

DRAFT MINUTES OF FIVEHEAD PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Held on Monday 6 November 2023, at 1830, at The Village Hall, Stowey Road, Fivehead

Present:

Mrs K Beacham – Chair (KB); Mr R Wynn (RW); Mrs L Howard (LH); Mr D Braddock (DB); Dr B Ferguson (BF); Mr M King (MK), Somerset Councillors M Stanton (MS) and R Wilkins (CRW) and Mrs J Parsons - Clerk/RFO (JP).

4514 Public participation

Eleven residents attended to discuss planning application 23/00961/FUL. Apologies had been received from a further two residents who were in objection. A written report from a resident had been received in advance, which was talked through and images were shown of the recent flooding near the proposed site. The site was in a low-risk flood area, but there had not been any local flood assessment undertaken. It was noted that residents were frustrated by the proposal for a residential site in open agricultural land, which was considered totally unsuitable and inappropriate for any kind of residential development. It was not clear from the plans the true scale of the site and its effect on visual amenity. The parish already has an established traveller site on Cemetery Road, with two further sites within close proximity to its boundaries. Space is available at sites nearby, with several more sites pending approval, so Somerset's requirement to meet the provision for travellers' sites had been succeeded beyond 2032.

The application stated that no one was currently living on site; however, it had been inhabited since March 2023, which had been reported by residents and the Parish Council to Enforcement. There had been no communication on the application until October 2023.

4515 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

Relating to matters at Min 4520e, BF, as a member of the Village Hall Committee, would remain in the meeting but withdraw from decisions.

4516 Planning application – 23/00961/FUL – Land OS 8356 Isle Abbotts Road, Fivehead -

change of use of land to 5 Gypsy/Traveller pitches, including 5 day rooms, 5 mobile homes, 5 touring caravans, and associated works

The Chair brought forward agenda item 9a. Apologies had been received from the applicant.

Having listened to concerns raised, the Council voted unanimously to object to the application (6:0). The main grounds for this included potential risk of flooding and pollution, due to inadequate drainage measures/package treatment plant, unsuitability of the site due to its rural location and incomplete environmental assessment and landscaping affecting visual amenity. There was no evidence of need for a further traveller site, or to make this a Rural Exception Site, especially when located within 1.1km of the parish SSSI site at Fivehead Arable Fields.

CRW and the public left the meeting at this point.

4517 Somerset Councillors' Report

The latest report had been circulated to Members and is available on the Parish website here:

<https://fivehead-village.org.uk/update-from-somerset-councillors-nov-23/>

MS highlighted the difficult financial position of Somerset Council, as budgets are being prepared for next year, principally caused by the rising cost of social care. For details, please see the report above. MS would be willing to answer any questions that arise.

4517 Apologies for absence

Mrs C Munday

4519 Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council, previously circulated, held on 2 October, were approved. Proposed by DB and seconded by MK. Carried unan.

4520 Matters arising from the Minutes (2 Oct) and raised by Members

- a) Effluent from wastepipe south of Sunnyside Park – MS and CRW had checked the pipe and the discharge that day was grey water from washing facilities; MS asked that members report any future foul-smelling discharge to them, so they could try to come out to inspect this as soon as possible.
- b) LCN update – i) Working groups for Wellbeing (chaired by David Fothergill) and Active Travel (chaired by Gerard Tucker) were being established. The Clerk had responded to an enquiry from a resident for further information on the Active Travel group plans. MS/CRW would report on progress at next meeting. ii) The next LCN meeting would be held at Edgar Hall, Somerton on Monday 13 Nov, at 7pm. LH would attend and report back. **Action:** LH to attend and report on LCN meeting and Clerk to add to Dec 23 agenda.

MS left at this point.

