

DRAFT MINUTES OF FIVEHEAD PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
Held on Monday 6 January 2025, at 1830, at The Village Hall, Stowey Road, Fivehead

Present:

Mrs K Beacham – Chair (KB); Mrs L Howard (LH); Mr M King (MK); Dr B Ferguson (BF);
Mr D Braddock (DB); Mrs C Munday, Somerset Councillor M Stanton (MS) and Mrs J Parsons -
Clerk/RFO (JP)

There were no members of the public present.

4681 Somerset Councillors' Report

Highlights from MS: i) Finance – it was difficult trying to achieve a balanced budget, given increases in National Insurance, minimal wage etc, which will impact care worker costs, but it was expected that there would be enough Reserves to cover this year. Further difficulties would come next year. The Government settlement was not enough, so the Council would be applying to increase the Community Tax. Restructuring was now complete, with around 450 redundancies. ii) Devolution was welcomed, although it would be with an elected mayor, in order to have increased powers. iii) More trees and cables were downed with Darragh, the second storm in two weeks, followed by flooding due to increased rainfall, showing the effects of global warming. iv) Local Plan – the next stage would see a call for sites coming out to developers and landowners, to nominate potential land to use for development.

Other matters of report: following report with photos of re-occurrent overflow on Cemetery Hill from Sunnyside travellers' site, MS had visited that day and seen water flowing, which was grey, smelling of laundry detergent; however, there were more than one outlet to the stream, which eventually empties in the River Five; signs of algae/green growth had been noted from some of the pipes. MS suggested that Members may wish to report this ongoing problem to Environmental Health for further investigation. It was agreed that options for testing would be considered and the matter would be added to the next meeting agenda. **Action:** Clerk to add to Feb 25 agenda

The Chair brought forward agenda item 6a for discussion. MS reported that there was a further planning application in the pipeline for the travellers' site on Isle Abbotts Road, which would be available for consultation once it had been validated. He had visited the site to see what had changed. Although approval for five pitches had been granted in 2024, only one of the five pitches was currently inhabited. The new application was for 7 additional pitches in the adjacent field, where there were currently at least 6 touring vans and a mobile home in place. **Action:** Clerk to add to Feb 25 agenda

MS was thanked and left the meeting at this point.

4682 Apologies for absence

None

4683 Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council, previously circulated, held on 2 December, were approved. Proposed by DB and seconded by LH. Carried unan.

4684 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

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 FY25/26.

Relating to matters at Min 4689a, BF, as a member of the Village Hall and Playing Field Committees, would withdraw from decisions on grant funding as necessary.

Relating to matters at Min 4689a, as temporary Treasurer of the Playing Field Committee, KB signed a request for a dispensation. A partial dispensation was granted by the Monitoring Officer, to allow the Chair to remain in the meeting, but withdraw from decisions on grant funding as necessary.

4685 Matters arising from the Minutes (2 Dec) and raised by Members

- a) Land in use for caravans adjacent to travellers' site on Isle Abbotts Road – see Min 4681
- b) National cycle route signage – a request from the cycling group, Sustrain, was discussed, to place signs to mark out the national cycle route within the parish. Advice had been sought from SC's Traffic Engineering Service Manager as to where signage could be permitted. Signs could only be fixed to standard steel traffic poles; all other street furniture should be avoided. Anyone fixing signs would also need appropriate road-side training, such as Chp 8, and insurance.
Action: Clerk to feed back guidance to the cycling group
- c) Crane enquiries – Sarah Dyke MP had been contacted to see if she could offer any help with the long-term issues, including the crane not being illuminated at night. MS/CRW had also written to support the request, as there was nothing further that they could do to help.
- d) Speed Indicator Device – i) The four proposed locations had been approved from SC Traffic Management, so the programme could now go ahead. Members considered three quotes from companies to supply 4 x 4m x 89mm diameter galvanised poles. An order would be placed with Road Signs Direct, once approximate lead time and storage at Greenshutters had been confirmed. A trained maintenance operative at Bridgwater Town Council would install the poles for an hourly rate and travel expenses. Quotes from two further sources had been obtained.
Resolution: to approve the installation of the poles and purchase of post-crete (quantity to be confirmed) estimated to be c£300 and to authorise purchase of 4 galvanised poles from Road Signs Direct for £309.60 (inc VAT), from CIL funds. Proposed by KB and seconded by MK. Carried unan. **Action:** Clerk to confirm installation requirements with Bridgwater Town Council and purchase poles. DB to obtain post-crete via a local supplier (once quantity confirmed) and confirm storage with Greenshutters. Clerk to add funding/purchase of SID to Feb 25 agenda
- e) Fivehead War Memorial – recommendations from the War Memorial Trust had been passed on for Greenways to consider if they would be able to carry out the preventative measures before grass cutting starts again in Spring. **Action:** Clerk to add to Feb 25 agenda
- f) Fivehead Village Green – the Green had been eroded by about a metre in places due to vehicles parking along the edge. The Council considered if this could be reclaimed, to avoid eventually losing posts, but it was felt that this would be difficult, as cars would be pushed further into the road space. It was agreed to keep a watch on movement and review again in March.
Action: Clerk to add to Apr 25 agenda
- g) LCN update – i) V Fouracre had kindly agreed to represent the parish at future Active Travel working group meetings and had attended on the LCN meeting on 5 Dec. Parish support had been notified to Sarah Dyke MP, for requesting the Secretary of State to unlock a vital section of the proposed new cycle route via Frog Lane and Park Lane, Huish. ii) No further matters arising from meetings on 19 Sep and 5 Dec; future dates were noted - 6 Mar and 19 June 25.
- h) Code of Conduct training – date for next SALC training course on 11 Feb 25 was noted.

