

**Minutes of the Sutton Poyntz Society Committee Meeting of 11th May 2016  
at the Mission Hall.**

1. *Present:* Mike Blee, John Sutherland, Bill Egerton, Jacqui Atkinson, Peter Riley, Jez Cunningham, Hilary Davidson, Sue Wintle.  
*Apologies:* Peter Dye, Chris Balfe, Chris Hubbard.

2. *Minutes of previous meeting*

The Minutes of the meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2016 were agreed and signed.

The Draft Minutes of the AGM were also reviewed. JS noted that the Donations element of the annual accounts had not included any money for Margaret's Seat, and requested a correction to item 6. Subject to BE and JS agreeing revised wording on this point, the Draft Minutes were approved for publication (marked as draft) on the village website

3. *Additional items (new and repeat) not on the Agenda*

It was noted that the two separate items on the Agenda (i.e. Matters Arising and Items to be raised under AOB) caused confusion, and would be better amalgamated (as here).

The following items were added to the Agenda:

- Campervan parking, History Board, and Bus Service (added to item 6 below);
- Village clean-up, Walks, and Coffee Mornings (added to item 7 below)

4. *Neighbourhood Planning*

MB described a meeting that he and BE had attended at Blandford Forum, organised by a commercial organisation who were providing support to Blandford's Neighbourhood Planning. Both MB and BE had concluded that this firm would be well suited to provide support to our Neighbourhood Planning. One of the things we had learned at this meeting was that Inspectors were more inclined to turn down planning applications while a Neighbourhood Plan was being developed, on the grounds that democratic decisions should be allowed time to be made, and not circumvented by external judgements. For this reason, MB had concluded that we needed to get going quickly with our own Neighbourhood Plan.

The early steps that had needed to be taken were to get the Council's provisional agreement to Terms of Reference for the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and to the application for a Neighbourhood Forum and Area, so that an application could be made quickly for grant funding to cover Training for the Steering Group.

Some disappointment was expressed that the Steering Group had not been brought together earlier, and had not been more directly involved in drafting these documents. It was agreed that the Steering Group members would be brought together quickly now (action **BE**), with a first task of reviewing the Terms of Reference and then submitting the formal Forum/Area Application to the Borough Council. The Terms of Reference will be simultaneously reviewed by Society Committee members to allow them to be formally approved at our next meeting. It was requested that comments from Committee members be submitted within 7 days.

Three changes to the draft Terms of Reference were agreed. Firstly, the maximum size of the Steering Group would be made advisory, by substituting "suggested maximum" for "maximum". Secondly, any Society role in selecting members of the Steering Group will be removed, by deleting the last sentence from the first paragraph of Section 3. Thirdly, the last part of paragraph 5 of Section 3 will be removed so that it will be implicit that people applying to join the Steering Group will be admitted (while leaving some flexibility for the Steering Group, for example if people apply very late in the process).

The following are believed to have expressed an interest in being members of the Steering Group:

Chris Balfe, Mike and/or Katrina Blee, Liz Brierley, Mark Cribb, Bill Davidson, Peter Dye, Bill Egerton, Keith Johnson, Huw Llewellyn, Colin Marsh, Andrew Price, John Sutherland and Doug Watson. These will all be invited to a first meeting of the Steering Group. In addition, Keith Hudson who is a second-home owner at Church Cottage, expressed an interest. There was some doubt whether he was truly eligible, not living or working in the Neighbourhood; BE will contact him to see whether in any case he would be able to attend enough meetings of the Steering Group to be meaningful.

#### 5. *Planning*

- a. WP/CA/16/00043 – Fell 1 leylandii 69 Sutton Road – It was agreed we could leave this to the Trees Officer’s judgement.
- b. WP/CA/16/00044 – Fell 26 ash at Valley Cottage – It was not clear from the application whether this was for wholesale clearance of the area or for thinning for the benefit of better specimens. The loose woodland up this part of Plaisters Lane was felt to be important; clearance should therefore be opposed strongly. BE to draft a reply and distribute before sending.
- c. WP/CA/16/00045 – Fell 2 Cupressus at Spinneys – It was agreed that the case for felling the trees could be left to the Trees Officer, but we should ask for replacement in accordance with our Society Policy.
- d. WP/CA/16/00048 – Tree maintenance at Springhead – It was agreed to leave judgement of this to the Trees Officer.
- e. WP/16/00177/FUL – Puddle Cottage partial change of use – It was felt that the minor changes were of little consequence, and were in accordance with our Society Policy. It was also noted that we should encourage small local business of this sort.

#### 6. *Sutton Poyntz Ltd*

##### a. Registration of “Top of the Pond” land

JS and BE explained that the Land Registry had sent a letter to Sutton Poyntz Ltd, stating that a formal objection had been made by Mr Skinner to our registration of the Top of the Pond land, on the basis that the documents submitted to the Land Registry had been fraudulent. JS and BE had contacted Paul Marsh, the now-retired Solicitor who had managed the conveyance and registration of the land on our behalf, for advice. He had immediately offered to assemble a rebuttal of Mr Skinner’s claim, on a pro bono basis. JS and BE had met with Paul Marsh on Monday, gone carefully through the extensive evidence proving our claim (including original conveyances from 1926 and 1950 which were handed to Mr Marsh for inclusion with the rebuttal), and assembled an outline response. Paul Marsh had now written the draft rebuttal, which had been reviewed by JS, MB and BE, and was thought by them to be quite excellent. It offers original conveyances for the land, an email from the Highways Authority showing that they still have their original copy of the 1950 document, and extensive other evidence showing that Devenish and the Springhead had exercised ownership over the land, rather than Mr Skinner. It also shows that Mr Skinner has never had any claim over the land; a letter from his own Solicitor effectively admits his only claim could be a “possessory” one, and he has never gained the physical control over the land that such a claim would need.

