

Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council on 27 July 2015

Present: Cllrs Trevor Gill (in the chair), Tim Daniel, Michael Hutchings, Geoff McHugh and Ann Reeder

In attendance: Cllrs Tim Inglefield and William Wallace; PCSO John Winfield and 52 members of the public

1. Business matters

- 1.1 Meeting clerk: The Chairman reported that the chief officer of the Somerset Association of Local Councils had offered to take minutes, but had been delayed. It was agreed that Cllr Reeder would take the minutes for this meeting

2. Road safety consultation

- 2.1 Following the informal consultation earlier in the evening, the Chairman opened a public forum on road safety.
- 2.2 The lead councillor on road safety, Cllr Daniel, reported on progress made by Cllr Wallace with Somerset County Highways to introduce a 20 mph flashing sign outside the school; a meeting with Somerset County Highways with a view to improving signage and the use of Speed Indicator Devices; and consideration of the development of Community Speed Watch. It was accepted that there is little support for a 20 mph speed limit in the village, because it would require self-enforcing road safety measures such as chicanes and build-outs, which in turn would require the introduction of street lighting, which villagers appear to oppose.
- 2.3 Cllr Wallace reported that he had been able to secure funding from the Small Improvement Schemes budget for the 20 mph flashing signage outside the school. He anticipated that it would be in place by 15 September.
- 2.4 The Chairman invited comments from the public on possible initiatives to improve road safety in the parish. These have been written up separately in a report that was circulated to all who had opted in to the Parish Council's village database.
- 2.5 Cllr Inglefield gave examples of initiatives in neighbouring areas, and PCSO John Winfield offered to provide support eg through sending police motorcyclists; he circulated information about South Somerset's Community Speed Watch and other road safety matters.
- 2.6 The Chairman thanked all contributors for their attendance and helpful suggestions, which will be followed up in the report and with Somerset County Highways Officers.

3. Business matters

- 3.1 There were no declarations of interest, but it was noted that three councillors are members of the Gardening Club (a later item), but had no pecuniary interest in

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the matter, and that Cllr McHugh's wife had submitted a planning application on which Cllr McHugh took no role in the response by the Parish Council.

- 3.2 The minutes of the meeting of 18 May were agreed and signed, with the correction of the date of 27 April in place of 18 March in item 4.
- 3.3 Under matters arising, the Chairman reported that an agent from Acorus Rural Property Services had asked for a meeting with the Parish Council regarding future development in the village. The Chairman gave an undertaking that the Parish Council would be open and transparent in all such dealings and would undertake consultation with the village before responding.
- 3.4 Cllr Reeder reported that there had been five expressions of interest in the vacancy for Parish Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer, all of whom had submitted an application. The position had been advertised in the parish magazine and on the Somerset Association of Local Councils and South Somerset District Council websites. Interviews will take place later in the month.
- 3.5 Cllr Hutchings reported on the requirement through the new Transparency Code for the Parish Council to place information on a website. He will discuss the possibility of working with the managers of the existing village website (the Village Hall Committee) or of developing a new site. He also will explore the possibility of a grant to support web development, and will respond to the related questionnaire.
- 3.6 Cllr McHugh reminded members and villagers of the public meeting to consider whether to develop a Neighbourhood or Community Plan for the parish. The meeting will take place at 7 pm on Thursday 27 August at the Village Hall. He encouraged as many people as possible to attend.

4. Road safety

- 4.1 Further to the open discussion, it was agreed to seek a third location for a Speed Indicator Device and to explore the possibility of Community Speed Watch. Cllr Daniel asked for volunteers to come forward after the meeting

5. Financial matters

- 5.1 It was agreed to pay the Village Hall for the use of the Hall for two meetings @ £16 per meeting. It was also proposed and agreed that payment be made for the year as invoices are received. Cllr Gill proposed and Cllr Reeder seconded.
- 5.2 In response to correspondence from the Chairman of the Gardening Club, it was agreed to cover the cost of the plants etc for the village tubs that are maintained by the Club - £80 for this year. Cllr Daniel proposed and Cllr McHugh seconded.
- 5.3 In recognition that the retired Clerk had continued to assist the new Parish Council by preparing the meeting agenda, preparing the accounts for audit and having them successfully approved, and handling correspondence, it was

proposed and agreed that she receive an honorarium of £75. Cllr Reeder proposed and Cllr Hutchings seconded.

- 5.4 The Chairman reported on delays to changing signatories on the bank mandate, and the progress he had made with chasing the Bank. Until the changes have been made, it is not possible to make payments from the council.
- 5.5 It was agreed to pay the second instalment of the annual grant to the Millennium Green Trustees of £550.
- 5.6 The Chairman reported that the external audit had been completed and the annual return made.

