

DRAFT MINUTES OF FIVEHEAD PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Held on Monday 5 February 2024, at 1830, at The Village Hall, Stowey Road, Fivehead

Present:

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

One member of the public was present.

4552 Apologies for absence

Somerset Councillor Mike Stanton

4553 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

Relating to matters at Min 4556b - BF, as a member of the Playing Field Committee, would remain in the meeting but withdraw from any decisions as necessary.

4554 Somerset Councillors' Report

Report to follow

4555 Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council, previously circulated, held on 8 January 2024, were approved. Proposed by DB and seconded by RW. Carried unan.

4556 Matters arising from the Minutes (8 Jan) and raised by Members

- a) Local Community Network (LCN) meeting update – i) Minutes for the meeting on 15 January (via Zoom) had been circulated. The focus was on the financial emergency and devolution of services. The role of a Highways Steward for the LCN had been discussed, as successfully piloted by Exmoor LCN. Parishes would be required to contribute to the cost of the contractor, who would be available to carry out small jobs for parishes who sign up. A further meeting would be held to hear more from Andrew Turner about how this would work. CRW would forward information when available. ii) Working groups: Active Travel met on 18 Jan; Health and Wellbeing meeting tbc. Curry Rivel had started clearing part of its Active Travel route through their parish, pending purchase of the land. It was expected to be a long-term project. iii) Next LCN meeting, 4 March, Long Sutton (NB: same date as March PC meeting)
- b) Playing Field/Village Hall merger – i) KB was helping to progress matters with BF and the Village Hall Chair. Due to the urgent need for PF trustees, the Parish Council was acting in its role as custodian trustee of the Playing Field to facilitate the merger and enlist new trustees to take this forward. It was helping with finance/bank accounts and obtaining key original documents. Copies of the Deed were available but it was agreed that the Clerk would contact the solicitor holding the original documents, should they be needed to complete the transfer to the new joint charity. **Action:** Clerk to contact the solicitor to verify where the original deeds and documents are held so they could be accessed if needed. ii) Points for attention on the recent playing field inspection report were passed to DB to consider if Fivehead Fixers could help.
- c) Garden of Remembrance – i) **Resolution: to authorise the EroB application for Plot R9, for two former parishioners (Mr & Mrs Muschamp) and approve a tree trunk slice to be embedded at the time of the joint ashes interment.** Proposed by BF and seconded by MK. Carried unan. ii) **To note:** Plot R8 was now reserved, pending a second applicant's signature. iii) As the first line of plots was filling up, plans for starting a second row, and how to separate this from the first, would require a site visit later in the year. **Action:** Clerk to add to June 24 agenda

