

Stogumber Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held in Deane Close Common Room on 11th May 2017.

The meeting started at 7.40 p.m.

Present:

C. Bramall (Chair), M. Symes, V. Sellick, G. Tuckfield, T. Vesey, C. Matravers
Judith Bryant – Stand-in Clerk
A. Trollope-Bellew (District Councillor),
1 member of the public

1. Election of Chairman and Declaration of Acceptance of Office

Chris Bramall was nominated as Chair. There were no other nominations. Chris Bramall's appointment was proposed by Tom Vesey and seconded by Cliff Matravers. All were in favour and the Chairman signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were accepted from Joe Hull. Tracey Brick was absent.

3. Election of Vice Chairman and Declaration of Acceptance of Office

It was agreed to defer this appointment to the next meeting.

4. Declarations of Interest/Dispensations

Chris Bramall declared an interest in the Beacon Field as a neighbour. Mostyn Symes declared an interest in the appointment of the temporary clerk as they are related.

5. Public Comment, Questions or Suggestions

The Parish Council were asked to consider the potential issue of fracking further. Approximately 50 parishioners had attended a public meeting with the vast majority voting against fracking in a straw poll. The Chairman replied that the meeting was attended by those who felt strongly against fracking and the Parish Council were not in a position to hold a referendum. He felt that it was a very good presentation, but political and totally opposed to fracking. He added that the Parish Council had no control over whether fracking happens and would only be able to express an opinion when a planning application was received. Mostyn Symes added that 50 people had attended the meeting and this in itself was indicative of the general view. The presentation at the public meeting was one-sided as nobody could be found to speak in favour of fracking. It was agreed to put fracking onto the July agenda for further discussion.

6. Minutes of Parish Council Meeting held on 09/03/17 and Extraordinary Meetings held on 30/03/17 and 20/04/17

Following a proposal by Cliff Matravers, seconded by Tom Vesey, all agreed that these minutes represented a true record of the three meetings and they were signed by the Chairman.

7. Matters Arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising which were not covered elsewhere in the meeting.

8. District and County Councillors' Reports

Anthony Trollope-Bellew reported that in the recent Council elections Christine Lawrence had been returned with a large majority. The Conservatives had increased their majority in Somerset, but the leader of the County Council had lost his seat. With regard to the restructuring of the Council and redrawing the boundaries, the original June conclusion date was unlikely to be met as a general election had been called. EDF had publicised a new valuation for Hinkley B. It had been valued at £8m in 2015, but was now considered to be worth £24.9m, which had been agreed by The Valuation Office. This valuation would help West Somerset Council's budget considerably, but it was still not viable in the long term.

9. Casual Vacancy

West Somerset Council had been informed of the vacancy and statutory notices had been displayed. They would expire on 12th May. If West Somerset Council confirm that a petition for election has not been received, the Parish Council will be free to co-opt a new Councillor at the July meeting. There was one potential co-optee and George Tuckfield would advertise the vacancy in the Stogumber Standard.

10. Neighbourhood Plan – Update

The Chairman had received a communication from Ann Rhodes at West Somerset Council. The Examiner was not able to accept the Plan unless it contains a map showing the extent of settlement, rather than a map showing where potential development might take place. The map has to be agreed with West Somerset Council. The Chairman would ask Ann Rhodes to advise the Parish Council when the map became available, in accordance with the Examiner's instructions. A discussion followed on boundaries of green field sites and the Conservation Area. Mostyn Symes added that as a Primary Village, Stogumber needed to be able to build up to 19 houses under the current rules. On receipt of the map, the Parish Council would be able to take further action.

11. The Beacon Field

- a) Grazing Let for 2017 Season. The grazing for 2017 had been let to Paul Tapp at £250 for the year. The contract had been revised and returned to the Clerk. It may be necessary to erect a temporary fence across the field for Gardens Open when the field is used for a Car Park. Access would be maintained for the public.
- b) Update on Works. Works were almost complete and they had been carried out to a high standard. Some grass seeding needed to be done. There were sufficient reserves to meet the cost of the work.
- c) Finance/Fundraising Update. £1000 had been received from the Village Hall towards Phase 1 of the work. £500 from Stogo had previously been received. There was nothing further to report with fundraising on Phase 2.

- d) Department of Local Government Application to take up CRASH loan offer. As requested, the application was sent to SALC, who forwarded the application to the Department of Local Government at the end of March. It was reported as 'lost' and the application was re-submitted and reported as received by Department of Local Government on 4th May. It was hoped that the application would now be given precedence.

12. Playground

This matter would be covered by the meeting following the Annual Council Meeting.

13. Employment Matters

- a) Consider implementation of council employees' NALC approved pay increase from 01/04/17. NALC had implemented a pay increase for parish council employees from 1st April 2017. The Clerk's current hourly rate is £10.363. This is equal to SCP21, which has been increased to £10.467 from 1st April. Following a proposal by Mostyn Symes, seconded by Cliff Matravers, all were in agreement with this increase.
- b) Consider increasing Clerk's working hours. The Clerk was currently employed for 5 hours per week. The workload had increased with the Parish Council becoming trustees of the playground and recent structural changes. The Clerk had asked for her hours to be increased to 6 hours, with an agreement to reimburse her for additional hours in times of high workload. The Clerk had been in post since November 2015 and there had been no salary review or appraisal during this time. The Clerk requested that an appraisal be considered and scheduled by the Council. Following a discussion, a proposal was made by Cliff Matravers that the Clerk's hours were increased by 1 hour per week and he would carry out the appraisal. Tom Vesey seconded this proposal and all were in favour.
- c) Pension staging date. The staging date for the Parish Council was 1st May 2017, with the automatic enrolment declaration to be completed by 2nd October 2017. The Clerk had received notice of the rights of automatic enrolment and the parish council is not obliged to set up a scheme. The completed declaration for the Council, as required by The Pensions Regulator, under the Pensions Act 2008, was submitted on 5th May 2017. The Parish Council will be required to re-declare its compliance in three years' time. Any new employees must be informed of the rights of automatic employment to a pension scheme.

