

Minutes of the Meeting of Meare Parish Council

Held on Monday 19th February 2024 7.30pm in the Meare Community 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
+ sixteen members the public.

126. Apologies for absence. (LGA 1972 s85 (1))
Apologies were received from Cllr Wyke

127. Minutes of the meeting held on: Monday 15th January 2024 (LGA 1972 para 41(1))
The minutes had been previously circulated and were considered a true and accurate record of the last meeting. 10-0-1

128. Declarations of Interest
There were no declarations of interest

129. Summary of actions from the previous meeting

- The Clerk to write Messers Hecks and Francis regarding ditch maintenance. Cllr C Foster visited both landowners and reported that the issue was as a result of a blocked drain on the highway, not the ditch. The clerk has previously written to Highways to report the issue.
- The Clerk to inform Highways of the poor road surface on Shapwick Road - completed
- Cllr Field to retrieve the Burtle Road sign. The sign has been retrieved, repaired and reinstalled at the road junction with Shapwick Road
- Cllr James to oversee the clearing of foliage near the defibrillator - completed
- Cllr Gage to investigate painting the signs so they are more visible – completed. The Westhay defibrillator also needs attention.

Action: The clerk and Cllr Gage will liaise and complete this task.

- The Clerk to invite Somerset Wildlife Trust to the next meeting. Unwilling to attend a meeting, an agenda item for an update later in the meeting.
- Cllr Hoskins to obtain an additional soil clearance quote. An agenda item for later in the meeting.
- The Clerk to submit a summary of the survey to the Parish Magazine editor – completed.
- The Clerk to inform Shaun Davis of the outcome of the Housing Needs Survey – completed.

130. County Councillor report:

Cllr Shearer informed that the request to Government to raise the precept above the 4.99% level has been refused. Therefore, budget setting remains extremely tight and difficult to process. Savings across all departments are being considered, together with a review of assets and where appropriate their disposal.. The threat of closing five waste recycling centres has passed for a while, as contracturally it would cost a lot to amend the contract mid-term. Anyone considering assisting with foster caring is encouraged to come forward as there is a shortage of personnel.

131. Highways

There were no highways issues reported

132. Car parking charges – Westhay Moor.

Cllr Bennetts informed the meeting that a representation of the council and four farmers met with Somerset Wildlife Trust at Westhay Reserve recently. In summary, the Trust are to provide signs for farmers to display requesting that gateways are not blocked by parked cars. The Trust is to produce a short statement for inclusion in the next edition of the Parish Magazine. The Clerk is to contact Planning Enforcement to determine if the solar panel, signage and ticket machine require planning consent.

Action: The clerk to contact Planning Enforcement and follow up a previous enquiry.

133. Planning: 2024/0220/HS

Proposal:	Erection of car port
Location:	River House, Porters Hatch, Meare
Applicant:	Mr K Turland
Application Type:	Householder application

A site visit was held the previous weekend, attended by seven councillors. (Cllr James left the discussion prior to its conclusion). The recommendation of those who attended the visit was that the proposed car port installation is acceptable. 11-0-0

134. Parish Matters including:

- a. Playing Field update
 - i. To receive quotes for the removal of soil – Cllr Gage. Two quotes have been received for the removal of the soil – Graham Building Developments and Corfield Groundworks. £1250.00 and £1200.00 respectfully. Providing the preferred contractor can show proof of the required licences to receive, haul and dispose of the soil, then Graham Building Developments is the preferred quote. Proposed by Cllr Gage, seconded by Cllr Hoskins and unanimously **AGREED** 11-0-0
 - ii. To receive a quote from Sovereign for the installation of a MUGA. Following a site visit, Sovereign have submitted a quote for the installation of a MUGA. £81,855.50 was considered beyond the current financial reach of the council.

Action: The Youth Group are encouraged to either attend or submit a report for the next meeting.
 - iii. To discuss a request for additional play equipment – Cllr Hoskins informed that a resident had written to request that the council considers installing equipment for younger children and those with disabilities.