- c) Mud/debris reported on parish roads – i) after wet weather in October, residents reported mud from passing tractors, harvesting maize, had made the A378 and routes through Fivehead village, include Isle Brewers Road, potentially dangerous for drivers and cyclists, as well as difficult for walkers, as it had not been cleaned up sufficiently afterwards. This had been reported to the Police and Somerset Highways at the time; as the farm vehicles were coming from outside the parish, Highways had offered to visit the farm located in Stoke St Gregory to seek future co-operation to keep the roads clear and safe, to avoid issues later in the winter, when slurry from dairy farming would be transported to fields on the outskirts of Fivehead. ii) With slurry regularly being deposited close to the River Five, it was agreed that water testing for phosphates and visual debris in this area would be useful, which would support a later request to the Environment Agency to test for possible faecal content, if necessary. **Action:** Green Group to undertake tests on River Five as part of their ongoing testing and report back. Clerk to add to Jan 23 agenda.
- d) Cemetery – the purchase of a plot for the burial of a resident (J E Woodhill), which had taken place on 1 November 2023 was noted. Deeds would be issued to the grantees (son and daughter of the deceased).
- e) Defibrillator update – i) BF was in the process of confirming with the VH Treasurer the remaining funds held on the VH account; it was estimated to be c£500. They were also looking into whether VAT could be reclaimed for a service by a charity. ii) Funds of £460 were now on the Parish Council account for future running costs. iii) The Working group would be BF, DB, Mary, Lucy, Renata and Victoria. Contracts would need to be updated in 2024.
- f) ESS Education and Support Services launch meeting – MK had attended on 6 Oct. He reported that the not-for-profit organisation is based at Old Kelways, where they have impressive facilities including a café, restaurant, drop-in centre and home-schooling support. They are currently looking for large scale funding from businesses, so at this stage, the Parish Council would not be able to help.
- g) Upgrade dog waste bin on Swell Lane – **Resolution: to purchase a front emptying, red, stainless-steel bin, without a steel liner, with plain post and screw seal fixings from Wybone (£328.16 inc VAT and delivery).** Proposed by RW and seconded by LH. Carried unan. **Action:** Clerk to purchase bin from Wybone (best value supplier for this bin).
- h) Grass maintenance contract – two quotes were considered for best value, from five contractors invited to tender. Two had declined to quote as they did not feel their business setup was the right fit; the third had not responded. The quote from Somerset Council (incumbent) going forward was prohibitively expensive, due to a rise in costs outside of their control. The other quote was much closer to the current contract and the contractor (Greenaways) had been out to view the areas and was keen to have the business. They were already cutting for Curry Rivel Parish Council and other councils so it was agreed to award a fixed contract for three years, to access a 6% discount, with an exit clause should service standards/frequency not be met after each year. **Resolution: to award a three-year contract, for a fixed fee, with break clause should service standards not be met, from March 2024 to March 2027 (£1868 per annum, including 6% discount and no VAT payable).** Proposed by KB and seconded by MK. Carried unan. **Action:** Clerk to contact the new contractor and offer the contract and notify Somerset Council that their contract would not be renewed in April 2024.

