

Spaxton Parish Council – Meeting MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting held at 8:00 pm on Monday 1st October 2007 at Aisholt & Merridge Village Hall.

i)	Members present: The Chairman – Mr D Jeanes, Mr S Stretton, Mr B Porter, Mr P Williams, Mr J Edwards, Mr V Massey, Mr V Hughes & Mr M Stevens.	Action
ii)	District Councillors present: Mr J Edney & Mr K Dyer.	
iii)	Members of the public present: Mr C Morton, Mr & Mrs P Thomas, Meg Smith.	
	<p>The meeting opened with a public session, at which further discussion took place regarding the planning application submitted by Cannington Cold Stores Ltd. Members of the public were very concerned that a site history they had prepared revealed that at various times planning conditions had been imposed which had subsequently been ignored or flouted. The concern also remained that slaughterhouse waste might be burned on the site rather than the materials stipulated in the application.</p> <p>In addition, it was highlighted that on Cannington Cold Stores' website it was alleged that the site could cope with 100 articulated lorries per day, a figure that seemed totally inappropriate for what people deemed to be an accident blackspot in close proximity to the AONB. (Mr R Adcock arrived at 8.23pm). The formal meeting then began.</p>	
1.	Apologies for absence: Mrs D Richards & Mr D Joslin.	
2.	Declaration of members' interests: Mr V Hughes declared a personal interest in the application to fell certain trees at Splatt Mill.	
3.	The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 3 rd September 2007 were read and approved.	
4.	<p>Matters Arising:</p> <p>i) Purchase of noticeboard – Mr V Hughes had negotiated a price of £400 for a decent-sized noticeboard that would accommodate a map and additional information. There would be some extra cost involved in setting it up as a free-standing board. Members approved the purchase of the board.</p> <p>ii) Hedgetrimming – the clerk had received an email from Lawrence Hackling acknowledging members' concerns and offering to pass their comments on to the relevant contractor.</p> <p>iii) Cannington Cold Stores – the pre-application consultation process; Mr V Hughes expressed the view that the process had to be judged as unsatisfactory overall by virtue of the fact that so many angry and uninformed people attended the last meeting. He felt that the process had spectacularly failed in its purported aim of encouraging applicants to involve and consult with their close neighbours, as this simply didn't happen. It was also pointed out that the Parish Council had been pressed to hold a meeting at very short notice, whilst not fully understanding the implications thereof, and that surely such a meeting should only have been held when the necessary interested parties had been informed of the very existence of the application.</p> <p>Mr V Hughes also felt that the Parish Council's response offering support to the scheme prior to the actual application being submitted was somewhat premature, and he felt uncomfortable with the fact that such support was subsequently cited as "evidence" in the actual planning documentation.</p> <p>Mr J Edwards felt that there was much to be commented on regarding the process</p>	

