

DRAFT MINUTES OF FIVEHEAD PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
Held on Monday 8 January 2024, at 1830, at The Village Hall, Stowey Road, Fivehead

Present:

Mrs K Beacham – Chair (KB); Mrs L Howard (LH); Dr B Ferguson (BF); Mr D Braddock (DB); Mr M King (MK); Mrs C Munday (CM); Mr R Wynn (RW) and Mrs J Parsons - Clerk/RFO (JP)

No members of the public present

4540 Apologies for absence

Somerset Councillor Mike Stanton

4541 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

Relating to matters at Min 4548a - BF, as a member of the Playing Field Committee, would remain in the meeting but withdraw from decisions on grant funding as necessary.

As Members with a property within the administrative area of Fivehead and Swell Parish, the setting of the Parish Precept would relate to or affect a disclosable pecuniary interest that has been registered. Members signed a request for dispensation. Dispensation was granted by the Monitoring Officer (the Clerk) to the Members in attendance, to allow them to freely and fully participate in relation to setting the Precept for FY24/25.

4542 Somerset Councillors' Report

The latest report is available on the Parish website here: <https://fivehead-village.org.uk/update-from-somerset-councillors-jan-24/>

The Council's financial focus, having declared a financial emergency last year, continues as it moves towards setting its budget for 24/25 in February.

The public consultation remains open until 22 January. A link to this can be found on the parish website: <https://fivehead-village.org.uk/press-release-public-consultation-on-budget-setting/>

4543 Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council, previously circulated, held on 11 December, were approved. Proposed by CM and seconded by LF. Carried unan.

4544 Matters arising from the Minutes (11 Dec) and raised by Members

- a) Visit to Isle Fruit Farm (IFF) – KB and Councillor Stanton (MS) were invited to visit IFF for an update from the Ops Manager, and MD of Angus Fruits, who joined via Teams from Scotland, and a tour of the greenhouses. The new focus, as a fledgling business, is the supply of early and late strawberries to supermarkets. Assurance was given that although the problem lighting was still in situ, due to prohibitive costs to remove it, it would not be used. From Feb to mid-March, the low-level pink lighting would be switched on, which has been used for many years without complaints. IFF would confirm the exact date for switching this on to MS and KB nearer the time.
- b) Defibrillator update – further donations had been received from the Crown pub quiz - £30 plus £54 which had come in after this month's statement, so would be recorded next month.
- c) Pound / Church wall repairs – i) Repointing of the boundary walls had been completed in December. It would now be tended to render the mortar flush with the stones, once it had dried out sufficiently. ii) A change in mortar mix to NHL2 with a proportion of putty to increase free lime had been agreed with the church architect, to ensure resilience and long-term durability, particularly for the lower parts of the roadside walls where splash back from vehicles would increase moisture. The colour would lighten and blend in with the older mortar repairs that had been done in the past. DB reported that a particularly good job had been done on the cracked corner, where tree roots were pushing out, ensuring this was well reinforced. iii) Tending of the Pound was also ongoing and the tile would be added once the priority maintenance work had been completed.

- d) Cemetery – i) The return of two headstones with second inscriptions (Emery/Kingsbury) on 20 Dec 23 had been authorised. Payment for one was still outstanding. ii) A plot pre-purchase was underway for P75B (for ashes) in the main cemetery and a plot enquiry for the Garden of Remembrance was also being considered.
- e) Office costs – the free 9-mth HP ink service included with the new printer would be coming to an end in Feb 24. The HP instant ink monthly plan (50 sheets) for £2.99 represented good value. This included delivery of ink in advance of it running out. The Clerk would be billed monthly and would reclaim this. **Resolution: to authorise monthly direct debit of £2.99 and reimbursement of the Clerk from the office budget line.** Proposed by DB and seconded by BF. Carried unan.
- f) Crane enquiries – the crane at Fivehead Court development had been on site for over a year. After recent high winds, residents had queried if the necessary authorisation was in place, including insurance, as the crane over-sails the highway and property. Work was ongoing, but the crane was rarely in use. Enquiries would be made initially with the planning officer responsible for the approval of the latest S73 application for the site. **Action:** Clerk to contact SC for an urgent reply, to find out if the crane had the necessary permissions/insurance/training for operators and how much longer it was likely to be on site.
- g) River Five testing – weather recently had not been conducive to testing, so this would resume in early Spring.
- h) Swell dog bin – the new bin was due to be dispatched on 12 Jan 24 directly to DB, who would schedule to install this, weather permitting.

