

Minutes of the meeting of the SPS Committee held on 23rd. February 2000 at 3, Sutton Close. Mike Pressly in the chair.

Apologies: Richard Backwell, Ron Birch, Tony Buglar, Alan Simpson.

The Minutes of the meeting of 18th. January were read, approved and signed.

Matters arising:

i) Millennium Trees. The Treasurer confirmed that Mr. Lunn had been paid for the fencing work that he had carried out. The Secretary reported that Chris Galpin had made a late request to sponsor one of the trees and asked on his behalf if it was too late to consider the request. Simon Emblen had already contacted those who had submitted their names before the last Committee meeting and it was decided that unfortunately it was too not possible to accept Chris Galpin's offer. The Secretary was asked to tell CG. of this decision.

ii) Extension of the Conservation Area: The Chairman reported that the proposal supported by the Society had been accepted by the Environment Committee of WPBC. and was now going before the full Council.

iii) The Pond: Julia Allen reported that the first stage of the work-spike and faggots- had been carried out. It was expected that the next stage would be completed in April. The Chairman commented that excellent progress was being made.

iv) Dog mess: The notices that had been put up in the village seemed to have made a modest impact and the Chairman felt that there should now be a pause before a more heavy handed approach involving the circulation of an official letter from WPBC is adopted. This was agreed.

The Future of the Society: The paper circulated with the agenda was considered together with a number of written responses. It was agreed that the Society should continue as it had an important role to fulfil acting as a watchdog over official bodies, as a conduit for communication and as an agent to promote good planning and environmental practice. There was also a feeling that it should continue to offer some social functions, in particular, the Cream teas, the walks, the social side of the AGM and the Christmas event. Some members believed that it still had a role to provide other 'one off' events such as a Barn Dance even if this meant setting up special co-opted sub-committees of people with the appropriate expertise and enthusiasm.

Having agreed that there was no need to make any recommendations to the AGM. about the fundamental nature of the Society, the Committee reviewed the procedures used to elect the Committee and to appoint the officers. The following process was accepted as the most democratic and transparent.

i) The notice announcing the date of the AGM should include an invitation to members asking for nominations for the Committee and the officers. There would be a tear-off slip to be returned to the Secretary seven days before the date of the AGM.

ii) Existing committee members and officers would need to indicate their willingness to stand for election by arranging their nomination in line with any new nominations.

iii) The Committee membership should be limited to 10 plus 3 officers. This recommendation would have to be approved at the AGM.

iv) If no officers are nominated for submission to the AGM, or subsequently at the AGM, then the Committee would appoint the officers from their own number. Again this procedure would require approval at the AGM.

These procedures were considered by some members to be too formal for our Society but they were prepared to accept them because the measures were a safeguard against any accusation that the Committee was a clique of cronies operating a 'closed shop'.

The Chairman confirmed that he would be standing down after the AGM. The Vice-Chairman was currently reviewing his position but was unlikely to accept nomination for the Chairmanship. The Secretary was willing to stand down if a volunteer for nomination could be found.

The AGM,

This will take place on 6th. April in the Mission Hall. The Secretary was asked to invite Mr. Martin Fielding to be the guest speaker and it was agreed that wine would be provided.

The Mission Hall :

SE. reported that there had been a worrying delay in arranging for the Management Committee to be granted charity status. Norman Brown was trying to sort out the difficulties with the Charity Commissioners. MM confirmed that an architect had been commissioned to draw plans for the refurbishment of the Hall once funds were available.

Planning:

RM. had nothing to report. P.J. had however received, within the last day or so, notice that an application for the building of stables at Valley Cottage had been re-submitted. RM. confirmed that a letter had been sent to WPBC last year expressing concern about the original application. RM. and MP. agreed to look at the re-submission and to respond accordingly. A particular concern was the water course that flowed through the garden and emerged on to Plaisters Lane.

