

Minutes of the Meeting of Meare Parish Council
Held on Monday 15th May 2023, 7.30pm in the Chapel

Public participation

No presentations were made during public participation

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

In attendance: 9 members of public.

2023/24 20. Election Of Chair

Cllr Bennetts was proposed by Cllr C Foster, seconded by Cllr James and unanimously re-elected as Chair of Meare Parish Council for the ensuing year.

21. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Heather Shearer

22. Election of Deputy Chair

Councillors Hoskins and Neale were both proposed. The following vote was Cllr Hoskins 6, Cllr Neale 5. Cllr Hoskins was duly elected to the position of Deputy Chair for the ensuing year.

- 23. Minutes of the previous meeting.** The minutes of the meeting held on 17th April 2023 were A discussion on the wording of item 14a (Planning, 49, Westhay Road). Cllr Wren felt the item had been wrongly recorded, as he believed the Council had supported the application – with conditions. The clerk explained that it was the role of the Planning Authority to introduce conditions, as consultees, we can only advise. As the concern of inadequate car parking had been raised, the Parish Council could only recommend refusal. It was **RESOLVED** that the clerk is to write to the applicant and explain the outcome of the debate and it's actions.

Action: Clerk to write to the applicant.

24. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest

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

- 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

26. County Councillor report

Unfortunately, there was no County Council representation at the meeting.

27. Highways

Cllr Bennetts informed that the sign for Farriers Close has still not been installed

Action: Write to Somerset Council to further the installation of a sign

The vehicle parked at 40, St Mary's Road is still causing concerns as the visibility for other motorists and pedestrians is restricted. Cllr Winter is to approach the resident and explain the dangers.

28. Parish Matters including:

a. Playing Field update

i. Trench and fencing contract – tenders

The priority is for the ditch to be piped and back filled. A quote for materials has been received from Little Acre Gardening Services and Ray Adlam. It was **AGREED** to use Ray Adlam to purchase the materials. Shaun Roberts is to be approached and asked to undertake the work in the summer or early autumn.

Little Acre quoted £4,504 – no VAT

Ray Adlam quoted £4,500 including VAT

ii. Request to locate an owl nest box in the Playing Field

Local advice received contradicts the advice obtained by the previous Village Hall Committee. The clerk was asked to contact the Hawk and Owl Trust to request that they undertake a site visit and advise on the best location for the owl box.

Action: Clerk to contact the Hawk and Owl Trust

iii. Review of notice board key holders

Cllrs Wren, Hoskins, C Foster and T Foster are key holders. Paul Bradley is also a key holder. The playing field gate key holders are Cllrs T Foster, C Foster and Paul Bradley.

iv. Health and safety

1. Heras fencing – The fencing remains in situ, with Keep Out signs attached.
2. Covering of footings – Guidance has been obtained from Simon Trafford at the Planning Authority which permitted the covering of the footings to keep the area safe.

v. Consider installing a new gate from the play area. The clerk shared with the Council the quotes received for both 4ft and 12 ft gates. It was **AGREED** to proceed with installing new gates. A site visit to identify the appropriate locations is planned for Saturday 20th May

b. Playing Field sub-committee

Cllrs Neale, Bennetts, Hoskins, T Foster, C Foster and James have all put themselves forward to form a Playing Field Committee. A review of the terms and conditions will be among their first assignments.

c. Village Hall update.

Paul Bradley presented on behalf of the Village Hall Trustees. He informed that the transfer of information, accounts and other documentation is unfortunately slower

than the new trustees would like. Until this is resolved, there is no opportunity to expand the number of Trustees. This means that at this time, they are unable to hold meetings and there is financial pressures due to the account not having been transferred and therefore accessible. The Parish Council was thanked for their continued efforts and support. Discussions with SPARK Somerset and the Community Council for Somerset have proved helpful. The Trustees remain positive that a new hall for the village is deliverable.

d. Picnic area bench, delivery and installation

The clerk informed that he is expecting delivery of the new bench on Wednesday 17th May. It will then be delivered to Cllr Bennetts and the benefactor has requested that they input to the location of the bench within the picnic area.

e. Other Playing Field items raised:

- i. Tim Hoskins is to repair or replace the broken drain cover on the field
- ii. The new seat is currently padlocked to the fence and this needs to be moved to allow grass cutting.
- iii. The notice board in the container is to be installed by Tim Hoskins and Colin Foster

29. Insurance

The Parish Council has enjoyed a three year fixed price insurance cover which ends on 31st May 2023. Eight companies were approached and asked to quote. Three quotes were received:

1. Higos Insurance - £2,000+
2. Zurich Insurance - £1,289.21
3. Hiscox – Gallagher - £1,302.96

Cllr Bennetts proposed, seconded by Cllr C Foster that the Council continues to insure for three years with Gallagher insurance.

11-0-0

30. Internal audit

The comments and observations of the Internal Auditor have been previously circulated to all councillors. The Finance Committee has met and discussed appropriate measures to be introduced to follow the guidance of the auditor. The clerk explained that the recently revised asset register had added a significant amount to value of the assets, due to an estimate of the costs to replace the war memorial. The suggested figure of £70,000 was an estimate and until such time as an accurate figure is known, it was suggested that the war memorial reverts to £1.00. Cllr T Foster proposed, seconded by Cllr C Foster and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the recommendations of the internal auditor are accepted in full.

