

**Minutes of the Meeting of Meare Parish Council
Held on Monday 17th April 2023, 7.30pm in the Chapel**

Public participation

Present: Cllrs Bennetts (Chair), Field, C. Foster, T Foster, Hoskins, Neale, Wren and the Clerk Gerard Tucker

In attendance: 18 members of public. Cllr Heather Shearer.

Public Participation

Abi McGuire informed that she intends standing as a candidate in the next General Election and used her attendance to introduce herself and understand the issues and concerns of the parish.

Matthew Jackson spoke in support of a recently submitted planning application at 49, Westhay Road. This item to be discussed later in the meeting.

2023/24

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Gage, Richards, James and Winters also County Cllr Ros Wyke.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting. The minutes of the meeting held on 20th March 2023 were considered accurate and were signed by the Chair. Proposed Cllr Neale, seconded Cllr C Foster 7-0-0

3. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Neale declared a personal interest in agenda item 14a, (planning – 49 Westhay Road as an immediate neighbour)

Cllr Field declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item 14b, (planning, Sunnyside Farm)

All councillors present declared a personal interest in agenda item 14b (planning, Sunnyside Farm as the applicant is known to them.

4. Summary of actions from the previous meeting – all completed.

- The clerk to circulate the Statement of Community involvement provided to him by Cllr Shearer
- The clerk to commence research into separating the Playing Field from the current Village Hall Trust deeds.
- The council is to revisit at their next meeting the Terms and Conditions for using the playing field.
- Cllr James is to oversee the installation of the new notice board at the playing field.
- The clerk is to contact Street PC to understand who valued their war memorial
- Each councillor is encouraged to review the new website and inform Cllr Field of any suggested amendments.
- Cllr C Foster is encouraged to meet with Shaun Roberts to determine the extent of works to be tendered at the playing field to avoid any confusion.

5. County Councillor report

Cllr Shearer informed that the ‘vesting day’ change to a unitary authority has passed

Without any major disruption to services. During questions, she informed that the contracted switch-board services employed by Mendip DC have transferred to Somerset Council.

6. General Power of Competence

The clerk produced his certificate to verify that he is qualified as a parish clerk and the council can continue exercise the General Power of Competence

7. Website and communications

Cllr Field informed that there are various additional features to the new website that could be of benefit to the parish. These include distribution of the parish magazine in an electronic format. There is also a calendar feature which needs a decision on what is to be included.

Action: To include an item on the next agenda

8. Highways

Cllr Bennetts informed that the occupier of 40 St Mary's Road was parking their vehicle in a manner which was creating difficulty for people exiting the car park. The clerk was asked to write to the occupier and request that he parks elsewhere.

Action: The clerk to write to the occupier of 40, St Mary's Road

9. Parish Matters including:

a. An update on the transition of information between the old and new Village Hall Trustees
The council was informed that documentation has been transferred between the old and new Trustees of the Village Hall and Playing Field committee.

b. A short presentation from a Trustee of the Village Hall and Playing Field Committee
Mr Bradley informed that it is the intention of the Trustees to create a strong link with the Parish Council. He confirmed that numerous documents have been collected and that the Charity Commission has been informed of the change in Trustees. A request was put to the Parish Council asking if a council email address could be provided to them, as the previous email account has been closed. Cllr T Foster proposed, seconded by Cllr Bennetts and unanimously **AGREED** that an email address be provided. 7-0-0

Mr Bradley continued and informed that the new Trustees would like the Parish Council to consider managing the Playing Field, separating the responsibilities for building a new hall and the playing field. Cllr T Foster proposed, seconded by Cllr Hoskins and unanimously **AGREED** that the Parish Council will revert to managing the playing field. 7-0-0

Action: To ensure the Trust Deed is amended to reflect this decision.

c. Playing Field works programme

i. Trench and fence contracts – tenders Two tenders have been received for the complete work programme. LG Humphrey and Little Acre. Chris Goodland quoted for only part of the works. The clerk was asked to request that LG Humphrey separates his quote into two parts, clarify Chris Goodlands quote and inform Little Acre of the delay. Ray Adlam is to be asked by Cllr C Foster to complete the clearing of the ditch.