New Conservation Area: it was agreed that once the WPBC. Council had approved the new boundary, the Society should write to ask the Council to negotiate the extension of the area into the West Dorset District Council territory at the northern end of Sutton Poyntz.

Social activities:

There was nothing to report.

Treasurer's report:

As there had been only two transactions since the last meeting SE. had not prepared a report.

AOB:

i) Traffic survey; JA. distributed copies of the survey for members to study before the next meeting. JA. and SE. would at a later stage discuss the finding with Richard Penny oWPBC.

ii) Local Transport Plan. It was agreed that the Society should not send an official response in its name but would leave it to individual members to return the questionnaire.

iii) Pig keeping; JL. asked if permission had to be sought from the local authority to keep pigs. An answer was not forthcoming.

iv) Orange car parked on the side of the pond. MP. agreed to speak to the person responsible to seek his co-operation in removing it.

v) JA. remarked on the poor condition of one of the cottages adjacent to the pond and asked if anything could be done about it. The Chairman felt that it was outside the remit of the Society to interfere.

vi) JL. was concerned about the horses from the Church Road stables trampling the daffodils that had been planted in the grassed area at the junction of Preston and Sutton Roads. The Secretary agreed to speak to the stable owner about this problem.

vii) It was agreed to make a donation of £10 to the DWT.

Date of next meeting. Weds. 22nd. March at Little Acorns.

Thanks were given to D. and I.B. for their hospitality and the meeting closed at 9-35pm.

Proposed J.K.
Seconded R.M.

Chairman
Secretary

A paper considered at the meeting on 23rd Feb. 2000

The future of the Society-- some thoughts.

At the last Committee meeting there was a brief discussion about the role of the Society and the need to encourage more local people to take an active part in its work. The Chairman has asked that there should be a more detailed discussion of the issues at our meeting on 23rd. Feb. to enable us, as the Committee, to clear our thoughts about the way we wish to see the Society develop. If we are able to do this, a paper can then be written and circulated to the wider membership in a Newsletter for discussion at the AGM. To help focus our thoughts for the meeting on 23rd. Feb, the Chairman asked me to set out for your consideration some of the options we may wish to adopt and to list some of the more immediate concerns such as the appointment of Committee members and election of officers. What I have written below will, I hope, provide a starting point for our discussions.

1) The status quo. We can ask, as we usually do at the AGM, for nominations to the Committee in the hope that someone will come forward. The officers are then appointed from within the Committee, not by direct election at the AGM. The Committee then carries on as we have done in recent years looking at planning applications (Planning sub-ctte.); organising various social functions ; making ad hoc responses to official bodies and organisations; etc. etc.

Should we wish to carry on in this mode we will need to know if the present Committee and officers are prepared to continue in office. It will also require an effort to drum up interest among Society members to submit their names for election to the Committee.

2) Option ii.

The Committee and officers to be appointed as for option 1, or by direct election at the AGM, and for the activities of the Society to be redefined. This could mean that the Society would restrict its activities to planning and environmental issues as set out in the original mission statement. Social and other activities, like fund raising, could then be left to other village organisations that were not in existence when the Society was founded. This would seem particularly relevant now that we have a Mission Hall Committee that by its very nature, will have to play a prominent role in organising social fund-raising events. Demand for our social functions would indicate that there is no room for competition in this sphere, so we should leave the field to the MHMC.

3) Option iii

To amalgamate with the MHMC and become a planning and environmental sub-committee of that organisation. The considerable funds of the SPS. could be transferred to the new joint organisation to speed up the development of the Mission Hall as an attractive venue to meet the needs of its potential users. It may be that such an arrangement would also attract the Street Fayre Committee to throw in its lot with an unified village organisation to create what, to misquote the description of Fox's cabinet

, would be 'a committee of all the talents' Such an organisation would be attractive to many residents who are often confused as to which committee 'does what and to whom and where'.

4) Option iv

To consider whether the SPS has outlived its usefulness and to donate existing funds to some other good cause.