

Minutes of the Meeting of Meare Parish Council
Held on Monday 15th April 2024 7.30pm in the Meare Community Chapel

Public participation

Presentations were received from the Avalon Food and Farming Forum, followed by an address from Cllr Hoskins.

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
+ 16 members of public

2024/25

1. Apologies for absence. (LGA 1972 s85 (1))

Apologies were received from County Councillor Wyke.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on: Monday 18th March 2024 (LGA 1972 para 41(1))

The minutes had been previously circulated and were considered a true and accurate record of the last meeting. Proposed by Cllr James, seconded by Cllr T Foster and **Resolved** by majority. 10-0-1

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest

4. Exclusions of the Press and Public. Cllr ? proposed, seconded by Cllr ? and unanimously agreed that agenda item 15 be dealt with after the public, including the press have been excluded. (Agenda item 15 – Villager of the Year). **Exclusions of the Press and Public** To agree any items to be dealt with after the public, including the press have been excluded. (Resolution to be passed by councillors) Agenda item 20 – Villager of the Year. Cllr T Foster proposed. Seconded by Cllr Field and unanimously **AGREED.**

5. Summary of actions from the previous meeting

- The clerk and Cllr Gage to involve with improving the signage for the Westhay defibrillator.
- The clerk to borrow or purchase the appropriate materials to define disabled parking spaces at the Playing Field. *Materials now obtained, waiting for improved weather conditions.*
- The Clerk to write to Somerset Highways and raise a concern regarding simultaneous road closures.
- The Clerk to try and obtain guidance on the finger post on Shapwick Road
- The Clerk to report again the blocked drains and poor road surface near Stileway
- The Clerk to pursue the installation of a sign at Wheelwrights Terrace

6. County Councillor report.

Cllr Shearer referred to a recent document which has highlighted ten things that have been achieved by the council in the last year. An electronic copy is to be sent to all councillors and placed on the councils website.

7. Highways

Cllr Bennetts raised a concern identified during a recent parish walk. The hedge in front of the properties Nos 2, 4 and 7 Sunnymede is maintained, yet extends over the pavement so much that it is impossible to pass with a push chair or wheel chair. The clerk is to write to the residents of these properties asking that they attend to the identified problem. **Action – Clerk to write to residents.**

Cllrs Wren and Field both made reference to the excessive speed and driving of the drivers of vehicles owned by Townens.

Action – Clerk to write to Townens

Cllr Neale informed of the poor state of the road near Turnpike

Action – Clerk to report potholes

Cllr C Foster raised the ongoing issue of the poor state of the road and blocked drains at Stileway near the junction of the Glastonbury Road.

Action – Clerk to write to Highways

8. To consider an inflationary rise to the cost of the parish maintenance contract

After much discussion, Cllr Hoskins proposed, seconded by Cllr James and unanimously **AGREED** that an increase of 10% be allocated to the maintenance contractor. 11-0-0

9. Planning: 2024/0551/HSE

Proposal: Two storey and single storey rear extensions and loft conversion.

Location: 63, St Mary's Road Hatch Meare Glastonbury Somerset BA6 9SR

Applicant: Mr and Mrs Brashier

Application Type: Householder Application

Councillors had the opportunity to attend a site visit recently, which included a visit to the immediate neighbour. Cllr T Foster proposed, seconded by Cllr Wren and **RESOLVED** by majority that the application is supported. 9-0-2

10. To review the Standing Orders of the council, in particular item m. – Recording of meetings.

The Standing Orders of Meare PC were last reviewed in 2022. To enable the recording of meetings to be conducted legally, the Standing Orders have to be amended to reflect this change. The suggested change is *'There is no right to record proceedings at meetings from which members of the public are excluded, although the council or committee may permit this. The Council may record the meeting to assist with the preparation of the minutes. The Council may also relay the meeting through electronic means for people to engage with the council by attending remotely.'* Cllr T Foster proposed, seconded by Cllr Gage and unanimously **RESOLVED** that future meetings of the council will be recorded. 11-0-0

11. To review the Financial Regulations of the council, in particular to align the limit of expenditure to the Standing Orders.

The Financial Regulations and the Standing Orders of the council had a conflict as the amount permitted by the clerk to spend had different limits. Cllr Gage proposed, seconded by Cllr Hoskins and **RESOLVED** by majority that the Financial Regulations be amended to £500 which is the same as the figure identified in the Standing Orders.

12: To discuss the recording of meetings. To include:

a. Equipment required

Sharon Bond has lent has the required equipment to enable the recording of meetings to take place.

b. How long recordings are held?

It is recommended that the recordings are held for a period not to exceed six months

c. Where recordings are to be held?

Cllr Field will retain the recordings or in her absence, Cllr T Foster will hold them.

d. Who will have a right of access to the recordings?

All Councillors will have access to the recordings.

Introducing microphones and speakers to the meeting will assist those in the public gallery being able to hear what is being discussed.

Cllr C Foster proposed, seconded by Cllr Hoskins and unanimously **AGREED** to commence the recording of the meetings from May 2024. 11-0-0

13: Review of the Councils Asset Register (previously circulated)

The asset register, which had previously been circulated was discussed. A few items are duplicated, this is due to the different purchasing dates and applies particularly to notice boards. No amendments were suggested and the asset register was accepted as being correct.

