

**Lynsted with Kingsdown Parish Council**  
**Minutes of AGM held on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> May 2021 at 8pm**  
**Lynsted Park, Lynsted Lane, ME9 0JH**

**Present: Cllrs Speed (Chairman); Delaney (Vice Chairman); Morgan; Dawes; Carr; Ross-Russell; Langdon-Bassett; Bott and M Mulley (Clerk)**

**Mike Whiting (SBC); Lloyd Bowen (SBC) and Rich Lehmann (KCC)**

**Meeting commenced at 20.03**

**1. Apologies for absence** None

**2. Chairman's introduction**

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending our first face to face meeting since Feb 2020

**3. Finance Report – 2020/2021**

**a) Annual Return - Section 1 Annual Governance Statement 2020/21**

Chairman read out report to members. Agreed by all as correct. Proposed TC Seconded LM.  
Signed by Chairman.

**b) Annual Return - Section 2 Accounting Statements 2020/21**

Chairman read out figures to members. Agreed by all as correct. Proposed JLB Seconded CD.  
Signed by Chairman.

**c) Certificate of Exemption - AGAR 2020/21 Part 2**

The total gross income had been £21,396

The total gross expenditure had been £22,676

The exemption certificate was agreed by all as correct.

Proposed TC Seconded PD. Signed by Chairman

**d) Internal Auditors Report**

The Chairman read out the annual internal auditor's report to members. The internal auditor found all the financial records to be accurate and up to date. Proposed as correct by TC, seconded VRR. The Chairman congratulated the Clerk on the findings of the internal auditor.

**4. Chairman's Report 2020/21**

The Chairman presented his report for the year - see appendix. Members and Ward Councillors thanked the Chairman for the work he had carried out in making representations on behalf of the Parish regarding the draft Swale Local Plan. All present agreed with these sentiments.

**5. Election of Office – Chairman & acceptance of office**

The Clerk asked all Councillors if they would like to stand for the position of Chairman. Cllr Speed agreed to re-stand, all other Cllrs declined. JLB proposed and TC seconded that Cllr Speed be re-elected as Chairman for the following year. Cllr Speed accepted.

**6. Election of Office – Vice Chairman & acceptance of office**

The Clerk asked remaining Councillors if they would like to stand for the position of Vice-Chairman. Cllr Delaney agreed to re-stand. LM proposed and VRR seconded that Cllr Delaney be elected as Vice Chairman. Cllr Delaney accepted

**7. To agree any committees for the forthcoming 12 months**

It was agreed that small working groups would be formed as and when required throughout the coming year for any items that required special attention. The informal planning group had worked well and would continue for another year. Unanimously agreed.

**8. To agree arrangements for appointing representatives to outside bodies and committees**

Subject to availability, the Chairman would continue to represent LKPC at the meetings of KALC and the SBC Eastern Area Committee.

**9. To agree arrangements for reviewing the Standing Orders**

Standing orders had been amended to accommodate Zoom meetings and would be amended as and when necessary. All present agreed with this policy.

**10. Statement of Internal Control & Risk Assessment**

Both documents had been reviewed through the year and it was agreed by all that these documents were up to date. Proposed LM Seconded TC

**11. Time for members of the public to speak** None

**12. AOB** None

**Meeting closed at 20.35**

**Minutes prepared by Marion Mulley**

## Appendix

### Chairman's Report: 2020/2021

I've only been chairman for seven months, although to be honest it's felt more like a decade.

That's because on 18 January of this year I discovered for the first time that the draft Swale Local Plan included a proposal to build 1,100 new houses in Teynham & Lynsted, in addition to those already built or planned. This included 300 new houses in the parish of Lynsted, which would increase our housing stock by 60%. Worse than that, a southern relief road was proposed in order to facilitate the housing which, whilst the route was not determined, would inevitably run through best most versatile agricultural land and adjacent to listed buildings.

So I thought it would be helpful to recap what the PC has undertaken in the intervening time. Firstly, I wrote to every borough councillor urging them to vote against taking the draft plan to Regulation 19 consultation, outlining 14 reasons why the process had been unsound. Nevertheless, the motion was carried on 3 February.

By mid-February we had produced and delivered our first newsletter, drawing everyone's attention to the plan as of course no-one knew anything about it.

We attended a joint meeting with six other local PCs in order to ensure we were all on the same page. This resulted in all seven PCs writing to SBC demanding an extension to the original six week consultation period, arguing it was far too short. This was successful, although I was disappointed that no further joint action was taken by the group of PCs.

We briefed Knights Solicitors to prepare our objections to the so-called Teynham Area of Opportunity (the TAO) and this resulted in a really excellent, robust 24 page document being submitted to SBC arguing that the Local Plan was neither sound nor legally compliant.

I helped a local resident to launch a petition against the TAO which attracted 1,072 signatures. And I also wrote numerous letters to the chief executive of SBC, the Cabinet member for Planning and the Leader of Council – although I have to say that the responses were far from satisfactory.

Cllr Delaney arranged for Larissa Reed (CEO of SBC) to attend an Extra Ordinary meeting of the PC at which she and Jill Peet, the planning officer, attempted to answer 25 questions that we had posed – although again, the responses did not fill us with any confidence that our objections were being listened to.

Cllr Ross Russell then conducted a survey of residents asking them for their views on the Lynsted bypass. We received 261 responses from across Teynham & Lynsted, which is high for such a small community, and 95% of Lynsted residents objected to the bypass, with 89% strongly objecting.

