

**Minutes of Long Sutton Parish Council Meeting held at the  
Hall on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2008 at 7.00 pm**

**Present:** Councillors: Mrs. J.R. Turner, Mr. R.G. Sargent, Mr. R.C. Vaux, Mr. M.J. Willoughby, Mr. D.C. Paull, Miss P. Jukes and Mr. C.J. Greenfield. District Councillor Mr G.R. Cox and 4 members of the public.

**Apologies:** Councillor: Mr. J.A. Ellerbeck.

The Clerk reported that County Councillor Mr. Derek Yeomans had said that he would attend the meeting if he could, time permitting, but he also had meetings in other Parishes to attend that evening.

**Presentation by Mark Dillon of South Somerset Homes Re: Affordable Housing.**

Councillor Mrs. Turner, who has had conduct of this matter, introduced Mark Dillon to the PC.

Mr. Dillon brought the PC up to date on the present position regarding the proposal for affordable housing in Long Sutton.

A site has been found at the north end of Martock Road and negotiations regarding purchase of the land are ongoing.

There was discussion regarding the number of houses and whether these would be shared ownership or rented. The suggestion for two pairs of semi-detached was made. Mr. Dillon said that access could determine whether the development was semi-detached or terraced.

The development will be controlled by a Section 106 Agreement and the properties allocated to people from Long Sutton in the first instance and then adjacent rural parishes. Mr. Dillon is to talk to the Community Council regarding the findings of the survey which was carried out, go to Committee with a view to appointing a Consultant Team to work on design in outline and make arrangements for a drop in meeting for people from the local communities at which it is hoped an Architect and Officers from Planning and Sales will be present. It was agreed that sufficient notice would be given for this to be advertised in the local Newsletter.

The meeting then proceeded to the Agenda with Vice-Chairman Mr. R.C. Vaux in the Chair.

**1. To Receive Resignation of Chairman** (He is not retiring as a Councillor)

Vice-Chairman Mr Vaux reported the resignation of Mr. Richard Sargent as Chairman of the PC. This was duly noted by the PC and Mr. Sargent was thanked for his work over the last seven months.

**2. Election of Chairman**

The Vice-Chairman was asked if he would like to become Chairman but he said that he felt that he was not in a position to undertake this.

The Vice-Chairman then proceeded to ask for nominations for Chairman. Mrs. Turner was proposed by Mr. Sargent, seconded Mr. Willoughby and there being no further nominations, was duly elected as Madam Chair.

Mrs. Turner then took the Chair (having signed the appropriate Declaration of Acceptance of Office) with the congratulations of the PC.

### **3. Election of Vice-Chairman (If necessary)**

Mr. Vaux said that he would be happy to continue as Vice-Chairman.

**Madam Chair closed the meeting to allow Public Question time to take place** following which, the meeting continued with the Agenda.

### **4. Declarations of Interest** - None

### **5. Minutes of last meeting** - Agreed and signed as a true record.

### **6. Matters Arising:**

**Rubbish Bin in Layby at Langport Road:** Mr. Sargent reported that this had been removed and he was following the matter up with the DC.

### **7. County Councillor's Report** -

### **8. District Councillor's Report** - Mr. Cox said that he had nothing to report.

### **9. Planning**

Land at The Manor, Cross Lane: Erection of 1 dwellinghouse & alteration to existing wall and access drive. This application has been withdrawn. There followed discussion regarding the possible development of other land in this area which is beyond the development line on which Councillors voiced varying views.

### **10. Finance: Budget/Precept for 2008/9**

The Clerk produced for Councillors' perusal a typed statement (based on that circulated to Councillors by Mr Sargent prior to the last meeting) containing the estimated financial position at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008 and the allocations proposed for 2008/9 together with accompanying notes.

**Clerk's Salary:** It was proposed by Miss Jukes, seconded Madam Chair and unanimously agreed that the Clerk should be paid for 6 hours per week at a salary of £2,988 p.a. both the hours and salary being back dated to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007 and that she should also be paid for 6 hours per week for the financial year commencing 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008. (This proposal was made following discussion and agreement reached at the last meeting during which the Clerk was not present.)

