

**Minutes of the Meeting of Meare Parish Council**  
**Held on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> October 2023, 7.30pm in the Chapel**

**Public participation**

**Present:** Cllrs Bennetts (Chair), Field, C Foster, T Foster, Gage, Hoskins, James, Neale, Richards, Winters, Wren

**In attendance:** Parish Clerk – Gerard Tucker.  
Cllr Shearer – Somerset Council

**81. Apologies** - All present

**82. Minutes of the previous meeting.** The minutes of the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2023 were signed by the chair as a true and correct account of the meeting.  
Proposed Cllr C Foster, Seconded Cllr T Foster (9-0-2)

**83. Declarations of Interest**  
No declarations were made

**84. Summary of actions from the previous meeting** – all the actions have been completed with the exception of an exchange with Somerset Council regarding the finger posts  
**Cllr Shearer to identify correct person at County to engage with.**

**85.**  
Cllr Shearer informed that the Council was about to commence with budget setting for the next year, which will prove difficult as there are continued savings to be made. The Avalon and Polden LCN recently met with a limited attendance. Issues raised included health and well-being and active travel. The positive news is that it appears a new pharmacist has been identified for Glastonbury, yet to be confirmed. During questions, the cost of Chapter 8 training and the need for a dedicated course was raised. Cllr Shearer offered to take this concern to other LCN's to hopefully gather support.

**86. Highways –**  
The improved signage at the narrow section near The Old School Rooms in Westhay is now completed.  
Cllr C Foster raised a concern about in appropriate parking on Muddy Lane and asked for No Parking signs to be installed. signs to be installed in the passing place on the right hand side of the lane. The Clerk to write to the residents re parking outside their homes where the footpath is and install no parking signs.  
The hedge at No 1 The Orchards has grown over the pavement and the Clerk has been asked to write to the occupants and ask that the issue is resolved.  
A sign supporting an event at All Hallows School has appeared on the SID.  
The system of reporting of potholes in the parish is to be circulated to all councillors.  
**Action – The Clerk to organise the purchase of a No Parking sign for Muddy Lane and write to residents to request that Muddy Lane is kept clear**  
**Action – Clerk to write to the occupant of 1 The Orchards**  
**Action – Cllr James to remove the sign from the SID**  
**Action – The clerk to inform how to report a pot hole to Somerset Council**

**87. Planning**

**a) Application Number:** 2023/1423/FUL

**1**

**Proposal:** Retention of shepherd hut for use as holiday let (Class C3), timber jetty, hardstanding access/car parking area and fence/gates (retrospective). Installation of elevated decking and pedestrian boardwalk. Change of use of existing access from B2 industrial use to B2 industrial use and holiday let Use (Class C3).

**Location:** Eclipse Peat Works, Ashcott Road, Meare, Glastonbury Somerset

**Applicant:** Mr Richard Bond

**Application Type:** Full Application

The Parish Council supported the application by majority on the grounds that this encourages tourism to the area and supports the economy locally. Concerns have been expressed by the immediate neighbours as a result of inadequate signage to the location. Suggested conditions forwarded:

1. That a dedicated parking bay is provided and appropriately marked.
2. That signage - which could be discreet is introduced to ensure that visitors are able to identify the location
3. The use of What Three Words as a means of directing visitors to the exact location should be distributed to all bookings.

Proposed by Cllr C Foster, seconded by Cllr A Neale 10-0-1

**b) Application Number:** 2023/1927/HSE

**Proposal:** Proposed erection of a single story detached garage/workshop. Proposed storage on a mezzanine floor situated in the roof space.

**Location:** 82 Meareway Lane Westhay Glastonbury Somerset BA6 9TZ

**Applicant:** Mr Pete Moseley

**Application Type:** Householder Application

The proposed building of a workshop met with the approval of the majority of the Council on the grounds of supporting employment in the village and reducing the need to travel. Whilst in support of the application, a suggestion of noise mitigation measures being introduced so as not to impact on the immediate neighbours is proposed as a condition of any approval given.

Proposed by Cllr Hoskins, seconded by Cllr Gage 10-0-1

**88. Review of earmarked reserves to include a discussion on priorities and virement of funds**

a. Millenium Book Fund for new VH	£3,194
b. War Memorial Repairs	£7,500
c. Defibrillator and play area fund	£4,460
d. Benches and fences for picnic area	£3,500
e. Playing Field ditch and fencing	£9,900
f. Legal expenses	£3,000
g. New VH	£200,000

Whilst an in-depth discussion was held, there are no movements proposed at this time of the earmarked reserves. It was concluded however that a valuation of the war memorial is required.

The works at the picnic area still to be completed include the installation of a litter bin and replacement kerbs.

A confusion has been identified over the replacement defibrillators, which needs to be addressed by the clerk.

**Action: Cllr Shearer to forward the contact of a historic monument valuer**

**Action: The clerk to contact the NHS and enquire the situation with the defibrillators.**

**89. Matters including:**

- a. Playing Field update
  - i. Progress report installation of new gates. The new gates are being installed this week.
  - ii. Progress report on piping the ditch and movement of topsoil. The majority of the works with piping the ditch have been completed. Once the soil has settled, there is a need to move a little more soil to level the site and complete the job. Further, there is a need to spread appropriate seed over the entire length, which could include wildflowers. Mr Adlam offered to complete the task for an additional cost of approximately £170 and to remove the remainder of the soil. This offer was subsequently retracted, following comments made in council during the ensuing debate.
 

