

CURRY MALLET PARISH COUNCIL

ORDINARY MEETING of the PARISH COUNCIL

Draft minutes of the ordinary meeting of Curry Mallet Parish Council
held on Monday March 9th 2015 at Curry Mallet Village Hall.

Present: Mr L W Frazer (Chairman), Messrs. R J Allard, D R Beck, R M Hughes and G K Townrow.

Apologies for Absence: Mr G D Turner, due to illness, & Sue Steele (District Councillor)

In attendance: Derek Yeomans (County Councillor), Marjorie Hookham, Janet & Mike Gray (Play Area), Linda & Christian Sheridan (Bus Shelter) (all part-time), plus Ann Collett (Magna Carta) & Bernie Collett.

1147 Public Participation:

Mrs Sheridan requested that consideration be given to provision of a bus shelter in the vicinity of the village shop, to benefit both the seven younger children attending Huish Academy and also the members of this community utilising the weekly bus services to Langport, Ilminster and Taunton. Many of the other villages served by this Berry's school-service had shelters whereas the Curry Mallet children were disadvantaged in this regard:

The Council agreed that a feasibility study be set up, with representation both from those families utilising the school service, and also from the parish council; issues for evaluation would include views from County Highways, SSDC Planning and the coach operator regarding a suitable location from both safety and statutory perspectives, as well as likely cost and aesthetic considerations. The impacts for children waiting at the several other stops within the parish would need to be considered. Linda was recommended to bring her proposition to the Annual Parish Meeting on April 21st, and Mr Townrow undertook to consult with SSDC Area North re similar projects elsewhere.

1148 Reports from District & County Councillors:

Mr Yeomans' Report for February had been noted by the Council members; there would be no further report prior to the District Council election in May. Mr Yeomans anticipated that the SSDC Water Management event would most probably be deferred until after the election. (min. 1136 refers).

Mr Townrow noted that the new Transparency Code required publication of local councils' Annual Return sections (see min. 1155.6c) on the parish website. At the recent SALC meeting, it had been accepted that such document publication should have the signatures of council members and officers redacted, in order to avoid any risk of fraudulent mis-appropriation of the signatures. SSDC had adopted this redaction policy when publishing members' Registers of Interests, and Mr Yeomans endorsed this safeguard.

The Planning Application for the new residential dwelling on Marshway (see min. 1140) was to be placed before the SSDC Area North Committee's meeting on March 25th, for its approval or rejection. The parish council would be invited to make representation at that meeting and Mr Frazer would attend.

1149 Declarations of Interest:

No new interests were declared.

1150 To Approve & Sign the draft Minutes of the Meeting held on February 9th 2015:

The minutes, as per the draft circulated to the members, were approved *nem con.* and duly signed by the Chairman.

1151 Matters of Report arising from the previous Minutes:

- **re 1136, Subsidy for Bus Route 608 (to Ilminster) & representation to County Council Portfolio Holder.**
Mr Hughes reported that the County Council had already decided to withdraw the subsidy from this service, as from mid-May, and replace it with a Demand Responsive Transport service as for the Tuesday and Friday 'Slinky Bus' services. (*Formal SCC notification received per notice of March 12th*).
The SCC Transport Services Officer, John Perrott, had advised Mr Hughes that the Ilminster service's subsidy per journey had increased from £70 in 2012 to £105 in 2015. In recent times, the normal passenger load was merely 4 people. Mr Hughes would maintain a watching brief.
- **re 1139.1, Repair to Footpath L8/24; Parish Volunteer Work Party March 22nd.**
Subsequent to the meeting, Mr Turner had advised that 4.5 tonnes gravel had been ordered for delivery to Manor Farm on March 19th for spreading on March 22nd by volunteers. Recourse to 'Terram' membrane had been considered unnecessary by the SCC Rights of Way officer. Some spreading would be undertaken on footpath L8/25 to improve the surface area where presently muddy.
- **re 1139.3, Access for Walkers across Public Footpath L8/13.**
Mr Turner would progress when more urgent priorities permitted.
- **re 1139.4, Emptying of Dog Bins at Headwell Bottom & Higher Street.**
Mr Townrow reported that SSDC Streetscene had been advised that the new bins were now in place and ready for inclusion on their schedule for routine emptying.
- **re 1139.5, Fieldgate Grit Bin, Suitable Location for Re-positioning.**
Mr Allard would establish with Stud Farm management their willingness to move the bin and concrete plinth to the newly designated location on Staundle Lane; (*subsequently affirmative, for early autumn installation*).

