



Sutton Poyntz Society

**Minutes of the Sutton Poyntz Society AGM
held at the Mission Hall 7.30 p.m. Wednesday April 12th 2017
Mike Blee in the chair**

1. Opening Remarks: The Chairman welcomed the 58 or so villagers at the meeting. He noted that 3 members of the Committee were resigning – Chris Balfe and Jacqui Atkinson were both finding themselves too busy to give the Society Committee the time they felt it deserved, and John Sutherland was resigning after 16 years on the Committee. The Chairman noted that there were several volunteers to join the Committee, so the Committee would not be short-handed.
2. Apologies were received from Tony & Anthea Heathershaw, Cllr Hazel Bruce, and Dave & Mo Martin.
3. Previous Minutes: The minutes of the AGM held on April 13th 2016 had been distributed before the meeting, and were accepted (proposed Peter Jones; seconded Rita Riley).
4. Matters Arising: None.
5. Annual report: The Annual Report had also been distributed and was approved. The Chairman gave thanks to the departing Committee members, and in particular to John Sutherland who had served for 10 years as Secretary and 3 years as Treasurer. The Chairman noted that John had been significantly involved in the purchase of the “Top of the Pond” land on behalf of the village.
6. Treasurer’s Report: John Sutherland gave his thanks to John Bellis who had examined the accounts.
 - a. He noted that the Society accounts are managed as a Cash Book, using a spreadsheet and methodology originally created by Sara Knight.
 - b. He noted a last minute Donation consisting of a large container full of coins, donated by Lorraine Best.
 - c. Fund raising events had made about the same amount of money for the Society as in the previous year, and the Treasurer thanked Sue Wintle, Jacqui Atkinson, Bill Egerton, Peter & Rita Riley and others who had organised the various events.
 - d. The main expenditure is on the Society’s insurance policy, which includes public liability insurance for the Top of the Pond area. The main Donation was to the British Heart Foundation out of gratitude for their funding of the village defibrillator.
 - e. The accounts included an Exceptional item line, which records the grant money received for the Neighbourhood Planning activity. In year, a grant of £2200 was received; about £1667 was spent by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and the unspent amount was returned.
 - f. The Society had a surplus of about £700, leaving a balance of £5155. It was recommended that the Society subscription remain at £2 per person (maximum of £4 per household).
 - g. The report, including the recommendation for no change to the subscription, was accepted by the meeting (proposed Cllr Ian Bruce; seconded Dorothy Emblen).
7. Sutton Poyntz Ltd report: Bill Egerton reported that the relationship between the Society and Sutton Poyntz Ltd had been formalised during the year, so that the three Officers of the Society (Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary are ex officio the three Directors of the Limited Company, and the Society Committee members are ex officio Members of the Limited Company).

The Limited Company had no expenditure in its own right, as the Society had funded the improvements to the Top of the Pond area, and also paid the £13 fee for the Limited Company’s annual return to Comapny’s House. However, a bank account had been created for the Limited Company, in order to hold the public grant money received for Neighbourhood Planning.

8. Neighbourhood Planning

- a. Peter Dye gave a report on the activities of the Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group, chaired by Katrina Blee. He noted that the Steering Group had been able to appoint a Consultant to assist and advise, paid for by the public grant money that was available to the Neighbourhood Forum. Two Newsletters had been issued, the first with a consultation questionnaire seeking views about what people value about the village and what topics they think a Neighbourhood Plan should include.

Later in the process, the views of landowners and other local stakeholders will be sought. It is hoped that emerging policies for the Neighbourhood Plan will be available by about the end of the year, with formal consultation taking place next year.

Peter Dye noted that a Neighbourhood Plan is essentially concerned with planning issues, but that it gives an opportunity to express wider aspirations for shaping the village in terms of social development and facilities.

- b. Parish Council status – A lengthy debate followed on the question of Parish Council status for the village. The Chairman explained that this question is highly speculative, but that local government changes in Dorset, with the possibility of a unitary Council for the western half of Dorset, and Town Council status for Weymouth, could create an opportunity for Sutton Poyntz to be considered as a potential Civil Parish (as Osmington, for example, already is). For this to happen, we need to start negotiating with Weymouth & Portland Borough Council, and the question for the AGM to consider is whether we should start talking.