**Action: The Clerk to write to Mr Adlam and thank him for his input**
  - iii. Recommendations following play area training (led by Cllr Hoskins)  
It was reported that an additional level of equipment monitoring needs to be introduced over and above the weekly inspections. The benches need to be chained down, the zip wire dismantled annually and serviced. The basketball hoops and goal posts need to be risk assessed.
  - iv. To discuss and recommend an approved procedure for obtaining quotes for the installation of a car park/hard playing surface.  
Cllr T Foster is to take the lead in supporting the Clerk in preparing a specification of works for the creation of a car park.
 

**Action: Cllr T Foster and the clerk to prepare a specification of works for the creation of a car park.**

**Action: To identify a solution to removing the remainder of the soil - All**
  - v. Parish survey – distribution and costs. Stamps, envelopes, labels and the survey are all ordered and should be ready for distribution in approximately a week. The total cost is estimated at £707. A contribution of £506.25 is to be met by the developer.
- b. Village Hall update.
  - i. Letter of intent (Parish Council to relieve the Village Hall Trustees of responsibility for the playing field). The clerk had previously prepared a letter of intent relinquishing the Village Hall Trustees of responsibilities for the Playing Field. Cllr Hoskins proposed, seconded by Cllr Neale and unanimously agreed to sign the documents. 11-0-0.
  - ii. The Chair read to the council a letter of received from the Current Village Hall Trustees about the transfer of funds to the new Village Hall Bank Account. The discussion that followed concluded that the transfer of the remaining funds from the former Village Hall Trustees account to the new Village Hall Trustees account should be completed with the presentation of a signed cheque for the full amount of the remaining funds. The cheque was duly signed and countersigned and presented to the new Trustees. Once the transfer has been completed, the former account will be closed.

**90. Response from PJK Littlejohn regarding the external audit**

The Clerk informed that due to the large increase in the amount of monies held by the Council, that there is an increase in the level of scrutiny undertaken by the external auditor. He further informed that the AGAR (annual return) had been completed incorrectly, with the balances of two boxes being wrongly completed. This amendment has been subsequently completed.

Further, a concern was raised by the auditor regarding the asset register, as amendments in the year 2021/22 previously identified had not been amended on that years register (although they had been amended on the current register). *We recommend that a review of fixed assts is undertaken to ensure that all assets are included in the fixed asset register at the correct valuation.*

**Action: To obtain a correct valuation of the war memorial and to revisit the asset register at a future meeting of the council.**

**91. Purchase of an accounts software package from Scribe**

The current system of managing the Councils accounts is on a book ledger system, supported by spreadsheets. This system is open to mistakes, particularly when reconciling the accounts, completing VAT returns and budget monitoring. The Clerk has reviewed three systems that are used by other councils, concluding that the Scribe system is the most appropriate, as it comes with a supported package and will complete the annual return automatically at the end of the year. Other systems considered were SAGE and Rialtas. The cost to the council in the first year is £657.00 + VAT. Subsequent years are £34 per month (£408 annually). Cllr T Foster proposed, seconded by Cllr C Foster and unanimously agreed to purchase the Scribe package of accounting. 11-0-0

**92. Finances**

**a. Presentation of income and expenditure**

The clerk presented the income and expenditure to September, having previously distributed a spreadsheet detailing all financial transactions in the year. No questions were raised.

**b. Summary of accounts**

The clerk referred to a document entitled Notes to support 2023 financial statement. This itemised the funds in each of the accounts, expenditure to the end of September and receipts to the same period. He further highlighted that there were a number of unrepresented payments which had not yet cleared the bank. These are summarised in item c. below. No questions were raised

**b. Invoices paid since last meeting**

Name	Details	Expend £
T Hoskins	Items for Playing Field	48.01
PKF Littlejohn	External Audit	756.00
G Tucker	Salary (Sept)	861.31
Ben Parsons	Painting war memorial	1,180.32

**c. Invoices to be paid.**

SALC	Annual membership fee	403.14
MRA Rousell	Stone for drainage ditch	1,572.90
S A Roberts	Ditching works	6,000.00
M Sweet	Village maintenance (Oct)	500.00

Gerard Tucker	Clerk's expenses	25.99
SALC	Training – Youth engagement	25.00
Netwise	Annual domain name and hosting	597.32
Justin Linham	Installing gates at playing field	612.50

**93. Correspondence:**

- i. A request from the VH Trustees that a temporary toilet facility is considered for the Playing Field until such time as a new hall is built. Paul Bradley was asked to undertake additional research to identify the full costs and implications of installing this facility
- ii. Letter received from the Village Hall Trustees regarding Cllr Alan Wren – *(This was dealt with under the Village Hall item)*
- iii. Village Hall request for a donation towards a Santa Party. Cllr T Foster proposed, seconded by Cllr C Foster and unanimously **AGREED** to provide a contribution of £5.00 per child to a maximum of £500 towards the children's Christmas party
- iv. Letter of appreciation from Richard Brown – read to the council in support of highways improvements

**94. Actions arising from this meeting**

- Cllr Shearer to inform the point of contact at the Council for finger posts.
- The Clerk to organise the purchase of a No Parking sign for Muddy Lane.
- The clerk to write to the occupant of 1 The Orchards
- Cllr James to remove the sign from the SID
- The clerk to inform how to report a pot hole to Somerset Council
- To proceed with obtaining a valuation of the war memorial
- The clerk to contact the NHS to determine the situation with the defibrillators
- The clerk to Mr Adlam to thank him for his voluntary services to the council
- The clerk and Cllr T Foster to produce a specification of works for the new car park
- All councillors to work on resolving the moving of the soil heap at the Playing Field.
- To revisit the asset register at a future meeting of the council

**95. Next meeting;** will be held on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2023, 7.30pm in the Chapel.

The meeting was declared closed at 9.35pm.