

CURRY MALLET PARISH COUNCIL
ORDINARY MEETING of the PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Curry Mallet Parish Council

held on Monday 12th September 2016 in the Curry Mallet and Beercrocombe Village Hall, Curry Mallet.

Present: P McKeown, (Chairman), L W Frazer, G K Townrow, R J Allard, D R Beck.

In attendance: Cllr D N Yeomans (Part Meeting), Cllr S Steele (Part Meeting).

1363. Public Participation Time

No members of the public were present.

1364. To receive reports from the District and County Councillors on items that may be of interest

The reports from Cllr Yeomans for July and August had previously been circulated. Cllr Yeomans reiterated the £25m of savings for 2016/2017 which Somerset County Council had to achieve by next February. Impacts on service-provision arising from local authority cutbacks, should be heeded by the parish council when preparing its budget for 2017/2018, by including a contingency for more expenditure at parish level.

Cllr Steele reported that SSDC had appointed Alex Parmley as Chief Executive. He joins on October 3rd from Eastleigh. SSDC presently has a £4m cost-saving initiative, which will include a staff reduction of 61 FTE through its 'Transformation' project. Future financing of the District Council was ill-defined, since the forthcoming demise of the government's Revenue Support Grant was unlikely to be compensated in full by the new business rate revenues (for which a variety of offsets could diminish the income to be received).

Cllr Steele also referred to the Planning Policy workshop planned for September 21st, at which those parishes designated in the SSDC Local Plan for housing development were to be consulted. She strongly urged members' attendance at the workshop, even though Curry Mallet had not been specifically listed within the government development target of 15,000 new homes to be built by 2028 in South Somerset.

1365. Declarations of Interest

Mr Allard, as Chair of the Village Hall Committee, re the proposed grant to defray costs of their new mower.

1366. Apologies

Mrs A J Clarke, absent for family reasons.

1367. Minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2016

These were approved and duly signed by the Chairman.

1368. Matters arising

1270 Village Hall Lease Renewal – The next meeting of the Committee is being arranged for late September by Mr Allard. The current lease expires in September 2017. Mr Allard will establish possible contacts re similarly rented village halls via the Community Council for Somerset, prior to the next Committee meeting.

1302 Village Web Site Steering Group – Availability of participants was being co-ordinated by Mr McKeown. In response to the Council's query regarding likely grant requirement for 2017/2018, Mrs Turner had advised that collection of advertising revenue remained outstanding and therefore payment of the annual hosting fee could be in jeopardy. Mr McKeown had been exploring free hosting solutions for the website and will bring a working example of what is available to the next meeting. This could reduce ongoing costs.

Mr Townrow reported that the proposed meeting with the Editorial Board of the Newsletter, to formalise their governance processes would be progressed, following a conversation with the editor. The Council agreed to meet the cost of a £6 software package to allow better graphics to be used for future issues.

1320 Village Play Area – At the 13th September VHC meeting, Mr Allard would convey the Parish Council's views as to allocation of financial responsibility and operational management between the Council and the VHC. As previously suggested, the Council would take and retain ownership of the equipment and the VHC would manage and operate the facility, including routine maintenance, inspections, insurance etc. The Council would finance, through the annual precept, the stipulated sinking fund for equipment replacement

after 20 years. It was noted that the Outdoor Play Area Working Group had envisaged a £240pa running costs' contribution to be met from fund-raising activities by the Play Area interest group. (see min. 1128).

1334 Village Hall Mower. Mr Allard presented his updated proposal for a Council grant towards the overall cost for the VHC. The request for £200 was accepted by all members present and a cheque will be issued.

1349 Church Street Highway Resurfacing. Still on schedule for February 2017. A copy of the residents' letter to South Somerset Area Highways would be sought by Mr McKeown for the Council's records. (*since received, subsequent to the meeting*).

1355. Council Membership. The most recent issue of the newsletter had again included reference to the vacancy. Members were asked to elicit expressions of interest through their contacts with residents.

1362. Relocation of village entry signs. Mr Beck had erected one within his property's boundary adjacent to Beer Street. The other redundant sign remains in Mr Frazer's garage awaiting Highways' contractors to erect on Rockway, opposite the layby. This work is now scheduled for completion by the end of the year.

1369. Footpaths & ROW

Mr McKeown had been in contact with Rachael Pearce of SCC Rights of Way and agreed she will have a technician review 3 of the 4 footbridge structures to ensure any defects are recorded and plans for remedial action established. Clearing of the upper part of path L8/10, as requested per Mr Townrow's e:mail of September 5th, will be progressed although a recent 50 person walking group passing through the area had trampled down the overgrowth quite considerably. Mr Townrow would update Mr P Bawler. Mr McKeown to write an article on the parish footpaths for the next issue of the newsletter.

1370. Planning

Crimson Hill Enforcement Notice Appeal APP/R3325/C/16/3154414

The minutes of 30 July 2007 to be sourced by the Clerk as they set out in detail the Parish Council's original objections to the application which, it was felt, were still valid. The Council's Observations need to be lodged with SSDC Planning by 21 September and these will be collated and submitted by the Clerk. (*Subsequent to the meeting, the Council has been informed that Observations to the Planning Appeal Inspector need to be lodged by 11th October*).

