

DRAFT MINUTES OF FIVEHEAD PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Held on Monday 6 February 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); Mr J Benton; County Councillor R Wilkins (CRW) and Mrs J Parsons - Clerk/RFO (JP).

No members of the public in attendance.

4398 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-feb-23/>). Additional comments: i) It was noted that the 54 bus service was now a straight through service again between Taunton and Yeovil. This was run by a private company and less frequency had been accepted as a compromise to be able to provide the through route. ii) CRW reported that Councillor Stanton had been in touch with the Environment Agency (EA) regarding agenda item 4403a and they would be contacting those involved about their responsibilities. He recommended that any future issues be reported via the EA hotline on 0800 807060. iii) The average precept increase for Somerset parishes was 17%. iv) The new planning system was under consultation. Four committee areas were proposed (N, S, E, W), with a strategic committee over-seeing decisions. All County Councillors would receive training in planning.

4399 District Councillor's Report

None

4400 Apologies for absence

County Councillor M Stanton; District Councillor M Cavill

4401 Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council, previously circulated, held on 9 January 2023, were approved. Proposed by DB and seconded by LH. Carried unan. The Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council, previously circulated, held on 16 January 2023, were approved. Proposed by CM and seconded by RW. Carried unan. Hard copies were signed by the Chair.

4402 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

Relating to matters at Min 4403c – BF, as a member of the Playing Field Committee, would be asked to withdraw from decisions on grant funding as necessary.

4403 Matters arising from the Minutes (9 Jan 2023 and 16 Jan 2023) and raised by Members

- a) Effluent from wastepipe south of Sunnyside Park – the matter would be kept under a watching brief and the hotline (see Min 4398) used if needed. **Action:** Clerk to add to March 23 agenda
- b) Village Hall/Playing Field merger update – the merger was progressing well. A new name (Fivehead Village Hall & Playing Field Committee) had been agreed. Village Hall expert, Robert Horne would be submitting the application to the Charity Commission (CC), as this was a complicated process. He would be liaising with the new trustees to verify their ID and upload their details to the CC website. BF had volunteered to become the Parish Council trustee for the new organisation. A new bank account would be set up once the organisation was officially formed, and the old accounts would then be closed down.
- c) Playing Field grant application – no further information was available, due to absence of key people at the meeting on 24 Jan. Provision for essential maintenance had been made in the budget, so the grant would be added to the April agenda for consideration. **Action:** Clerk to add to April 23 agenda

- d) Tree felling at Swell Copse – further felling, mainly of Elm, and flaying of hedgerows had taken place at the end of January. The landowner had sent an update to share at the meeting. The Forestry Commission had visited the site, following a complaint about the work. They found that no offence had been committed and no further action would be taken. There were plans to restock the Copse. Members agreed to seek advice from Phil Poulton, SSDC Tree Officer, about whether the remaining old Oak tree might be protected. **Action:** Clerk to write to Phil Poulton to seek advice on protecting the Oak tree in Swell Copse and add to the March 23 agenda

JB left the meeting.