Action: Cllr C Foster to liaise with Ray Adlam to clear the ditch

Action: The clerk to contact those who have quoted to clarify and inform

ii. Review of the Terms and Conditions for the use of the Playing Field facility. A smaller working group is to be formed to look specifically at matters relating to the Playing Field.

Action: Clerk to invite member participation in a small working group

iii. Consider installing a new gate from the play area. Cllr T Foster suggested that a small pedestrian gate should be installed to prevent people jumping the fence. The

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Clerk was asked to obtain quotes for the purchase of a gate. It was noted that a number of the existing fence posts need attention and a site visit to determine the work required is to be arranged.

Action: Determine the state of existing fence posts and obtain quotes for a gate

d. Appointment of a Parish Councillor to lead on the War Memorial. The clerk informed that in obtaining quotes for insurance purposes, it was identified that there is no longer a parish councillor with responsibilities for the war memorial. Cllr Gage in her absence had put herself forward for consideration. Cllr Wren also offered to liaise with Janet Westover and take the lead. It was **RESOLVED** that Cllr Wren takes the lead for the war memorial and liaises with the clerk on this matter as required.

10C. Insurance

The clerk informed that the council has insured with Gallagher Insurance for the last three years. The current policy is due to expire on 31st May. Quotes are in the process of being obtained from Zurich, Higos and Gallagher. In total eight companies were invited to tender. This will be revisited at the next meeting of the council for a decision.

Action: To include Insurance as an agenda item for the next meeting

11. Internal audit

Microshade have completed the internal audit, which in summary states *‘that overall the financial procedures are absolutely fine. I think the main issues will be to improve transparency and financial reporting’*. The Clerk suggested that the Finance Committee convenes to discuss in more detail improvements to reporting and monitoring of expenditure.

Action: Clerk to organise a meeting of the Finance Committee

12. Presentation of the regularly paid Direct Debits and Standing Order payments

A paper informing of the regular payments made by Standing Order and Direct Debit was circulated.

Standing Orders and Direct Debits – April 2023

Payee	S/O or D/D	Amount £	Regularity
Ripple Accounting (Payroll)	S/O	10.00	Monthly
EDF Energy (Electricity playing field)	D/D	28.00	Monthly
Water2Business – Water supply	D/D	149.96	Half yearly
Gerard Tucker – salary	S/O	837.75	Monthly
Malcolm Sweet – maintenance	S/O	500.00	Monthly
HMRC – PAYE/NI	S/O	628.40	Quarterly
Public Works Loan	D/D	5,812.70	Half yearly
Independent Commissioners Office	D/D	35.00	Annually

Cllr C Foster queried the cost of the water supply to the playing field, as there is very little usage. He offered to check the meter to indicate if there is a leak. If all appears ok, the Clerk is to write to Water2Business to query the amount paid.

Action: Cllr C Foster to check the meter before determining subsequent actions

13. Defibrillator replacement

Cllr Gage has met with the SW Ambulance Trust and concluded that the council should proceed with entering in to a further four year contract for the supply of two defibrillators. Cllr Bennetts informed that there isn't a defibrillator at the Avalon Marshes Centre. It was **RESOLVED** that the clerk is to contact Natural England and encourage them to consider purchasing a defibrillator.

Action: To contact Natural England and encourage consideration of a defibrillator

14. Planning

a. **Application No 2023/0384/FUL. Applicant:** Mr M Jackson and Ms R Bliss

Location: 49, Westhay Road, Meare, Glastonbury BA6 9TL

Proposal: Retrospective permission for the erection of a side extension to be used as a Health Treatment Facility with overnight clients accommodation. Retention of the existing residential use of the main house and retrospective consent for the insertion of 3no. roof lights in the original roof. Change of use of the site to mixed residential (Use Class C3) and health treatment use.

