

**LONGSTOCK PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
1900 THURSDAY 6th MAY 2021 – VIRTUAL MEETING BY ZOOM**

Present: Cllr Sophie Walters (SW) - Chairman
Cllr Angie Filippa (AF) – Vice Chairman
Cllr Charles Grieve (CG)
Cllr Selina Musters (SM)
Cllr David Burnfield (DB)
Cllr Ivan Gibson (IG)

In attendance: Clerk Mark Flewitt (MF), and 12 local residents

1. **Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman:** SW and AF had declared their willingness to stand again, and there were no other candidates. On this basis, SW was proposed as Chairman by CG, seconded by SM, and unanimously elected by Councillors. AF was proposed as Vice Chairman by SW, seconded by IG, and unanimously elected by Councillors.
 - a. **Declaration of Acceptance of Office:** MF will arrange for SW and AF to sign the official DAO book. **ACTION:** MF/SW/AF
 - b. **Declaration of Pecuniary Interest:** MF advised that TVBC requires also Councillors to review their DPis and advise of any amendments. Councillors all confirmed that no amendments were necessary. **ACTION:** MF
2. **Apologies:** Tony Ward (TW) TVBC Councillor, and Colin McIntyre (CM), Leckford Estate:
3. **Minutes of Meeting of 12th April.**
The minutes were unanimously agreed for adoption and signed.

n.b. At this point, in view of the considerable interest in the issue of the proposed Affordable Housing project on Church Road, SW invited members of the public to express their views on this matter. The notes of this discussion are included below under Item 8. Affordable Housing on Church Road.

4. **Matters Arising:**
 - **Highways & Traffic.**
 - **21536802** – Blocked drains opposite LOYO unit. Still with HCC contractor. **ACTION:** MF to monitor
 - **21547787** – Potholes at 18 Roman Road. With contractor. **ACTION:** MF to monitor
 - **21556657** – Potholes at 20 Roman Road. With contractor. **ACTION:** MF to monitor
 - **HCC Mowing Damage** – DB advised that the grass has been cut down once again. MF to contact new HCC Councillor to follow up with Contractors. **ACTION:** MF to follow up
 - **Dog Walkers** – SW to contact the TVBC dog warden post-Covid-19 – still pending. **ACTION:** SW
 - **Traffic Speed on Bunny** – Negative initial response from HCC Safer Roads team. Following JE's resignation from PC, CG and MF to consider setting up a working group to take this forward.. **ACTION:** MF/CG
 - **Barn Cottage Issues** –Local resident Mr Hardy (PH) raised concerns about PC processes in the identification of Barn Cottage as the subject of complaints in the parish council minutes and in the

Longstock Newsletter. SW pointed out that TW, TVBC Councillor, has taken the lead on this matter after several residents had raised concerns. PH recommended that the PC make direct contact with the residents to ascertain the on-going situation and get a proposed date for hedge reinstatement and landscaping to be finished, thereby closing this standing agenda item. **ACTION** SW to follow up – **Post Meeting Note** – SW has met with PH and the residents of Barn Cottage. PH has agreed to draw up a protocol for PC when dealing with complaints of this type.

- **War Memorial Cleaning** –PC confirmed OK for John Eastwood to carry on with gentle cleaning. **ACTION:** MF to advise
- **Disused Chalkpit** – Following news re Church Road, discussions with English Rural to be shelved for the time being
 - MF advised that the householder at Tamlyn intends to start building works in September, and wants to formalise the proposed agreement with the PC re access via the chalkpit and the protection of the verge. **ACTION:** MF
- **Village Litter Pick** – To be deferred for 2 months. **ACTION:** MF
- **New Model Code of Conduct for Councillors** – Still awaiting TVBC guidance. **ACTION:** MF
- **Bottom Road Grass Triangle** – SW advised that HCC Highways need to visit the site and agree to install a Give Way sign and repaint the road markings. To be brought up with our new HCC Councillor: **ACTION:** SW/MF

5. **Planning Applications.**

- 9 Southside Cottages – Rear extension to replace conservatory. Unanimous PC SUPPORT. **ACTION:** MF
- Mulberry Lodge – Fell Spruce. Unanimous agreement to PC NO OBJECTION, but owners should consider reducing height and girth to maintain tree. **ACTION:** MF

6. **Finance.**

- MF had circulated the 2020/21 financial accounts in advance of the meeting. There were no questions.
 - MF confirmed that with both income and expenditure below £25k, LPC is able to declare itself exempt from external audit. Unanimous PC agreement for the Certificate of Exemption to be signed and sent. **ACTION:** MF/SW
 - MF took the PC through each of the clauses of the Annual Governance Statement for 2020/21, and it was unanimously agreed that the PC complies with each of the conditions. **ACTION:** To be signed by MF and SW
 - MF laid out the proposed timescale for the annual audit: **ACTION:** MF
 - Accounts to internal auditor Patrick Coates next week
 - “Exercise of public rights to examine the accounts” – target publication dates 4th June to 15th July
- MF proposed that the PC renew its membership of HALC at a cost of £237.97. Agreed unanimously. **ACTION:** MF
- NHP Grant Funds - MF advised that £2,030 of the £7,200 Locality grant received was used in the 2020/21 financial year. The unused balance of £5,170 should be returned to Locality. AF will provide the payment instructions, and any supporting reports. **ACTION:** AF/MF

7. **Councillors’ Reports.**

- a. Affordable Housing. (DB). – See item 8. Affordable Housing on Church Road.

