

## **LOPEN PARISH COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the Meeting held in The School Room, Church Street, Lopen 7 pm, Monday 22 May 2017**

Present : N Jones (Chairman), S Crane, E Moore, J Burrows

In attendance : L Wilson, Parish Clerk. Cllrs A Dance & C Raikes were present for part of the meeting. Members of the Public : 9

The meeting commenced at 7.02 pm.

**157/17 Election of Chairman** Cllr Crane proposed Nick Jones continue as Chairman, seconded by Cllr Moore. There were no other nominations. Nick Jones signed the Declaration of Acceptance, which was witnessed and signed by the Clerk.

**158/17 Election of Vice-chairman** Stephen Crane

**159/17 Apologies for absence** : None received

**160/17 Interests to Declare & Dispensations:** None

**161/17 Minutes of last meeting, 13 March 2017** : the previously circulated minutes were accepted as an accurate record and signed by the chairman

**162/17 Matters arising from the Minutes of 13 March 2017** :

- The Chairman updated those present that replies had been received from two out of three of the Bus Companies written to regarding the speed of their vehicles. Berry's were yet to respond. Taylors indicated they didn't believe any of their buses travelled through Lopen. Somerset County Council had observed that they had two buses travelling to Maiden Beech via the village and have contacted the school. Roger Gurner of SLOW commented that one of Taylor's buses had been flagged in excess of the speed limit by Speedwatch.
- Cllrs Dance and Raikes arrived at the meeting at 7.15 pm.
- The chairman confirmed that a letter had been sent to the bank with regard to removing the previous councillor from the bank mandate.

- No contact details had yet been obtained with regard to the Parish Bier.

**163/17 County Councillor's Report :** Cllr Dance confirmed his new appointment as County Councillor and that he will also continue in the role of District Councillor. He indicated that there would be a full County Council meeting on Wednesday, after which date he would have more information available. He invited residents to contact him if they had anything they wanted to raise. He had already received an email regarding potholes and blocked drains and would also be meeting with SLOW soon to see how he could assist.

**164/17 Minutes of Planning Meeting of 6 April 2017 :** The previously circulated minutes were approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

**165/17 Matters arising from the Minutes of 6 April 2017 :** The Chairman summarised SSDC'S subsequent decisions on the planning applications that were considered at the meeting. Mendip View had been approved as per the application. Gabscot had been approved upon the amended plans. Mill Lane: the applications were granted with the Parish Council's comments disregarded. The Trading Post: the majority of the Parish Council's comments were taken on board and conditions had been accordingly applied, save for any restrictions on noise from the refrigeration units.

**166/17 Annual Governance Statement & Financial Statements :** The Chairman proposed that the approval of these documents be deferred until after the Internal Audit had taken place where there had been some difficulty obtaining the services of an available auditor. A quotation (previously circulated) had been obtained from one potential auditor but fortunately contact had been received at the weekend from Lopen's previous internal auditor, Ian Benfield,, and he had agreed to carry out the audit. It was resolved that Mr Benfield be duly instructed and a further Parish Council meeting date be arranged for the week commencing the 12 June. The Clerk indicated that an extension period for submission to the external auditor could be requested from Grant Thornton.

**167/17 Review & adoption of Standing Orders :** It was resolved that the Standing Orders were renewed in their current form; proposed by the Chairman and seconded by Vice-Chair.

**168/17 Review & adoption of Financial Regulations :** The Chairman proposed that the Financial Regulations should be reviewed as it's possible that they go further than is required for such a small parish. Seconded by Vice-Chair and resolved.

**169/17 Review of Parish Council's existing services & suppliers :** Comprising Footprintz (printers of Lopen Eye); SSDC Ranger Services; Loxston Mowers. It was agreed that Footprintz would continue as would SSDC Rangers. However, it was resolved that SC would ask for a review of the tasks that the ranger carries out on each visit. It was raised that alternative companies be explored who might prove more competitive than Loxston Mowers. Councillor Moore volunteered to investigate options from companies including Devonport Soils of Yeovil (as suggested by Cllr Dance) and Crewkerne Horticultural.

**170/17 Review of subscription to SALC :** It was agreed that this was a modest sum (just under £70 per annum) and a valuable service, and therefore it was resolved that membership would be renewed.

**171/17 Proposal to purchase *Arnold Baker's Guide, Local Council Administration (10th edition)* :** A new copy of the guide is available from various suppliers but all at the same cost of £92. The Clerk had been unable to locate a second hand copy online (of the current edition), but the Chairman had located one of unknown date for £25; an email had been sent to the supplier and a response awaited regarding the edition. A number of members of the public questioned the need for the guide and alternative options. It was explained that this was the most comprehensive guide of it's kind, strongly recommended by SALC and owned by the majority of Parish Councils and all Local Councils. All free online resources had already been obtained by the Clerk. Sharing one with another Parish was impractical. At this time it was agreed that the matter be put on hold while a response is awaited from the enquiry the Chairman had sent out.