4686 Correspondence Received

- a) St Margarets Hospice would be celebrating its 40th anniversary with a Glorious Gardens event in 2025. LH would speak to the organisers to find out more.
- b) An online budget consultation for Somerset Council was open until 15 January 25.
- c) Notification of new litter and dog bin collection charges, wef 1 Apr 25, received and noted. Costs would be applicable for collections from bins on private land only.

4687 Reports

- a) Playing Field / Village Hall – i) No further merger update as new charity awaiting legal advice; ii) 100 Club up and running for 2025, with good uptake; iii) Meeting to agree AGM agenda to take place on 14 Jan 25, for AGM on 28 Jan 25; iv) Approval given for SID site near the VH/PF entrance
- b) Cemetery – minor branches cleared following storm damage
- c) Environment – Cemetery clear-up planned for Mar 25; online training to be completed when available
- d) Rights of Way – report from MB: i) A few small trees brought down by Storm Darragh had been dealt with; ii) Unsafe stiles on L11/33 were in hand with SC; iii) A stretch of 20yds of mud, left after Wessex Internet installation work, would be reported once they return to work; iv) Fivehead Fixers to help with some of the bigger maintenance issues, such as hedge trimming
- e) Highways, Police and SALC – nothing to report

4688 Planning - see <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/planning-buildings-and-land/view-and-comment-on-a-planning-application/> for details.

- a) **24/02872/FUL** – Land adjoining Willow Barn, Stowey Road, Fivehead – change of use from agricultural land to residential for the erection of a self-build dwelling – no objections raised (6:0)

4689 FY25/26 Budget/Precept

- a) Updated budget/precept – the revised budget with precept calculations had been circulated. After further discussion, minor amendments were made and the budget approved. A precept increase of 5.5% for FY25/26 was agreed to support a budget of £20,046. This would be equivalent to an increase of c£2.01 per annum, for Band D properties. **Resolution: to set the precept requirement at £20,046, assuming a grant allocation of £0.** Proposed by LH and seconded by CM. Carried unan.
- b) Reserves policy – earmarked reserves to be reviewed again when year-end figures are available.

4690 Finance

- a) Payments authorised and unrecorded during previous months:
 - (i) Parish Magazine Printing – Newsletter printing (Dec) - £366.75
 - (ii) HMRC – Employer National Insurance (Nov) - £5.74
- b) Payments to be authorised:
 - (i) Village Hall – Small meeting room (Jan) - £20
 - (ii) H Price – Editor's honorarium for newsletter (Jan-Dec 2024) - £200
 - (iii) Citizens Advice Somerset – Grant under s73 - £50
 - (iv) J Parsons – Clerk/RFO – Salary (Dec) - £623.20
 - (v) J Parsons – Homeworking allowance (Dec) - £26
 - (vi) J Parsons – HP Instant Ink (Nov) - £3.99 (inc VAT)
 - (vii) J Parsons – Overtime – 7hrs @ £14.95 - £104.65
- c) Income received:
 - (i) NatWest interest (Nov) – £72.52
 - (ii) Somerset Council – Newsletter advertising (Curry Rivel Primary) - £240
 - (iii) Beehive Storage – Newsletter advertising - £60
 - (iv) M Braddock – Defibrillator donation (quiz)- £33

4691 Matters of Report, Questions and Items for the Next Meeting

- a) MK had spoken with a Clerk regarding what the parish might need for emergency planning. This could include identifying the types of emergencies the parish was likely to face and putting together a skills database.

4692 Date for Next Meeting

Monday 2 February at 6.30pm at Village Hall, Stowey Road, Fivehead

The meeting closed at 8.10pm.

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