been received regarding the overgrowth of foliage along Higgins Grave Lane, which was causing obstruction to vehicles. Highways had been approached who told the complainant that trimming was the responsibility of the landowners. In this case two of which were Parish Councillors. The question was one of responsibility. Highways have a responsibility for maintaining verges and landowners for hedges that abut highways. In the case of Higgins Grave lane, the foliage was not hedges but overgrown trees and shrubs in the near vertical verges. Both landowners in this case believed that Highways owned the verges on Higgins Grave Lane. Cllr. Le Hardy undertook to raise this at his meeting with Highways at the end of the month. Cllr. Davolls had in the meantime responded to the complaint.

Waste Paper Collections. Cllr. Sienkiewicz raised concerns over the lack of recycling collections down Broomhill Lane. It was noted that small vehicles were required for this road. Cllr. Paul Thompson agreed to raise this with Street Scene.

Meeting closed at 21.30.

Next Scheduled Meeting – Monday November 18th at 7pm, School Room.