14. Consider Insurance Quotes for Renewal 1st June 2017

Councillors had received quotes from AON, and Came & Co, who were brokers for Inspire, Hiscox and Eccliastical. Cliff Matravers proposed acceptance of the AON quote, at a rate fixed for 3 years, which met the Council's needs. Mostyn Symes seconded this proposal and all were in favour.

15. Finance

- a) To approve Year End Accounts – 2016/17. Cliff Matravers proposed approval, Mostyn Symes seconded and all were in favour.

- b) Payments to approve
- i. Clare Morrison-Jones – Salary April/May £449.06
 - ii. Clare Morrison-Jones – Expenses and reimbursements £51.31
 - iii. K. Smith – Internal Auditor £30.00
 - iv. BWSB – Beacon Field Water Supply £12.94
 - v. PWLB – Beacon Field Loan £3223.02 (Direct Debit)
 - vi. Insurance Renewal – AON Ltd £237.96

Cliff Matravers proposed approval, Viv Sellick seconded and all were in favour.

- c) Amounts received
- i. WSDC – First Precept Payment £9,500.00
 - ii. HMRC – PAYE Refund £448.80
 - iii. C.R.A.S.H. – Contribution legal costs for Graveyard option £250.00
 - iv. Stogumber Village Hall – Donation towards Beacon Field splay £1,000.00
 - v. HMRC (May 2016) V.A.T. Reclaim - £680.28
 - vi. M. Waldock (10/06/16) – Beacon Field Rent £290.00
 - vii. M. Waldock (10/01/17) – Beacon Field Water Charges £16.72

- d) Consider updating the bank mandate

It was necessary to remove Julian Spicer as a signatory. 2 additional councillors were needed as signatories and required to sign a new NatWest Bank Mandate and Additional Party Form. George Tuckfield and Mostyn Symes agreed to be added as signatories. Cliff Matravers proposed this amendment and additions, Tom Vesey seconded and all agreed.

16. Consider Internal Auditor's Report

Items drawn to the Clerk's attention had been retrospectively minuted (Item 15 c) v, vi and vii. These amendments were agreed.

17. Annual Return – Section 1 Annual Governance Statement

Councillors agreed the 9 accounting clauses of the Annual Governance Statement and the Chairman signed and dated it accordingly.

18. Annual Return – Section 2 Accounting Statements

Councillors agreed the Accounting Statements for 2016/17 and they were signed and dated by the Chairman accordingly.

19. Planning

- a) Application 6/31/10/101. Lawful Development Certificate for the existing construction of an agricultural storage building, Springwater Farm, Maunsborough Lane, Elworthy. This was a retrospective application and the building had been in situ for more than 10 years. The Chairman had visited and reported a very small building. There was no action to be taken, but a response was needed for ENPA. It was agreed that the Parish Council had no objection.

20. Highways – Any Issues to Report

The original iron finger posts around the village were in poor condition. Any voluntary maintenance would not be covered by the ENPA training event and

an appeal for volunteers was suggested. It was agreed that the Clerk would approach the County Council regarding maintenance of the finger posts and if they were unable to do the work, the question would be asked whether the posts could be repaired and maintained voluntarily. A pothole near Boar's Head Cottage was raised, but was thought to be on private property.

21. Parish Walk Booklet

There was demand for a further Parish Walk booklet and it had been suggested to Judith Bryant that it should be revised and re-published. Definitive maps of the village could be used as the Parish Council had permission. Mr Sellick commented that some of the maps were incorrect and he asked that the route emerging on Curdon Corner be avoided as it was dangerous. Tom Vesey thought it would be an ideal community expenditure and it was suggested that an application was made to C.R.A.S.H. for a loan to fund printing of the booklet, with sales being returned to C.R.A.S.H. Judith would research printing costs and seek help from other walkers to create the routes.

22. Any Other Business by Permission of the Chairman

- a) Somerset Remembers – 2018 marks the Centenary of end of World War One. This was noted and Stogumber was likely to commemorate the centenary.
- b) Grass Cutting Schedule. This was detailed
- c) Exmoor's Historic Signposts Training Event. There were a limited number of signs in Stogumber Parish within ENPA.
- d) Removal of Parish signs. The County Council had responded that a site meeting was needed and then there were lengthy procedures to go through before the signs could be removed.
- e) Use of Car Park for Gardens Open – June 18th 2.00-6.00 p.m.
June 24/25 10.30 a.m. – 5.30 p.m. This was agreed and the temporary clerk would inform organisers. The Clerk would be asked to inform Paul Tapp.
- f) There had been a complaint from a resident in Archers Grove concerning an overlooking issue from the Simpsons' new property. Mr Simpson was invited to speak and said he had complied with all regulations to his knowledge. The planning inspector had inspected the property and said there was little point in complaining until the property was complete.

Meeting closed at 9.45pm