

DRAFT MINUTES OF FIVEHEAD PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Held on Monday 9 January 2023, at 1830, at The Village Hall, Stowey Road, Fivehead

Present:

Mrs K Beacham – Chair (KB); Mrs L Howard (LH); Mrs C Munday (CM); Mr R Wynn (RW); Mr D Braddock (DB); Dr B Ferguson (BF); County Councillor M Stanton (MS); District Councillor M Cavill; Mrs J Parsons - Clerk/RFO (JP) and one member of the public.

4379 County Councillors' Report

The latest report from the County Councillors had been circulated to Members and was available on the Parish website (<https://fivehead-village.org.uk/update-from-county-councillors-jan-23/>). MS added: i) the budget for 23/24 had been finalised and would be presented in February; ii) Following the consultation process, the terms of reference for the Local Community Networks (LCN) would be considered at the Council's Executive Meeting the following week. The recommendations would be published as part of the meeting papers at 5pm on 10 Jan. Budgets for the LCNs would be available and how this would work on an individual basis was still to be worked out with the LCNs. KB said that it had been stressed that parishes would not be required to take on things unless they were willing. iii) As part of his adult social care remit, MS was involved in working through the issues with our hospitals being clogged up. There were 30-40 patients needing to be discharged to either care homes or their own homes. A 3-day initiative had taken place at Musgrove with a team of senior people looking at the issues. There were enough beds but staff shortage was a problem. There was also an issue with acute admittances, where care packages were being cancelled after the 5th day if the person had not been discharged. It was hoped that it might be possible to extend the packages for a few more days to allow more time for recovery.

4380 District Councillor's Report

MC had returned to business in January and reported on a recent meeting of Curry Mallet Parish Council, who were currently exploring a community shop venture, as their Post Office and shop is closing on 31 March. He had fed back that some passing trade may come from surrounding parishes, but as Fivehead has its own shop and post office facilities, local residents support and benefit from this.

4381 Apologies for absence

Mr J Benton (JB)

4382 Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council, previously circulated, held on 5 December 2022, were approved. Proposed by DB and seconded by CM. Carried unan. Hard copies were signed by the Chair.

4383 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

Relating to matters at Min 4389a and 2389b – BF, as a member of the Village Hall and Playing Field Committees, would be asked to withdraw from decisions on grant funding as necessary.

4384 Planning application 22/03283/HOU

Agenda item 10a was brought forward by the Chair. The applicant was present to answer any queries. The application had been requested by SSSDC, for adding a lower window for fire safety, and some other minor alterations, including an extra window on the garage roof and updates to the bi-fold door, to reduce to 3-fold. The applicant confirmed that the wildlife box would remain in place.

Members voted unanimously to support the application (6 - for). **Action:** Clerk to submit response in favour of the application to SSSDC Planning by the extended deadline of 11 Jan 23.

The applicant was thanked and remained in the meeting.

4385 Matters arising from the Minutes (5 Dec 2022) and raised by Members

- a) Effluent from wastepipe south of Sunnyside Park – although the discharge seemed satisfactory, the main concern was the pooling at the end of the ditch, where it flows into a culvert, under the bridge and disappears. Running water could be heard but not seen; there was possibly a blockage on the other side. DB reported that a hole had been dug out at the end of the ditch and there was a yellow marker. MS had previously visited the site and reported the matter to the Environment Agency. MC offered to speak to the surrounding landowners to see if they could help. The matter would be reviewed again at the next meeting. **Action:** MC to follow up to see if anything can be done to help the flow on the other side of the culvert. Clerk to add to Feb 23 agenda.
- b) Village Hall/Playing Field merger update – no further report as no one had been available to meet in December. KB had written to Robert Horne, the village hall expert, with queries and he was willing to come to another meeting when needed. The next joint meeting was planned for 10 Jan (postponed to 24 Jan). BF and KB would meet to discuss next steps in supporting the process.
- c) Lifted drain – the reported raised drain cover on Isle Brewer's Lane was still giving problems, as it appeared to pop in and out as traffic went over it. Tarmac had been put over it, assumed to be a temporary measure until it could be changed; however, this was causing flooding and was breaking up, so was also a safety concern. It was agreed that DB would check the drain and the Clerk would report again to Highways. **Action:** DB to check drain and Clerk to write to Highways.
- d) Cemetery – burial/memorial enquiries: i) A request from a long-standing, former resident of Fivehead had been received before the Christmas break, for the burial of her sister. Members were in agreement that an exception should be made, as the resident was her sibling's only next of kin. **Resolution: to accept the application for the burial of Miss R Sherriff, in the interest of keeping the family together.** Proposed by KB and seconded by LH. Carried unan. Non parishioner rates for 2022 would be applicable. ii) An application for an inscription to be added to an existing memorial had been processed by the stonemason, prior to the Parish Council's approval, and the headstone had now been returned with the new inscription. Cheque payment had been received but was on hold. The Clerk had written to the mason to let them know that there were matters to resolve with Deed. Members agreed to authorise the inscription retrospectively and the Clerk would write to the mason to clarify the terms and conditions for removal of a headstone for the future. **Resolution: to authorise a second inscription to be added to the memorial for P Maisey without transfer of rights.** Proposed by KB and seconded by LH. Carried unan. **Action:** Clerk to write to stonemason to provide terms and conditions for removing a memorial for future clients and process the fee for the inscription.
- e) St Martin's Churchyard – i) Quinquennial report actions – DB had offered to meet with the tree surgeon on 11 Dec, to obtain advice on the row of conifers along the roadside walls. Advice had been received that their roots would be contributing some pressure on the wall, but there were no visible cracks which would be the first indication of a problem. There was plenty of grass area on the churchyard side for the roots to grow into, which would be the preferred option before growing through walls. This advice backed up the advice of the stonemason who had recommended repointing the walls and monitoring for changes, rather than removal of the trees at this stage. The tree surgeon also confirmed that there was no problem with the Yew tree at the rear of the churchyard, but recommended some remedial work to the load-bearing stems of another Yew in the middle of the churchyard, which was being pulled over by the weight and could fail in future. Members felt that this work should be planned in before any bad weather could cause damage to the tree. A further comparative quote would be sought from a local contact recommended by MC. **Action:** Clerk to obtain quote for remedial work and add to Feb 23 agenda.
- f) Grass maintenance – no further response had been received from SSDC, despite follow-up with a phone message. Members felt that, after all the changes since the pandemic, it was not clear if a regular service could be maintained, so it was agreed that the email with concerns over service levels, previously sent to Jon Brown, would be forwarded to Quentin Coleman for a response and copied to MS/MC. **Action:** Clerk to re-send email to Quentin Coleman, copying in MS and MC for a response and add to Feb 23 agenda.

