

Letheringham Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held
on Monday 27th March 2017
at Easton & Letheringham Village Hall*



In Attendance

Terry Carlin (TC) (Chairman & Financial Officer)
Jean Barker (JB)
Matthew Bickerton (MB)
Richard Gooding (RG)

David Allan (DA) (Clerk)

Public Attendance

Michael Lloyds (ML)
Ian Paltreyman (IP) (in part)
Andrew Maskery (AM) (in part)
Robin Vickery (RV) SCC Councillor (in part)

Public Forum – opened at 7.48pm

IP addressed the Meeting with regard to the Easton & Letheringham Village Hall, for which he is Chair of the Management Committee, regarding a key-change arising from the departure of the Pre-school, which had been a primary user of the Hall for 30 years. The Pre-School had relocated to the Hamilton Room at Easton Farm Park.

IP referred to the extensive refurbishment of the Hall completed in 2011 and to the fact that the Pre-school had contributed approximately 50% of the £9,000 income derived from users. This reduction in funds was partly off-set by lower running costs, although many of these were fixed costs. IP provided a schedule of costs and income for the period 2012 to 2017 which showed an anticipated shortfall this year of £1,758.89 in contrast the surpluses in previous years.

In the light of this situation, IP advised that the Village Hall Management Committee were looking for ways to bridge this funding gap by attracting new users but also to request a contribution from LPC.

RG enquired about reserves and IP confirmed that there was a Reserve Fund totalling approximately £10,000 for capital expenditure. TC commented that the significant refurbishment completed, resulting in a £4K increase in expenditure in 2015-16, meant that similar spending would not be required in the near future. IP commented that there was a rolling agenda of internal improvements, and that a lottery grant had been secured to fund the kitchen installation. IP stated that the water heaters had also been replaced recently and that there was no planned major maintenance for the next four years, although there was an issue with damp that would need to be addressed.

TC congratulated the Village Hall Management Committee on the work completed to date, and commented that the funding gap was perhaps not as bad as it looked initially, and that the departure of the Pre-School assisted in resolving issues with other users. IP confirmed

that the departure did make things easier in the sense that there had been friction with other users and the Management Committee were frequently required to resolve issues. However, there was still a 50% reduction of income that had to be addressed.

TC suggested that LPC could contribute a similar amount to Easton Parish Council, and IP commented that Easton PC (EPC) had a larger population and precept and therefore should contribute more, which had been £500 per year but reduced by agreement to £400 per year. IP commented that ten years ago, the Hall had operated at a loss and Easton PC had then taken on responsibility for all the bills.

RG queried where the EPC income was included in the figures provided by IP, and TC suggested that the solution to funding issues was attracting more users as any pro rata contribution by LPC in accordance with the funding from EPC would have only a marginal benefit.

JB enquired about advertising, and IP confirmed that this was done through Parish magazines and Notice Boards. He also referred to use by Adult Learning Services and for funding for Fit Villages Suffolk to run classes in Village Halls – and the results of enquiries regarding interest was awaited.

TC suggested that the issue of funding contribution by LPC would need to be considered and discussed, and that a decision could not be made immediately.

MB commented on the figures provided and, in the light of IP confirming that projected maintenance for 2017 and 2018 would be around £1500 per annum, suggested that the fine-year average figure suggested was too high.

IP referred to organised events at the Hall including music events and the BBQ, as well as a further event in the Autumn, but stated that the money raised from these were used to buy specific items that were needed, such as chairs. IP also referred to week-end hire of the Hall for events such as children's parties, which was quite common, although there was a policy not to host 18 or 21st birthday parties. The Hall was suitable for older birthdays and small wedding celebrations, although these were not common, and it was anticipated that Suffolk Coach Holidays would start to use the Hall for occasional lunches.

AM (the Letheringham Representative on the Village Hall Management Committee) commented that IP had covered most things, but highlighted the varied and popular events that are held every quarter.

AM referred to his role in representing Letheringham and promoting and encouraging events, and the need to encourage more people to attend and become involved. At present there was a music event by the Rhino's on the 12th August and an 80's Disco in October.

Due to work commitments, AM requested that someone be identified to either take-over or share his role as Village Hall representative, involving attendance at quarterly meetings and communicated information, as well as assisting at events where required. DA agreed to circulate an email regarding this.

RV addressed the Meeting, and confirmed that he had received an email from Carol Poulter apologising for her inability to attend but providing a Report from Carol Poulter, which included a reference to the District Council portion of the Council Tax bill increasing by 3.25%, resulting in a typical increase of £5 in bills. DA to agreed to circulate this Report.

RV referred to conversations with David Harris at Mill House and with David Chenery regarding the maintenance of verges and gullies. DH had referred to rebuilding banks that had been eroded and DC had queried how this could be done, although ML commented that the Council had dug gullies on half of Sandy lane, although he had seen this done and was therefore unsure about what equipment had been used.

