

Loxley Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting held at Loxley Hall on Thursday 27th September 2018 at 20:15

Present: Glynn Jones, Chair (GJ), Justin Whitehorn (JW), Maria Garcia (MG), Peter Gregory Hood (PGH), Dan Bake (DB)

In Attendance: Penny O'Donnell

Apologies: Izzi Seccombe, Ken Osborne

Introductory comments

GJ welcomed everyone to the meeting, which PGH had kindly agreed to host as the school was unavailable. However, the Council needed to meet urgently to sign off the end of year financial accounts which were now overdue.

JW wanted to know before any formal business was transacted about the position of the Clerk following his recent meeting with her at which he was informed she had resigned. GJ noted that he had received a letter of resignation from the Clerk which he circulated. GJ felt compelled to accept as the Clerk had already been onto the HMRC website and issued a P45. The Clerk had decided to resign because she felt unable to provide the level of commitment required and also was unable to attend the training required. This was held on Tuesdays when she had other family commitments.

However, MG had identified a potential replacement who she and GJ had interviewed immediately. GJ explained on this basis he had offered the position to Adrienne Alun-Jones. He had explained to her that she would need to attend the training as soon as possible and would continue to be supported by Councillors in her role, plus would be allocated a 'buddy' by WALC who would help her settle in.

GJ explained that he had needed to move quickly, because of the significant risks associated with delaying, namely:

- First, LPC as a smaller Council and limited precept were offering relatively low remuneration and this was a factor contributing to the on-going struggle to recruit alongside lack of any willingness of any residents to volunteer. While ideally the Council would look to attract further candidates this has proved extremely difficult on all the recent occasions LPC had looked to recruit, with two previous candidates resigning before they had started.
- Second, delay could risk the current candidate losing interest.
- Third, delay would mean that the current Clerk would need to handover all documentation, passwords, etc back to LPC to then be handed back to the new Clerk. This would involve a considerable and inefficient use of time and resource.

The only practical option appeared to be to ask KJ to do a handover on behalf of the Council for a third time which seemed unreasonable.

The contract for the Clerk would include a probation period of not less than three months where either party could change their mind. GJ noted that the position LPC had been placed in was difficult with the Clerk wanting to resign with little notice. However he had persuaded her to remain and complete a handover which she had agreed to. The meeting supported this decision to appoint Adrienne subject to agreement in respect of taking up WALC training for new Clerks.

Action : GJ to issue draft contract to Adrienne Alun-Jones.

1. Members present

Glynn Jones, Justin Whitehorn, Maria Garcia, Peter Gregory Hood, Dan Bake

Apologies :

Apologies were received from Izzi Seccombe.

2. Declaration of interests in any item in the agenda

No interests were declared.

3. To approve the minutes of LPC meeting held on 10th July 2018

The minutes of the meeting held on 10th July were approved subject to minor typing modifications.

4. Matters arising from minutes of the last meeting not covered in agenda

DB noted planning applications need to be circulated earlier and preference for looking at on-line.

GJ apologised for the limited amount of time that had been available to comment on several recent planning applications. Unfortunately, the Clerk had been late circulating documents and in one instance had forgotten to post the response of the SDC website. However, going forward he suggested that in addition to applications being circulated as quickly as possible, Councillors would be notified as soon as an application had been received by the Clerk, along with the planning application reference. This would enable those Councillors happy to view on line to do so without having to wait for the circulation of planning documents.

Action: Ensure Clerk passes round applications as soon as received and notify immediately by email including the planning reference.

5. District Councillors update

Broadband event held by SDC, PO explained that if households with poor broadband speed contacted her with their residential postcode she will compile a list and get these reviewed by Gavin Tristram (an independent advisor) with s view to improving.

Electoral register – 12,500 have not responded out of 58,500.

Unsure about what is recyclable? Look at the SDC website (enter recycling) or email streetscene@stratford.gov.uk. **Action : GJ to post on website.**

SDC overshoot target for social housing. DB asked whether this is proposed or developed. PO was unsure but would look into.

6. Clerks Report

To sign off last year's finances

GJ ran through the end of year accounts which KJ had both finalised and reviewed. These were late as the Clerk had not been able to complete in the required time period and were incomplete because she had not been able to attend the training available due to family commitments. GJ noted several issues had been highlighted but these were relatively minor and could be for considered going forward by the Clerk and JW.

JW proposed the end of year accounts be accepted – noting that he was satisfied a thorough review had been undertaken - and this was seconded by MG. The meeting and thanked again for the support she has provided to the Council.

To confirm payments & receipts

Payments made between meetings

A) ICO – Data Protection Renewal fee - £40.00 (paid by ST on her debit card)

Chqs for approval at tonight's meeting

A) Thomas Fox Landscaping - £321, vat - £53.50 & £225, vat - £37.50, £321, vat -£53.50

B) The Play Inspection Company - £90.00, vat - £15.00

C) APS - £234, VAT- £54

D) Walc -£30.00

E) S Thomas - £925 & £115.38 & £40.00

Payments rcd

Bank interest - £0.27

Bank Balances

At last statement - £19,917.66 & £6,321.53– less uncleared chqs of £2301.38– leaving a total of £23,937.81

Spending YTD :

JW noted that spending was in line with budget based on the spreadsheet he had prepared which would enable the Council to keep track of spending.

