



Sutton Poyntz Society

**Minutes of the Sutton Poyntz Society AGM
held at the Mission Hall 7.30 p.m. Wednesday April 11th 2018
Mike Blee in the chair**

1. Talk by Doug Pigg on the proposal for a National Park for Dorset: Doug Pigg and Sandra Brown attended on behalf of the team trying to have a new National Park created for Dorset. Doug's talk noted that a new "21st Century" type of National Park was now being created, with the South Downs National Park as the first. Dorset was the only area currently short-listed candidate, and Natural England would begin a review in about 6 months. This was likely to include an area of East Devon so that the new National Park would encompass the whole Jurassic Coast. Doug noted that the National Parks receive about £10M of additional Government grant per annum, and also that the new National Parks are designed to be entrepreneurial in nature; National Parks actually have a better record of approving planning applications than normal Local Authorities, even though they do not have housing targets imposed on them by government. Much of Dorset's income comes from tourism, although that income is currently falling; the new South Downs National Park had generated a large increase in tourism very quickly after being created. Dorset has wonderful assets, both environmental and heritage, for generating tourism, but currently lacks a focus to ensure good exploitation of those assets. The sea is an important asset for Dorset, and the new National Park could become the first combining on-shore and off-shore areas. Doug noted a number of significant challenges for Dorset, including improving villages as social entities, overcoming gradual deterioration in agricultural industry and the countryside, and making better economic use of the area's heritage assets.

After a few questions, Doug and Sandra left, and the meeting discussed its own attitude to the proposal. It was suggested that a good case had been made in favour of the National Park proposal, but there may be counter-arguments that had not been heard. It was agreed that no decision could be made without hearing both sides of the argument, and the Committee was actioned to find speakers to present both sides to a future Society meeting, so that the Society could decide whether to support the proposal [**Action Committee**].

Refreshments were then served before the main business of the meeting started.

2. Opening Remarks: Mike Blee welcomed the 45 or so villagers at the meeting. He noted that 4 members of the Committee were resigning – Sue Wintle, Liz Balfe and Peter Dye, with Mike himself leaving the Committee as well as ending his term as Chairman. He noted that Peter and Mike were joining the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. As a result, the Committee was likely to be short-handed in the coming year unless any volunteers came forward during the meeting.
3. Apologies were received from Sue Wintle, Liz Balfe, Anthea Heathershaw, Ruth Egerton, Mike & Mary Fry, Cllr Hazel Bruce, and Cllr James Farquaharson.
4. Previous Minutes: The minutes of the AGM held on April 12th 2017 had been distributed before the meeting, and were accepted (proposed Ian Bruce; seconded Peter Jones).
5. Matters Arising: None.
6. Annual report: The Chairman's Report had also been distributed and was approved. The Chairman noted again that the Committee could find itself very short-handed and asked members to consider volunteering. John Sutherland noted that the Report contained no mention of the History and Biodiversity Groups' activities. It was observed that the Biodiversity Group continued to produce regular Newsletters advertising its activities, and the History Group continued to hold regular History Evenings, but these Groups had not provided reports for inclusion in the Annual Report.

7. Treasurer's Report: Terry Pegrum gave his thanks to John Bellis who had examined the accounts. He noted that subscriptions were slightly down on the previous year, as was fund raising income; he expressed his thanks to the organisers of the Society's fund raising events. On the cost side, the Society's insurance premium was slightly reduced. There had been donations to Waves and the St Andrews Angels. The Treasurer noted one exceptional item, a cost of £300 for a Traffic Speed survey that had been commissioned as part of the Neighbourhood Planning work but had been refused as a grant-coverable cost. As a result, there was a smaller annual profit than usual at £105.

In discussion, it was noted that the speed survey was conducted on Plaisters Lane near the junction with Sutton Court Lawns. Thanks were expressed to Jez Cunningham and Bill Davidson for the restoration of the seat near the telephone box.

Terry Pegrum also explained the Neighbourhood Plan grant account, which showed that £8266 had been spent, mainly on consultancy and printing. A balance of just over £3000 was due to be returned to Groundworks who administer Neighbourhood Plan grants on behalf of the Government Department. The Treasurer then discussed the Sutton Poyntz Ltd account, which showed the £3000 grant balance, due to be returned shortly, plus the cost of the Top of the Pond land balanced by a loan, effectively in perpetuity, from the Society. The net assets of the Limited Company are therefore zero.

Finally, the Treasurer explained that there would be no collection of subscriptions this evening, as a new Data Protection law required the Society to use a membership application form that included a Data Protection statement authorising the Society to hold necessary information on its members. This form would be brought round for completion when Newsletter Distributors come round with the next Newsletter.

These accounts were approved by the meeting (proposed Peter Jones, seconded Maureen Morris).

8. Election of Officers, Committee and Independent Examiner: There was no candidate for the post of Chairman. Terry Pegrum was willing to continue as Treasurer, as was Bill Egerton as Secretary and John Bellis as Independent Accounts Examiner. Jez Cunningham, Hilary Davidson, Jackie Greet, Jill Kelsey and Peter Riley were willing to continue as Committee members, but there were no new candidates. These people were all appointed *en bloc* (proposed Ian Bruce, seconded Shirley Davies).