Action: To include on the next agenda
 - iv. Gates – Playing field and play area. Cllr Hoskins offered to identify and install a temporary solution to ensuring the gates remain closed, until such time as they can be fixed properly.
 - v. Disabled space line markings. The clerk is to explore the purchase (or loan) of the appropriate templates and paint to mark off two dedicated hatched disabled spaces near the entrance to the Playing Field.

Action: The clerk to borrow or purchase the appropriate materials.

- b. Village Hall:
- i. The agm of the Village Hall Committee will soon be announced.
 - ii. The results of the village survey are being processed and incorporated in to future designs of the building.
 - iii. A quiz night held recently received a good following and was most enjoyable.
 - iv. Future fund raising events are being planned and will be announced in due course.

135: War Memorial: To receive a quote for the cleaning of the war memorial

The clerk informed that the work of preparing and cleaning the war memorial was a specialist task. It has proved incredibly difficult to find appropriate organisations who are technically qualified to undertake this work. SSH Conservation based in Wells have visited the memorial and quoted £2,729.00 plus VAT which includes preparing a conservation report for the War Memorial Trust. Cllr James proposed, seconded by Cllr Winters and **AGREED** by majority to engage with SSH Conservation. 9-0-2

136. Villager of The Year: Request for nominations for Villager of the Year is to be made via social media, website and word of mouth. Nominations have to be received by Friday 5th April and will be discussed at the following meeting of the Council on 21st April.

137. Finances a. Presentation of income and expenditure to include:

Payments made in January

1 st January	G Tucker – Salary (Dec)	£ 861.50
5 th January	Public Works Loan	£5,812.70
15 th January	M Sweet – Maintenance (Jan)	£ 500.00
15 th January	Gerard Tucker – clerks expenses	£ 367.00
15 th January	Caroline Sanderson 2 x magazine edits	£ 300.00
15 th January	Meare Community Church 3 x hall hire	£ 90.00
15 th January	Village Hall Trustees – Children’s Party	£ 265.76
17 th January	Ripple Accounts – payroll	£ 10.00
22 nd January	HMRC PAYE and NI	£ 661.15
24 th January	Information Commissioners Office	£ 35.00
25 th January	EDF Energy	£ 44.98

Payments made and approvals required

1 st February	G Tucker -Salary – (Jan) incl back pay	£ 1,317.85
14 th February	M Sweet – Maintenance (Feb)	£ 500.00
19 th February	Gerard Tucker – clerks expenses	£ 85.98

Receipts in January

3 rd January	Shaun Davis – Survey postage	£ 465.00
11 th January	Allotment rent	£ 200.00
19 th January	Barclays account closure	£15,841.70

Reconciliation of the account to the end of January was distributed, acknowledged and initialled by the Chair.

The account has reconciled to January 31st and is showing there to be £46,112.98 available in the Co-operative current account. The Barclays Community Account has now been closed and the remaining funds of £15,841.70 transferred to the Co-operative current account. The Co-Operative Business Select account remains at £221,707.41

138. Correspondence

A request for funding an individual has been received from The Brightwell who provide support for individuals affected by the disabling effects of neurological conditions. The clerk was asked to contact The Brightwell and either invite them to attend our next meeting, or provide additional information from which a decision to support financially can be made.

Action: Clerk to contact The Brightwell and invite them to provide additional information.

Cllr James asked that funding be set aside to improve the footpath to the allotments. As this is a Somerset Council responsibility, the Rights of Way team are to be contacted and asked to involve in the provision of a solution.

Action: The clerk/Cllr Wren to contact the Rights of Way Officers and request that the footpath to the allotments is improved

139. Actions arising from this meeting

- The clerk and Cllr Gage to involve with improving the signage for the Westhay defibrillator.
- Representatives from the youth of the village are encouraged to attend the next meeting
- To include on the next agenda an item to discuss the installation of additional equipment at the Play Area.
- The clerk to borrow or purchase the appropriate materials to define disabled parking spaces at the Playing Field
- Information to promote the Villager of the Year to be forwarded to all councillors.
- The clerk/Cllr Wren to contact the Rights of Way Officers and request that the footpath to the allotments is improved
- The clerk to contact The Brightwell

140. Next meeting will be on Monday 18th March 2024, 7.30pm in Meare Community Chapel

The meeting was declared closed at 8.35pm.