Both Cllr Tony Ferrari and Cllr Ian Bruce warned that this would be a complicated step, and that the disadvantages of not being part of a Weymouth Town Council could be significant, and would need to be examined very carefully. Sutton Poyntz would need to work out how to provide services that might otherwise be provided by Weymouth. Cllr Bruce also pointed out that Weymouth Town Council has significant capital assets that could be a financial benefit to residents of Weymouth but would not be available to any areas that decided to become separate (he pointed to Lyme Regis as an example, which enjoys a very low Parish precept).

Cllr Bruce pointed out that Weymouth is unusual in not being Parished. The process, if it is decided to take the matter further, would be for the Society to make an application to the Borough Council, who are about to put out a consultation document on the future of local government for the Borough. The current presumption by the Borough is that if Weymouth becomes a Town Council within a unitary authority, the present Borough Councillors would become Weymouth Parish Councillors (he noted that the terms Town Council and Parish Council are in fact synonyms in the local government legal framework).

In the discussion that followed, it was pointed out that the way forward is in any case uncertain at present, as it depends on the outcome of a referendum taking place currently in Christchurch. It was felt that there is at present insufficient clarity about the advantages and disadvantages of parish status for Sutton Poyntz, and that an evening event, with speakers to give different viewpoints, would be very helpful.

At the end of the debate, the following motion was agreed (proposed Peter Jones, seconded Peter Dye): *“That the Committee be given the authority to explore with Weymouth & Portland Borough the implications of Sutton Poyntz becoming a Parish Council”*.

Cllr Bruce urged that in any case all members individually should study the Borough consultation paper when it is issued.

- c. Assets of Community Value – The Chairman noted that under the Localism Act, communities are able to nominate buildings or other property for registration as “Assets of Community

Value”. If the owner tries to sell such a property, the community then has the right to delay the process in order to try to put its own bid in. An example in the village might be the Mission Hall, which clearly has community value; if designated as the Localism Act allows, then the village would have the right to submit a bid if the Diocese wanted to sell it. Other possible assets were considered during the debate.

Cllr Bruce pointed out that the Neighbourhood Plan can also give some protection to such community assets. However, in discussion it was felt that declaring certain assets in this way probably has no down side, and the following motion was approved: *“That the Committee should produce a list of potential Community Assets, with cases explaining why each asset should be registered, for consultation with the village”*.

9. Planning Policy: Following the changes to the Society constitution at the 2016 AGM, the Committee had drafted a modification to the Planning Policy to ensure that the Policy includes due recognition of the need for suitable business and employment within the village. The new Policy had been distributed before the meeting, and Peter Dye gave a short explanation of the proposal. The additional Policy was formally adopted (proposed Peter Dye, seconded Mike Blee).
10. Election of Officers, Committee and Independent Examiner:
Chairman: Mike Blee (proposed Bill Egerton; seconded Peter Dye).
Secretary: Bill Egerton (proposed Mike Blee; seconded Rita Riley).
Treasurer: Terry Pegrum (proposed Mike Blee; seconded Peter Dye) .
Committee: As noted above, 3 Committee members had decided to resign: John Sutherland, Chris Balfe, and Jacqui Atkinson. During the year, Jill Kelsey and Jackie Greet had volunteered and been coopted; their Committee membership now needed formal confirmation. In addition, Liz Balfe had offered to stand for Committee membership. It was proposed by Cllr Ian Bruce, seconded by Chris Balfe, that these new Committee members be elected along with those previous members who were willing to continue; the Committee therefore to consist of the three Officers listed above plus Liz Balfe, Jez Cunningham, Hilary Davidson, Peter Dye, Jackie Greet, Jill Kelsey, Peter Riley and Sue Wintle. These Committee members were appointed.
Independent Accounts Examiner: John Bellis (proposed Bill Egerton, seconded Mike Blee).
11. AOB: A vote of thanks was proposed to John Sutherland for his many years of service on the Committee.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.30. The evening ended with refreshments and an opportunity to see the film of Sutton Poyntz in the 1950’s and 60’s taken by Ron Waite, then publican at the Springhead.