With regard to the proposed SID signs on the B1078, RV confirmed that he had allocated the balance of his accounting budget, totalling £1,225.43, and that this had been done before the moratorium had commenced on the 23rd March 2017, although any cheque could not be signed until after the 4th May 2017 due to the election. RV requested that a formal request for these funds be put into writing, and that the recommendation was for the funds to be used to purchase a new as opposed to reconditioned device.

TC commented that the used sign considered previously was for '30mph only' in any event, whereas a sign stating 'Slow Down' etc was required. In addition, the used sign proposed previously had been of German manufacture and used lead-acid batteries that had a very limited active life, and that a lithium battery would be preferable and more practical.

TC confirmed that DC had undertaken to progress this matter if the funding was raised, so will contact him in the light of the funds provided by RV and will circulate a schedule of final costs. RV confirmed that the County Council would pay for the posts.

The issue of the lopsided and unreadable signpost by Sanctuary Bridge by Abbey Farm was raised, about which correspondence had been submitted. RV commented that the Highways Office in Saxmundham was being closed and relocated to Ipswich with voluntary redundancies and a restructuring process, and that one team was designated to drainage tasks. The issue of signage would be referred to DC.

RV referred to Council tax and commented that there had been no rise for the County Council element of this for the past 6 years. RV notes that there had been a 3% increase for Adult social care, with additional money required to cover increases to national Living Wage. TC commented that Adult Care was done through contractors, and RV confirmed that agencies and private care homes were used.

With regard to roads generally, RV commented that £10 million was spent on road re-surfacing last year covering 300 miles of roads, and over the next 4 years a further 1000 miles was scheduled to be re-surfaced. This did not include the A12, which was the responsibility of Highways England.

ML referred to queries regarding road closures and outsourcing, but stated that he would address these in detail in an email.

RG referred to the Council Tax information including a reference to the portion allocated to LPC (£47.85), as well as that for the County Council, police etc – but queried why a description of what the money was being used for by those other agencies but not for LPC, and suggested that further information should be provided and disseminated. TC confirmed that the level of the precept had been agreed in previous meetings, and raised concerns regarding insufficiency of funding for coverage of requirements, including a paid Parish Council Clerk. RG reiterated that there was no or insufficient information about what the LPC precept was spent on, and was referred to the Minutes of Meetings containing budgets and other information as well as the Reports and information provided at the Annual parish Meeting. TC also commented on comparison with other Parish Councils, and stated that the

precept for Easton was about 30% higher per household than for Letheringham. TC also referred to the Plebiscite issued which resulted in an overwhelming response in favour of maintaining LPC. TC confirmed that he would address these issues in his report to the Annual Meeting.

TC expressed his thanks to RV for sorting out the funding for the SID signs.

The Public Forum Closed and the Meeting opened at 9.15pm

2017.11 Apologies

Apologies had been received from Maurice Finch and (via RV) Carol Poulter.

2017.12 Declaration of Interests

None.

2017.13 Approval of Minutes of Meeting on 28³rd January 2017

Approved unanimously and signed by TC

2017.14 Matters of Report

(i) Correspondence

None.

(ii) Police

DA referred to the email received from Paul Clarke regarding the burglary of farm buildings, and the notification circulated to residents.

This did not appear on current Police information, nor on the most recent SNT Newsletter or Crime Map.

2017.15 Village Hall

TC commented that this had been addressed in detail during the Public Forum, and that consideration should be given to contribution based on a pro-rata basis involving the ratio of Council Tax payers in Easton and Letheringham.

MB raised concerns about being presented with incomplete figures that omitted items such as fundraising and reserves. AM responded that the figures were intended to address Operational Costsings and therefore did not include fundraisers, although MB stated that they should, and that it should also itemise what the money was spent on. In addition, MB also stated that if the years prior to 2014 were included, the averages reached would be much lower.

RG commented that the LPC was a shareholder in the Hall and shared responsibility for it, so that there was a perception issue regarding funding. It was agreed that the issue of funding on a pro-rata basis should be considered.

AM stated that an immediate response was not expected, and that the Management Committee was also looking at increasing rates for hirers as well as attracting new users.

2017.16 Sizewell

An increased flow of information regarding issues relating to Sizewell was noted, and it was agreed to put over consideration of this to later Meetings.

2017.17 B1078 and SID Signs

This had already been discussed and addressed in the Public Forum.

TC agreed to address the funding allocated by RV and to revert to DC once this had been done. TC also confirmed that the issue of access to the posts once in place had also been addressed with the relevant land-owners.

2017.18 Planning

It was confirmed that no objections had been raised regarding the planning application relating to the Piggery at Seven Spar Farm. RG referred to the potential for odour, but ML commented that the application related to change of use from pigs to light industrial use, so that this concern did not arise. ML stated that the units were mainly being used by car and bike repairers and restorers.