**Parish Council Allowances:** A Parish Council may choose to pay their members an allowance known as 'basic parish allowance' to recognise the time and effort they put into their parish duties and also allowances in respect of travel and subsistence.

Mr. Sargent reminded the PC that a Chairman's Allowance of £100 p.a. to cover expenses had been agreed at the last meeting.

Following discussion it was proposed by Mr. Vaux, seconded Mr. Willoughby and unanimously agreed that a basic parish allowance should not be paid.

### **Budget/Precept for 2008/9**

Bearing in mind that with three months still outstanding (Jan - March 08) there were some inevitable "best guesses" regarding expenditure, the figures presented by the Clerk showed that the surplus for 2007/08 would be around £2,200, a considerable reduction from the surplus of £5,000 from 2006/07. Expenditure for 2008/09 was estimated to be £8,900.

During discussion the following points were made:

- a) The reduced amount in the reserve; this needed a degree of restoration.
- b) SSDC income in 2008/09 will be reduced, indicating that grants will inevitably suffer.
- c) Insurance in respect of the PC's new responsibilities as Trustees of the Village Hall will increase.
- d) Voluntary helpers for such matters as audit of the PC's accounts, tree cutting etc, are in the decline which could mean increased expenditure to hire specialists, to keep the village up to standard.

This sample suggested a potential additional expenditure during 2008/09 and it was not enough to plan to balance the books; a surplus was needed after three consecutive years when the Precept has remained at £5,000. Against this background, a Precept of £6,400 for 2008/09 was therefore proposed by Mr. Sargent, seconded Mr. Greenfield and agreed by a majority (4 to 3), an annual increase of £1,400 or on average £3.80 per household as from 1 April 2008.

**Balance of A/Cs:**

<b>Current A/C</b>	£2735.67	<b>Business Reserve A/C</b> <u>£7260.51</u>
<b>Less</b> A/cs last meeting	<u>1126.56</u>	
	<b><u>£ 1609.11</u></b>	

**A/cs/Donations for payment:**

Mr R Sargent Expenses (copying, faxing and car parking)	15.94
Additional Clerk's Salary Payable	471.00
Donation towards Church Tower Lighting	50.00
Donation towards Churchyard Grass Cutting	150.00

It was proposed by Mr. Greenfield, seconded Mr. Willoughby and agreed that the above accounts/donations be paid.

**11. Parish Plan**

Steve Sensier, the project co-ordinator, brought the Councillors up to date with the Plan's progress and reiterated the original terms of reference, which defines the Parish Council's role, for the benefit of new Councillors.

The survey questionnaires have been processed and the project team of 19 members is developing the individual themes. First drafts will be discussed at a meeting on the 23<sup>rd</sup> January. Three additional Councillors volunteered to become involved with the themes at this stage to ensure that actions planned to meet objectives will be supported by the Parish Council. The total number of Councillors now involved with the project is 5.

The aim is to consolidate the themes and draft the introduction by mid February, to circulate the whole draft Plan to the team for comments by the beginning of March and present the final draft to the Parish Council at a meeting by mid March.

Any amendments will be incorporated and the Plan design finalised by the 1<sup>st</sup> week in April ready for printing.

Mr. Sensier also said that the Parish website fees would be coming up for renewal shortly.

It was reported that following applications for funding made to the South Somerset Area Working Panel, funding of £500 towards the Parish Plan and £300 for the website have been agreed.

## **12. Affordable Housing**

**Knightlands Lane:** Mr. Sargent reported that he had been in touch with RHT Developments regarding the sale of No. 1 and No. 6 Knightlands Lane. Although there had been 21 enquiries only two could be considered having connections with the local area. It was agreed with RHTD that a helpful definition of local area in future should be "within the Team Ministry of parishes". It was also agreed any decision regarding house No. 1 should be delayed and that it should be republished in the January newsletter under the revised terms. This has been done. It was noted that No. 3 was also coming up for sale.