At this point, Mike Blee stepped down from the Chair, and was replaced for the remainder of the meeting by Peter Dye. Peter Dye expressed thanks to Mike Blee for his three years as Chairman, and also particularly thanked Sue Wintle and Liz Balfe for their service on the Society Committee (happily Sue is willing to continue as the Society's representative on the Mission Hall Trust committee).

9. Sutton Poyntz Ltd report: Peter Dye noted that the Committee had discussed converting the Limited Company to Community Interest Company status. This is a form of Company particularly suitable for Companies whose sole purpose is to serve the interests of a local community, as SPLtd does. The conversion would allow the Company to purchase the redundant Telephone Box on behalf of the village, at the price of £1 (which £1 had been donated a few years ago by Dave Wintle). The decision rests with the Directors, but the Society's views were being sought.

One question from the floor concerned the cost of making this conversion – Post Meeting Note; the fee for the conversion is £25.

10. Society Constitution: Peter Dye noted that the Committee proposed that it should create a Code of Conduct for the Committee Officers and members. The Terms of Reference for the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group included a Code of Conduct, including for example rules relating to declaration of personal interests when relevant topics are discussed; among other benefits this offers protection to members of the Steering Group. It had been thought illogical that the Steering Group has a Code of Conduct but the Society itself does not. As a result, the Committee had written a proposed Code of

Conduct; it, plus some proposed changes to the Society Constitution and a new Data Protection Policy, would be put to the Society's members at the next available General Meeting.

11. AOB: Mike Pressly raised an issue that he had identified with the Society's Planning Policy, which currently makes no reference to the Development Boundary. He had proposed a motion to change the Planning Policy, but the motion had been submitted too late to be considered. He was now seeking views from members, so he could decide whether to propose a motion and seek a Special General Meeting. His motion proposed that the Society would automatically oppose any application outside the Development Boundary, unless this was specifically reversed by a Society General Meeting. He noted that the importance of the Development Boundary had been stressed repeatedly in Society documents, including particularly the 1999 Village Survey and the 2007 Village Plan, and had now received confirmation in the recent Neighbourhood Plan Stage 2 Survey.

In discussion, Nick Maton noted that the December Committee meeting had raised the question of whether the Committee should bring a motion on these lines to the AGM. He also asked in passing why the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group had abandoned the list of Key Views originally included in the Stage 2 Survey. John Sutherland noted that Policy 2 in the Planning Policy required preservation of the village's "compact shape" and asked whether this did not require the Development Boundary to be adhered to. He also disputed the Committee's decision that Mike Pressly's proposed motion was submitted too late; this depended on the interpretation of the words "Constitution and Rules" in the Constitution.

Cllr Ian Bruce noted that the Development Boundary itself was under review as part of the Local Plan review; a report was expected very soon. He also noted that after Local Government Reorganisation in Dorset, planning applications would probably be heard by Area Planning Committees, and that he expected that the same Area Planning Committee would cover Sutton Poyntz and the houses at the top of Plaisters Lane. Cllr Bruce observed that our Neighbourhood Plan would in effect trump the Local Plan, and urged the village to bring its Neighbourhood Plan to completion.

Mike Blee noted that the Committee's decision on the application outside the Development Boundary had effectively been a "no comment". Richard Backwell expressed his regard for Mike Pressly as a former Chairman of the Society, and supported his concerns about the Society's Planning Policy. Shirley Davies said she hoped the introduction of the Neighbourhood Plan would make divisive discussions such as this unnecessary, but it was observed that the Neighbourhood Plan would not actually be approved until maybe August 2019 at the earliest. Chris Hubbard asked whether approval of the Neighbourhood Plan was automatic, and noted that as the answer was clearly No, the Society's Planning Policy certainly needs to be maintained for a while longer.

A motion was then put to the meeting: "**That the Society Committee will arrange for a Special General Meeting in the near future, so that Mr Pressly's motion on amending the Planning Policy can be formally debated and voted on**" (proposed Mike Pressly, seconded Peter Jones). Anne Dye expressed concern that issues such as this can be considered democratically when the Hall has a limit of 60 people. However the motion was then voted on, and carried, 22 members voting in favour and 12 voting against. [**Action Committee**].

On another matter, Erica Ferrari asked what proportion of the village's population were members of the Society. Post Meeting Note: the membership for 2017/18 was 285 adults of whom about 10 live outside the Neighbourhood Area. The village population from the 2011 Census was calculated in the Place Appraisal document as 456, with 12% (i.e. 55) aged under 16 – the numbers of those aged 16 and above and living with their parents is not known. Therefore at least 69% of the village's adult population are members.

Finally, Bill Egerton noted that 2018 is the 50th Anniversary of the Society, and asked whether anything should be done to celebrate the event.

The Chairman closed the meeting at about 10 p.m., with the serving of further refreshments.