- e) Lifted drain on Isle Brewers Lane – Highways had been contacted about the tarmac that had been put over the drain, but the superintendent was on leave, so no update would be available until his return. (Later confirmed by DB that the drain cover has been repaired and replaced by Highways).
- f) St Martin's Churchyard – i) Quotes had been obtained for remedial work to the eastern side of a Yew tree. The Churchwarden had confirmed that authorisation from the Diocese would be needed for the work. It was agreed that the Clerk should supply details for the application. **Resolution: to approve quote for £220 + VAT for work on the Yew tree to be carried out by Arbresolutions either before March or after July, subject to approval from the Diocese.** Proposed by LH and seconded by BF. Carried unan. **Action:** Clerk to provide information on tree location and work needed to the Churchwarden and confirm with Arbresolutions that work could be undertaken once approval was received. ii) **Resolution: to defer to Diocese to grant permission required for burial requested in closed churchyard.** Proposed by KB and seconded by LH. Carried unan. iii) The Churchwarden had checked on requirements for future church wall repairs and consultation with the Archdeacon for authorisation was necessary. The Clerk would ask for this to go ahead ready for the work to be carried out in the Spring.
- g) Grass maintenance – a response from SSDC was still needed to confirm the contract for FY23/34. This would be added to the next meeting agenda. **Action:** Clerk to add to March 23 agenda
- h) Newsletter printing / business directory – KB and the Clerk had met with the editor on 24 Jan. i) It was proposed that the publication would remain in full colour, as this makes it professional and appealing to read. The Clerk would obtain three comparative quotes for the next issue to check the market. ii) The business directory was now ready to start adding categories/businesses and would be added to the website, at no extra charge, for newsletter advertisers in 2023. The annual renewal cost of £40 for the plug-in would be paid from the website budget. iii) The editor was considering if it would be helpful to train an apprentice, so that there would be someone to take over/cover for him, and would look at what the role might involve. This will be reviewed again in June, along with advertising and print costs. **Action:** Clerk to obtain three quotes for newsletter printing and set up the newsletter directory. Follow-up meeting to be arranged for June 23 and added to July 23 agenda.
- i) Clerk's contract/holiday calculation – KB, RW and BF had met on 30 Jan to review the Clerk's terms of employment. KB had also contacted SALC for advice and training was available on the Council's employer responsibilities. It was felt that this was essential to be up-to-date with all the requirements. The course was only run infrequently, so if a place was available on 6 March, it was agreed that KB should attend and the March meeting would be moved to 13 March. Budgetary approval would be made retrospectively. **Action:** Clerk to book a place on the SALC employer training course on 6 Mar 23 if available, and rebook meeting for 13 March.
- j) Speed Indicator Device – KB, RW and the Clerk had met via Zoom on 1 Feb to look at the requirements for purchasing a device. The Police had recently installed their devices on the top road for a week and shared the data, which showed a need for speed enforcement. It was felt that this was within the remit of the police speed enforcement team, being an A road, and that residents' main concerns were with the dangerous driving on the bends on Butcher's Hill and Ganges Hill. It was likely that this could still be within the 30mph limit, so having a SID would not help with this. It was agreed that advice would be sought from the Police and also from SCC Highways as to whether it would be possible to reduce the speed limit to 20mph. **Action:** Clerk

to contact the Police to see if a meeting would be possible and SCC Highways for advice on reducing the speed limits within the village and add to Mar 23 agenda

- k) Local Community Network (LCN) update – our parish would be part of LCN 16 (Levels & Moors), which was a large LCN with 16 councillors. It would be important to keep a watching brief on the remit of the LCN, which was still being shaped and would not be completely decided by 1 April 2023. Members did not feel that they had enough information yet to decide how they might become involved. CRW said he would feed this back and it was agreed that this should be a regular item on future agendas. (Information on Terms of Reference for the LCNs was subsequently circulated from Councillor Stanton.) **Action:** Clerk to add to Mar 23 agenda
- l) Terms of Reference for Internal Auditor for FY22/23 – the updated terms for FY22/23 had been circulated and it had been previously agreed to appoint a self-employed bookkeeper (Min 4352q) recommended by Councillor Paul, for the estimated cost of £60-£80. **Resolution: to approve the terms of reference for FY22/23.** Proposed by KB and seconded by BF. Carried unan. **Action:** Clerk to send out terms of reference to the auditor, ready for the audit in May.

4404 Correspondence Received

- a) It was noted that thanks had been received from Community Council Somerset for grant support to be ringfenced in Taunton Crisis Fund.

4405 Reports

- a) Playing Field / Village Hall – the meeting on 24 Jan was not well attended but the merger is progressing (see Min 4403b). The committees are working together on future fundraising events, including a quiz night (3 Mar), Barn Dance (April) and Village Open Gardens (11 June). Volunteers were invited to help organise a Coronation event (7 May) similar to the Queen's Jubilee Big Lunch last year. It was agreed that the VH should be reserved for 6, 7, 8 May. A follow up message seeking volunteers would be sent out via village email and social media, asking for responses by end of Feb. This would include a request for volunteers and suggestions for participating in the Big Help Out on 8 May, as part of the festival of volunteering. **Action:** Clerk to speak to the VH Booking Clerk to reserve 6-8 May for Coronation celebrations and to arrange for follow up email/social media to invite volunteers. Clerk to add to March 23 agenda.

CRW left the meeting.