- b. Allotments, Cemetery, and Trees. (IG).
 - IG confirmed that the allotments are all OK
 - Re Cemetery –a PC Working Party met on May 1st. to tidy the area and level some sunken plots.
 - PC unanimously agreed the proposed new inscription for Mary Saunders’s ashes plot. **ACTION:** MF
 - MF advised that the family intends to bury the ashes of Sandy Burnfield on 24th May, subject to the new regulations on gatherings.
 - SW advised the family of Mrs Duncan had also been in contact about placing her ashes in her husband’s plot. The Funeral Directors will follow up.
 - c. Footpaths and Lengthsman. (CG).
 - Footpaths – All in order at present
 - Lengthsman – Current work includes the benches and a litter pick.
 - CG will also ask for the cemetery gate to be repainted. **ACTION:** CG
 - CG highlighted that we now appear to have 10 benches across the various PC areas. MF will check on the insurance cover for benches – both number and value. **ACTION:** MF
 - d. Test Valley School and Neighbourhood Plan. (AF).
 - TVS – NTR this month.
 - Re NHP - AF confirmed that a face-to-face NHP Community Engagement event is scheduled for 24th June (subject to the lifting of Covid restrictions) in the Village Hall.
 - The event intends to include presentations from English Rural, TVBC NHP Officer, and Plan-et (dedicated NHP consultants). This will be a long-awaited opportunity for the Steering Committee to promote the plan and obtain further community feedback, which ultimately can be used to inform the plan going forwards. **ACTION:** AF
 - e. Environment, Website and Phone Box. (Vacancy).
 - Environment – pending new PC member
 - Website – SW advised that Mr Eastwood has confirmed his willingness to continue with the website
 - Phone Box – Mr Eastwood will re-paint the phone box in the summer.
 - f. Village Hall and Streetlights. (SM).
 - SM advised that the Village Hall is open again with the new rules, and some bookings are starting to come in
 - Re Streetlights – all OK.
 - g. Playground and Henry Smith Charity. (SW)
 - SW confirmed that some replacement equipment has been ordered, to be delivered shortly.
 - A ROSPA inspection is due in May. **ACTION:** SW
 - Re Henry Smith – SW confirmed that we have submitted our application for next year’s funds.
 - Henry Smith have been very generous in providing additional funds during the Covid crisis, and we have copied to them many letters of thanks received
 - h. Leckford Estate. (CM).
 - NTR in CM’s absence.

- i. HCC. (AG)
 - AG had distributed his HCC report in advance of the meeting. We await details of our new HCC Councillor
- j. TVBC. (TW)
 - TW had distributed his Mid-Test Matters report in advance.
 - MF advised that SW had recommended to English Rural that they should undertake a public consultation in person about the Affordable Housing.

8. **Affordable Housing on Church Road**

- SW confirmed that the on 6th April the PC received a presentation from English Rural and the Leckford Estate' which provided details of an outline proposal for 12 affordable (only) dwellings in Church Lane.
- SW advised It has been an aspiration of the PC for over 30 years to find a suitable piece of land and/or the funding for Affordable Housing.
- There followed an active exchange of views from village residents, with some speaking in favour, and some against the proposed development. In general, the meeting demonstrated strong positive support to the over-arching principle of providing Affordable Housing in Longstock, subject to a suitable scale and location.
- The opinions expressed by several residents in opposition to the proposals included the following points (in no particular order):
 - Increased traffic volumes and speeds, with the resultant increased risk for local residents, and particularly children throughout the village.
 - Vehicle access problems into and out of Church Road. Previous HCC Highways reports had considered the access to be unsuitable for additional traffic.
 - Water supply issues in view of existing extraction limits.
 - The issue of “backfill” development in a “linear” village such as Longstock, and the possible risk of setting a precedent for further future “backfill” development outside the settlement boundary.
 - The need for “backfill” for Affordable Housing to be covered by a legal undertaking/condition, such as a covenant, not to allow any further future development on land adjacent to this plot.
 - Concern about the possibility of an alternative access route being created across the adjacent land via the ex-dairy site.
 - Consideration of alternative sites in the village, such as Roman Road and the Chalkpit on Bottom Road.
 - The scale of the proposed development of 12 homes was deemed by some to be excessive for the proposed site. A more modest and manageable number – say 6 – might be more feasible.
 - Concern that the developers appear to have undertaken considerable work in advance with TVBC Planners, and the fear that they are presenting a “fait accompli”.
- The opinions expressed in favour of the proposals included the following (in no particular order):
 - Longstock needs Affordable Housing to avoid the loss of local young people and families, including key workers, who otherwise will not be able to afford to remain in the village.
 - The project will be restricted to people who can demonstrate local connections, including residence, employment, close family connections etc
 - Planning rules provide for “Rural Exception” sites specifically to allow for Affordable Housing, but do not create precedents for future nearby commercial housing development.
 - The recent Housing Needs Assessment, undertaken as part of the forthcoming