- i) Policy review – i) **Resolution: to adopt the new Volunteer Policy from November 2023.** Proposed by RW and seconded by BF. Carried unan. ii) **To re-adopt the Financial Regulations without amendment.** Proposed by DB and seconded by MK. Carried unan
Action: Clerk to add new policy to parish website.
- j) Pound / Church wall repairs update – no further work had been possible due to the weather; the Clerk would follow up to see what would be possible to achieve by the end of the year.
- k) Speed indicator device (SID) – i) One volunteer had offered to undertake Chapter 8 training. Three councillors also volunteered (RW, DB and BF). The Clerk would look into costings for four places with training companies and add to December agenda. ii) The Police had given permission to make public the speeding data from Feb 23, so the Clerk would add this to the website. They had also recommended looking at the Police Commissioner’s Fund for help with training and equipment costs so KB would look at this again. **Action:** Clerk to add to Dec 23 agenda.
- l) Village Hall meeting room increase from 1 Nov 23 – **Resolution: to authorise the increase from £8 to £9 per hour (£18 per meeting) from November 23 onwards.** Proposed by KB and seconded by LH. Carried unan.
- m) Village Green – **Resolution to authorise purchase of post mix for securing heavy weight posts around the green and the new dog bin up to £60.** Proposed by KB and seconded by BF. Carried unan. **Action:** DB to arrange purchase of post mix (via Evergreen Garden Services).
- n) Clerk’s annual review – i) a successful review had been conducted by the Staffing Group, via Zoom on 5 Oct. The Clerk’s scale point was proposed to move up to SCP17. The 23/24 rates were expected to be announced in November so the increase would be applied once this was known, with back pay from April 23. **Resolution: to approve the new scale point for the Clerk of SCP17, effective 1 September 2023.** Proposed by LH and seconded by BF. Carried unan. ii) KB reported that information on the management of leave had been obtained from SALC. The Clerk would calculate leave to be carried forward and overtime due, following the guidance, for the Staffing group to review in November. **Action:** Clerk to add to Dec 23 agenda
- o) Newsletter/directory review – KB and the Clerk had met with the editor on 6 Oct. Meeting notes had been circulated, showing that most advertisers had renewed, with a few exceptions where one year’s advertising was all that they had needed. The small increase had been well accepted so members proposed to apply a similar increase of c5% from Jan 24, keeping figures rounded up, to help keep up with increased print/material costs. The new business directory would be introduced to advertisers free of charge for the first year. **Action:** Clerk to circulate suggested figures to the editor and add to Dec 23 agenda.
- p) Remembrance Sunday arrangements – the service would be led by St Martin’s this year. KB had received the wreath and would personalise this and lay it for the Parish Council as usual. Timing to be confirmed.
- q) Xmas tree arrangements – LH had already spoken with Greenshutters and they were expecting a delivery of trees from a new supplier. Members were very grateful for the kind donation of a tree to be located in St Martin’s churchyard and help from Gordon and Ellen Balmer to dress it with LH. She hoped that Mary Braddock would help top the tree.

4521 Correspondence Received

- a) Invitation to consult on the priorities for Somerset Council’s Equality Objectives for April 24 – April 26, by 17 Nov 23 was noted.
- b) A request for the Council to write to support the Climate and Ecology Bill would be considered after its second reading on 24 Nov 23. **Action:** Clerk to add to Jan 23 agenda
- c) Invitation to attend SALC AGM, on 2 Dec 23 at the Edgar Hall, Somerton had been received. RW would attend from 9.30-12 and CM would be asked if she would like to be the second attendee. **Action:** Clerk to notify SALC of attendees by 17 Nov. CM to confirm availability to attend.
- d) Notice had been received from the Post Office Consultation Hub of closure of Fivehead PO services at The Stable, from 26 Oct 23.
- e) A request from Citizens Advice Somerset to consider grant-funding support following recent merger of four district services was considered. The merger was new and supported by Somerset Council, so the Council would consider this as part of its 24/25 budget.
- f) Fire Service consultation to obtain community views, open until 30 Nov 23, was noted.

- g) Members noted that enquiries for a community review were welcomed by CCS, by 30 Nov 23, but this was not required at this stage, as a Community Plan Survey had been undertaken in 2017 and Housing Needs Survey in 2021.

4522 Reports

- a) Playing Field / Village Hall – the joint committees had met last week; both were financially stable but the new organisation required a new bank account so it could start the process of moving assets. It was proving difficult to find a bank to take on a new account. KB had stepped back from helping progress the merger with the charity commission application. Kevin Stevens was now moving things forward, but KB would be available if further help was needed.
- b) SALC – see Min 4521c
- c) Cemetery – see Min 4520d
- d) Highways – a resident had reported flood water at the bottom of Butcher’s Hill, after the recent storm. Ganges Hill had also been affected. KB/DB had checked the following morning that the water was draining away and there were no further issues. DB reported that the Pound was flooding, which could potentially wash out the render, so he had cleared the nearby drain and would try to see if he could give the ditch on Angel Rise more profile, so that it would drain quicker in future.
- e) Environment – Fivehead Fixers update – i) DB reported that he had been working on the third signpost on Swell Lane. ii) Beds at the phone kiosk had been replanted; iii) St Martin’s church wall would be cleared of weeds on 7 Nov, ready for Remembrance service. It was noted that the wall had sustained some minor damage to a coping stone, along the road opposite Langford Corner, but there was no serious damage to its structure. It had most probably been clipped by a trailer passing through but it had not been reported.
- f) Rights of Way – PPLO reported: i) our SC Ranger was back on our area again full-time; ii) on L11/6 and L11/7, a slippery slope, joining the two paths behind the old poultry sheds, is now dangerous and MB had asked for steps to be built as soon as feasible. iii) Steps on L11/22 had not been repaired yet and were unlikely to be done in 2023 due to the current weather; iv) on L11/52, the drain at the junction of L11/52 and Lower Swell has now been cleaned out to hopefully prevent further damage to the bridleway.
- g) Police – MK would be attending the Police Commissioner’s Forum in Yeovil on 8 Nov and would report back on the Crime plan priorities. **Action:** Clerk to add to Dec 23 agenda
- h) Asset check – BF reported that the grit bin at the bottom of Butcher’s Hill was less than a quarter full but under the new system Somerset Council would check and top up if necessary. It was also noted that there was a small amount of spoil from the recent burial left near the war grave. DB was looking into screening an area for managing spoil.