- d) Draining/ditch maintenance – DB had carried out an informal survey to pinpoint areas that the Fixers may be able to help Highways clear to reduce future flooding. Ditch clearance would require Chp 8 training. DB had compiled a list of issues for the Clerk to send out for Highways input. It was noted that there were a few areas needing more urgent attention – drains on Butcher’s Hill, which were causing the bottom of the hill to flood regularly, near the Pound, which could impact the mortar long-term; also drains on Ganges Hill and at Lower Swell. **Action:** Clerk to contact Highways with DB’s report for their input and add to Mar 24 agenda
- e) Village Green posts – during better weather in January, all posts had been replaced and the old chain added back. Members congratulated DB on the excellent job by the Fixers, joined by Evergreen Garden Services (EGS), who donated their time to help with installation. There were no additional costs for new brackets, as these had been supplied by a kind, anonymous donor, but c£20 would be required for oil to protect the posts. i) **Resolution: to authorise c£20 for post oil to complete the job.** Proposed by RW and seconded by CM. Carried unan. **Action:** DB to purchase oil. ii) EGS’ bill for £161, for collecting and shaping the posts, and supply of post-mix, had now been received and was due for immediate payment. **Resolution: to authorise the Clerk to settle the invoice for EGS for £161 and record next month.** Proposed by CM and seconded by KB. Carried unan.
- f) Fivehead Fixers – future projects – two further fingerposts would be renovated from April onwards. Funding for materials was available again for 2024 from the countryside charity, CPRE, who had kindly been in touch to invite a further grant application. It was agreed that a request for £70 for paint would be made by the Clerk as soon as possible. **Action:** Clerk to confirm grant application of £70 for fingerpost renovation materials.
- g) Tool box/hand tools – Members were very grateful for a recent donation from a resident of a tool box and tools for the Fixers to use. This would be added to the Asset Register with a value of £25.
- h) Chapter 8 training update – names for three councillors and one volunteer had been confirmed to Bridgwater Town Council for the day training course on 29th Feb; joining instructions were pending but would be circulated as soon as available. **Action:** Clerk to follow up and circulate details.
- i) Crane enquiries – the Clerk had submitted concerns to the planning officer who had approved the application, regarding the long-term storage of a large crane on site at Fivehead Court; however, the officer had moved to another area, so the matter was now with the officer for North area, for urgent attention. CRW reported shortage of staff for dealing with planning matters, but kindly offered assistance to follow this up. **Action:** Clerk to forward correspondence and photos to CRW/MS for follow-up and add to March 24 agenda
- j) Planning comments – concerns had been sent directly to the lead planner (on 15 Dec) regarding publication on the portal of personal contact details with comments, for South Somerset applications. As the head of planning had now changed, the Clerk had re-directed the correspondence to the planning team, who would raise this with the new Head of Planning, but it was expected that this would take some time to action. **Action:** Clerk to follow up and add to April 24 agenda
- k) Internal audit – i) the terms of reference for FY23/24 internal auditor had been circulated. Last year’s auditor (C Perrin) had agreed to carry out the audit providing the requirements were similar to FY22/23, for a fee of £80-£100, and had asked for the accounts as soon as possible. **Resolution: to approve the terms of reference for FY23/24 and to appoint C Perrin, as internal auditor, to undertake the audit for approval in June 2024, for the estimated cost of £80-£100.** Proposed by CM and seconded by LH. Carried unan. ii) It was noted that exemption from an external insurance review by PK Littlejohn would not be applicable for FY23/24. Costs and deadlines for this were to be confirmed. **Action:** Clerk to send out terms of reference to the auditor, for confirmation of acceptance by 28 Feb, ready for the internal audit in May.

- l) Staffing meeting (2 Feb) – KB and RW had met with the Clerk to review carry-over of leave entitlement from 21/22 (extended due to the pandemic) and 22/23 (as per contract) to be taken by 31 Aug 24. **Resolution: to authorise remaining leave from FY21/22 and 5 days pro rata from FY22/23 to be carried forward to FY23/24, to be taken by 31 Aug 24.** Proposed by KB and seconded by LH. Carried unan.
- m) Office costs – **Resolution: to authorise a price increase of £1 p/mth for HP instant ink service, from £2.99 to £3.99 p/mth, wef 18 Feb, from the office budget line (previously approved Min 4544e).** Proposed by RW and seconded by DB. Carried unan.
- n) Church walls/Pound repairs – i) All repairs had now been completed but tending had taken longer due to the wet and cold weather in January. The stonemason had been in touch to say that this would be completed in the next few weeks, including the tile being added to the interior of the Pound. DB commented that the work on the church walls was looking very good, especially the reinforced corner where the tree roots had been pushing the wall outwards. A site inspection to sign off was expected in February. i) **Resolution: to authorise the Clerk to make payment from earmarked reserves for the remaining repair work (up to value of £5200) following sign-off, previously approved Min 4439j.** Proposed by LH and seconded by BF. Carried unan. iii) DB suggested commemorating the completion of Pound restoration work with a plaque, with some historic background, to be installed inside, possibly in the planted bed. He offered to look into the history and signage options, with costings. The Clerk would circulate photos of a recent plaque and toposcope added to High Ham Pound for the Coronation, for interest. It may be possible to use CIL funds for this. **Action:** DB to look into plaque options, history and costings
- o) Annual Parish Meeting – this meeting is legally required to be held annually between 1 Mar and 1 June. It was agreed the Clerk would look into availability of the small meeting room, for after the annual parish council meeting on 13 May. (Provisional date now booked for Wed 23 May, 6.30-8pm.)

4557 Correspondence Received

- a) Thanks had been received from the Parish magazine editor for the honorarium for his services in 2023.

