

**DRAFT**

## **PEN SELWOOD PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes of the Council Meeting held at the Village Hall on Wednesday 9th March 2016 at 7.30 p.m.

Present: Cllrs. Steadman, Ashman, Appleton, Jenkins, FitzGerald.

Apologies for Absence: Cllrs. Jukes, Carter.

Members of the Public: Mr. and Mrs. Bradley, Mr. Steadman.

County Councillor - Anna Groskop; District Councillor - Mike Beech

### **1. Public Open Forum**

Mrs. Bradley expressed concern that the District Council did not give due regard to her concerns about the proposed stable and associated drainage from the manure heap. Also that they refused the suggestion that the Environmental Agency should be approached about the application. She feels that there should be guidelines on the construction of stables and their proximity to nearby housing (guidelines that other District Councils appear to have) and she is prepared to take up this particular issue with SSC.

### **2. Apologies for Absence**

Cllrs. Jukes, Carter.

### **3. Minutes of the Last Meetings 13th January and 10th February 2016**

Minutes of the 13th January - signed as a true record with one amendment - under AOB Item 15 - Sweeting to be amended to Sweetman. Minutes of the meeting 10th February signed as a true record.

### **4. Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes**

The Chairman advised that work on the Welcome Booklet is ongoing and that next week it will be sent to the councillors for their comments. Cllr Appleton queried whether the Parish Priorities still referred to the Welcome Booklet. Cllr. Ashman pointed out that the Priorities were strategic and that the Welcome Booklet as such would not be mentioned in such a document.

With regard to the commemoration bell ringing for the soldiers from Pen who died in the First World War - Cllr. Ashman will arrange for a single cross with a poppy to be placed on

the War Memorial at the appropriate time which will be 21st April 2016; the remaining commemorations will continue up to 2019.

With regard to the amended planning application by Wessex Water - no update as yet.

#### **5. Requests for Dispensations and Declarations of Interest**

None

#### **6. To Receive Reports from District Councillor and County Councillor**

Cllr. Beech reported that Wessex Internet are providing wireless Broadband into Cucklington and Charlton Musgrove and that SSC are offering each household £350 towards the conversion costs. Cllr. Ashman advised that the Parish is looking at potential providers for a high speed network - discussions are at an early stage and thanked Cllr. Beech for the information on the availabilities of monies from SSC.

Cllr. Groskop advised that the County Council have set the budget with a saving of £2.5 million for the year, and that the overall increase in the precept will be 8% which equates to a £52 increase p.a. in the rates for a Band D property. The Authority is experiencing difficulty in recruiting professional staff for its social services and medical functions, for various reasons.

She advised that the County Council as part of its forward planning is looking at the possibility of a university at Taunton together with an Enterprise Zone and the possibility of a Garden Town with 4,000 houses - all with a view to ensure local people stay and work in the area and professional people from other areas would be attracted to Somerset.

She reported that the Waste Partnership is looking at reducing Black Bin collections from every two weeks to every three weeks with a view to starting from next year. Also that all plastics will be collected as part of the recycling programme.

#### **7. Finance Report**

Cheques to be minuted:-

11.11.15 R. Cuthbert Defibrillator £38.58

R. Gething - Footpaths £74.93

13.1.16 PSW Hall Trust Fees £165.00

I.J. Small Payroll Fees £50.00

20.1.16 K.H. Stow - Salary and Exp. £724.86

Balances:- Current Account £1235.52 29.2.16

Business Reserve £3468 29.2.16

Allotment Account £736.56 30.11.15

New audit regulations to take effect from 2017. Council accounts will still need to be subjected to an external audit as current practise but there will be no submission to Government appointed auditors. Accounts will need to be published on the Parish Council's website.

All small organisations will now have to offer pensions to their employees. In the case of the Parish Council this would represent a cost of 3% of the annual precept. Cllrs. Ashman and Jukes, after reading the Regulations (and discussion with SALC) felt that as the annual salary was under £5,000 there would not be the need to offer a pension and that the only action required would be to register with the appropriate authorities this year. Cllr. FitzGerald to read the Regulations to ascertain that he agrees with this understanding. The Clerk felt that Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils were quoting different advice and will check with them again.

Additional cheque signatories are required with K. Stow to be removed. It was proposed by Cllr. Ashman that Cllrs. Steadman and Carter become signatories. Cllr. Appleton seconded and all in agreement. Relevant paperwork to be completed.

The Council was reminded that the budgeted amount of £300 to the PCC needs to be paid 1st April. Clerk to arrange for cheque to be drawn. Cllr. Jenkins provided the background as to why this request had been again although it had already been budgeted and it was agreed that for good practise and transparency any recipients of grants from the Parish Council do need to apply formally for the payment of any monies due.

## **8. Report from Committee Chairman**

### **a. Planning**

Cllr. Jenkins gave the updated planning notifications:-

Conversion to cottage, Leigh Common Farm, listed building element withdrawn as planning permission had been refused.

Eton Nursery - appeal dismissed.

Penridge Farm - Equestrian element released.

The Rectory - permission granted.

