

LOPEN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held in The School Room, Church Street, Lopen 7 pm 16 January 2017

Present : N Jones (Chairman)

S Crane

E Moore

In attendance : L Wilson, Parish Clerk; County Councillor Le Hardy; District Cllrs C Raikes and A Dance; Members of the Public : 4

The Meeting opened at 7.15 pm

122/17 County Councillor's Report :

- Cllr Le Hardy confirmed that a new broadband contract would add an additional 32,000 homes to the scheme including the potential for Lopen, Ilton and Dinnington. To establish whether a house is to be connected, a postcode check is possible via www.gigaclear.com.
- A conversation with Steve Lawrence of Highways in relation to the Small Improvement Scheme for Lopen had indicated that the response from such a small village was "unprecedented". An amended plan was not yet ready. There are currently eight SIS schemes in various stages across Cllr Le Hardy's area. Cllr Le Hardy confirmed that the Parish Council will see the plan first, but no timescale indicated.

123/17 District Councillors' Reports

- Cllr C Raikes confirmed that Frogmary Green came to committee last week and was deferred due to the absence of an Environmental Impact Assessment. It is unlikely it will be ready by the adjourned date next month either.
- "Health Coaches" are to be posted at South Petherton Surgery to provide a first stage help for the most needy in advance of seeing a G.P. There will also be a "Village Agent" who will liaise with agencies including Health Providers.
- Cllr A Dance confirmed that the County Council considered the best of the three options for the location of the dog waste bin is the Water Street/Kitchen Lane point next to the footpath. Because of the delay in a decision, the funding has gone, but there was confirmation that the Council will collect waste for no charge. However, final approval for funding from an alternative source, Area North, has been sought and a decision awaited. The exact cost is £126.69 for the bin and £50 for fitting.

124/17 Apologies : received from Cllr Jed Burrows.

125/17 Minutes of the last meeting: approved and signed.

126/17 Matters arising : None

127/17 Resignation & New Councillors : The Chairman announced that Teresa Sieciewicz resigned at the weekend. A vote of thanks was given and an acknowledgement of her six year's of hard work.

With this event, the Council is now in need of three councillors and getting very close to the minimum for a quorum. A discussion took place about how to encourage applicants for the post and suggestions included flyers through doors, albeit advertisements had already been placed in the Lopen Eye on a number of occasions.

128/17 Footpath Project : Updates received from Cllr Moore regarding repairs to the footpath steps and railings in Upper Holloway. A resident informed the room that following his report to SSDC, the wobbly stile at Kitchen Lane had been removed.

Cllr Moore outlined his proposition for a working party in the Spring to clear the footpaths, with reference to the Adopt a Path Scheme. It was discussed and agreed that the event could take place in late May/early June, could include a social aspect, including discovery of the history of the local paths, and a barbecue.

It was mooted and agreed that a Village meeting take place as a stand alone event on a Saturday afternoon; a good opportunity to not only gather interest for the footpath event and agree a date, but also for residents to air any thoughts or concerns in a more informal environment. Councillors would also provide more information on their role, which might encourage applicants to apply for the Councillor vacancies. It was agreed that the village meeting will take place on the 11 March at 2.30 pm.

129/17 Update on Road SIS : Highways took out an additional speed survey between the 16 and 23 December. It was confirmed by Cllr Le Hardy that Alan Jones, the Director of Highways, had taken on supervision of the Scheme.

The Speedwatch representative confirmed that eight residents had undertaken training and whilst there had been some unfortunate delays in obtaining the necessary kit, and availability of the Beat Officer, the first trial/demonstration session was likely to take place on Wednesday. Further training dates would be forthcoming. Two sites had been risk-assessed and approved - one by the phone box and one opposite the Pumping Station, as the field gateway has proved to be a better sightline.

130/17 Update on Mill Lane : Two quite different replies to the LPC's complaint letter had been received from the Inspectorate, confirming that the Appeal was by way of written representations and therefore it was SSDC's responsibility to keep residents and the Parish Council informed of the applications. Councillors all voiced their disbelief at this in view of the fact that without the information being published on the Council's website, there was no method of discovering the existence of, or details of the representations. Cllr Dance confirmed that Merriot PC had also complained, and that residents could do so individually, to David Norris of SSDC. He requested that he and Cllr Raikes were copied in to any correspondence.

131/17 Code of Conduct : It was agreed that the Clerk would check the variations of the Code on the system and try to establish which was the latest version in the first instance. There may be no need for review, dependant upon the date of the last update.

132/17 Filter of emails from Clerk to Councillors : Councillors present, Nick Jones, Ed Moore and Steven Crane confirmed that there should be a sensible degree of filtering, but in view of the fact that there were now so few councillors, more emails should be automatically sent to all.

133/17 Reserves, Budget & Precept : The RFO provided copies of payment and reserve information and the previously supplied spreadsheets were reviewed and discussed. Notably there has been a large decrease in the CTB grant this year, from £270 to £70.

It was agreed that there was less need to put additional money into reserves as they were now sound, but funds could potentially be reassigned within reserves so that they could in future be used for projects such as road improvements, or a second dog waste bin. It was agreed and resolved that the former Egwood Reserve be re-allocated to a new reserve named Highway Safety Fund.

Angela Naunton-Davies made reference to the urgent need for repairs on the chimney in the school house.

Cllr Crane confirmed that he had spoken to Sarah Mason regarding the second set of defibrillator pads. He undertook to speak to her regarding whether annual maintenance/calibration was required.

The Clerk's hours were increased to bring the monthly total closer to SALC'S minimum recommended time.

It was proposed, agreed and resolved to increase the precept by 2.65% ; half of which is necessary due to the decrease in the CTB grant.

The meeting was concluded at 9.40 pm

Note: For the purpose of minute-taking, this meeting was recorded. This was announced by the Chairman prior to the meeting commencing.