

These minutes are draft until considered and adopted by the Parish Council at its meeting on 4 April 2019.

STOKE ST. MICHAEL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes from the meeting held on 21st February 2019

Present: Cllr. Holder (Chair), Cllrs. Gibson, Hambly, Hayes, Johnston, McEntee Mearns, Taylor and Wolf

Also in attendance: Vickie Watts (Acting Clerk) County & District Cllr Philip Ham and District Cllr Townsend. There were no members of the public present.

1. **Apologies for Absence**

There were none.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Mearns declared an interest in agenda item 14 - Millennium Green.

3. **Endorsement of the action of the Chair of the Council in arranging temporary cover for the vacant post of Clerk to the Council.**

Cllr Holder explained that Vickie Watts had agreed to attend the meetings to assist with taking the minutes during the process of recruiting for a new Clerk. This was unanimously endorsed.

PROPOSED BY: Cllr Johnston
UNANIMOUSLY AGREED

SECONDED BY: Cllr Wolf

4. **Public Session**

There were no members of the public present.

5. **County & District Councillors Reports**

County Cllr Ham reported that the Full Council of Somerset County Council have agreed a balanced budget with Council tax agreed with an overall increase of 3.99% made up of 2.99% for County and 1.00% for Adult and Social Care. At the end of the second quarter it was predicted that there would be a £20 million overspend; but it is now predicted that there will be a £1 million underspend. This is down to the exceptional job done by the Chief Finance officer over the last 12 months.

At the Full Council meeting it was agreed across party that Climate Change would be declared a Climate Change emergency. Many members of the public attended the meeting to highlight the importance of acting now before it was too late. This will also be highlighted at the next Mendip District Council meeting.

David Warburton MP has taken the lead with Somerset Rivers Association, It has now been agreed that the money will be collected as part of the Precept. Cllr Townsend confirmed that there were over 300 schemes across Mendip including clearing the river in Frome, which has prevented possible flooding to residential areas.

County Cllr Ham reported that discussions have been taking place with quarries across Mendip to establish if they might be able to take on the responsibility for gritting some of the roads during inclement weather. Somerset County Council has 3 gritter trucks for sale and consideration is being given as to whether one could be purchased, possibly with the help of Parish Councils contributing towards the ongoing costs. Cllr Ham said that there was still many points that needed to be discussed and it is hoped that this is something that could be in place before next winter.

Cllr Hambly asked if this scheme was linked to the recent report in the press which said that Somerset County Council were considering reinstating gritting the routes that had been withdrawn this winter?

County Cllr Ham said that this was an independent scheme but he confirmed that the County Council were considering increasing the gritting routes from 17 back to the original 21 routes. However, these routes are major link roads and would not assist the smaller villages.

District Cllr Townsend reported that:

- At the recent planning board meeting an application for a traveller's site at West Compton was refused on the basis that there were already 8 encampments in the area. The proposed site was also outside of the development line.
- The financial report was considered at the Scrutiny meeting. At the end of the 3rd quarter there was a predicted overspend for the year end of £140K but it was now predicted that the Council will be on budget by the end of the financial year. District Cllr Ham confirmed that Mendip District Council has already put together a balanced budget for the next 3 years.
- Mendip District Council have now opened the Shape Mendip Community Fund for applications. The fund, which shares the proceeds of the Shape Mendip Lottery, gives Mendip organisations the chance of securing a grant of £500 towards projects benefiting the Mendip community. There is a total of £10K available for allocation. Applications can be made online. District Cllr Ham explained that it is worth considering signing up the Community Events Group who would receive 50% of all ticket sales which can generate income from very little effort.
- There was a visit to Hinkley C which was very interesting. The scale of the development is immense. Once the site is running at full capacity it will achieve the green intention to be carbon neutral in the County.
- Coleford Parish Council has been using the local Community Payback team with great results. They have cleared footpaths, completed litter picks, painted play equipment and treated timber benches/fences. They offer an economic way of getting projects completed and could be worth investigating.
- The Mendip District Council, Parish Forum will take place on 28th February 2019 starting at 18.00hrs at the Council Chambers.
- Mendip Country Practice Doctors surgery in Coleford hold a regular patient participation meeting, which District Cllr Townsend attends. He invited anyone who had any issues or questions to forward them to him by email so that he could put them to the Practice Manager / Doctor at the meetings.

District Cllr Ham reported that:

- The Saxonvale development is progressing well. It is hoped that the masterplan will be in place by the end of next week and the planning application will be submitted in March. Consideration is being given to purchasing adjacent land to add to the development and further enhance.
- £25K has been awarded to Avalon School for the installation of a hydro therapy pool at a total cost of £1.2million. The build is expected to be completed next year and will be accessible to both schools and members of the public. A changing places facility will also be included within the new build. The grant from Mendip District Council was the final payment from the Local Legacy fund.
- £6K has been put towards the installation of a changing places station at the main entrance to the Bath & West showground. This will be open 364 days a year open from 7am to 7pm.
- The Local Plan Part II has been submitted to the Inspector for consideration. The hearing date will be confirmed for June/July.