Cllr Jenkins requested support from the Parish Council to submit a letter to SSC expressing concerns about the handling of the stable application, in that it wants SSC to adopt the procedure that other councils operate in that a 30 metre distance is requested between a

stable block and any other unrelated houses. Mrs. Bradley stated that SSC ignored her concerns as a resident - the particular concerns being the well that exists on her property and the fact that the manure heap is going to be situated 3 metres from the boundary of her property. Cllr. Jenkins asked her to let him have her concerns so that he could include in the Parish Council's letter. The Chairman reported that there had been three extensive meetings to discuss this application and expressed concern that SSC choose to ignore the comments of both the Parish Council and local residents.

Cllr Appleton asked if there was a policy on the granting of permission for the construction of stables at SSC. Cllr. Beech he would start to work on such a policy and suggested that the letter the Parish Council wishes to send on the subject should be sent to Nick Weeks, and David Norris (Head of Planning) with a copy to him.

Cllr. FitzGerald stated he was unhappy about the decision taken by the District Council on this particular planning application and endorsed such a letter from the Parish Council to SSC.

Planning Application 16/00709/COL - Lawful development certificate for the use of part of the stable block as a single dwelling (studio flat) at Stable Block, Penhouse Farm (Mr. Hopkins). This was discussed in detail. It was noted that the studio flat has been in existence for ten years and that Mr. Hopkins has sworn a declaration to the fact. Cllr. Jenkins asked the District Councillor whether building regulations should have been applied for. Cllr. Beech stated that it should have had building regulations approval. Cllr. FitzGerald stated that the permission should be granted for agricultural use only. The decision was taken that although the Parish Council is not happy about granting permission there is no other option but requested that its use is restricted to agricultural use only and that Permitted Development Rights be withdrawn from this applicant to prevent any future developments. Cllr. Jenkins to prepare letter and circulate to fellow councillors for their comment.

Cllr. Ashman suggested that the Parish Council ask the District Council how retrospective planning can be prevented in the future and this to be the subject of a separate letter to SSC.

#### b. Employment

Cllr Ashman advised that she and Cllr. Jukes are looking at the Health and Safety Policy, Disciplinary Grievance and Absence/ that is required for the Clerk's position. The minimum that SALC recommends is a Health and Safety Policy. It was agreed that a Health and Safety policy should be prepared and Cllr. Jenkins said he had a copy of such a document from his previous employment that he will pass to Cllr. Ashman for reference. Cllr Ashman advised that the Contract for the Clerk has been prepared and signed by both parties.

Cllr. FitzGerald asked how if the Footpath Group was covered for insurance purposes as this has been an issue for discussion by the Council in the past. It was agreed after discussion that this committee is not a committee of the Parish Council - it is a totally separate entity and that their insurance comes under the remit of the County Council. Cllr. Ashman advised that she would check what arrangements are in place.

#### c. Highways

Cllr. Appleton reported that the road surfacing in the Parish is in fair condition. Some small potholes but not needing any action at the moment. Some mud on the road, particularly in Pear Ash Lane. He advised that he will now chase the County with regard to getting the roads swept. He reported that because of the mild winters over the last 2/3 years the salt bins have not been emptied. The feeling was that the salt would not deteriorate for another couple of years.

He advised that one tree had come down in the recent storms and cleared quickly by the landowners. The Chairman queried who should be advised if a tree falls down on the road - the advice was that this should be notified to the Highways Department who would deal with the issue.

He advised that he had received communication from County Highways concerning some stones that had been placed on the verge outside The Granary and Little Green. He has spoken to the owners who have now removed them because County will not permit such action. The County had received a complaint about them and therefore they were obliged to contact the Parish Council concerning the matter. It was agreed this subject should be mentioned in the Pen Paper as it is important to make people aware that if owners put stones on to private verges and members of the public trip over them and hurt themselves then the owners can be sued.

The general policy of the County however is that is there is no complaint about stones being put on to a verge they turn a "blind eye" but owners do need to be aware of the potential risks.

### **9. Reports from Outside Bodies**

#### **a. Footpaths**

Two footpaths on land belonging to the Hopkins that have officially been opened still cannot be used - this is a continuing situation and ongoing discussion is taking place with the Footpaths Officer and the Hopkins. Cllr. Ashman asked if the Parish Council would support a letter to the Footpaths Officer asking for our right for access to these paths to be granted. The Council agreed that this would be acceptable if required if no progress is made after the meeting with the Footpaths Officer tomorrow.

Six or seven stiles/gateways on the Stour Valley Way are in need of repair. Some preliminary agreement has been made as to the nature of the works required.

b. Allotments

Cllr. FitzGerald advised that a recent problem had occurred in that Captain Thompson had felt that the Parish Council had not paid the rent for the Allotments for the last three years. and therefore was going to serve notice to quit. Cllr. FitzGerald had checked with the Clerk and this was not the case and has advised accordingly Captain Thompson accordingly. Cllr. FitzGerald will check the insurance aspects in view of the earlier discussions on this matter.

**10. Communications**

A communication had been received from the Cranborne Chase Group regarding various initiatives. The Chairman to circulate the correspondence to councillors for information.

**11. Items for Next Agenda**

It was agreed that the new style agenda will feature the committees and outside bodies shown above including PACT.

Items for next Agenda - Health and Safety Policy.

It was agreed that the Clerk should contact all the Councillors three weeks before each meeting requesting items for the agenda.

**12. Date of Next Meeting**

11th May (AGM and bi-monthly meeting). AGM at 7p.m. followed by bi- monthly meeting at 7.30 p.m.

Meeting closed at 9 p.m.