- **re 1139.6, Remedial Work to Bridge on Footpath L8/9.**

Mr Turner would progress when more urgent priorities permitted.

- **re 1139.7, Annual Parish Meeting Arrangements.**

Bob Croft had confirmed his availability on April 21st; Emily Colenso from the Youth Club had been contacted for permission to use their projector and screen. Mr Townrow would establish which of the community organisations wished to have the opportunity to speak at the meeting.

- **re 1145, SSDC Draft Policy on Rural Lettings.**

Mr Hughes had reviewed the draft and had obtained some clarification from the SSDC Housing Officer, Paul Herbert. Subsequent to the 'open-market' sale of 19, Pope's Cross, Curry Mallet now possessed 18 dwellings rented from housing associations (excluding the 2 'shared-equity' properties at Doble Close); of these 18 dwellings, the 4 at Doble Close were designated (for re-letting applicability) as having highest priority for families associated with Curry Mallet. Of the remaining 14 dwellings, 50% were similarly designated with highest priority for people with a Curry Mallet connection.

It was noted with some surprise that the 3 bungalows at Headwell Close were presently designated merely for 'general needs', and it was agreed to change this designation to being restricted to occupancy by elderly people. Mr Hughes would progress this change in designation.

1152 Outdoor Play Area Working Group Report:

It was noted that the Village Hall Committee's concerns about a Play Area on the hall grounds had been set out prominently in the most recent issue of the parish newsletter; an informal meeting of interested parties (VHC, parish council, Working Group) with SSDC officers (Area North & Leisure Services) and an independent Chairman had been set up for March 31st to review the feasibility and practicalities towards any implementation. The meeting would consider the legal obligations placed on each of the trustee entities and would determine what arrangements were needed to safeguard the interests of those managing both the village hall and the play facilities. Each interested party would be invited to send 2 representatives to the meeting. It was hoped by the Council that the representatives from the VHC would attend, as any reluctance so to do would have implications for future relationships between the VHC and those organisations like the Duchy of Cornwall and South Somerset District Council which contributed to its wellbeing. (*VHC participation subsequently confirmed*). Mrs Gray expressed a personal view that several of the Hall's regular bookings would be terminated if the Play Area were to be progressed. The Play Area would be an agenda topic for the Annual Parish Meeting on April 21st, so that a wider cross-section of the community could express their views.

1153 Magna Carta Committee Report:

Mrs Collett gave a verbal report; key points were,-

- .1 dates for the various archaeological digs were noted to be May 18th/19th for the school's children, June 6th for adults and June 13th/14th on the Glebe Field. Digging on Duchy land would require the permission of the Land Steward, and this was being sought. The Duchy retained the rights to any artefacts discovered on its land.
- .2 a schedule of events up to September 2015 had been prepared. Mr Townrow had spoken with the SSDC Tourist Information Supervisor, Justine Parton, regarding the possible tourism benefits from these Magna Carta celebrations; photographs of Curry Mallet activities would be welcomed for possible inclusion in the 2016 edition of the Discover South Somerset tourism brochure.
- .3 the Planning Application for the village sign would be submitted on March 10th, and this approval was a pre-requisite for County Highways' authorisation for a sign to be erected on its land. Judith Ellis of the Roads Records Office had been contacted.
- .4 Highways' Area Traffic Engineer, Gary Warren, was not enamoured of the red background and lettering font as per Belinda Magee's proposed design for the village entry signs, so Belinda would liaise with him regarding colours and fonts accepted by other highway authorities. Mr Townrow expressed dismay at an alternative design with a predominantly black background.

1154 Council Election May 2015:

Mr Frazer handed out nomination forms to those members interested in standing for election; the need for nomination papers to evidence the current electoral numbers (*ie* from February 2015 Register) for the proposer and seconder was stressed. Forms were to be presented by hand, by 4.00pm April 9th, at SSDC Brympton Way offices.

1155 Finance:

- .1 The following invoices were approved for payment, 'Parish Magazine Printing' for £103.48 (incl. VAT) for printing March newsletter issue, - #483 refers. Mr Hughes expressed concern that there had been several errors in the compositing of the copy, such that sentences and sign-offs had been omitted. It was recommended that this concern be expressed to the newsletter's editorial team. Duchy of Cornwall for £50.00 + VAT for playing field rental to 31st March 2015, - #484 refers.
- .2 Payment of £192.50 to SSDC in respect of the planning application fee for the village sign was agreed (see min. 1142.8); #486 refers. The VAT status for this would be checked (*subsequently noted VAT not applicable*).
- .3 Payment to SALC of £25.00 in respect of the March 5th Internal Audit training session (see min. 1144.3) was agreed. #485 refers.