	<p>itself, on issues falling outside of the “planning criteria” umbrella, not least the fact that the consultation process was initiated and driven by the applicants, leading to unfair bias. The help that he felt ought to have been forthcoming from SDC, bearing in mind that this was a totally new process, was noticeably absent.</p> <p>The 4 members of the public left the meeting at 8.55pm.</p>			
5.	<p>Footpath: SALC: QHJAC: Parish Cluster Reports (as appropriate) – the SALC AGM notes are to be found at the end of these minutes. Mr V Massey attended the Deer Forum and reported that there is a fear of overgrazing and that 50% of the 800 deer present on the Quantocks will need to be culled.</p>			
6.	<p>Financial items:</p> <p>i) Statement of Accounts: Current account £724.75 cr, Capital Reserve account £21561.66 cr. A comment was made by Mr K Dyer that the Parish Council seemed to be holding considerable funds in reserve, and that a portion of these should be spent on local projects, something that has been highlighted by the clerk in the past. Members agreed with this although pointed out that at least £10,000 has been allocated to the Village Hall porch project and hopefully will be paid out soon.</p> <p>ii) Payments: it was agreed that £5 should be paid to Richard Young for completing the internal audit, as well as £150 to Mark Husband for grasscutting this year; however, since the clerk had omitted to bring the cheque book, these payments could not be issued at the meeting.</p> <p>Mark Husband had mentioned to the clerk that he would be willing to undertake further grasscutting in St Margaret’s churchyard for a further £150 fee and it was decided that Mr R Adcock would discuss this with him and report back to the next meeting.</p> <p>Mr J Edney left the meeting at 9.35pm.</p> <p>iii) Recreation & Amenity grant – the sum of £102.45 had been received from SDC, but it was nevertheless agreed that £400 should be paid to each of Spaxton and Merridge Village Halls – cheques to be issued at the next meeting.</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>RA</td> </tr> </table>	RA	
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7.	<p>Planning items:</p> <p>i) Applications decided since last meeting: as per the October 2007 agenda.</p> <p>ii) New Applications:45/07/00023 – Mr & Mrs Phillips, erection of conservatory to west elevation at Radlet Barn, Spaxton – members objected to this on the basis that they felt the new structure would detract from the character of the barn and undermine the concept of preserving old, characterful buildings as far as possible in their former state. 45/07/24 Mr D Fox, Remove one limb, 30% crown thin and reshape one Ash Tree, fell 3 Black Poplar Trees, 1 Cypress Tree, 1 Apple Tree, 1 Damson Tree, 2 Cherry Trees and 3 Lombardy Poplars at Splatts Mill, Spaxton – no observations.</p>			
8.	<p>Correspondence received: circulated at the meeting other than:</p> <p>i) The HGV pinch-point document was handed to Mr V Hughes for action.</p> <p>ii) The request for suggestions on ways to improve Cluster arrangements was given to Mr J Edwards for reply.</p> <p>iii) Path Prioritisation document – also to Mr J Edwards.</p> <p>iv) Mr J Edwards & Mr M Stevens will attend the Quantock Hills Annual Event on November 7th.</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>VH</td> </tr> <tr> <td>JE</td> </tr> </table>	VH	JE
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9.	<p>Matters of report & items for the next meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allotments: in all, 8 are required, and Mr B Porter suggests the land is made available on 1st December upon the expiration of Mr M Williams’ grasskeep tenancy. New fencing will need to be erected in addition to the existing fencing, and Mr B Porter will obtain a quotation. The interested parties are to be asked to provide 5 years’ rent up front, and to ensure that the 	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>BP</td> </tr> </table>	BP	
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	<p>allotments are all sprayed off at the same time to prevent cross-contamination. Further discussion will take place at the November meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village noticeboard – Mr P Williams made the point that, with ample funds in the bank, the Parish Council was well placed to be able to fund the erection of the noticeboard as a freestanding item, enabling the full £400 grant from Mr J Edney to be used towards the purchase of the board itself. It was therefore clarified that Mr V Hughes is to order a £400 noticeboard, with the erection costs being met from PC funds. • Mr M Stevens raised a point about one of the restricted byeways that needs sorting out, and said he would contact the clerk at a later date with more specific details. • Mr J Edwards asked that the issue of storage in respect of old PC records be added to the next agenda. 	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">VH</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">MS</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">SF</div>
10.	Date & time of next meetings: Monday November 5 th and Monday December 3 rd , both at Spaxton Village Hall.	
	The meeting closed at 10.02pm.	

Notes from SALC Meeting 29-9-07 for Spaxton PC Meeting 1-10-07

This was the AGM combining all areas of the County consequently some remarks from the floor may not relate to our area.

Future Local Government: Remember “Status Quo is not an alternative to Unitary”? New schemes of working *must* be introduced. One feature affecting PCs is multi-tier working as well as greater liaison.

Suggestions and comments invited from the floor:

Cluster Meetings, Area Panels and Local Strategic Partnerships: Would have to be greatly beefed up to become an effective way of multi-tier working. How do all these things fit together? Too many meetings.

