

LISS PARISH COUNCIL

A Special meeting of Liss Parish Council took place at 7.30pm on 9th April 2014.

Members

*Mr K Budden (Chairman), Mrs R Chads, *Mr D Dodds, *Mrs S Halstead, *Mr R Hargreaves, *Mr M Kendall, *Mr H Linsley, *Mr B Mayo, Mr P Payne, Mrs J Szpitalak, *Mr E Thomas & Ms A Wright.

* Present

Clerk: R Bowery

In attendance: Two members of the public & one member of the press.

Apologies: Cllrs Chads, Payne, Szpitalak & Wright.

61/14 Declarations of interests

There were no declarations.

62/14 Chairman's announcements

The Chairman made health & safety announcements for emergency evacuation etc.

63/14 of a motion proposed by Cllr Halstead

“That Mr A Smith be co-opted as a Member of Liss Parish Council.”

The motion, seconded by Cllr Linsley, was carried unanimously.

64/14 Appointment to Committee

Cllr Kendall, proposed by the Chairman & seconded by Cllr Mayo, was unanimously appointed to the Review Group for Standing Orders, Procedures & Agreements with third parties.

Members then agreed a period of adjournment to receive comments from members of the public.

65/14 Public participation

Mr Harris asked if LPC knew if the Highways Agency had completed all works at Ham Barn roundabout as they had departed & left some fields in a mess.

The Chairman replied that LPC had no knowledge of this but would ask the Highways Agency.

The meeting was then reconvened.

66/14 Consideration of the necessity to develop a Liss Neighbourhood Plan.

The Chairman explained that there was pressure from the SDNP for all parishes to develop a Neighbourhood Plan & that without one there would be no opportunity until 2017 for parishes to have a significant input on development in their area. It was now time for LPC to make a decision to develop a Plan or not.

Cllr Halstead thanked the Chairman for the very useful presentation he had made at the Annual Parish Meeting. She said there were clear advantages to having a Plan, both financial as well as protection on development; however, it was an expensive exercise. It would also need a lot of time & resources devoted to it. Liss did have the benefit of already having a Village Design Statement, a Parish Plan & a Landscape Character Assessment that much evidence could be drawn from. The process had to involve other people & they might well have different ideas. Liss was the only larger settlement in the Park that had not committed to a Neighbourhood Plan. Cllr Halstead had concerns over the ability to obtain the resources & people necessary & she was aware that Cllr Payne felt that it could be a divisive matter, particularly regarding location of housing allocation.

Cllr Halstead said that LPC must make a decision now.

Cllr Linsley supported Cllr Halstead's comments saying that initially he was against the idea but as more information emerged he realised that it was now imperative. He added that the only issue was that a change of Government may lead to a change in direction.

The Chairman said that all the indicators were that both main parties had the same views on this.

Cllr Thomas said that LPC must establish how much or little needs to be put into the NP & what cost implications those two positions had.

The Chairman said that the scope of the operation would be for the Steering Group to decide; the Council could not direct it. How much it affected cost would depend on the ability to use the research that the VDG & the SDNP had done already.

Cllr Mayo asked how closely the NP would mirror the JCS with regard to housing allocations.

Cllr Halstead replied that it would not be acceptable to look at lower allocation numbers as the NP had to sit with the Local Plan.

Cllr Hargreaves said that as the JCS ran till 2028 & the SDNP Plan till 2032 he suspected that as you looked beyond that then it would be difficult to avoid questions on allocations. He was not sure they were fixed.

Cllr Mayo felt that as a sustainable settlement with rail & retail services, Liss was an attractive site for development. An NP would give protection against that.

Cllr Halstead said that protection was better inside the Park than outside; for those outside, until a 5 year land supply was established they would be vulnerable.

Cllr Hargreaves asked if LPC was against development.

The Chairman said there was no formal position on that but in general LPC was not against development as long as it was good quality & satisfied a demand.

Cllr Halstead added that LPC wanted good quality design that complemented & enhanced the village.

Cllr Dodds asked if there was an opportunity in the NP to link other aspects such as schools, doctors & transport.

Cllr Halstead said that is what the NP does & that work had been done in the past on these matters. It had been recognised that LPC was short of some facilities such as open space.

Cllr Linsley felt that LPC should promote extra housing, particularly affordable housing, & that this was a positive opportunity to improve the situation. If Liss did this it would avoid a situation where things were forced on it.

Cllr Halstead said that this would involve widening the scope of the NP & finding sites & creating additional design briefs. It would become a much bigger project.

Cllr Linsley replied saying that the 150 allocation should be tackled positively.