- .4 The proposal to award an exceptional and unbudgeted grant to the Community Council for Somerset was discussed; it was noted that between 2004/2005 – 2007/2008 (inclusive) an annual grant of £25.00 had been awarded by the Council to this organisation and that, recently, its annual grant from Somerset County Council had been cut back significantly. The Community Council had, in 2006, provided helpful advice to communities at a time when rural sub post offices were under threat of closure. A grant of £40.00 was agreed.
- .5 The status to amend the bank mandate's authorised signatories to the Council's accounts was reviewed; Mr Allard had signed the form and would pass it to Mr Turner and thereafter to Mr Beck for their signatures. These three new signatories would present themselves + credentials to Lloyds Bank to facilitate authorisation.
- .6 Arrangements for the financial year-end accounts/bank reconciliation and for the Internal/External Audits were reviewed by reference to Mr Townrow's paper dated March 8th; key points were that
 - a. the proposed timetable of activities was agreed, and the Receipts & Payments for 2014/2015 plus year-end bank reconciliation would be presented for review/approval at the Council's April 13th meeting.
 - b. Angela Clarke, lately Clerk & RFO to the Council, had kindly acceded to the request to prepare the year-end financial documentation required for the Annual Return. This arrangement was agreed with gratitude.
 - c. Mr Townrow's attendance at the SALC Internal Audit training session on March 5th had been illuminating, although it had given rise to forebodings concerning the duplication in effort required up to March 2018 while both the new Transparency Code and the existing External Audit procedures operated in tandem. He undertook to liaise with the webmaster of the village website to establish whether the incremental financial year-end documentation for public display could be accommodated without undue inconvenience.
 - d. Pam Crafter had indicated her willingness to attend the External Audit seminar on April 28th, by way of increasing her familiarity with the audit requirements for local councils. This attendance had been agreed with Grant Thornton. Additionally, Mrs Crafter would familiarise herself with the provisions set out in the NALC Practitioner's Guide (2014 edition) to Governance & Accountability for Local Councils.
 - e. a statement of the Magna Carta Committee's Receipts & Payments for 2014/2015, together with a year-end bank reconciliation, would be prepared as adjunct to the Council's financial documentation for 2014/2015.

1156 Clerk Recruitment Status:

It was noted that Fivehead parish council was presently seeking a successor Clerk, and that 3 candidates were being interviewed. Mr Frazer would liaise with the Fivehead Chairman to ascertain whether any of the candidates might be interested in the Curry Mallet clerkship vacancy.

1157 Attendance at Forthcoming Meetings:

Mr Townrow also would attend the External Audit seminar on April 28th in Exeter, (see min. 1155.6d); it was agreed to re-imburse him 50% of his fuel costs, as per his request.

1158 Correspondence:

The County Council's Civil Contingencies Unit letter dated February 17th was discussed; Mr Townrow would complete the details for its data-base covering Emergency Contacts in Communities.

1159 Items of report from Members:

- .1 Mr Allard referred to the damage to the grassed triangle at the Fieldgate Lane/Higher Street cross-roads; most probably, the damage was caused by an agricultural vehicle, and it was queried whether installation of wooden posts would afford a measure of protection against such incursions onto the grassed area. He undertook to liaise with both the adjacent householder at Laurel Cottages (for possible identification as to the cause of the damage) and also with the tenant farmer with fields in that locality (to establish minimum turning-circle around the corner between Higher Street and Redland Lane).
It was noted that the asbestos fly-tipped last year on the Redlawn Lane verge had yet to be collected by the relevant Waste Services entity.
- .2 Mr Allard would attend the First-Aid Training Course, (*subsequently confirmed for April 26th*).
- .3 Mr Townrow was authorised to seek a quotation for cutting the parish's main highway verges latterly in May, at the Council's expense.
- .4 Mr Beck would commence his re-painting of sign post finger-arms in the near future, having first cleaned the arms with stabilising fluid; the work was to be completed by the end of May, in readiness for the Magna Carta Anniversary celebratory events.
- .5 Mr Townrow had notified the Council's insurers, Aon, of the purchase of the second dog bin, for its addition to the Council's list of assets.

Date of next Meeting: Monday April 13th, at 7.30pm, Curry Mallet Village Hall