Smaller councils should allocate jobs to individual councillors eg safety, environmental issues, crime & disorder. These individuals to attend multi-tier meetings. Several commented they already have “one nominated cllr + 2” to deal with planning. For many functions Parish Councillors who take on roles in multi-tier working may have to be trained to higher tier standards, eg for planning functions. A practical problem is all-day committee meetings or, in some Districts, evening meetings continuing to around midnight or into a provisionally set continuation meeting in next few days. There should be scope for appointment of PC reps to sit on SCC committees: [The recent appointment of PC reps to QHJAC is a step in this direction but this committee is advisory rather than executive]

Liaison & Communication: PCs want better feedback from higher tiers on all topics but most examples were in planning matters, eg no info why decision contrary to PC observations. A District attendee remarked there is a problem that PCs do not understand legitimate grounds for objection. PCs might benefit from a current practice talk? Some complain that decisions contrary to PC do not go to planning committee. Many also complained of non-response from higher tiers on other topics.

Looking after the local street scene: PCs could be much more active, eg expand Lengthsman scheme, reported to be working well in some areas on attention to village centres, parks beauty spots – verge cutting.

Finance: Government expects PCs to do more and precept more. Most PCs have doubled precept recently with no howls of protest – vital to explain where money is going, extra precept is then accepted. PCs taking over a task from higher tier should expect to get the funding and add to it if appropriate for better job.

Comments by Higher Tiers: Kerry Richards: SDC will be working differently because Central Gov is to cut funding, probably through enhanced Clusters. Police and PCTs will certainly be unable to communicate with 3rd tier in future. SCC: Recognise that Area Panels need improvement. S Som: Sees a big push for housing coming.

Future of SALC: Area covered may be expanded to be more regional in order to share overheads. Some legally required docs cost £750pa

Somerset Rural Youth Project (Guest Speaker) Has been running successfully for 10 years providing advice and grants for projects. Carried out a survey of youth to find what most are dis-satisfied about: 75% said having no say. When questioned further most youngsters said they didn't know who to go to about what they wanted. "Don't care/not interested" was not a prevalent attitude. Rural organisations should do better to encourage youngsters, Bicknoller PC has a dedicated youth rep. The 25% of those surveyed who said they had found someone to talk to identified club leaders, PCs or individual cllrs.

Code of Conduct Update: Given ~80% complaints are rejected there is pressure for more effective initial filtering. Cllrs who voice an opinion on a topic before decision should be safe provided expressions such as "...but I haven't made up my mind yet" are included. (This is 'pre-disposition' and acceptable – predetermination is unacceptable) The distinction between predisposition and predetermination (bias) is set out in an Occasional Paper pub by Standards Board – see standardsboard.gov.uk/publications then select 'occasional paper'. On suspecting a cllr might breach the Code the Chairman should *invite* cllr to reconsider his position, never (as is increasingly common) *tell* him to declare. Cllrs with a personal and prejudicial interest are allowed to speak in public session but some monitoring officers disagree (vital to check with the monitoring officer) Cllrs who have left the room may be called back solely to answer questions but only if members of the public are offered the same facility.

Post Office Closures: The PO has decided it must close a set number of Post Offices and this will be done according to a strict criteria. Parishes will not be consulted. For those selected for closure it is suggested that the criteria be checked out, if it appears closure of the local PO is not in line with the criteria appeal can be lodged. Postwatch can be contacted for advice. In some areas substitute services may be offered: Outreach (mobile PO – set up for a few hours in local venue eg village hall, pub) or Hub & Spoke (telephone main PO, service delivered later) Complaints about later delivery times and last post times being too close – widening the gap will only be considered from people who can demonstrate damage to their business.

Rural Housing Development: Extra houses in gardens are seen as brownfield development. Much dissatisfaction that this is encouraging sprinkling 'town' style houses in the older core of villages and not at all in-keeping.

Waste Recycling: SCC meeting Woolavington Thurs 15 Nov – What do parishes want?

Planning Pre-Application consultation Process: I described Spaxton's recent experience, making clear that I was presenting only information relating to the procedures and that the topics were for discussion by the PC before responding to SDC's request for comments.

je/slc/mtg07929