- g) Grant request from Community Council Somerset – confirmation had been received from CCS that it would be possible to ringfence a grant donation for specific use in the parish, to benefit local residents. This could help provide emergency food, fuel and essential items for warmth and could also be used towards the cost of a Talking Café. Limited funds from the s137 budget line were available at this stage in the financial year, so it was agreed this would ensure a parish grant would have greatest impact. **Resolution: to grant £150, under s137, to the Community Council Somerset Crisis Fund to support local emergency needs and help with social isolation initiatives.** Proposed by DB and seconded by BF. Carried unan. **Action:** Clerk to write to CCS to confirm the grant and conditions of the donation of £150, to be added to payments for February 23.

MS, MC and the member of the public left at this point.

- h) Newsletter price increase – due to rising material costs, the print cost for the newsletter would be increasing by around 10% from the next issue, in February (estimated £32.50). KB and the Clerk would be meeting with the newsletter editor later in the month to look at ways to make savings. **Resolution: to approve a further overspend on budget line 45 for the estimated print increases from Feb 23.** Proposed by KB and seconded by RW. Carried unan.
- i) Litter picking equipment/volunteers update – DB had spoken with the Parish Litter Champion and suggested that some of the Fivehead Fixers (FFs) may be willing to help with local litter collection, including on parish footpaths. He had contacted CPRE who had provided free equipment for 10 people, including litter pickers, gloves, high vis vests and tote bags. CPRE would also provide insurance cover for the volunteers who registered with them for litter picking. The equipment had been distributed to 10 volunteers and they had already collected 7 bags of litter over the holiday period. DB had purchased a bag holder which clips on to a bag to hold it open to make the job easier and more hygienic; a volunteer had tested this and confirmed that it worked well. Members thanked DB for organising everything and agreed to fund 10 bag holders and clips for the cost of £70 as an overspend from the Fixed Assets budget line. **Resolution: to approve an overspend of up to £70 on the Fixed Assets budget line, for the purchase of 10 bag holders and clips for use by parish litter volunteers.** Proposed by LH and seconded by BF. Carried unan. **Action:** DB to order bag holders on his account so that the PC could benefit from free delivery.
- j) Insurance cover for general volunteer work – the Clerk had confirmed with BHIB the terms of cover for using volunteers for general maintenance work. Low level maintenance could be undertaken, providing the volunteers were fit and capable (18-75 or children supervised by parents) and the tasks were *solely* for the Parish Council and fully risk-assessed. Non-motorised Parish Council tools should be used, other than for grass cutting. For fitting bird boxes, the Parish Council would need to be invoiced by the volunteer/contractor for a nominal fee (eg £10), so the work would be covered by their professional insurance.
- k) CIL report – the Clerk had followed up the outstanding CIL liability for the Stillbrook Lane development with SSDC, but had not received an update as yet. (The CIL officer replied the following day that a demand notice had been issued for 4 plots and the first payment would be due on or before 1 March 23. A payment of 15% would be due to the Parish in April 23 providing the monies had been received by SSDC.) **Action:** Clerk to add to March 23 agenda.

4386 Correspondence Received

- a) It was noted that thanks had been received from the Parish magazine editor for the honorarium granted for services in 2022.

4387 Reports

- a) Playing Field / Village Hall – the next joint meeting was to take place on 24 Jan. An action plan would need to be agreed to keep up the momentum of the merger. BF/KB would meet to look at updating the merger document with the feedback received and to consider consulting with Robert Horne on next steps.