Cllr Johnston asked who is responsible for the clearance of blocked drains. Cllr Ham confirmed that it is Somerset Highways department. Cllr Johnston said that there was two, on Stoke Hill and Mendip Road, that needed to be addressed. Cllr Townsend said that he would report this to Charlie Higgins at Somerset Highways.

Cllr Mearns queried how funding could be sought from the Hinkley C Community Grant. It was confirmed that the Somerset Community Foundation are processing applications from the fund. Cllr Ham encouraged Cllr Mearns to highlight that Stoke St Michael is a Mendip Quarry village and has been greatly affected by the increased activity resulting from the Hinkley C development. He said that he was happy to review the draft application before it was submitted.

6. **Minutes of previous Meeting**

The minutes from 10 January 2019 were agreed as a true reflection of the meeting were and signed by the Chair.

PROPOSED BY: Cllr Mearns
UNANIMOUSLY AGREED

SECONDED BY: Cllr Taylor

7. **Matters arising from previous minutes which do not appear on this Agenda**

Cllr Taylor confirmed that the recent community event held in the pub raised an impressive £700 towards Stoke Fest.

8. **Planning Application No. 2019/0107/HSE – 7 Tower Close Stoke St Michael Shepton Mallet BA3 5LQ. Proposed single storey conservatory to the front elevation**

Councillors had considered the plans and believed that due to the location of the house, the proposed conservatory would have no impact on surrounding properties or on the street scene. It was therefore agreed that the application should be recommended for approval.

PROPOSED BY: Cllr Wolf
UNANIMOUSLY AGREED

SECONDED BY: Cllr McEntee

ACTION: Cllr Holder to notify the planning office.

Cllr Hambly reported that the two long-standing planning applications at and adjacent to Warren Farm have been decided. Both have been refused. The full planning officer reports and conclusions can be read on the Mendip website.

9. **Grants to Village Organisations**

- a) War Memorial Hall
- b) Youth Club
- c) Baby & Toddlers Group

No applications had been received from the Youth Club or the War Memorial Hall. Cllr McEntee confirmed that the Baby & Toddler group had prepared an application but it had not been sent to the Chair and did not confirm the actual amount required.

It was agreed that these would be deferred until the next meeting.

PROPOSED BY: Cllr Wolf
UNANIMOUSLY AGREED

SECONDED BY: Cllr Johnston

ACTION: Agenda item for the next meeting

10. **Progress report on Community Playing Field Charity**

Cllr Johnston confirmed that:

- A water meter had now been installed with Water2Business being the provider.
- A contract for electricity has been agreed with the standing charge now being 25p per day and 17.3p per kwph which will be a considerable saving.
- The banks account is set up with the football club rent having been paid in.
- The Accounts 2013/14 have been submitted to the Charity Commission website and the 2015/16 accounts will be uploaded with nil returns as there was no income or expenditure for that period as advised by the Somerset Playing Field Association.
- He has written to Wayne McKeown of Wainwrights to ask if their engineering team is able to help with the repair to the slide treads and handrails.
- Other health and safety issues have been addressed.
- A trustee meeting will be held soon.
- Insurance is the next priority. Early conversations with an insurance company has shown that the lack of maintenance is making this problematic. It was agreed that we need to establish who is the current Parish Council Insurance provider and find out what cover is offered within that policy.

ACTION: Cllr Johnston to visit the previous Clerk to pick up as much of the Council documents and equipment as possible as a matter of urgency.

Cllr Johnston said that the next annual play area inspection will take place in May when the skate park ramps will also be included.

The position was noted.

It was agreed that the play bark needed to be purchased and installed at earliest opportunity.

ACTION: Cllr Johnston to make the purchase and arrange installation.

11. **Nomination for Parish Council representative to the War Memorial Hall Management Committee for 2019/2020**

It was agreed that Cllr McEntee should continue as the representative for the coming year.

PROPOSED BY: Cllr Wolf
UNANIMOUSLY AGREED

SECONDED BY: Cllr Johnston

12. **Appointment of Clerk/RFO to the Parish Council – To consider the process to be adopted**

It was agreed that a small working party should meet to discuss and agree the job spec, contract, number hours, salary etc. SALC have model documents and advice on process which will be of assistance.

It was agreed that the working party should be made up of Cllr Holder, Taylor and Hambly.

It was proposed by Cllr Mearns and seconded by Cllr McEntee that the working party should have full delegated authority to progress the recruitment process.

PROPOSED BY: Cllr Mearns
UNANIMOUSLY AGREED

SECONDED BY: Cllr J McEntee

ACTION: Cllr Holder to send the information already gathered on the recruitment process to Cllr Taylor and Hambly and arrange a convenient meeting date.