The S.106 document concerning the development states that if RHTD are unable to find anyone with a direct connection to Long Sutton itself, they may offer the property to anyone with a sufficient connection to the locality subject to Parish Council approval. In the case under consideration the applicant for No. 6 had a connection to Long Sutton and a strong connection to the local area.

It was proposed by Mr. Willoughby, seconded Mr. Paull and agreed that the PC had no difficulty with the proposed applicant for Number 6 Knightlands Lane. Mr. Sargent will inform RHTD accordingly.

A letter has been received from First Step Homes (SW) Ltd, a Company dedicated to providing Affordable/Intermediate housing solutions for local people unable to purchase a property on the open market in their local area. It is not a Registered Social Landlord (Housing Association). They say that a site has been introduced to them in Long Sutton which they feel is suitable for an affordable housing development and would like the PC's support in exploring the potential for development.

It was agreed that they should be informed that the PC is currently involved in its own scheme.

## **13. Village Hall**

Mr. Sargent reported that there is no advance regarding the Village Hall Operating Instructions.

## **14. Neighbourhood Watch**

It was agreed that this is a matter for consideration following the outcome of the Parish Plan.

## **15. Correspondence** -

## **16. Date of next meeting** - 5<sup>th</sup> February 2008

## **17. Any Other Business/Items for next meeting**

Miss Jukes said that she did not feel that she could be of very much assistance as a member of the planning sub-committee at the present time and Mr. Sargent therefore agreed to take her place for the time being.

Mr. Sargent reported that the Parish Footpath Liaison Officer, Mr. Harding, has said that the District Council has advertised the agreed amendments to the footpaths between Knole and Bineham and so far there have been no objections. Assuming there will be no objections within the allowed time scale then it should be possible to start putting in new stiles, signs, etc in February. The Chief Local Countryside Ranger has written that he anticipates no financial problems.

The Clerk confirmed that a copy of the proposed Order from the District Council had been received and passed to Mr. Jones.

Mr Willoughby reported that there have been comments as to why there was no Christmas Tree. In the past this had been supplied by The Rotary Club but when they ceased to be able to provide this service in December 2006, the Gardening Club kindly provided a tree. Unfortunately this year the matter was overlooked.

Madam Chair enquired the position regarding the pollarding of the trees on the Green and Mr. Willoughby said this was due to take place in February. She requested that this be followed up.

She also requested assistance regarding the cleaning of the village sign on the A372, (The condition of the village signs had been raised by a parishioner in Public Question Time.) and reported that the new hedgerow which had been laid opposite the Village Hall is in need of cutting. It was suggested that Mr. Tim Cox be asked if he would be prepared to undertake the cutting of the hedge.

It was agreed that Mr. Robin Davies should be asked for his quotation for the cutting of the Village Green again this season and his account for last season.

#### **18. Correspondence with Hedleys Solicitors**

Pursuant to Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 it was proposed by Madam Chair, seconded Mr. Willoughby and unanimously agreed that because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted (legal matters) the Public and the Press be instructed to leave the meeting during consideration of this Agenda Item i.e. Correspondence with Hedleys Solicitors.

A copy of Hedleys' email of the 4 January setting out the current state of affairs had previously been distributed to all members of the PC. During discussion of it the PC noted Hedleys' conclusion namely, "as Battens do appear to be trying to resolve the situation there is no advantage to the Council in termination at this stage. If we give a further period of time.....we will appear to have acted reasonably." In addition Hedleys advised the revised deadline to agree the Deed should be 4 February otherwise "the matter is (will be) closed so far as the Council is concerned and no further correspondence will be entered into by us (Hedleys) or the Council with Mr. Taylor."

After considerable debate, it was proposed by Mrs. Turner, seconded Mr. Greenfield and resolved by a majority of six to one against that the PC agreed Hedleys' advice and re-emphasised that the deadline of 4 February 2008 was "absolutely final".

Hedleys are to be informed accordingly.

The meeting closed at 9 pm