

MINUTES OF FIVEHEAD PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Held on Monday 24 January 2022 at 1830 at The Village Hall, Stowey Road, Fivehead

Present:

Mrs K Beacham– Chair (KB); Mr R Wynn (RW); Mrs N Cameron (NC); Mrs L Howard (LH); Dr B Ferguson; County Councillor C Paul (CP); District Councillor M Stanton (MS) and Mrs J Parsons - Clerk/RFO (JP).

4217 Public participation

The applicants and agent were present for discussions on planning application **21/03729/FUL**. One further member of the public was in attendance.

Agenda item 9a was brought forward by the Chair. Plans for the demolition of an existing barn and erection of a single, detached 3-4 bed bungalow at Lower Swell were summarised by the agent and a copy of the pre-application report was made available, along with printed A4 plans.

Heritage and ecology assessments had been undertaken. The new access point to the property would require removal of a section of hedgerow, which was considered to be species poor and a new hedgerow would replace where the current barn wall will be removed, which would enhance bio-diversity. The new access splay had been designed by a former Highways Officer. The location was considered sustainable as it was within walking distance of Fivehead village amenities

The Chair raised queries received from a local expert in bats, about the potential effects of the development on bats and dormice present at the location, as the parish is fortunate to have a number of rare bat species. The agent confirmed that the barn had been inspected for bats, but none were present, and it was considered an unsuitable location as it was open-fronted. The planned enhancements could be considered better for bats after development. Ecology assessments for dormice had found none present, likely to be due to the gaps in the hedgerows. Adding the new hedgerow may make this more suitable in future.

Due to recent difficulties with developments not turning out as originally presented, the change in height from a flat roof barn to a dwelling with a pitch roof was queried. The agent estimated it would be around 40% higher, similar to the height of a taller barn on the same site. It was also noted that two previous applications for development at this site had been turned down, but the agent stated that the position had changed and residential development was currently considered favourable due to the district no longer having a five-year land supply.

Members voted in support of the application (4 - for). **Action:** Clerk to submit response in favour of the application to SSDC Planning by 8 Feb 2022.

The agent and applicants were thanked for coming along to talk through the application and they left at this point.

4218 County Councillor's Report

County Councillor Paul's latest report had been circulated to Members and made available on the Parish website (<https://fivehead-village.org.uk/update-from-county-councillor-clare-paul-4/>).

It was noted that the new online Highways system would enable members of the public to report pot-holes and other faults themselves. Details had been added to the Parish website and next Parish newsletter.

MS offered to circulate the monthly report that he prepares for his Ward, whilst he continues to stand in for Councillor Malcolm Cavill. Although Malcolm was recovering well, he was not expected to resume his duties until later in the year, therefore MS would be looking after the planning aspects for Fivehead and would attend meetings as needed. Both CP and MS supported the use of Zoom to help facilitate meetings, but unfortunately there had been no change in the legislation as yet, to allow this for formal meetings.

4219 Apologies for absence

Mr K Male

4220 Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council, previously circulated, held on 6 December 2021, were approved. Proposed by LH and seconded by NC. Carried unan. Hard copies of the Minutes were signed by the Chair.

4221 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

As Members with a property within the administrative area of Fivehead and Swell Parish, the setting of the Parish Precept would relate to or affect a disclosable pecuniary interest that has been registered. Members signed a request for dispensation. Dispensation was granted by the Monitoring Officer (the Clerk) to the Members in attendance, to allow them to freely and fully participate in relation to setting the Precept for FY22/23.