13. **Millennium Wood – To consider the initial works necessary to address access and public safety issues as identified by the working party.**

Cllr Mearns reported that the working party met on Saturday which went well. Simon has put together the following costings:

- A. Chipping @ £195.00. Cllr Mearns advised that this work was urgent and included spreading the mulch around the trees on site.
- B. Access to the reservoir needs to be secured. It was suggested that padlocks could be purchased and used to secure the gate but repairs are also needed.
ACTION: Cllr Taylor to check the deeds to establish ownership of this area before action
- C. Purchase new 12ft 5 bar gate and a kissing gate along with posts with fittings @ £650.00. This is considered essential to protect the woods from vehicular access.
- D. Purchase a dog waste bin @ £100.00
- E. Improve steps – It's been recommended that the stone is broken up with a petrol breaker, the weeds removed, scalplings added and then compacted down. £250.00
- F. Auto gate closer to be purchased for the existing gate. Price TBC
- G. Cllr Johnston asked if the cost of oil for his chainsaw could be reimbursed as it had been used for works at the woods. £24.90

The above items come to a total cost of £1219.90 which it was proposed be paid by the Parish Council. There is £2K allocated within the budget.

PROPOSED BY: Cllr Wolf
UNANIMOUSLY AGREED

SECONDED BY: Cllr Johnston

Cllr Mearns said that they proposed to have the management plan completed by May.

Cllr Mearns left the meeting at 21.05hrs

14. **Millennium Green:**

14.1 - Bench Seat to the East of the wooden bridge

Cllr Johnston confirmed that in the past he has completed repairs to the bench but on this occasion he felt that this was no longer an option and the bench should be replaced. The bench is a memorial to Daniel Pagett and it was agreed that Cllr Johnston would contact the family to ask if they would like to replace it.

ACTION: Cllr Johnston to contact the family to establish if they wish to fund a replacement bench.

14.2 - To consider any further quotation for bridge repairs

The repairs to the bridge are now urgent. 2 quotes had been received and despite best efforts it has not been possible to secure a 3rd quote. A quote of £1390 was received from Ross Clements for the same design with the second quote at £1950. The Council was reminded that the budget had £3500 allocated for parish projects. It was proposed that the quote for £1390 should be accepted.

PROPOSED BY: Cllr Johnston
UNANIMOUSLY AGREED

SECONDED BY: Cllr Hayes

ACTION: Cllr Taylor to notify Ross Clements that the quote has been accepted and the work should be completed.

15. **PCSO**

Cllr Holder said that the police have indicated that it is not safe for the Police to undertake speed checks but have suggested that a community speed watch be set up.

ACTION: Cllr Holder to further pursue this with the Police.

16. **Village Environment**

Cllr Holder reported that Mr Ian Glover from Mendip District Council enforcement team visited the village and observed the various sites which are of concern. During the visit he took many photographs and notes. Mr Glover confirmed that he would be writing to the landowners asking them to address the problems.

ACTION: Monitor to see if there is any improvements

17. **Mill Lane Traffic Incidents**

Cllr Taylor said that she had been asked by a resident to highlight that there has been several incidents recently where inappropriate vehicles had tried to access Mill Lane, namely a scaffold truck, a recycling lorry and another lorry. The latter managed to remove its own bumper in the process of reversing back out of the lane.

It was also noted that on 2 occasions cars had been traveling along the lane at speed with no regard for pedestrians.

It was questioned whether another sign could be purchased and erected on the post on the opposite side of the lane to highlight that the road is not suitable for large vehicles.

ACTION: Cllr Hambly to liaise with Cllr Mearns and report back at the next meeting.

18. **Silting of Rivers**

Nothing further to report

19. **Pedestrian Road Safety Enhancement Scheme**

Cllr Mearns is progressing with County Cllr Ham. Nothing further to report.

20. **Finance**

A. Bank Balances It was noted that the bank statements are being sent direct to the previous Clerk which needs to be addressed.

ACTION: Cllr Holder to discuss with the bank and amend address.

B. Cheques for authorisation The following cheques were authorised for payment:

War Memorial Hall:		
Inv. No. 011118	£222.00	
Inv. No. 311118	£232.00	
Inv. No. 010119	£152.00	
Inv. No. 70219	£176.00	
Total	£782.00	

Primrose Garden Maintenance:		
Ref. 4255	£581.76	
Ref. 4256	£270.00	
Total	£851.76	

PROPOSED BY: Cllr Johnston
UNANIMOUSLY AGREED

SECONDED BY: Cllr Hayes

C. Annual Return It was agreed that the information was needed from the previous Clerk

21. **Correspondence**

There was none.

22. **Matters to Report/Items for next Agenda**

No extra items were raised.

23 **Date of Next Meeting:**

04th April 2019 at 19.30hrs in the War Memorial Hall

The meeting concluded at 21.43hrs