Paul Marsh has donated his time free. This is mainly because of his fraternal relationship with the village, but also because, it emerged from discussions with him, Mr Skinner made a formal complaint to the Police that “his” land had been stolen from him by fraudulent means. As a Board Member of the Solicitors’ Regulatory Authority, the taint of possible fraud is extremely serious to Mr Marsh.

The formal response to the Land Registry will be sent to the Land Registry by Downs, the firm that acted for us in the purchase and registration. It is not clear whether their time in sending

the letter will be free of charge – no charge has been mentioned, but the last letter sent in this manner cost us £320. If there is a charge, the Limited Company Directors will apply to the Society for reimbursement.

b. SP Ltd membership

JS explained that the Limited Company Directors had held a meeting to create a Rule for the Company dealing with who the Directors and Members are, mirroring the recent changes to the Society Constitution. Mike Blee had been appointed a Director of the Limited Company.

Membership forms were distributed and signed, by which the members of the Society Committee applied to become members of the Limited Company.

7. *Other village matters*

- a. Mobile Library Service – MB pointed out that Dorset’s mobile library service was about to be withdrawn, leaving only a service to retirement homes and the like. It was agreed that the Society would submit a representation asking that this reduction of service should be reconsidered.
- b. Bins & Dog bins – No progress.
- c. Campervan parking – Some villagers had observed that there had been a camper-van parked for some time by the pond. There is nothing illegal in this (providing it is taxed and insured) but there is the risk that any long-term parked vehicle might become an eyesore in this conservation area. JC suggested that a longer-term solution might be debated as part of Neighbourhood Planning, perhaps in the form of off-road parking spaces.
- d. History Board – The board by the pond had been pushed into the pond a couple of weeks before. JC had rescued the board, which is now in BE’s barn; PD had removed the metal footings for safety. It is believed that the board belonged originally to the Borough Council, and the land in any case is theirs. It was suggested that we ask the Borough Council to consider putting the board back up, but on the other side of Sutton Road; this would leave space for another seat by the pond (action **BE**).
- e. Bus service – PR pointed out that the bus service was being reduced by one bus at each end of the day, with a new 4B service through Osmington to Warmwell. No action was thought necessary.

8. *Village Events / Activities*

- a. Summer events – BE has booked to Mission Hall for the following dates:
  - 16 July – Cream Teas (2.30 to 4 p.m.). SW agreed to look after this event, with Maureen Morris’s help;
  - 6 August – Vegetable Show (9.30 to 11.30 a.m.). BE will organise this.
  - 3 September – Pimms evening (5 to 8 p.m.). Because the Mission Hall Trust are running a Picnic in the second half of August, an earlier date was not sensible for the Pimms evening. The next Committee meeting will review whether to run this event, and if so what form it should take.
- b. Village clean-up – In past years the Society has organised a Clean-up in Spring (normally March). BE will discuss with Guy Bridge what the Street Fayre Committee have planned, and offer the Society’s help, with a Newsbite if that would be helpful.

The state of some of the seats around the village was discussed. It was agreed that the next Newsletter would ask for volunteers to help refurbish the seats.

- c. Summer walk – BE will contact Richard Backwell to see if he would be willing to organise a walk.

- d. Coffee mornings – A suggestion had been made that the very successful Coffee Mornings could be extended beyond the winter months. PR explained that the present system works at capacity, with just enough helpers and cake makers to make it work. Some regret was expressed that extending it a few extra months would be so difficult, but it was agreed to leave it as is, for the time being at least.

9. *Communications*

- a. Newsbites and Newsletters – JS and BE will discuss the Newsletter distribution rounds before the next Newsletter appears.
- b. Noticeboard – Bill Davidson has offered to fit softboard to the new Noticeboard to make it easier to pin up notices. The cost of this is not known, but Bill Davidson was authorised to go ahead.

HD will be seeing members of the Wilson family shortly, and will check progress on a memorial label for the Noticeboard.

It was agreed that prints of Newsbites should appear on the Society Noticeboard, and also a list of Committee meetings.

10. *Other Village Activity reports*

No report.

11. *Committee Reports*

- a. Mission Hall Trust  
SW reported that the Trust will be running a village picnic on 21<sup>st</sup> August, and that their AGM had been set for 29<sup>th</sup> June.

12. *Treasurer's Report*

A report had been tabled by email, showing a balance of £4525.65. The transaction sheet showed all transactions since the last Committee meeting, including some from the last financial year.

The report included a Note stating the costs approved in the past relating to the Top of the Pond purchase – these costs were formalised at the AGM as a loan to SP Ltd.

It was noted that JC had incurred some costs, mainly providing additional wine for the Beacon lighting event; reimbursement was approved.

13. *Correspondence*

A subscription reminder had been received from the Dorset Wildlife Trust. However, we had already agreed not to renew our subscription, as members of the Biodiversity team are already members individually.

In connection with Neighbourhood Planning, we have received an Ordnance Survey End User licence for signature; this allows us to use OS maps in our Neighbourhood Planning documents. BE was authorised to sign on behalf of the Society.

A number of regular magazines have been received from the Dorset Wildlife Trust and the CPRE, as well as a DWT “Walk with Nature” programme.

14. *Date of next meeting*

8<sup>th</sup> June.

***Minutes agreed and approved :***

***Date:***