Loxley Parish Council

**Minutes of the Meeting held at Loxley School on Tuesday 15th January 2019 at 19:15pm**

Present: Glynn Jones, Chair (GJ), Justin Whitehorn (JW), Dan Bake (DB), Ken Osborne (KO), Peter Gregory Hood (PGH) and Penny O’Donnell (PO’D).

Apologies: Izzi Seccombe (IS) and Maria Garcia (MG).

Residents: Richard Parsons (RP) and Hazel Mills (HM).

1. **Record of members present**

Glynn Jones, Justin Whitehorn, Dan Bake, Ken Osborne, Peter Gregory Hood.

*Apologies* ***:*** received from Izzi Seccombe, Maria Garcia.

1. **Declaration of interests in any item in the agenda**

* Three Councillors noted that they were members of the PCC and therefore would not be able to participate in the discussion on the church contribution to grass mowing costs.
* PO’D declared an interest in the Rosconn development (arising from a family connection with the company).

1. **To approve the minutes of LPC meeting held on 13th November 2018**

The minutes of the meeting held on 13th November were approved and could be placed on the website.

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

None.

1. **Representations from the public**
2. **Drainage**

RP and DB had met with WCC who had appointed contractors to examine the drainage system in Loxley. The published report ‘Flood report and Plan of Loxley drains’ had been forwarded to LPC (and emailed to Councillors). The report highlighted a range of significant issues with the drainage system in Loxley which would contribute to problems of localised flooding.

RP and DB had met with Mark Vanning from WCC who commissioned the report from contractors including work jetting drains. The work showed that many of the drains are not fit for purpose - some are 70% blocked. In other cases drains have been repaired but the connecting pipe has a smaller smaller diameter creating blockages. WCC have written to Highways about the key difficulty with the ditch on Goldicote Road (by Dancers Lane). WCC will return in April (this years budget has been exhausted), to do a check with a view to prioritising actions as well as looking at the potential for secondary pipework.

A significant concern was the lack of any records regarding the Loxley drainage system. The report has been helpful in identifying the location of key problems which will enable them to devise a more strategic approach to drainage issues in the village. Going forward there would need to be further discussion in relation to responsibility (WCC or Highways), and budgets.

1. **Rats**

HM noted that rats had been spotted in properties adjacent to the school and appear to be coming from behind school.

**Actions :**

* **DB to inform the school caretaker about the rat problem**
* **RP would follow up in March with WCC in relation to drainage issues to remind them of the commitment to visit in April (to identify remedial actions).**

1. **District & County Councillors update**

PO’D noted the following issues:

* Crime – ‘whatsapp group’ has been formed in Pillerton Priors – to notify if anything suspect. DB happy to investigate setting up a group in Loxley. PO’D noted that burglary and anti-social behaviour are rising. Any concerns about Police and crime contact PO’D who is speaking to the Crime Commissioner.
* Budget *proposals* have been published and proposal to raise Council Tax (£2 on a Band D property – main benefactors include homelessness prevention, including properties to provide temporary accommodation, refurbishments to Elizabeth House plus a one off sum for the CPO of the Airfield.

**Actions**

* **DB to look into setting up a ‘whatsapp’ Crime Group in Loxley**
* **PO’D will provide links to Dominic Connelly who set up Pillerton Priors group**

1. **Clerks Report**

***Casual vacancy update***

GJ noted that since the resignation of Samantha Thomas, the Council had received interest in the role of the Clerk from several individuals who unfortunately had all pulled out at the last moment, including most recently Catherine McDaid. The vacancy was increasingly becoming a matter of urgency given that the present temporary arrangements were not sustainable and also involved a level of risk.

GJ highlighted number of potential actions including :

* Advertising on the website and Grapevine
* Spread the word locally
* Send email to surrounding parish councils
* Continue to highlight with WALC
* Raise with District and County Councillors

**Actions**

* **JW volunteered to help the Chair pro-actively pursue initiatives to secure a Clerk (returning from vacation 2nd February). GJ and JW to co-ordinate**
* **Other Councillors to consider promoting the role of the Clerk to other potentially interested people in the village.**

**Clerks revised contract of employment**

Councillors discussed and approved the revised contract of employment for the Clerk. Proposer : JW and seconded by DB.

***To confirm payments & receipts:***

Chqs for approval at tonight’s meeting

Total payments

£36 to CPRE

£188.54 to Stratford Herald (advertising for the NDP Regulation 14 consultation)

Bank Balances

Deposit account - £6,322.60

Current account - £26,431.76

***Grass mowing costs and contributions***

The largest annual expenditure item continued to be grass cutting with a total spend of 1,872.50. Over half of this amount was accounted for costs relating to the Church (£903 for mowing the church yard, plus and additional c£376 mowing the Cemetery, totalling £1,279 (getting on for one-fifth of the Precept), with the contribution received relatively small (£300) in relation to the costs.

Councillors including PCC members discussed the issues and agreed a detailed quote would be helpful along with the views of the PCC. GJ noted that the current contract was in the process of being renewed. And the Chair also noted NALC advice that ’*support of this kind was leaving the Parish Council vulnerable to legal challenge as it not totally clear that it is legally valid*’.