4545 Correspondence Received

- a) An update on the success of the app, which reviews disability access within the community, had been received from Snowball Community. This would be promoted again via social media and the website.
- b) Details of the Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance Xmas appeal had been received since the last meeting. DB reported that c£500 had been raised via the Crown pub quiz and collection for this charity to support its essential emergency services.
- c) The launch of Somerset and Frome MP, Sarah Dyke's petition to save vital bus services was noted.
- d) Information on Listed Places of Worship grant scheme had been received from Sarah Dyke's office and passed on to the churchwarden for St Martin's and CM had notified the church treasurer. Details would also be sent to St Catherine's and the Baptist Church. **Action:** Clerk to pass on the grant details to St Catherine's and the Baptist Church for information.
- e) The recent appointment of a new chief planning officer (Alison Blom-Cooper) for Somerset Council was noted.

4546 Reports

- a) Playing Field / Village Hall – no further meetings had taken place since 29 Nov 23. The new bank account application was still pending. KB had written again to Robert Horne expressing the urgency now to move forward with co-opting more trustees and hoped that he would visit soon to help with the final arrangements.
- b) SALC – feedback on services had been provided as requested, to help future planning.
- c) Highways – a badger on the verge at the top of Ganges Hill had been reported to SC for removal.
- d) Environment – following the formal thanks received last month from residents on Swell Lane, DB had been thanked personally for his excellent work on the village signpost.
- e) Cemetery, Rights of Way and Police – no further matters of report

4547 Planning - see <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/planning-buildings-and-land/view-and-comment-on-a-planning-application/> for details.

The applications below were considered:

- a) **23/02759/HOU / 23/02760/LBC** – Langford Manor, Lower Swell, TA3 6PH - proposed kitchen alterations and new roof lights – **approval STC noted.**
- b) **21/03729/FUL** – Land OS 0082, Lower Swell – application for the demolition of existing barn and erection of single dwelling – **approval STC noted.**

4548 FY24/25 Finances/Budget

- a) Grant request – Playing Field – further information on spend and fundraising had been requested. It was agreed that the full grant requirement of £3342.50 would be included in the 24/25 budget and the grant request would be reviewed again at the March meeting. **Action:** Clerk to add request to March 24 agenda for consideration.
- b) Draft budget and precept for 24/25 – updated precept calculations had been circulated following the December discussions. Taking into account the likely increase of the community tax by Somerset Council and the ongoing pressures of increased cost of living, Members agreed a precept increase of 5% for FY24/25 to support a budget of £18,999. This would be equivalent to an increase of c£1.33 p.a. for Band D properties. **Resolution: to set the precept requirement at £18,999, assuming a grant allocation of £0.** Proposed by MK and seconded by RW.
Carried unan.
- c) Allocation of Reserves – earmarked reserves would be updated as follows:
 - (i) Cemetery railings/maintenance - £7,000
 - (ii) Speed Indicator Device - £1,000
 - (iii) Emergency plan - £500

4549 Finance

- a) Payments authorised and unrecorded during the previous month:
 - (i) G Gale – Damage repair to Pound - £2800
 - (ii) Parish Magazine Printing – Newsletter printing (Dec) - £347
 - (iii) Village Hall – Small meeting room (Nov) - £18
- b) Payments to be authorised:
 - (i) H Price – Editor’s honorarium for newsletter (Jan-Dec 23) - £200
 - (ii) J Parsons – Clerk/RFO – Salary (Dec – 40hrs inc 13.75hrs leave - SCP17 new rate @£14.95 p/h) - £598
 - (iii) J Parsons – Homeworking allowance (Dec) - £26
 - (iv) Village Hall – Small meeting room (Jan) - £18
- c) Income received:
 - (i) NatWest Interest (Nov) - £78.94
 - (ii) Ilminster Chiropractic – Newsletter advertising – £28.50
 - (iii) Quest Cars – Newsletter advertising – £57.50
 - (iv) Westcountry Firewood – Newsletter advertising - £57.50
 - (v) Aspect Property – Newsletter advertising - £30
 - (vi) Pringle/Jones – Pound renovation (to offset payment at Min 4549a(i)) - £1400
 - (vii) M Braddock – Defibrillator quiz donation - £30
 - (viii) L Summers – Defibrillator donation - £10 (CHQ)
 - (ix) Memorial inscription – Stones (Emery) - £155
- d) Internal review – 3 of 4 – completed by LH (8 Jan 24)

4550 Matters of Report, Questions and Items for the Next Meeting

- a) Chair – to note - KB would not be available to chair on 1 July 24 (or 7 July 24). Alternative arrangements would be confirmed nearer the time.
- b) Staffing meeting – to take place at end of Jan 24, to consider carry forward of Clerk’s leave
- c) Clerk – to note - next Levels and Moors LCN meeting – 15 Jan, Long Sutton Village Hall – LH to attend and report back
- d) Flooding – to consider how to help avoid future overflowing drainage causing surface water by clarifying responsibilities for maintenance – Clerk to circulate pdf for discussion

4551 Date for Next Meetings

Monday 5 February 2024 at 1830 at Village Hall, Stowey Road, Fivehead

The meeting closed at 7.25 pm.

Chairman..... Dated.....