Churchill Cottage – External Extension 16/03882/FUL

After consideration of the submitted plans, the Council had no observations to make on the submission since the proposed development was to the rear of the property and not detrimental to visual amenity for the wider community. The adjacent householders had been consulted had not expressed objections.

Notice of permitted Agricultural Development to form a Bund at Stud Farm 16/02691/AGN

It was noted that this would be sited in the field to the right of footpath L8/10. It was deemed unlikely to affect the water table and the bund was not in close proximity to any dwelling. However, concern was expressed about water management in times of heavy rainfall and the weight of retained water potentially affecting the bund's stability. The Clerk would communicate the Council's concerns to SSDC Planning.

1371. Annual Return 2016

1. The External Auditor's extension in submission deadline (to July 15th) had been achieved.
2. The public notice period had now expired; no community requests for information had been received.
3. The notice in the front of the Playground Inspection Log had been reviewed and the content was re-affirmed at the meeting. Mr Allard to attach to the log.
4. The Clerk reported a query from the External Auditor concerning the Section 2 entry and an apparent disparity between the 2014/2015 closing balance and the 2015/2016 opening balance. This was discussed and authority delegated to a meeting on 14th Sept when the methodology would be clarified for provision of an explanation. It was noted that Grant Thornton needed an expedited response in order to comply with their own 30th September deadline for completion of audits.
5. It was agreed that an honorarium to the value of £35 be awarded to Mrs Crafter by way of expressing the Council's thanks for her diligent services as Internal Auditor. Clerk to circulate her Report to members.
6. The Financial Regulations of the Council, as updated by the Clerk, were reviewed; minor revisions were discussed and a final version to be presented next meeting.

1372. Finance

VAT return – this was being progressed by the Clerk for invoices both directly through the Council (x 9) and also via the Magna Carta Committee ((x 27), covering the period up to the end of fiscal year 2015/6. Receipt of the £605.00 refund, in full amount, should enable the final Magna Carta account surplus to be disbursed.

2017/8 Budget Setting – the draft as circulated by the Clerk was discussed and the Clerk to amend in line with comments made, in advance of further dialogue at the next meeting. The £200 mower expenditure to be included for 2016/2017 and the 2017/2018 precept to be increased to ~£4,500 to facilitate a target year-end balance of ~£3,000, which would provide contingency cover for future uncertainties in income and expenditure (eg. discontinuation of Council Tax Reduction Scheme grant and possible capping). Mr Townrow noted that, in recent years, increases in annual precept had been held to £80 & £180, whereas significant exceptional expenditure had been incurred, viz £700 for hall kitchen upgrade in 2013, £510 for village website creation in 2014 and £1,215 for Magna Carta in 2015. Rationale for a £4,500 precept level would require detailed explanation in the next newsletter.

Costs

- 1) The print cost of newsletters.
- 2) General repairs around the village, eg. playing field fencing.
- 3) Contracted Verge cutting.
- 4) Clerk Salary will increase, albeit by a small amount.
- 5) Provision of community play equipment sinking fund
- 6) Contribution to the Village Hall Committee's repairs and maintenance programme.

The following payments were agreed and cheques will be issued in due course.

1. Village Hall Committee grant re mower	£200.00	Cheque no 534 issued
2. PMP Printing, re newsletter	£85.36	Cheque no 535 issued
3. Duchy of Cornwall, Playing field rental	£60.00	Cheque no 535 issued

1373. Attendance at forthcoming meetings

- SALC AGM 17th Sept Mr Townrow to attend
- Community Council for Somerset AGM 6th October Mr Townrow to attend
- Neighbourhood Watch Coordinators meeting 3rd October – Mr Townrow to attend

1374. Correspondence

A number of items of correspondence had been previously circulated to members

- Police & Crime Commissioner's newsletter
- Somerset Waste Partnership – introduction of a permit scheme for trailers using the recycling centres, and restrictions on vehicle and trailer types using the centres, to be effective from October 3rd.
- Somerset Choices – Care & Support Services leaflets to be provided to the shop / Post Office
- The new Travel Somerset travelsomerset.co.uk web site was promoted – an all in one portal for travel plans and issues.
- A letter from the DCLG Minister for Housing & Planning, Gavin Barwell MP, was read out and noted to align with Cllr Steele's earlier comments regarding government pressure for housing development.

1375. Items of report from members

Mr Townrow referred to prevailing slow response times for the national police 101 non-emergency number, an issue he would raise at the NHW meeting. There was widespread support for this stance. Roger Eavis who, in February 2012, had provided and planted the Queen's Accession commemorative oak tree at the edge of the playing field, had advised Mr Townrow that the tree's growth pattern now warranted 'crown-lifting' and recommended that this be undertaken in November, after leaf-fall. The September 2016 Curry Mallet School roll was 64 pupils, with 22 coming from the village; the increasing proportion of Curry Mallet children therefore called for greater consideration of this age-group's needs. The Pope's Cross notice board was in a poor state of repair and without benefit of a front panel to protect notices from wind and rain. Mr Townrow recommended that the notice board be replaced and that such replacement was within the criteria for SSDC grant support. Mr Beck recommended that local carpenter Mr Ben Skinner be approached to undertake the work; Mr McKeown to try to obtain a quote.

Next meeting will be held on Monday October 10th 2016 in the Village Hall at 7.30pm



Shaun Dale Clerk to the Parish Council