4222 Matters arising from the Minutes (6 Dec 21) and raised by Members

- a) **Councillor resignation /actions required** – Councillor Brett's (PB) resignation had been received. As parish elections had been brought forward to May 22, Members felt that the vacancy could be filled as part of this process. The Clerk would notify Democracy Services and check current requirements. Members considered the roles and responsibilities that would need to be covered going forward – i) Social media posts (Facebook/Nextdoor); ii) Parish website; iii) Parish Online (mainly for Planning); iv) Custodianship of the War Memorial; v) Playing Field Committee. PB had kindly offered to continue with social media posts for information supplied by the Clerk and promotion of activities from local businesses/organisations. NC expressed an interest for training for the website. The Clerk would cover planning updates based on the Minutes, in the interim. BF offered to take over as Playing Field representative. It was agreed that a note should be circulated detailing what was required for the website, Parish Online and the War Memorial so Members could give further thought to this before the next meeting. Members wished to thank PB for her extensive contribution to a wide-range of village life over the past five years and were grateful to have her ongoing support as a volunteer on projects, where possible. **Action:** Clerk to inform SSDC Democracy Services/Monitoring Officer of the resignation, to inform the Playing Field Chair of the new representative and to circulate details of the other responsibilities for consideration at the Feb 22 meeting.
- b) Parish Fund – an application had been completed on behalf of the Village Hall for funding the installation of Wi-fi and six months start-up costs via the third stage of the Parish Fund administered by SALC. **Resolution: to request a grant allocation of £471 from the SCC Parish Fund to part-fund the Village Hall Wi-fi needs, to be transferred once received.** Proposed RW and seconded by NC. Carried unan. (See Min 4213a)

CP and MS left at this point.

- c) Defibrillator project – i) **Resolution: to authorise the hosting of a defibrillator in the Parish Council's refurbished phone box opposite St Martin's Church, Fivehead and for the Clerk to sign the tailored hosting agreement on the Council's behalf (as Host), subject to the cPAD scheme parties being written in full (Community Heartbeat Trust and the Fivehead Defibrillator Group, a sub-group of Fivehead Village Hall Management Committee).** Proposed by KB and seconded by NC. Carried unan. ii) It was noted that the sub-group had been authorised by the Village Hall Committee and this had been minuted. There would be no cost to the Parish Council and no insurance liability, as host. The responsibility for the equipment checks and insurances would be with the cPAD scheme. The Parish Council would continue to ensure the area around the phone box was clear and accessible as part of its monthly checks.

- d) Cemetery – i) **Resolution: to increase Cemetery fees by 4.6% for inflation wef 1 Feb 2022.** Proposed by BF and seconded by LH. Carried unan. ii) It was agreed that the old rates for an enquiry received in January would be applicable.
- e) Queen’s Platinum Jubilee – an article had been included in the February parish newsletter inviting volunteers and suggestions for Fivehead’s local celebrations to be emailed to the Clerk by 14 February. Members felt that a low-cost event such as a ‘BYO’ picnic at the Village Hall/Playing Field on Sunday 5 June, would be well-received at the current time. PB had passed on a list of a small group of volunteers who had already expressed an interest to help. RW offered to check on availability of long tables from Hatch Beauchamp. LH offered to liaise with PB to see who might like to take the lead on arrangements. KB would liaise with the VH to reserve the venue. **Action:** RW to contact Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall to check availability of tables and reserve as soon as possible. LH to liaise with PB. KB to contact the VH.
- f) Newsletter advertising – it was agreed that advertising fees would remain at the 2021 rates until the business directory on the website was ready to launch, which was anticipated to be April 22.

4223 Correspondence Received

- a) Notification from SSDC had been received that Town and Council Elections will be brought forward to 5 May 2022
- b) Curry Rivel PC were arranging a follow-up meeting to discuss views on the ‘Heart of the Levels’ Local Community Network and NC had offered to attend as Fivehead’s representative.
- c) It was noted that the next Local Government Reorganisation Advisory Board Meeting would be held online on 3 February 2022 from 3.30pm.