- b) Environment – future work to be undertaken by FFs in the Spring would include wildlife gardening in the Cemetery, and wildlife/wildflower gardening with the two churches, planting of the beds in the Pound and weeding of the kerbs in Ganges Close.
- c) Rights of Way – the report from Mary Braddock (MB) had been circulated. L11/6 (Green Lane) had had a ditch dug along one side and gravel put down in an attempt to stabilize the surface. The new farmer on the west side of path had cleared his hedge line and opened up the whole length, allowing more light. Two offers of help had been received from residents to begin to form a team to maintain the work that has been done so MB would be meeting with them to take this forward. The blocked drain on L11/52 (corner at Lower Swell) blocked drain had been reported by SCC to Highways as water was flowing freely down the bridleway. Resources were limited at this stage of the year but the Superintendent would be coming out to assess if anything could be done.
- d) Cemetery – see Min 4385d
- e) SALC, Highways and Police – nothing to report
- f) Asset/Maintenance Check Report – JB to retain for Jan 23

4388 Planning - see <http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/planningsearch/> for details. The applications below were considered:

- a) **22/03283/HOU - Swallows Drift, Isle Moor Road, Fivehead** - installation/reconfiguration of rooflights to the roof of the house and detached garage (part-retrospective) – see Min 4384
- b) **22/03358/DOC1** - Land OS 6790 Lower Swell, Fivehead - discharge of condition No. 4 (Ecological Report) of Planning Application 21/03844/S73A – decision pending – **noted**
- c) An update had been submitted to SSDC Planning Enforcement on 21/12/22 - 22/00324/ENF - Land off Isle Abbotts Road, Fivehead

4389 FY23/24 Finances/budget

- a) Village Hall (VH) grant request – the application from the VH Committee for a grant of £900 towards improving the external lighting at the Hall was discussed. The upgraded lighting was required for safety Hall users in hours of darkness, but also to improve the effectiveness of the CCTV recently installed. It was hoped to include lighting to enable the MUGA to be used at night. As the scope of the work was still being decided, the costs had been estimated in the region of £1800, with the balance to be paid by the VH. Members agreed to fund 50% of the costs for this improvement project, up to a maximum of £900, payable in April 2023, subject to the VH obtaining three formal quotes for the work. **Resolution: to include the award of a grant for 50% of the total cost of the lighting project, up to a maximum of £900 in the FY23/24 budget and precept, to be paid after April 2023.** Proposed by KB and seconded by CM. Carried unan.
- b) Playing Field (PF) grant request – the PF Committee had requested a general maintenance and support grant of £3380, based on the past year’s actual expenditure for key areas (insurance, safety inspections and grass cutting) to enable the PF to continue to function. This figure could be used for budgeting but competitive quotes for insurance and grass cutting would be needed. The PF was also reliant on volunteers to help with tasks, such as hedge cutting, to help keep costs down, and on income from hiring, events and fundraising, which was variable and had not returned to former levels before the pandemic. The grant requested was greater than FY22/23, although some fundraising was anticipated; given the ongoing complication of the merger with the VH, it was agreed that further information was needed before a decision could be made. An update on when the bills would need to be paid and the forecast for next year’s income would be requested at the next joint meeting, so the Parish Council could review the request again in February. **Action:** BF to request further supporting information on cash flow and supplier payment dates, and income from fundraising/hiring for 2023 and feedback for Feb meeting. Clerk to add to agenda for Feb 23.

- c) Draft budget and precept for FY23/24 – the draft budget had been circulated to Members with example precept calculations. It was agreed that it would be helpful to consider the main areas of expense in more detail, to see where any reductions may be made. An informal Zoom meeting would be arranged for Friday 13 January to discuss this, in preparation for a short Finance meeting to approve the budget and precept on Monday 16 Jan.

4390 Finance

- a) Payments authorised and unrecorded during the previous month:
(i) Parish Magazine Printing – Newsletter printing (Dec) - £325.13
- b) Payments to be authorised:
(i) H Price – Editor’s honorarium for newsletter (Jan-Dec 2022) - £200
(ii) J Parsons – Clerk/RFO – Salary (Dec) - £521.16
(iii) HMRC - Clerk/RFO PAYE - £26.84
(iv) J Parsons – Back pay for salary increase (£1 per hour) from April 22 – Oct 22 - £270
(v) J Parsons – Overtime for AGAR/finance work (10 hours approved Nov 22) - £134.50
(vi) J Parsons – Homeworking allowance (Dec) - £26
(vii) Stable A/C Utilities – refund due to payment by error - £35.79
- c) Income received:
(i) NatWest – Interest (Nov) - £31.27
(ii) R Turvey - Ensors Accountants – Pound transfer of ownership - £600 (inc VAT)
(iii) Beehive Self Storage – Newsletter advertising - £55
(iv) Memorial fee – Stones (Balmer) - £380
(v) Stable A/C Utilities – payment received by error - £35.79

4391 Matters of Report, Questions and Items for the Next Meeting

None

4392 Date for Next Meeting

Monday 16 January 2023 at 1830 at Village Hall, Stowey Road, Fivehead

The meeting closed at 8.42pm.

Chairman.....Dated.....