7. Planning / Loxley NDP

a) Planning

Recent applications Planning applications (Goldicote Road, Little Crofts and Highfield House).

- Brief discussion on Little Croft, DB concerned about how close development is to boundary and proximity to boundary.
- Highfield House – no objections
- Outstanding application:
Second story attic conversion on garages on development on Goldicote Road.
Reference is : 18/02449/FUL.
Brief discussion with DB highlighting concern in respect of adding a further bedroom above the garage and making into a much larger house, effectively ‘salami slicing’ ultimately getting permission for a much larger property.
GJ questioned the material planning issue at stake, noting that it would not change the ‘footprint’ of the building and a future purchaser would be able to convert in any event.

Action:

- **DB to visit site Little Crofts and liaise with PO regarding any issues relating to removal of trees or proximity to boundary**
- **ALL – to review and comment on application for the attic conversion on Goldicote Road and revert to GJ**
- **DB to make site visit to consider views from proposed garage conversion on Goldicote Road with a view to assessing any ‘overlooking’ issues and feed these back to GJ.**

b) NDP update

Discussion of SDC Regulation 14 comments (and process for responding)

Discussion of comments from SDC - which were mostly seen to be relatively minor - with a few that were site specific. GJ proposed that he would amend the plan in line with all material planning comments received as part of the consultation process and a revised draft would be presented at the next LPC meeting.

Consultant feedback on options analysis and discussion

A further discussion was held around the options analysis and preferred options that LPC had previously identified. These would need to be considered and a final plan voted on at the next public meeting of LPC when all supporting appendices would be made available.

However, the meeting was not minded to drop the plan completely, although DB and GJ saw some merits in this, on the whole most felt that too much work and resource had been expended not to bring a plan forward to vote. Although clearly if the vote went against the plan a second time the likelihood would be that the Plan would be dropped completely and going forward the market would effectively determine which sites were brought forward.

GJ reminded the meeting that if sites were to be dropped there would have to be a justification in relation to 'material planning considerations'. The remaining options / sites would therefore need to be assessed with this in mind and decisions would need to be supported by the independent planning consultant.

When the plan had been agreed it would then be reviewed by an independent planning inspector who would focus on planning aspects of the plan and would be unlikely to consider voting intentions or views of the public in as far as they do not relate to material planning considerations. It would also be possible during the process for any rejected sites to be challenged should the landowner / developer feel this appropriate. SDC would then consider the views of the Inspector prior to making any changes and putting forward a final plan to the vote.

Should the plan be voted down the Council would carefully consider the reasons and voting patterns, but there is a presumption that the plan would then be dropped.

Progress on supporting documentation and steps required to completion & sign off by LPC

Revised documents would be brought to the next meeting, including significant work led by Wendy Gadd on drawing together material for the supporting appendices which GJ noted ran to 100s of pages. The Council again wished to record their thanks for all WGs work in drawing this information together.

Action :

- **GJ to meet with the planning consultant to discuss the option analysis and material planning issues relating to remaining sites**
- **GJ and consultant (with inputs from SDC) to revise Plan based on comments received and (with Wendy Gadd) prepare full set of supporting appendices to bring to the next meeting**

8. Playing Field & Equipment

a) Repair of the multi-play area fencing

MG highlighted findings of play area inspection. Work was required replacing a fence for which MG had received a quote. This was thought to be very expensive so MG has gone back for a revised quote. Swing baskets need replacing and she has received some quotes to replace – £247 to £466 - for chains and two seats.

DB noted significant cracks in the park following the dry weather as a potential safety hazard. LPC would take action if this re-occurs next year.

Action:

- **MG will look at other potential options in addition to quote received for work on the fence.**
- **MG to look into replacement of swing bucket seats.**
- **GJ to ask if Thomas Fox responded to correspondence relating to fence damage from strimming.**

9. Self-assessment capability tool – for distribution and agreement of date for discussion

GJ distributed toolkit for discussion at an informal meeting of Councillors pre-Xmas.

Action:

- **ALL – to review and complete self-assessment.**

10. Correspondence

- Clerks and Councils newsletter
- Resignation letter from Samantha Thomas.

11. Any other business

- DB updated meeting – Richard Parsons following up actions on gully buster with WCC and will report.
- KO following up on the 'Safer routes for School'.
- New electric pole in the playing field. DB asked had this come to the Council. GJ would check previous minutes.

12. Date of Next Meetings

The next two meeting dates were changed as GJ could not make, plus it was agreed that Councillors would informally get together to discuss the toolkit.

Revised meeting dates (to be published on the website):

- **Tuesday 13th November, 7.30pm at Loxley School**
- **Monday 10th December, 7.30pm at Loxley School**
- **Tuesday 4th December - informal meeting to discuss toolkit, 7.30pm at the Fox.**

Action :

- **GJ to book the school**
- **All Councillors to reserve dates**

The meeting closed at 10.15pm.