4558 Reports

- a) Playing Field / Village Hall – the Playing Field committee was meeting on 6 Feb, as they urgently needed to boost their trustees, to keep things running and move forward with the merger as quickly as possible. The bank account for the new charity was taking some time to be approved. A new quote had been obtained for grass maintenance, from the existing contractor. For further details on the merger, see Min 4556b.
- b) SALC – a free training webinar on tree inspection was offered on 16 Feb. DB would attend.
- c) Rights of Way – PPLO reported: i) L11/51 - a volunteer team is planning to help trim the sides of Swell Drove bridleway, where it has become overgrown, as Somerset Council is only responsible for cutting the tops. Curry Mallet PPLO had agreed to loan a hedge trimmer for DB to use for hedge trimming, to be done before mid-Feb before birds nesting season; ii) L11/6 – another working party is planning to improve the surface in the middle of the path and the tops of the steps down from L11/7 to lessen slippery steps issues. Matravers has offered some tarmac spoil, which will be moved by a volunteer with suitable equipment. Our ranger has agreed to maintain the ditch when the contractor comes to Lower Swell. iii) L11/52 – plans are being considered to lessen the water going into Swell Lane, causing flooding, which may include digging a ditch, approx 100m, along the north side of the Drive until it meets the stream.
- d) Highways, Cemetery, Environment and Police – no further matters of report

4559 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) **To note - 24/00260/AGN** - Land OS4900 and 3100, West of Green Lane, Langport Road, Fivehead - notification of intent to erect a steel portal framed agricultural building to be used for secure storage of agricultural machinery, tools and equipment.
- b) **To note - 23/00987/LBC** - Cathanger Manor, Gatehouse, Langport Road, Fivehead, TA3 6PT - repairs and alterations to the existing roof covering and walls and restoration of window openings at The Gatehouse, Cathanger Manor – **approved STC**

4560 Finance

- a) Payments authorised and unrecorded during the previous month:
 - (i) Village Hall – Small meeting room (Dec) - £18
- b) Payments to be authorised:
 - (i) Parish Magazine Printing – Newsletter printing (Feb) - £347
 - (ii) J Parsons – Clerk/RFO – Salary (Jan) - £598
 - (iii) J Parsons – Homeworking allowance (Jan) - £26
- c) Income received:
 - (i) NatWest Interest (Dec) - £75.13
 - (ii) M Braddock – Defibrillator quiz donation - £54
 - (iii) J Farrow – Pre-purchase of plot (75B) - £315
 - (iv) Somerset Council – CIL payment (Fivehead Court) - £723.83
 - (v) Somerset Council – Newsletter advertising (Curry Rivel School) – £230

4561 Matters of Report, Questions and Items for the Next Meeting

- a) Following the site visit by KB and MS in December 2023, notification had been received from the Operations Manager at Isle Fruits Farm that the old lighting would be switched on at night, from 8 February. This should only be on for 4-6 weeks depending on the weather/crop/heating.
- b) Notice that Sue’s Village Shop would be closing wef 1 April 2024 had been received and members would consider writing to thank her for her valued contribution to the community, especially during the pandemic.
- c) Problems with anti-social dogs could be reported to the dog warden on 0300 1232224, or if in an emergency and out of control, to the Police on 999.
- d) A separate planning meeting would be held on Monday 12 February, for a new application that had been received - **24/00165/S73A- Glendale, Butchers Hill, Fivehead, TA3 6PD** – to consult by the deadline of **22 February 2024**. This is a S73 application to amend Condition 2 (approved plans) of approval 21/02786/S73A - application to vary condition no 02 (approved plans) to reflect internal and external alterations and material changes, of application 20/03631/S73A, a variation of approval 18/01855/FUL for the demolition of existing dwelling and the erection of 3 no. new dwelling. Further details can be found on Somerset Council’s website.
- e) A forthcoming 10% price increase for printing of the parish magazine was expected to be applied wef April 2024, due to rise in materials and staffing costs.
- f) A meeting with the new grass maintenance contractor, Greenaways, would be scheduled before the start of the new season (wc 18 March 2024).

4562 Date for Next Meetings

Monday 12 February 2024 at 1830, Planning Meeting at Village Hall, Stowey Road, Fivehead
Monday 4 March 2024 at 1830 at Village Hall, Stowey Road, Fivehead

The meeting closed at 8pm.

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