Councillors had previously attended a site visit and met with the applicant. Councillors were keen that the applicant is aware that support for local business and enterprise is a priority. However, the number of visitors to the premises, plus occupants vehicles was putting additional pressure on the limited amount of parking provided. Cllr Wren proposed, seconded by Cllr Hoskins and supported by majority that the council is unable to support the application until improvements to car parking have been submitted. 6-0-1

b. Application Number: 2023/0487/HSE. Applicant: Mr Field

Location: Sunnyside Farm, Shapwick Road, Westhay, Glastonbury

Proposal: Two storey extension to south east side of existing two storey house
Cllr Field left the room for this item. Proposed by Cllr T Foster, seconded by Cllr Neale and unanimously agreed to recommend approval of this application. 6-0-0

15. Finances

a. Shape Mendip lottery grant receipt

Cllrs Bennetts and Hoskins attended a n award presentation at Shape Mendip where the fencing at the Playing Field project was awarded £750.

b. Summary of account

The clerk presented a summary of the bank account, showing that expenditure for the year 2022/23 amounts to £55,059.96. Income for the year is shown to be £250,215.52. The accounts have been presented to the internal auditor and his comments are awaited.

The schedule of payments is included on the parish website.

c. Invoices Paid since last meeting

Name	Details	Income	Expend £
Gerard Tucker	Clerks salary (Mar)		837.75
Ripple Accounts	Payroll		10.00
Netwise	2 x additional contact email addresses		141.14
M Sweet	Village Maintenance		120.00
Citizens Advice	Donation		200.00
M Sweet	Village Maintenance		35.00
S A Roberts	Fencing		420.00
C Westover	Historic payment for making safe supply		95.00
SALC	Training		30.00
HMRC	PAYE & NI		628.40

d. Invoices to be paid. Three payments were approved for processing

Payment	Amount £
G Tucker – Clerk’s expenses	108.31
Microshade – internal audit	234.00
Steve Edwards – website maintenance	108.00

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e. Clerks remuneration

The clerk salary is based on the NJC Pay Point Scale 6 – SO1 - 25. There has been an inflationary increase in this scale from £30,095 to £32,020. The current contract is for 15

hours per week. Pro rate, the clerks salary is £12,981.08 per annum. Cllr Hoskins proposed, seconded by Cllr Bennetts and unanimously **RESOLVED** to award the clerk at the revised scale.

16. Correspondence

A resident has offered to contribute £300 towards a new bench at the Westhay picnic area. The clerk has researched a traditional teak bench and a plastic bench made from recycled materials. Cllr Bennetts is to liaise with the benefactor and seek their guidance on the preferred seat.

Action: Cllr Bennetts to liaise with benefactors

Churchwarden Hilary Sage has informed of pending works to remove a fallen limb in the church yard on Thursday 20th April. The clerk was asked to forward the correspondence to the school.

Action: Notification to be forwarded to the school

17. Actions arising from this meeting

- To include an item on the next agenda to discuss the website and communications
- The clerk to write to the occupier of 40, St Mary's Road to request that car parking visibility is improved.
- Research and amend the Trust Deed that will recognise the separation of responsibilities for the playing field and hall.
- Cllr C Foster to liaise with Ray Adlam to clear the ditch
- The clerk to contact those who have quoted for the works in the recreation field.
- Determine the state of existing fence posts at the playing field and obtain quotes for a gate.
- Include an item entitled insurance on the next council agenda.
- To convene a Finance Committee meeting
- To check the water meter for an indication of any leaks.
- Contact Natural England and encourage the consideration of a defibrillator at Avalon Marshes Centre.
- Cllr Bennetts to identify which is the preferred style of bench for the picnic area.
- Clerk to notify the school of pending tree surgery works.
- To purchase an appropriate engraved gift for the Villager of the Year

18. Next meeting; will be held on Monday 15th May 2023, 7.30pm in the Chapel.

The meeting was declared closed at 9.05pm.

19. Exclusion of the Press and Public (LGA 1972 ss 100 and 102) Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960

To receive nominations and select the Villager of the Year award

The Council received nominations for the Villager of the Year Award. A winner was identified And the clerk was asked to purchase an engraved glass for the winner to the value of £50.00.