- b) SALC – the latest financial briefing had been distributed by email.
- c) Cemetery – KB planned to visit the records office when it re-opens to see what records of Deeds/burials were held there to help with an ongoing matter.
- d) Highways – i) Wessex Water would be closing Butcher's Hill for four days from 14 Feb; as Ganges Hill was the planned alternative route for all traffic, DB had suggested that additional signage to flag that this route is unsuitable for HGVs might be needed again, after an HGV had recently struggled to get through the S-bend, narrowly missing properties. Wessex Water had been contacted and would be putting signs by the Crown Inn and at the top of Ganges Hill. ii) Highways had confirmed that the verges on Butcher's Hill had been pulled back, removing as much soil from the edge as possible, without causing any damage to the existing bank.
- e) Environment – i) Around 15 Fivehead Fixers would be helping the landowner at Stowey Farm plant 200 trees on 11 Feb. County Councillor Sarah Dyke had also been invited. ii) The Fixers were planning a litter pick from Matravers to the Two Bridges parish boundary (carried out on 14 Feb with five bags collected).
- f) Rights of Way — i) Several footpaths had been affected by flood water: On L11/22, the hogging on the new steps had been washed out so the bank is currently difficult to climb. SCC had been informed; at Lower Swell, L11/52, the blocked drain had caused the bridleway to be washed out. SCC are discussing what can be done, as Highways has no budget to clear the drain at this stage. ii) The gate from Moortown Lane on L11/19 has been replaced by the landowner. iii) L11/51 SCC is aware of the condition of the bridleway following works in Swell Copse – see Min 4403d.
- g) Police – nothing to report
- h) Asset/Maintenance Check Report – this was passed to BF for March. Highways would be notified that the grit bin at the bottom of Butcher's Hill was now half full and would need topping up.

4406 Planning - see <http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/planningsearch/> for details. The applications below were considered:

- a) **22/03546/HOU – New House Farm, Stowey Road, Fivehead** - Two storey side extension with associated alterations – members agreed unanimously to submit support for the application, by the extended deadline of 8 Feb 23.
- b) **23/00093/S73A – Homeacre, Stowey Road, Fivehead, TA3 6PP** - S73A application for the removal of Condition 2 (Agricultural Tie) of planning application 750677 (Outline: Erection of agricultural dwelling at Stowey Road Fivehead) dated 9.7.75 – members agreed unanimously to submit support for the application, by 14 Feb 23
- c) **22/03283/HOU - Swallows Drift, Islemoor Road, Fivehead** - installation/reconfiguration of rooflights to the roof of the house and detached garage (part-retrospective) – **approval STC noted.**
- d) **20/03111/FUL – Land North of Ganges Close, Fivehead** – construction of 7 dwellings with associated infrastructure including drainage, landscaping and access works – members reviewed the application, first considered in 2021, and felt that the concerns for this development should be reiterated to the Planning Officer, as they remained the same. A copy of the Parish Housing Needs Assessment would be included as this had been carried out after the consultation, in June 2021, and showed that further development was not required. Development at this location was unsuitable and unsustainable. Views were perceived to be even stronger following three new properties being added to Butcher’s Hill. The village had been overwhelmed with planning applications in recent years and the Parish Council had been regularly reporting increased traffic issues. Traffic from this proposed development would only add to this. **Action:** Clerk to resend previous consultation, along with updated comments and Housing Needs Assessment, for the attention of the Planning Officer, copied to MS and MC.

4407 Finance

- a) Payments authorised and unrecorded during the previous month:
 - (i) Village Hall – Meeting room (Dec) - £16
- b) Payments to be authorised:
 - (i) Community Council for Somerset – grant to support local work in parish under s137 - £150
 - (ii) D Braddock – 10 bin bag holders for litter collection (Amazon) - £69.90 (inc VAT)
 - (iii) J Parsons – Clerk/RFO – Salary (Jan) - £548
 - (iv) J Parsons – Homeworking allowance (Jan) - £26
- c) Income received:
 - (i) NatWest – Interest (Dec) - £35.75
 - (ii) Fine Memorials – 2nd inscription added to headstone (Maisey) - £50
 - (iii) The Stable – Newsletter advertising - £57.75
- d) Internal review of controls 3 of 4 – completed by LH

4408 Matters of Report, Questions and Items for the Next Meeting

- a) Chairman – i) The Somerset Councils are currently consulting on a new Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) from 1 Feb – 16 Mar 2023. This would include consultation on future planning policy documents, including our Local Plan, and how to involve people on deciding new applications for development. Councillors agreed to submit their own responses to the consultation and to copy the Clerk on any points to enable KB and the Clerk to submit a response on behalf of the Parish Council; ii) Coronation celebration plans – see Min 4405a.
- b) Clerk – i) Working group meeting to discuss sources of grant funding for church wall and Pound repairs (KB/Clerk)
- c) Councillors – Debris at Swell – it was noted that further debris was accumulating and evidence of this would be collected to review this at the next meeting.

4409 Date for Next Meeting

Monday 13 March 2023 at 1830 at Village Hall, Stowey Road, Fivehead

The meeting closed at 8.55 pm.

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