4523 Planning - see <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/planning-buildings-and-land/view-and-comment-on-a-planning-application/> for details.

The applications below were considered:

- a) **23/00961/FUL**– Land OS 8356 Isle Abbots Road, Fivehead – see Min 4516 (please note: deadline for comments subsequently **extended to 30 November 2023** to enable full community consultation)
- b) **23/02601/NMA** - Sedgemoor Farm, Cathanger Lane, Fivehead, TA3 6PS – Non Material Amendment to approved application **23/00814/FUL** to block up and render the 2 small windows on north elevation, replace 3 panel windows in lounge with 2 panel patio doors and 1 window and replace the 3 panel window to East Elevation with 2 panel window and a single panel window and remove roof lantern from lounge roof - **noted**
- c) **20/03111/FUL** – Land North of Ganges Close – the Chair/Vice Chair responses to the planning officer’s recommendation to approve the application were now online and the application would not be considered by the Planning South Committee - **noted**

4524 FY24/25 Finances – Preliminary discussion

- a) Updates to the Asset Register and Risk/Insurance were reviewed and approved. **Resolution: to approve the Asset Listing, Risk and Insurance reports, correct to 31 October 2023.** Proposed by KB and seconded by BF. Carried unan. **Action:** DB to review the tool inventory.

- b) Updated Reserves – i) It was noted that the Reserves had been updated to include future funds for the community defibrillators (£460). ii) Funding for the grant for the VH outside lighting project would be added to Reserves.
- c) Budget review – Members agreed to aim to hold full budget discussions at the December meeting, so the precept could be set at the January meeting. **Actions:** i) Members to consider suggestions for new projects requiring budgeting and send to the Clerk by 27 Nov. ii) Members to review allocation of Reserves to future projects for Dec meeting. iii) Clerk to write to VH/PF to request their grant application for FY24/25 for the Dec meeting.

4525 Finance

- a) Payments authorised and unrecorded during the previous month: None
- b) Payments to be authorised:
 - (i) Parish Magazine Printing – Newsletter printing (Oct) - £347
 - (ii) Village Hall – Small meeting room fee (Oct) - £16
 - (iii) D Braddock – 2 x Primer for signposts (Amazon) - £17.62
 - (iv) SALC/NALC – annual affiliation fee (April 23 – Mar 24) - £184.66
 - (v) J Parsons – Clerk/RFO – Salary (Oct) - £548
 - (vi) J Parsons – Homeworking allowance (Oct) - £26
 - (vii) J Parsons – Coronation wooden plaque on stakes (Natural Signs) - £68 inc delivery (no VAT)
- c) Income received:
 - (i) NatWest Interest (Sep) - £76.52
 - (ii) The Stable – Defibrillator donation - £300
 - (iii) M Braddock – Defibrillator fundraising - £145
 - (iv) Local Expert Directory – Advertising - £57.75
 - (v) G J Bailey – Advertising - £57.75

4526 Matters of Report, Questions and Items for the Next Meeting

- a) Chairman – in order to publicise the extended subsidy for bus fares until the end of 2024, donations are requested to help the Somerset Bus Partnership charity with printing costs. Details to be added to the parish website.

4527 Date for Next Meetings

Monday 4 December 2023 at 1830 at Village Hall, Stowey Road, Fivehead

The meeting closed at 8.44 pm.

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