**172/17 Proposed co-option of new Councillor :** The Chairman had received an application (previously circulated) from resident Valerie Canton. It was resolved and agreed to accept Mrs Canton's application; she completed the declaration of acceptance and joined the Council.

**173/17 Review of Councillor Responsibilities:** The following were resolved and agreed :  
Ranger Liaison : Stephen Crane; Footpaths : Ed Moore; Highways : Stephen Crane; Planning : Nick Jones; Health & Well-Being : Valerie Canton

**174/17 Review of Footpath Project Day** : A recap on the day confirmed that this had been a really successful event with 14 adults and a number of children attending, good work being completed by the team of adults, a treasure-hunt for the children, followed by a home-reared pork barbecue at Councillor Moore's house. Cllr Moore and his family were thanked for their hospitality and the volunteers for their hard work.

**175/17 Review of Parish Council Annual Insurance** : The previously circulated policy proposals were reviewed and it was agreed and resolved that Came & Co represented better value and more individual cover and personalised service than the existing insurers. The annual premium of £294.74 would save in the region of £90 p.a.

**176/17 Update on the SIS** : The chairman recapped on the short-notice meeting that he had attended with Ben Goldsmith of SLOW at SSDC's offices to meet Highways and Councillor Le Hardy. The new proposals return the speed limit to 30 mph throughout the village, but include some additions including painted white lines on either side of the carriageway, some refreshment of the painted markers on the road surface, the addition of cat's eyes at Snapant and more pronounced gateways at either end of the village. The Parish Council and SLOW had pushed the point with regard to the desire for a 20 mph limit, but this was met with much resistance, little detail but the promise that Highways would write with details why it was not appropriate and why Lopen don't meet the guidelines. Montacute have recently had their third request for a 20 mph zone turned down. The installation of SID's would appear to be supported however, and sharing with another village an option, (previously rejected by the County Council), albeit these would be merely subsidised, not fully funded and residents would have to be trained in the use/ installation of the devices.

**177/17 Motion : *The chronic failure of SSDC to ensure compliance with planning conditions at Lopen Head and Mill Lane*** : Proposed by Teresa Siekiewicz - matters were outlined by TS and NJ. Another Councillor viewed the ongoing applications as an escalation. At Lopen Head, it continues to appear that the buildings are being used for alternative uses to those permitted under the planning conditions, and the grassed area is used for regular car displays. The Trading Post and Mill Lane are the subject of numerous retrospective planning applications. Cllr Dance commented that it is up to individuals to report any breaches, but that Lopen had been supported in a number of it's requests, for example at Mill Lane. Cllr Raikes pointed out that retrospective applications were common county-wide, not just

in South Somerset. TS raised the point that when the anaerobic digester at Frogmore was granted permission, conditions were attached that quarterly reports would be provided and a surface water scheme put in place, neither of which had been met; Cllr Raikes agreed to look into those issues. It was agreed that a meeting would be arranged between the District Councillor, County Councillor and the Chairman to discuss further.

**178/17 Village Picnic** : Cllr Canton agreed to liaise with the organiser Carolyn White with regard to a formal request to the Parish Council for insurance of the event.

**179/17 Defibrillator Maintenance** : Following research and telephone conversations with the manufacturers of the Defibrillator, accurate quotes had now been obtained for a "first responder" kit (£79) comprising plastic apron, mouthguard and pads; just pads; and batteries. Cllr Dance recommended contacting South West Ambulance Association regarding supply of the kit and signs that could be installed to point the way to the defibrillator as concern was raised that residents or visitors might not know of its existence or location. Cllr Crane agreed to speak to Sarah Mason to arrange a new training session and he would also contact SW Ambulance to confirm the speed with which replacement pads would arrive if one set had been used, and also to ensure that they have on record that the village has a defibrillator. It was agreed that the Chairman would be prepare a checklist, to be placed next to the defibrillator for weekly (at least) visual checks. It would also contain contact details so that if anyone passing should see there is a power failure (red light rather than green), it can be reported and dealt with forthwith.

**180/17 Projects & aims for forthcoming year :**

- a) Defibrillator signs
- b) Electronic speed sign
- c) Gully clearing and possible investigation of old clay land-drains at Snapant due to the ongoing water issues down upper Holloway. It was agreed that photos would be emailed to AD and he would raise the matter in a meeting with Mike Fear.

**181/17 Planning & Licensing** : One new application had been received since the Agenda was released. On that basis it cannot be discussed until the next meeting.

**182/17 Next meeting dates** : The next meeting was arranged for Thursday 15th June. Further meeting dates will be fixed at that meeting.

**183/17** The issue of the recycling or rubbish lorry that had reversed into a wall, lifting a stone and causing other damage was raised and resolved that the matter would need reporting to the District Council.

The meeting concluded at 9.05 pm

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