- Neighbourhood Plan, identified a need for 12 such properties.
 - No formal planning application has been submitted as yet, and everyone will have the opportunity to express their views during that formal planning application process, which is expected later in the summer.
 - If such a project were re-located to the Roman Road area, it may well open the door to larger scale development on adjacent land, with serious effects on local communities and services. For example, construction of up to 350+ homes had been mooted last year.
 - Concerns were raised by residents that English Rural had circulated information about the proposal to some neighbouring properties, but not all. Following feedback from the community and comments from TW, the PC and the NHP Steering Group have included a segment on affordable housing and the Church Lane proposal in the a “community engagement” face-to-face event, currently scheduled for 24th June (Covid restrictions permitting).
 - English Rural have advised the PC that they are extending the current consultation period from 9th May to 23rd May, noting that this is an opportunity purely for residents to give their views on the proposal to the developer (English Rural) as opposed to the local planning authority (TVBC) who will ultimately decide upon this proposition, should it go forward to a full planning application.
 - SW advised that the local MP, Caroline Nokes, has confirmed her support for the scheme.
9. **Councillor Vacancy**
- Following the resignation of John Eastwood, MF advised that in line with instructions from TVBC Electoral Services, a notice of the vacancy was posted on the PC notice boards on 20th April.
 - We will await TVBC’s instructions after 12th May as to whether there will be an election or the PC can co-opt a new member.
 - It was agreed that the PC should ensure that everyone is aware of the vacancy, either via the Newsletter or by direct leaflets. **ACTION:** MF
10. **Correspondence**
- AF advised that following the reporting of the theft of catalytic convertors from vehicles in Roman Road, including a physical assault, the Police disappointingly did not attend.
 - Re Remote Meetings - MF advised that the High Court has upheld the Government’s decision not to extend beyond 7th May the permission for councils to hold remote meetings. All future meetings must now be in person.
 - MF advised that the PC must review its reply to the recent SAR, whose sender is dissatisfied with the reply. MF will organise the review. **ACTION:** MF
 - MF advised that we still await news from the ICO on the designation of a Case Officer to review the recent FOI complaint. **ACTION:** MF to update PC
 - MF has received messages from residents applying to join the list for Affordable Housing. SW said we should clarify with English Rural. **ACTION:** MF
11. **Any Other Business/public comment.**
- IG and other residents expressed concern at the deterioration in the level of service at Stockbridge Surgery.
 - SW proposed that the PC prepare a letter to Stockbridge Surgery to transmit the complaints of our residents. **ACTION:** MF to draft
12. **Date of Next Meeting.** Monday 7th June at 7.00 pm – in Village Hall
The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.45 pm.

Cheques Signed: None

N.B. Additional Note re Rural Affordable Housing

TVBC Affordable Supplementary Planning Document (September 2020)

Rural Affordable Housing

8.2 Rural exception sites are small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing. These sites seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection.

8.3 Policy COM8: Rural Exception Affordable Housing seeks to provide a framework for the consideration of development proposals for rural affordable housing, provided on exception sites, as an exception to the general policy of restraint of residential development in the countryside (Policy COM2). Such housing should be kept as affordable in perpetuity. Rural Exception Sites (RES) can make a significant positive contribution towards overall delivery of affordable housing within the borough and to the sustainability of rural communities. The wording of the adopted policy is shown below:

Policy COM8: Rural Exception Affordable Housing Development for rural affordable housing will be permitted provided that:

- a) the proposal is accompanied by evidence which demonstrates there is an unmet need within the parish for accommodation by households unable to afford open market housing where a member of each household has either:
 - i) been ordinarily resident in the parish or previously lived in the parish and has a strong family connection; or
 - ii) a demonstrable need by virtue of their employment to live in the village or its immediate surroundings; or
 - iii) a demonstrable need to live within the village either to support or be supported by a family member.
- b) it is restricted in perpetuity to occupation by households with a member in housing need; and
- c) the proposed mix of housing meets the identified need.