2017.19 Financial Report

TC presented updated Accounts and Financial Report [attached herewith at Annex A and Annex B], with no interest accruing. An amendment was required as the entry for payment of the Village Hall Invoice had been mis-recorded initially as £130 and should have been £138. Subject to this and the provision of amended records, it was agreed that the Accounts and Financial statement presented were accurate and would be Minuted accordingly.

A cheque completed for £130 was cancelled (cheque number 100254) and a replacement cheque completed for £138 (cheque 100255). JB and MB countersigned this cheque as well as the Invoice for the use of the Village Hall for 2016.

With regard to Audit requirements, TC stated that documents had been received and he would complete these. TC confirmed that David Holborrow had agreed to complete the internal audit.

2017.20 Asset maintenance

No issue except for the signpost, and the need to paint the phonebox, which TC agreed to address with Jan and others.

2017.21 Phonebox

An update and decision regarding the proposed VETs scheme was postponed until a future meeting at which Paula could attend and provide an update.

2017.22 Litter Pick

DA to arrange provision of equipment and to circulate an email regarding the proposed date on the 23rd April 2017

At the conclusion of the Meeting, JB raised an issue regarding fallen trees from the EFP side of the river blocking boat access. MB referred to the Village BBQ and suggested that the 2nd July was the preferred date. An issue regarding the need for a Church warden was also mentioned, and the risk of the Church closing if a volunteer could not be identified.

The meeting closed at 10.07pm

Signed..... Date.....

Next Meeting: Monday 27th March 2017 at 7.45 pm in the Village Hall

Appendices follow:

- A Financial Report as at 27th March 2017
- B Parish Accounts as at 27th March 2017

Report provided by Carol Poulter to be circulated separately.

Letheringham Parish Council

Financial Report as 27th March 2017

Cheques presented for payment at this meeting

	date	chq #	Total
village hall hire	27/03/2017	100254	£130.00

Income received

nil			£00.0
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Current position before cheques are paid

Community Account	£2,989.86
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Business Premium Account	£267.10
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TOTAL	<u>£ 3,256.96</u>
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Current position before cheques are paid

Community Account	£2,851.86
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Business Premium Account	£267.10
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TOTAL	<u>£3,118.96</u>
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Expenditure approved minute 2017.19 refers

Date 27/03/2017

ANNEX B

Letheringham Parish Accounts statement of account as at March 2017

COMMUNITY ACCOUNT #50571423			(2016-2017)			october statement		
	date	Cheque no	debit	credit	total	vat	account statement date	statement date
C/F from 2015-2016					£2,442.66			
SCDC precept	01/04/2016			£525.00	£2,967.66		£2,967.66	26/05/2016
Marshalls phone box electricals	25/07/2016	100249	£118.66		£2,849.00	£19.77		
SALC membership fees	03/10/2016	100250	£33.14		£2,815.86			
Insurance (came & co)	03/10/2016	100251	£165.00		£2,650.86			
SCDC precept	27/09/2016			£525.00	£3,175.86			
churtyard fund	03/10/2016	100252	£150.00		£3,025.86			
BDO audit invoice	03/10/2016	100253	£36.00		£2,989.86		£2,989.86	27/10/2016
village hall hire	27/03/2017	100255	£138.00		£2,851.86			
YTD total debits/ credits			£640.80	£1,050.00				

note community account retains £1100 received from SCDC community grant as contribution to VAS road signs

BUSINESS SAVER ACCOUNT #50571431						
transaction	date	Payments	Receipts/ interest payments	Balance	Bank statement	statement date
c/f 01/04/2016				£267.01	£267.01	12/04/2016
acct interest	06/06/2016		£0.03	£267.04	£267.04	10/06/2016
	29/11/2016		£0.03	£267.07	£267.07	13/10/2016
	23/01/2017		£0.03	£267.10	£267.10	13/12/2017

Total account balances				
date	Community Account	business premium account	Total funds available	
23/05/2016	£2,967.66	£267.01	£3,234.67	
25/07/2016	£2,849.00	£267.04	£3,116.04	
03/10/2016	£2,989.86	£267.04	£3,256.90	
28/11/2016	£2,989.86	£267.07	£3,256.93	
23/01/2017	£2,989.86	£267.10	£3,256.96	
27/03/2017	£2,851.86	£267.10	£3,118.96	

LPC	ASSET REGISTER	
Capital asset	Value (£)	Comment
Village sign	£1,469.00	Sign insured for public liability and replacement cost £4000
Phone box	£1.00	Replacement value £1000
Salt Box	£67.00	Replacement value £100
Millennium seat	£485.00	Replacement value £500
defibrillator	£2,130.00	replacement value £2130
village notice board	£500.00	replacement value £500
Total	£4,652.00	total replacement £8230