This was an important piece of research, because it demonstrated statistically that the actions we were taking were supported by the overwhelming majority of our community – although of course we'd already had a lot of direct feedback.

We lobbied our local MP, Gordon Henderson, and he wrote a strong letter of objection regarding the Local Plan.

Media wise, we have had four significant articles in the Kent Messenger – both Faversham and Sittingbourne editions – strongly supporting our position. Three of these articles also appeared on Kent Online.

On social media, we've been very active with numerous posts on the likes of the Teynham & Lynsted Facebook Group, Next Door, Lynsted What's App Group, Faversham Matters etc

In April, we published a second newsletter which was again delivered to every household in the Parish. This contained more detail on the implications for our neighbourhood, and explained the stance that we as a Parish Council were taking, based on the legal advice we had received. This was intended to help residents start thinking about the representations they might like to make themselves. The back page took the form of a poster that people could cut out and place in their front windows, if they objected to the plans.

The LKPC website was also a major source of information. Don't forget we were in lockdown, so unable to hold any public meetings other than via Zoom, or knock on doors in any meaningful way.

A total of 16 news items were uploaded onto the Parish Council's website about the Local Plan and these pages had over 3,000 views – a pretty high figure for a small PC website over such a short period of time.

Working in tandem with the Parish Council, a group of local residents had formed an informal action group called STOP-TAO. At their own expense, they produced a postcard which was distributed not only to every household in Lynsted, but every household in Teynham as well.

The STOP-TAO website was also launched, which gave residents specific advice on how to comment on soundness and legal compliance. The website only went live a week before the consultation closed, but it received over 2,000 page views in that one week – and there were only four pages! Views peaked at 464 on the Thursday before the deadline.

So, what were the results of all this activity?

Nigel Heriz-Smith has very kindly analysed the responses on the consultation portal.

In total, there were 226 individual commentators on the TAO, making 734 individual comments on the 23 paragraphs that made up the TAO section.

Remember this is a Borough-wide plan, and the Borough stretches from Faversham across to the Isle of Sheppey. 734 comments means that over 30% (nearly a third) of ALL the comments across the entire Borough related to little old Lynsted & Teynham. This demonstrates both strength of feeling locally about the TAO, but also the effectiveness of the campaign that we ran.

93% of these respondents are clearly opposed to the TAO. Four per cent are neutral, and just three per cent support it – mainly those with vested interests, such as developers.

Gratifyingly, well over half of residents used the suggestions on how to comment on soundness and legal compliance, either in full or in part, that were provided by the STOP-TAO website as well as by the various LKPC materials.

Even more detailed comments were published by Nigel Heriz-Smith on his AQMA5 website, and I'd like to thank Nigel in particular for the tremendous support he has provided to the PC. His clear-sighted analysis of complex documentation has been invaluable.

But I'd also like to thank all members of the PC as well as the action group for the contributions they have made – whether it be strategically, financially or practically such as contributing to documents or pounding the streets of Lynsted shoving literature through doors.

As if dealing with the Local Plan wasn't enough, the application to build 86 houses off Lynsted Lane reared its head for the third time on 28 January, literally 10 days after we heard about the TAO. For this one, we had three weeks to respond and as previously, we briefed Allison Bowers to draft a letter of objection and this was submitted. We didn't produce a resident newsletter this time, as we were focussing our efforts on the Local Plan. Instead, we were active on social media and the posts relating to Lynsted Lane on the LKPC website attracted a further 500 page views. The first application in 2019 attracted 87 objections from local residents. The second 109. The third, over 150. So if the developers were hoping for objection fatigue they will have been sorely disappointed.

Over the year, we also continued to scrutinise all planning applications in the Parish and made our recommendations as appropriate. But it wasn't all just about planning.

We designated four areas as Local Green Spaces to help protect them from development, an excellent document produced by Cllr Ross Russell. We lobbied for better broadband in the village. We created a checklist for how all new build properties in the Parish should demonstrate environmental responsibility, an initiative led by Cllr Dawes. We continue to lobby for improvements to drainage in and around The Street, again led by Cllr Dawes who also liaised with Stepping Stones nursery, as a result of which we agreed to donate £2,000 to help keep them afloat during the pandemic.

Looking ahead briefly to the next year, I feel our activity will be determined by the outcome of the Local Plan. Will SBC withdraw it and launch a new Reg 18 consultation, or will it proceed to the Examination in Public in which case we will need to marshal our representations.

One point that emerged from our meeting with Larissa Reed was that the Lynsted Parish Design Statement, whilst adding much value to the planners' toolkit, now has limited weight as it was adopted in 2002. The Local Plan, if or when adopted, will over-ride it where there are conflicts - as it will have full weight and take precedence.

We therefore need to think about re-visiting the Parish Design Statement and converting it into a Neighbourhood Plan. This plan, as I understand it, would carry the same weight as a Local Plan. It needs significant input from the community and indeed does not have to be a PC initiative. It also requires collaboration with SBC's planning team. At the moment, our objectives do not appear to be aligned with theirs, so it may be that we need to await the outcome of the Local Plan Review. But, moving forwards, it's something to think about and may be an opportunity to build some bridges.

I'd also like to reapply for funding for an Air Quality survey in the AQMA5 area, after meeting with SBC officers to understand their reasons for rejecting our application in March.

**Julien Speed**  
**Chairman**