14: Review of the Risk Assessment

The clerk presented a Risk Assessment for the Council which was completed on 31st March 2024. The discussion that followed identified the risk to volunteers who undertake works on behalf of the council. Of particular concern was grass cutting and litter picking. In response, the clerk informed that at least one person present needs to be trained to Chapter 8 level, and would effectively supervise others. Both the clerk and Cllr T Foster are Chapter 8 trained and they will compile a risk assessment specific to cover volunteering work by individuals. This to be forwarded to all councillors within a week.

Action: Cllr T Foster and the clerk to produce a volunteers risk assessment.

15: Parish Matters including:

Playing Field update

- i. An update on the removal of soil – Cllr Gage reported that a further quote has been received from Mr N Cavill. Two of the previous quotes have been retracted following a request for the appropriate documentation. The site of the drain works has to be levelled and reseeded. Some soil is required for this. Following completion of these works, this item will be reconsidered.

Village Hall

Paul Bradley informed that a family day has been organised for 13th July. The absence of toilets is a concern and a request for financial assistance was made. A quality toilet trailer which incorporates men, women and has disabled access is expected to cost approximately £500. Cllr T Foster proposed, seconded by Cllr Bennetts and **AGREED** by majority to fund the toilets to a maximum of £500. 10-1-0

Westhay picnic area to include:

1. Village picnic

After much discussion, it was considered that an event to celebrate Somerset Day at the Westhay picnic area was unsuitable. The preferred location of the Playing Field was proposed by Cllr T Foster, seconded by Cllr Neale and **AGREED** by majority

10-0-1

2. Litter bin.

The clerk has recently visited the picnic area site with Mr Adlam and it is suggested that the new bin is located within the site, which will prevent it being hit by vehicles.

3. Litter clearing.

Following a report of excessive litter in the ditch at the location of the lay by near the picnic area, the clerk has visited the site. Having retrieved numerous tyres and carpet rolls from the ditch, these have been reported as a fly tip to Somerset Council. Further works are required for which Mr Adlam has offered to assist. The suggestion of extending the fence along the side of the ditch was discussed and the costs associated to this are to be sought. Whilst the council will assist in removing litter from the ditch on the picnic side of the road, the opposite ditch is considered too dangerous to undertake any works.

3 Action: Obtain quotes for additional fencing

4. Bramble Close footpath.

Cllr James informed that volunteers have offered to complete the works, yet there is a requirement to purchase some stone to enable the work to be completed to a high standard. It was **RESOLVED** that this expenditure can be permitted and completed by the clerk, as it falls within the limits of expenditure as identified in the Financial Regulations. Cllr James is to co-ordinate this work.

Action: Cllr James to instigate footpath improvements at Bramble Close.

5. Purchase of three flags

The clerk was asked to purchase a Union Flag, Somerset Flag and a St Georges flag to fly on the village hall flag pole at appropriate times.

Action: Clerk to purchase three flags.

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16: Finances a. Presentation of receipts and payments to include:

- b. Summary of Account to include:
 - i. Invoices paid since last meeting
- c. Invoices to be paid
 - i. Clerks expenses
 - ii. Any other invoices to be paid

a. The clerk informed that a full copy of the receipts and payments for the year to 31st March have been placed on the website. A copy had previously been circulated to councillors prior to this meeting. There were no questions arising from the presentation.

Payments made since the last meeting

1 st April	G Tucker – Salary (Mar)	£907.59
18 th March	Ripple Accounts – payroll	£ 10.00
2 nd April	Scribe – professional services	£ 58.80
2 nd April	Baker and Adlam – tractor fuel	£ 97.02

Payments to be approved and paid

15th April	Malcolm Sweet – April maintenance	£550.00
15th April	Clerk's expenses	£295.23
15th April	Flowers for war memorial	£ 29.97

Receipts since the last meeting

No receipts

Bank Reconciliation

The clerk informed that the bank had reconciled to 31st March and all of the information required for an internal audit had been submitted.

17. Correspondence

No correspondence has been received

18. Actions arising from this meeting

- The Clerk to write to Somerset Highways and raise a concern regarding potholes near Turnpike

- The Clerk to write to Somerset Highways and raise a concern regarding the issues of poor drainage at Stileway
- The Clerk to pursue the installation of a sign at Wheelwrights Terrace
- The Clerk to write to Towns to complain about the speed of their vehicles at various locations.
- The Clerk and Cllr T Foster to compile a volunteers risk assessment.
- When the ditch has been cleared, quotes for the erection of additional fencing to be obtained.
- The Clerk to purchase three flags
- Cllr James to pursue the improvements to the footpath at Bramble Close.

19. Next meeting will be on Monday 19th May 2024, 7.30pm in Meare Community Chapel

IN CAMERA

20: To consider nominations for Villager of the Year

Seven nominations for Villager of the Year were received. Following much discussion, Lyn Appleton was voted by majority to be awarded the title for 2023.

The meeting was declared closed at 9.53pm.

DRAFT