



HORSINGTON PARISH COUNCIL



Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting

Held on Wednesday 8th November 2023 at St Margaret's Hall, Horsington

Present: Adrian Pratt (Chairman), Mark Tucker, Gillian Miles, John Sansom and Angela Clayton.

Barry Druce (Clerk)

Nicola Clarke (Unitary Councillor)

Apologies: Apologies were received from Belinda Mann and Judith Hodges. No members of the public were present.

Public Forum – No matters were raised

66. Unitary Councillors' Report – The Unitary Councillors' written report having been circulated was taken as read. Nicola Clarke stated that at the Somerset Council Executive meeting held recently, the Council had declared a State of Financial Emergency. The estimated deficiency for 2024/2025 was circa £100 million, and that the Council was doing all it could to avoid a S.114 declaration. The deficit is largely due to cut in government funding which has resulted in a 47% increase in adult care costs. Nicola reminded members that Somerset Council had sent out a survey on Asset Devolution, that they were currently in the process of reviewing their assets and buildings, and that at the appropriate time, public meetings will be held to discuss these matters fully.

Nicola referred to the local bus service which is currently at risk, and stated that the local MP had written to the Secretary of State requesting additional funding to preserve this vital service. The Chair stated that he had recently placed a report in 'The Villager' magazine, outlining the financial pressures and the need for public awareness. The Clerk reported an absent member's concerns over the potential loss of the bus service and its devastating effect.

The Chair requested advice on identifying the responsible person for gate repairs on a footpath adjacent to the church, and Nicola pointed contact to the local Footpaths Officer.

Concern was raised over fly-tipping that had taken place near the railway bridge and Nicola undertook to look into it.

67. Declarations of Interest / Dispensations: There were none declared.

68. The Minutes of the meeting held on the 11th October 2023: were taken as read and as PROPOSED by Gillian Miles, SECONDED by John Sansom, were approved unanimously.

69. Matters Arising: (a) Referring to Minute 58(a) the Chair reported that the dog waste bin had now been moved and installed in the preferred location.

(b) Referring to Minute 65 the Chair reported that the damaged post on the Memorial surround had been repaired.

(c) Referring to \minute 61(b) the Clerk thanked Mark Tucker for the comprehensive tender document that he had created and members for their input, and confirmed that invitations to tender had been sent out to the 8 nominated potential suppliers.

(d) Referring to Minute 65(c) the Clerk reported that the proposed letter to the residents of The Grange had not yet been sent but he would attend to it.

(e) The Clerk drew members' attention to the fact that the new website had now gone live and its availability would be advertised as widely as possible. Members expressed their appreciation to the volunteer who has created the site.

70. Planning - a): Applications: The following application had been received since the previous meeting:-

23/02803/TCA - Notification of intent to fell No.01 tree within a Conservation Area - **Barton Ridge Rectory Lane Horsington** – This application was noted by members.



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b): Decisions: The following decision had been received since the previous meeting:-

20/03423/FUL - The erection of 2 No. self-build passiv-houses with associated access and landscaping - **Land East Of Coombe Cross Stowell Lane Horsington.** **WITHDRAWN**

23/02115/HOU - Proposed Single Storey Extension, Proposed Loft Conversion, Additional First Floor Window to Gable End - **2 Foxcombe Lane Horsington.** **GRANTED**

(c) : Other Planning: No other planning issues to be discussed.

71. Footpaths – The Chair reported that he had placed an article in ‘The Villager’, reminding landowners of their responsibility for maintaining footpaths that cross their land. A member stated that they and their family had cleared the access to one of the local footpaths by cutting back branches which had been causing an obstruction.

72. Cemetery – (a). The Clerk referred members to the design of a tablet memorial which was being proposed for Sally Macey, and following a brief discussion, this was agreed as acceptable.

(b) Discussion took place on the proposal to install a full length memorial stone for Jasper de Pelet, which was finally agreed to be acceptable.

73. Play Area – (a) The Chair referred to Minute 62 and reminded members that the recent report had raised some issues which could mainly be overcome by cleaning the equipment. It was agreed that a ‘Cleaning Party’ would be formed during finer weather and carry out that work. The Chair also stated that he would repair a broken bracket that had been identified during the inspection.

(b) A member raised the issue that the large gate to the playing field was overgrown by the adjacent hedge and on discussion it was decided that this belonged to the property owner next door and they would be contacted and asked to rectify the problem.

74. Finance

(a) The accounts as at 31 October 2023 were reviewed and noted.

(b) The following cheques were authorised for payment:-

1362 - £214.10 – B Druce – Clerk Salary and expenses to 31 October 2023.

1363 - £45.00 - HMRC – Payment of PAYE deduction from clerk’s July salary

1364 - £60.00 – Hire of St Margaret’s Hall, Horsington – 1 October 2023 to 31 March 2024

1365 - £560.00 - R J Peters Invoice No. 25 (3 November 2023)

1366 - £91.84 – B Dolve – Repairs to post.

(c) The following payments had been received since the previous meeting:

(i) £100.00 – Cremation Fee – P Judd

(ii) £4.27 – Bank Interest

(d) **TREE WORKS** - The Clerk referred to the two estimates that had been obtained by the Chair in respect of necessary tree works in the parish, i.e. a dead Holm Oak and a dead Hawthorn Tree. After a detailed discussion it was PROPOSED by Mark Tucker, SECONDED by Gillian Miles, and unanimously **AGREED** to award the contract to **DAVID HARNES**. The Clerk was instructed to notify both parties accordingly.

(e) **PLAY AREA FENCE REPAIRS** - The Chair referred to the tenders that had been submitted for the repair of fencing at the Play Area. Thanks were extended to the member who had contacted the potential suppliers and obtained the



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estimates. After detailed scrutiny of the quotes received, it was PROPOSED by John Sansom, SECONDED by Mark Tucker, and unanimously **AGREED** that the contract should be awarded to **BRIAN DELVE**, subject to a site visit to clarify certain aspects within the scope of the tender. The Clerk was instructed to notify all parties involved.

75. Correspondence - The Clerk reported that items of interest that had been received through email had been circulated to all councillors, and referred to the other items that had been similarly distributed.

(a) The Clerk referred to the letter that had been circulated from the Somerset Bus Partnership who were seeking donations towards the costs involved with their ongoing campaign. Following discussion it was unanimously **AGREED** that although it was recognized that the work the Partnership was undertaking to protect the local bus service was essential, the financial restraints currently in place meant that the Parish Council would not be able to offer any financial assistance.

(b) The Chair referred to the notification that had been received from Somerset Council concerning an award being made to the Parish Council in respect of a CIL levy payment (£744.14) incurred through the granting of a planning application for Tower Hill Barn. It was acknowledged that this income came with restrictions on how it could be used, but nevertheless welcomed by all members.

76. Any other business of importance: A member stated that promised Footpath Direction Arrows had still not arrived and the Clerk undertook to chase this up with the Footpaths Officer.

The meeting closed at 20:30.