11-0-0

31. Financial Regulations policy to align with the Standing Order policy

The Financial Regulations Policy and the Standing Orders for Meare Parish Council contradict each other. The clerk explained that for contracts of £30,000 or more, there are specific requirements associated with advertising and implementation that need to be followed. It was unanimously **AGREED** to align the two policies, 11-0-0

32 Planning a. Application No 2023/0728/CLP. Applicant: Mr L Butler

Location: Westfield House, 16, Chapel Lane, Meare, Glastonbury

Proposal: Construction of outdoor garden swimming pool and summerhouse

Type: Certificate of Proposed Use/Development

No objections or further observations were raised regarding this application.

b. Application Number: 2023/0547/VRC. Applicant: J Merrett

Location: Avalon Marshes Centre, Shapwick Road, Westhay, Glastonbury

Proposal: Variation of condition 7 (FRA/Surface Water Drainage System) on consent 2022/0085/FUL. Removal of existing ancillary café kiosk and toilet building, an erection of new entrance pergola, new ancillary café kiosk, covered outdoor seating area, open sided trailer canopy, refuse store, parking bays and associated landscaping.

Councillors considered that a site visit would be of benefit and this has been arranged for Saturday 20th May at 10.00am. The clerk is to write to Natural England and request that someone joins our meeting to explain their application.

33. Website and communications

Cllr Field informed that there is an opportunity to gather individual email addresses from parishioners which will allow the council to make direct contact to share news, events etc. Cllr Hoskins proposed, seconded by Cllr James and unanimously supported. 11-0-0

A discussion on the appropriate sharing of commercial activities concluded that further research is needed before this is implemented. It was considered appropriate to liaise with Caroline Sanderson, editor of the parish magazine and obtain her input. This item is to be discussed again at the next meeting.

Action: Website – events to be included on the next agenda

34. Finances a. Presentation of annual accounts including income and expenditure

The clerk had previously circulated the income and expenditure for the year to date to Councillors. He informed of the proposed changes to be introduced to make the whole process more transparent. A budget monitoring summary will be presented regularly drawing attention to areas where the budget has been exceeded. **b. Annual return – (AGAR)**

The Annual Return has been completed and the clerk presented the financial statement to the Council. He further informed that the Internal Auditors internal controls had been followed and changes made where required.

The nine points within the Governance Statement were read and Councillors were provided the opportunity to challenge any part of the statement. Cllr T Foster proposed, seconded by Cllr C Foster and unanimously **RESOLVED** to accept the Annual Accounting Statement for 2022/2023. 11-0-0

c. Summary of account

The account summary had been previously distributed. The clerk explained that some payments raised in the previous financial year have yet to be cleared.

d. Invoices Paid/Received since last meeting

Name	Details		Income	Expend £
Gerard Tucker		Salary		861.51
Ripple Accounts		Payroll		10.00
M Sweet		April Maintenance		500.00
Somerset Council		Precept	48,000.00	
Somerset Council		Shape Lottery grant	750.00	

e. Invoices to be paid.

Payment	Amount £
Clerks expenses	540.33
MPAG – Kings Coronation	544.50
M Sweet (May maintenance)	500.00
C Westover (electrical fittings)	186.00
Emprint	59.74
Caroline Sanderson – May editorial	150.00
Meare Magazine Fund May & July	700.00
Meare Church – Hall Hire	90.00
C Foster – puncture repairs & padlock	135.38

35. Representation to Outside Bodies

	Organisation	No Cllrs	Current representation
A	Somerset Waste Partnership	2	Cllrs Bennetts and Gage
B	Avalon Marshes Landscape Partnership	2	Cllrs Hoskins & Field
C	New Community Hall and Playing Field Committee	1	Cllr Hoskins
D	Footpaths	1	Cllr Wren
E	Allotment Committee	1	Cllr Winter
F	Play Area Inspection	1	Cllr Hoskins
G	Representative to Church Committee	2	Cllrs C Foster and Richards
H	Speed Indicator Device (SID)	1	Cllr T Foster
I	War Memorial	1	Cllr Wren
J	Village Hall	1	Cllr James
K	5 Mile Food and Farming	1	Cllr Bennetts

36. Correspondence

A planning application has been received requiring a response prior to the next meeting

Action: Cllr Bennetts to organise a site meeting for Saturday 20th May at 9.30am

Chairmans Award – Somerset Council invites nominations for the annual award. It was **RESOLVED** that Caroline Sanderson should be nominated as Meare Villager of the Year

Action: The clerk to nominate Caroline Sanderson for a Chairmans Award

37. Actions arising from this meeting

- Cllr Winter to contact the resident at 40 St Mary's Road
- Clerk to write to the applicant at 49, Westhay Road to explain the Councils position
- Clerk to contact Somerset Council and follow up Farriers Close signage
- Organise a site meeting on the Playing Field
- Organise a site meeting at Avalon Marshes Centre
- Include an agenda item to discuss events inclusion on our website.

38. Next meeting; will be held on Monday 19th June 2023, 7.30pm in the Chapel.

The meeting was declared closed at 9.10pm.