

Minutes of the meeting of the SPS Committee – Wednesday 18th February 2010
at The Mission Hall – John Crisp in the Chair

1. **Present** – Joyce Litschi, Louise Sheaves, John Crisp, Peter Riley, Graham Embley, John Bellis, Bill Egerton.
Apologies – John Sutherland, Tony Bugler, Karen Phillips.
2. The minutes of the meeting held on 20th January 2010 were approved and signed.
3. **Matters arising: -**
 - Thank Simon Grant-Jones, continuing.
 - Coffee morning 2 April, item of interest to be pictures of local area showing history. Committee members to ask residents for loan of suitable photographs, post cards etc, and pass to John Crisp.
 - Coffee mornings, John Crisp to send note to Chris Hubbard re proceeds.
 - AGM agreed to provide wine and cheese after meetings. John Crisp to speak to Anthea about sharing cost and organisation with Anthea Heathershaw (Mission Hall).
 - Society records, agreed to pass the Society's records to the Dorset Record Office for safe keeping and to provide public access. John Crisp and John Sutherland to weed files before transfer.
4. **Discussion of Weymouth and Portland Council Planning Committee meeting held on 3 February.** The Chairman summarised reports from those who attended the meeting and asked for any further points not covered in his summary to be outlined. The summary listed:
 - comments made by Planning Committee members referring to Sutton Poyntz residents as middle class, planning applications elsewhere in the Borough, not understanding what all the fuss was about;
 - private communication between the applicant's agent and Planning Committee members two days before the meeting;
 - no report of any reason or justification given for rejecting the advice of the employed planning officers other than a statement by the Planning Committee Chairman that a refusal might well be overturned on appeal.
 - Graham Embley added, in his opinion (1) although the letters sent by the agent to Planning Committee members may be considered undesirable, they would be permitted by planning regulations, and (2) that he had drawn the planning committee chairman's attention to the fact that Mrs Albin's statement (in support of the application) did not represent the views of the Mission Hall Trust committee, as may have been inferred by planning committee members.

The committee agreed that the reports of the conduct of the Planning Committee meeting made it difficult to see how issues relating to planning were adequately discussed and also how issues unrelated to planning could be seen not to have affected the decision. There was also disquiet over the letters sent by the applicant's agent to Planning Committee members the existence of which had remained secret from the public until the planning meeting and the contents of which are still unknown. Graham Embley pointed out that he believed the procedure to be permissible. However it was also pointed out that there was no means of knowing whether or not the contents of the letters were misleading. Graham Embley drew attention to the fact that at the Planning Meeting he had drawn the committee chairman's attention to the comments of Mrs Albin, which were not compatible with those of the Mission Hall Trust committee, as may have been inferred by the planning committee members. The Chairman noted that none of the reports he had received contained any reference to statements from members of the Planning Committee explaining why they rejected the advice of the employed Planning Officers and hence approved the application in contradiction of established policies B1, B8, D3 and H4 of the Weymouth and Portland Borough Council. (Post meeting note – details of policies included below for info). Graham Embley stated that in his view each member of the Planning Committee gave their reasons for voting in the way that they did although they may be considered inadmissible. The Chairman asked for clarification as to whether any of the reasons given related to the planning issues raised by the employed officers, or to the policies B1, B8, D3 or H4. It appeared not. The committee agreed to write a letter to the Chairman of the Planning Committee seeking clarification on the following points:

 - The relevance to planning considerations of the statements made by the members of the Planning Committee and the influence of those statements on the planning decision;
 - The part played by the letter sent privately by the applicant's agent to members of the Planning Committee and how such private communications were consistent with the open and public nature of all other communications.
 - The departure from established W&P policies for planning.

The Chairman noted that Peter Jones (SP resident) had already written expressing his personal concern to the Chief Executive of Weymouth and Portland Borough Council. Graham Embley asked that it could be recorded that he did not agree with all of the proposed points to be included in the letter to the council, and that it should be sent to Melanie Earnshaw (Monitoring Officer for W&PBC). John Crisp produce a draft to be circulated to committee members by the secretary before sending to the Chairman of the Weymouth and Portland Planning Committee with a copy to Melanie Earnshaw who is the monitoring officer for Weymouth and Portland.
5. **Other Planning Issues** tree work at Mullions, Plaisters Lane, agreed to accept the advice of the trees officer.

6. **Society Website** Bill Egerton reported difficulty in finding a website designer who would be able to work within our budget. He will continue to try and find a solution.
7. **Treasurer's report** The treasurer reported proceeds of £62.70 from the February coffee morning.
8. **History Group** The Ridgeway Project (Sarah Harbidge) has offered to cover expenses for the History Evening but will require an invoice from the Society. The Treasurer agreed to prepare an invoice when the expenses are known.
9. **Street Fayre** Graham Embley reported significant progress in obtaining prizes for the Society stall. He has already obtained six substantial prizes. Agreed to ask Jim Willis if he would lend his expertise in constructing the stall and to see if Sara Knight would undertake the artwork. (action with John Crisp). Graham Embley advised that it would be necessary to have someone assisting the person selling tickets to keep accurate records. This means that if there are two people selling tickets then the stall would need a total of four people to man it.
10. Date of next meetings –_Wednesday 17th March 2010 at the Mission Hall at 8.00 pm

Other dates booked are :

Wednesday 21st April 2010 at the Mission Hall at 8.00 pm – **For AGM**
 Wednesday 19th May 2010 at the Mission Hall at 8.00 pm
 Wednesday 16th June 2010 at the Mission Hall at 8.00 pm
 Wednesday 21st July 2010 at the Mission Hall at 8.00 pm
 Wednesday 18th August 2010 at the Mission Hall at 8.00 pm
 Wednesday 15th September 2010 at the Mission Hall at 8.00 pm
 Wednesday 20th October 2010 at the Mission Hall at 8.00 pm
 Wednesday 17th November 2010 at the Mission Hall at 8.00 pm
 Wednesday 15th December 2010 at the Mission Hall at 8.00 pm

Minutes agreed and approved _____ Date _____

Policy D3 (General Development Criteria) requires that buildings should respect local distinctiveness and the character of the area and not have a detrimental impact on the privacy and amenity of potential occupiers;
 Policy B1 (General Design Criteria) specifically the siting, design, scale and mass should be in character with the surrounding area. Individual buildings should have respect for their urban or rural context;
 Policy B8 (Protection of Character of Conservation Area) proposals should preserve or enhance the character of the area, should not result in the loss of building, open spaces views, trees, hedges or other features that make a positive feature to the conservation area;
 Policy H4 (Plot subdivision and backland development) adequate space between buildings and adequate garden space must be provided for both properties, adequate and safe access must be provided without detriment to existing and proposed properties;

PPG15: Planning and the Historic Environment, deals with development within conservation areas and advises that it is not only the historic buildings in conservation areas which should be preserved but also enhancing or preserving the character of the area including its setting, or views into or out of the Conservation Area.
 SPG2 Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas (Weymouth and Portland Borough Council) states that proposals for new development should respect the character of the area in terms of layout, size, materials, design and enhance or reinforce the local distinctiveness of the area.