4224 Reports

- a) Village Hall – the January meeting had been inquorate so the next meeting would be the AGM on 15 Feb 22.
- b) Highways – i) the Clerk reported that Highways had postponed the meeting with the Glendale developer to look at the drainage and verges at the bottom of Butcher’s Hill, as part of relieving the long-term flooding issues. An update has been requested after the meeting has taken place. ii) The HGV problems on Swell Lane/Hazeldene Lane had been referred to Traffic Management by Highways and would be reviewed at the February meeting.
- c) Environment – i) KB passed on a report from Dave Braddock that several months of wildlife records had now successfully been uploaded via the SERC portal in December. ii) The bramble in the Cemetery had been cut back by DB and the waste chopped up with his brushcutter. The log area left as a wildlife habitat had been tidied and there was a small amount of work left to tidy up and prune some of the shrub branches. In the Spring, DB had kindly offered to tidy a small hedged compartment and the front fence line.
- d) Police – the latest newsletter had been published on the Parish website.
- e) Asset/Maintenance Check Report – BF reported that the water in the grit bin at the bottom of Butcher’s Hill had been sorted by KM and the bin had been refilled. RW took over the report for Feb 22.
- f) Rights of Way – the Clerk passed on Mary Braddock’s latest update on progress with the parish paths. i) Mary and Dave Braddock had cleared and opened up the footpath which runs from the top road near Cathanger to A378 over the Xmas period. Mary had made contact with SCC’s new ranger, who had agreed to install steps on L11/42 and put in a handrail to make this a much safer option for descending the slope, so no funding would be required from the Parish. ii) Mary had also agreed with the ranger for the steps on the footpath L11/39 on the lower slope of A378 (north side) to be cleaned out, a rickety stile to be replaced with a gate and new steps to descend to the field below. The broken stile on L11/33 (which runs along from Smiths Farm to Squirrelmead cottage) would also be replaced with a gate and the bar over the ditch at Squirrelmead cottage on the same path. Excellent progress had been made and members wished to thank Mary and the team of volunteers for all their hard work and successes, which was a great start to the year.
- g) Playing Field, Cemetery and SALC – nothing to report

4225 Planning - see <http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/planningsearch/> for details. The applications below were considered:

- a) **21/03729/FUL**- Land OS 0082 Part Lower Swell Fivehead Taunton - application for the demolition of existing barn and erection of single dwelling – see Min 4217.
- b) **21/00135/FUL** – Land opposite Old Manse, Stillbrook Road, Fivehead – it was noted that work had commenced on site w/c 17 Jan but it was unclear whether up-to-date ecology licences for hedge work were in place and concerns had been raised about fencing that had been erected, which appeared to be closer to the hedge than permitted. A report had been submitted to SSDC Planning/Enforcement requesting confirmation.
- c) **21/01760/HOU** – Erection of an outbuilding, Squirrelsmead Cottage, South Drove, Fivehead – permitted STC
- d) **21/02392/S73** – Thane Barn, Cathanger Lane, Fivehead, TA3 6PS - permitted STC

4226 FY22/23 Finances/Budget

- a) Village Hall grant application – see Min 4211a. It was agreed that £500 would be included in next year's budget and the grant to be awarded would be considered again once it was known if the Parish Fund grant application had been successful (notification expected in Feb 22).
- b) Playing Field grant application – as the Playing Field currently had no means of income, a grant of £3K was considered for essential maintenance and upkeep of the area to keep the facility running. This would cover grass maintenance (three comparative quotes had been obtained); equipment safety inspections and insurance. It was agreed that the sum requested would be included in next year's budget, but it would be reviewed again before the grant was awarded, when further information on the organisation's finances and other grant opportunities would be available.
- c) Draft budget and precept - Members considered the balance of difficult times for many due to the ongoing pandemic, with high inflation rates, and agreed that a Precept increase of 2.96% (equivalent to £1.77pa on Band D charge) would be prudent for FY22/23. This was lower than inflation and would require a small top up from general reserves to cover budgeted expenditure.
Resolution: to set the budget requirement of £17,092, with a Precept of £16,150, assuming that the allocation of grant is £0. Proposed by RW and seconded by NC. Carried unan.

4227 Finance

- a) Payments authorised and unrecorded during the previous month:
 - (i) Parish Magazine Printing – Newsletter printing (Dec) - £274.90
 - (ii) Arbortech – Emergency tree work in Cemetery - £54 inc VAT
- b) Payments to be authorised:
 - (i) H Price – Editor's honorarium for newsletter (Jan-Dec 21) - £200
 - (ii) Village Hall – Small meeting room fees (Dec) - £16
 - (iii) J Parsons – Clerk/RFO – Salary (Dec) - £489.60
 - (iv) J Parsons – Homeworking allowance (Dec) - £26
- c) Income received:
 - (i) NatWest Interest (Nov) - £0.45

4228 Matters of Report, Questions and Items for the Next Meeting

- a) Councillors – it was noted that some signage had been placed on a 30mph speed limit sign on the A378. Highways had recently reviewed this so the Clerk would check if this had been authorised with them for the next meeting.

4229 Date for Next Meeting

Monday 21 February 2022 at 6.30pm, Village Hall/Playing Field, Stowey Road, Fivehead

The meeting closed at 8.04pm.

Chairman.....

Dated.....