Cllr Hargreaves said that his instinct was against developing an NP if possible, particularly with a ridiculous referendum at the end of it. He felt there were other tools available, such as the VDS; however, he recognised that things were moving on quickly for the JCS & that the SDNP options for their Local Plan was on the basis that NPs were in place for all. If Liss wanted control there was an onus on it to develop an NP.

Cllr Hargreaves said that for tier 2 areas, the SDNP indicated that where there was not an NP then the Local Plan would review the position. If all others had NPs where would Liss be? On balance he felt that an NP should be developed for Liss & that Liss would need to be whole heartedly behind the process.

Cllr Mayo said that having listened to the comments he was, by & large, in agreement. Liss was the third largest settlement in the park & if all neighbouring parishes were creating NPs then if Liss didn't it would be vulnerable.

The Chairman said that the SDNP saw the Local Plan as a patchwork & they wanted to concentrate on minor settlements. It would not be known what the outcome of the SDNP study on SHMA would mean for larger settlements. Liss needed an NP for protection. Additionally, without an NP any bid for funds from the central pot of CIL would be in competition with those smaller settlements & Liss would not be looked on favourably.

Cllr Halstead said that the SDNP strongly supported the Liss LCA in its assertion that Liss was a hidden village. It was large but it was still a village & did not have the infrastructure of a town. If there was to be affordable housing development it must be clear that it is for local people.

Cllr Hargreaves said that Liss was one entity rather than a split settlement & an NP could establish it as a single community.

Cllr Mayo felt that the preponderance of the many care homes in Liss should not be overlooked.

Cllr Kendall saw it an issue of control & he was not sure what scope there was for LPC to direct how the NP would evolve. In the Localism Act a parish council could apply for designation as a neighbourhood forum. He welcomed the opportunity to explore an NP but felt that today the decision should only be to agree in principle.

The Chairman said that it was necessary to apply to the SDNP to be a parish with an NP.

Cllr Kendall asked if it was possible to apply for only certain parts of Liss.

The Chairman replied that Liss could; however, the general view was that all four parts comprised the village.

Cllr Hargreaves said that Liss could start with the whole parish boundary & it was possible to remove parts. He added that the council was responsible for the plan & if necessary the steering group could be a formal

committee of the Council.

The Chairman then proposed the following Motions:

“That Liss Parish Council agrees to apply to the South Downs National Park for designation as an area for development of a Neighbourhood Plan.”

“That Liss Parish Council agrees to set up a steering group charged to set up a public event to stimulate interest in the development of a Neighbourhood Plan.”

Cllr Linsley seconded the Motions.

In discussion various amendment were proposed & accepted by the Chairman & Cllr Linsley & the final agreed Motion was put to the vote:

“That Liss Parish Council agrees to apply to the South Downs National Park for designation of the parish as an area for development of a Neighbourhood Plan encompassed by the parish boundary & that Liss Parish Council agrees to set up a working party of a minimum number of three Councillors charged to set up a public event to stimulate interest & with a view to forming a steering group for the development of a Neighbourhood Plan.”

The Motion was carried unanimously.

67/14 Motion proposed by the Cllr Dodds

“That Liss Parish Council agrees to purchase a four wheel drive vehicle & trailer for use by the groundsman as a general purpose vehicle for a sum not exceeding £14000 in accordance with the proposed budget inclusions for 2014/15 & future years.”

The motion was seconded by Cllr Mayo.

Cllr Dodds explained that a review group had been investigating proposals for the future grounds maintenance arrangements of LPC’s areas of responsibility. He said that over the past couple of years there had been several costly machinery failures & that the present arrangements were inefficient in transporting staff & equipment to the various locations. There was also an unsatisfactory situation with staff using their own vehicles to collect fuel from petrol stations. During the review various options including vehicle lease, contracting out part or all of the work & outright purchase had been looked at. The review group had concluded that the best solution was that proposed in the motion. The proposal involved taking money from general reserves that would be recouped over several years.

Cllr Linsley said that it would be better if the papers had been circulated prior to the meeting. Cllr Dodds replied that the schedule of alternative options had been presented at the Grounds committee in September.

The Chairman suggested that the Motion be amended to include the words “subject to a satisfactory independent mechanical check”.

Cllr Dodds replied that this might be restrictive as it would depend on if the vehicle was sourced from a trader or an individual.

Cllr Hargreaves proposed that the word “suitable” be added & Cllr Dodds accepted this amendment.

Cllr Dodds proposed the amended Motion:

“That Liss Parish Council agrees to purchase a suitable four wheel drive vehicle & trailer for use by the groundsman as a general purpose vehicle for a sum not exceeding £14000 in accordance with the proposed budget inclusions for 2014/15 & future years.”

The amended motion was seconded by Cllr Mayo.

The Motion was carried unanimously.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 20.56hrs.

Next meeting: TUESDAY 22nd April 2014, 19.30hrs