**Action :**

* **Clerk to request breakdown of costs from Thomas Fox and obtain tender for the coming year(s)**
* **Clerk to send grass mowing costs relating to church owned land to the PCC for comment and discussion**
* **LPC to consider (at next meeting) in light of PCC response, potential funding options plus advice from NALC.**

1. **Draft Budget 2019/20 and forecast for 2018/19**

***Background***

GJ noted that additional resources would be available to the Council given that:

* Savings in the Clerks salary continue to be made due to the outstanding vacancy
* The previous Clerk had not fully invoiced for all her time
* Developers of the three houses on Goldicote Road had written to indicate that they would be willing to make a small financial contribution to LPC following the completion of the development.
* Increased contributions from the church could be sought.

The issue therefore less about funding (the Council had significant reserves for projects) but about spending. Spending some of the money held in reserve would therefore continue to a priority in the coming year, although it was accepted that capacity remained limited until the NDP had been progressed further.

***Budget for 2018/19***

The proposed budget for the next financial year had been discussed by GJ and JW, and the outcome of these discussions had been shared with Councillors. The proposed budget (£9,675) was broadly equivalent to the previous years’ budget (£100 less). JW requested details from the Clerk regarding the basis for the proposed Precept. However, notwithstanding any issues raised by JW, Councillors were happy with the proposed budget which was flat on last year (and therefore - subject to JWs further scrutiny – that the Precept also remain unchanged). Acceptance of the budget and precept was proposed by PGH and seconded by JW. Councillors agreed to reconvene should JW to flag any issues relating to the precept calculation following discussion with the Clerk.

**Action : Clerk to confirm basis for precept calculation to JW to consider.**

1. **Planning / Loxley NDP**
2. **Planning**

LPC had responded to the application on Goldicote Road to develop five new homes. Significant improvements had been made and concerns about highways issues had since been resolved with highways confirming discussions with DB that they had no objections. LPC had therefore withdrawn its objection to the application, whilst continuing to highlight concerns regarding the close proximity to some of the site boundaries.

1. **NDP update**

***NDP consultation period***

GJ noted that the additional period of consultation (from Thursday 15th November 2018 to Thursday 10th January 2019) had now ended. A much smaller number of responses had been received and many of them favourable.

SDC had reported to Cabinet and have made their formal comments which are significantly reduced and in some cases repeat points previously made that LPC have responded to. Hence given progress already in hand it was not expected that completing the Plan would take long. The key elements comprising: (a) map of the NDP area; (b) a consultation statement; (c) The final Submission version of the plan; and (d) the basic conditions statement.

GJ then outlined the additional steps required to finalise the plan, namely:

* LPC would need to provide a copy of the formal minutes whereby the QB formally resolves to submit the NDP – ideally this would be the March meeting
* SDC carry out Regulation 16 consultation and appoint an Examiner (with our involvement). It takes a couple of weeks to set the consultation up ie to get the advert in the paper produce an online questionnaire etc and runs for a minimum of 6 weeks. Replies to the consultation process come back to SDC and are copied across verbatim. SDC is also a consultee at this stage.
* This schedule is sent to LPC with 2 weeks to comment but no obligation for LPC to make any comments. The representations and LPC comments and the specified documents are then sent on to the Examiner.
* The Examiner then carries out the examination which usually takes a few months.
* The final report is then issued which normally contains proposed modifications by the Examiner. SDC examine these and assess whether the NDP meets the basic conditions, report to Cabinet on the modifications and potential referendum date.
* If approved the NDP goes forward for referendum (SDC make all arrangements).

PO’D noted that she will be asked for comments so to feed through any concerns to her, noting the NDP would provide more protection for the village.

**Actions :**

* **Wendy Gadd (WG) to complete appendices following comments received during the most recent consultation phase**
* **GJ to respond to comments from SDC and other consultees and confirm responses with the independent consultant**
* **GJ to revise document as appropriate and get sign off from consultant**
* **Documents to be forward to Councillors – any issues of contention identified by the consultant to be highlighted to Councillors– with a view to signing off at the next LPC meeting in March.**

1. **Playing Field & Equipment**

**Seating on the park**

DB noted that he was in the process of confirming quotes on benches.

1. **Self-assessment capability tool – outcomes**

Responses fell into a number of categories:

* Items where LPC was not active – but should consider going forward including : regular contribution to the Parish magazine / regular correspondence
* Items which were important and specific to the Clerk / on-going vacancy – staff retention, regular appraisals, annual return filed on time
* A variety of other items of interest to individual Councillors but not generally thought to be a priority.

DB noted that instead of a regular magazine, consideration ought to be given to ensuring Councillors are available to residents, for example through drop in sessions.

**Actions:**

* **Appointing a new clerk – and issues around reporting - remained the overwhelming most significant issue and on-going challenge**
* **Consideration be given (at the March meeting) to holding a community drop-in session, possibly timed to raise awareness of regarding forthcoming Council elections.**

1. **Review actions from previous meeting**

Completed, with exception of actions relating to play area.

1. **Correspondence**

Email from Sarah Brooke Taylor on a follow up housing needs survey.

**Action: SBT to be invited by GJ to the next meeting of LPC to discuss a follow up housing needs survey**

1. **Any other business**

A number of items were raised:

* RP noted that the sand bags the Council had been provided with deteriorate over time and this should be considered when replacing.
* KO noted that Willersley has a one way system but no street lights - KO would find out further details (to be discussed in March )
* DB noted the two broken stiles had been fixed.
* DB noted that the defibrillator needs servicing.

**Actions**

* **KO to request details of Willersely one way scheme**
* **Defibrillator supplier to be identified**  – **GJ to review paperwork for details and to forward to DB.**

1. **Date of Next Meetings**

Tuesday 12 March 2019

**Action :**

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

The meeting closed at 9pm.