6. Planning matters

- 6.1 The Chairman read out the letter from an Agent from Acorus Rural Property Services who had asked for a meeting with the Parish Council. It was agreed that the Parish Council would only meet with the Agent in an open meeting and in discussion with villagers. It was agreed to reply to the Agent saying that it had been discussed at the Parish Council and that we would reply further after two forthcoming meetings that would focus on planning policy in the village – the Neighbourhood or Community Plan public meeting on 27 August and the next Parish Council meeting on 14 September when we would receive an update on the significant changes to planning legislation and guidance, including South Somerset's Local Plan.
- 6.2 The Chairman invited contributions from other councillors and the public, in which there was considerable discussion about sequencing of consideration of the Plan, the update on new planning guidance and the response to Acorus, and a possible (revised) planning application from a developer. It was agreed to discuss matters further on 14 September, when we would receive a presentation from the Development Manager at SSDC, Dave Norris, and that the Parish Council would not talk with the Agent until consultation with the village.
- 6.3 The Chairman reported a request from Somerset County Council to appoint an (unpaid) Footpaths Liaison Officer for the village; it did not have to be a parish councillor. Kate Hill had expressed an interest and her appointment was agreed.
- 6.4 The Chairman reported on plans received for consultation:

15/02196/DPO – Application to discharge S.52 Agreement dated 01/09/83 which tied 75 acres of land to dwellinghouse – Buscat Farm, Sigwells. Withdrawn by the applicant

15/01932/COL – Application for a Lawful Development Certificate for the continued use of dwellinghouse for residential purposes in breach of agricultural occupancy condition (4) of planning permission 83075 dated 02/09/83 – Buscat Farm, Sigwells. Withdrawn by the applicant

15/01763/COU – Change of use of agricultural land to domestic use – Mildmay House, Milborne Port Road. Supported by the Parish Council

15/02156/COU – Change of use of agricultural land to residential garden – Chalwell House, Milborne Port Road. Supported by the Parish Council

15/00902/COL – Application for Lawful Development Certificate for the existing use of building (converted stables) as a self-contained dwellinghouse occupied as a holiday let – The Stables, Clare Cottage, Stowell. Refused by the planning authority, SSSC

15/01518/FUL – Construction of an agricultural steel frame building adjoining an existing livestock building for a milking parlour and facilities, etc. Stowell Farm. Permission granted by the planning authority, SSSC

7 Items of report and future business

- 7.1 The Chairman reported that he had undertaken training in Chairing Skills and Planning.
- 7.2 The Parish Councillors will participate in training provided by SALC on 5 September for four hours.
- 7.3 Cllr Hutchings reported that BT has run a fibre optic cable into the village and that faster broadband speeds are now available for BT customers, possibly at a higher contract cost. He will publicise this in the Parish Council feature in a future edition of the parish magazine.
- 7.4 The next meeting of the Parish Council will take place on Monday 14 September when the main item will be Planning, including information on the new National Planning Guidance SS2 which covers Rural Settlements such as ours.
- 7.5 The Chairman invited members of the public to suggest or comment on future items.
 - 7.5.1 Reference was made to likely changes to the management of the village website, and the need for any discussion with the Village Hall Committee and the website editor to cover the likely volume of information and frequency of items from the Parish Council so that they can consider fully the appropriateness of collaborating on a village/parish council site.
 - 7.5.2 A proposal was made to mark the 90th birthday of HM Queen in April 2016 and support was invited from the Parish Council. It was agreed that the Parish Council would hope to support in principle, but that a proposal including likely costs should be provided.
 - 7.5.3 It was pointed out that the Parish Council covers Sigwells and Stowell as well as Charlton Horethorne, but that the new parish councillors all live in Charlton Horethorne. It was noted that Cllr Inglefield lives in Stowell, and attends the Parish Council meeting where possible.

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- 7.5.4 A resident questioned why a grant had been made to the Gardening Club, given the funds they hold, and given that previously time and plants had been given at no cost to maintain the garden on the Millennium Green as well as the tubs. It was further understood that the tubs had been provided by the Gardening Club and they had agreed to maintain them.
- 7.5.5 A question was asked about changes to agricultural occupancy conditions at Gunville Farm, given the sale of the farm and the understanding that the new occupant is not engaged in agricultural work. The Chairman agreed to look into the matter.
- 7.5.6 The previous Chairman of the Parish Council commented on the correspondence with Acorus and provided background information on the previous Parish Council's dealings with the developers, and the opportunities that are available for the Parish Council and the village to make representations on any forthcoming plans.
- 7.5.7 The Chairman closed the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.

NOTE – efforts had been made to provide amplification for this meeting, but the village hall committee were in the process of updating the system. It therefore had not been possible, but it will be provided at future meetings.

Agreed and signed by the Chair _____

Date _____