

CURRY MALLET PARISH COUNCIL
ORDINARY MEETING of the PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Curry Mallet Parish Council
held on Monday 9th January 2017 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 S Steele (District Councillor), part-time

1405. Public Participation Time

Andrew Lee, Editor of 'The Langport Leveller', was in attendance for part of the meeting.

1406. To receive reports from the District and County Councillors on items that may be of interest

Sue Steele reported on the SWWP changes. From some date after October 2017, additional recycling items including batteries, small electrical items and more types of plastic will be collected weekly, with non-recyclable waste moving to a 3 weekly collection cycle. Publicity for the changes was planned for nearer the time of introduction. Cllr Yeomans' report has been previously circulated. The Enterprise Advisor Scheme (volunteer business mentors) being sponsored by the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership was noted, and it was queried whether Huish Academy in Langport would be part of the Scheme.

1407 Declarations of Interest

Mr Allard, as Chairman of the Village Hall Committee, declared an interest in the Hall's lease renewal, although it was recognised that all Council members had an interest in the continuation of the Hall facilities.

1408. Apologies

Mrs A J Clarke, for family reasons (see min. 1355).

1409. Minutes of the meeting held on 14th November and the EPMC Meeting of 22nd November 2016

These were approved and duly signed by the Chairman.

1410. Matters arising

1302. An initial meeting of the Steering Group (Mr McKeown, Mrs Turner and Mrs Talbot) had been held on 15th November. In dialogue with TeaPot Creative the training was confirmed for which we are most thankful. That training will ensure that all efforts will be made to get a set of people trained in the use of the web site. A second meeting was planned for 10th January. This will build on the outputs from the first session to facilitate Teapot's training of additional web masters so that different people could become responsible for different parts of the site. Mr McKeown was to write an article for the Newsletter (deadline 20 Feb) highlighting the site, the roles of Steering Group members, and future plans.

Mrs Turner was to be re-imbursed by the Community Fund for her payment of the annual renewal charge for the website's domain name.

The dialogue with Mr Hearn re the newsletter's policies & procedures will be resumed forthwith; to improve the appearance of articles, it would be requested of Mr Hearn that the formatting be modified to avoid the splitting of words to fit the space available. (*Done, Jan. 10th*)

1355. Parish Council Membership – The one vacancy remained unfilled; another request for candidates will be run in February Newsletter. All Councillors were reminded to continue with efforts to fill the vacancy. Mr Lee undertook to highlight the vacancy and the work of the Parish Council in his newspaper.

1369. Footpath bridge repairs - Mr McKeown reported on his January 9th meeting with Tracy Sutton of SCC Rights of Way team and updated members on the different types of crossing as well as the deterioration in the condition of the 3 structures in the Parish. It was noted that the County Council's team had done a very good job at clearing the undergrowth around a number of bridges and paths, and supplemented with Parish Council volunteers' clearance work to help maintain a good standard of access on the paths. The structures inspected at the meeting were agreed to be in a poor state, and Rights of Way will review their engineer's report to advice on remedial work required for these 'ditch crossings' and when this could be achieved.

It was noted that Rights of Way's Capital Budget for 2016/2017 had been cut back by £16,000, but that the Revenue Budget (for maintenance etc.) was unaffected.

Mr Frazer reported that the Volunteer Activity Report (for footpath strimming) had been provided to Rights of Way, and that the strimmer unit would remain available for Curry Mallet's designated volunteers' use throughout the 2017 season.

1370. Planning Stud Farm Bund 16/02691/AGN – Work on the Bund had been completed and its creation was helping reduce flows of run-off water into Pestlefield Lane. Topsoil recovered from the excavation had been spread across the bund surface, this should help the grass to grow and it should not be visually obtrusive. Item discharged.

1375. Popes Cross Notice Board – On-line quotes have been obtained and Mr Beck was in contact with local tradesmen to work up quotations for the supply and fix of a new board similar to the one in Higher Street near the Post Office. Specification details for the preferred quotation would be included in the submission to SSDC Area North for a community grant.

1399 - 24th April has been confirmed for the Annual Parish Meeting. Mr Townrow to contact the Community Safety Officer at Taunton Fire Station for their making a presentation. The Clerk had confirmed the Smart Meter 10 min. presentation and will extend the request for speakers to local organisations.

1411. Village Hall Lease Renewal

Mr Allard's Report, setting out details of remedial and upgrade works undertaken since Nov. 2008, was noted with interest, as were the statistics regarding hours of annual usage by routine and *ad hoc* organisations. The forward Maintenance & Improvements Plan, with outline costings for the specified works, was similarly commended. Parish Council dialogue with the Duchy to be instigated. A letter to the Duchy drafted by Mr Burrough, setting out the recommendations of Beercrocombe Parish Council, was noted. It was agreed that 3 Council members, including the VHC Chairman, should meet informally with the Duchy's representative to discuss the outline terms of the renewal. The Council may need to make provision for legal fees and, as previously noted (mins. 1341 & 1270), the SSDC Solicitor would be contacted for advice once proposals for a new trust document had been formulated and agreed by the Council and the VHC.

1412. Footpaths & Rights of Way

It was agreed, following quotes obtained by the Clerk, that Dearden's should be asked to supply the 3 bags of 10mm chippings needed on 26th Feb for the L8/24 footpath dressing. Clerk to contact Mr Adams re location for Dearden's delivery.

1413. Planning

No items of report

1414. Finance

2017/8 Budget Setting – the Precept for 2017 of £4,450 plus £50 Grant (now confirmed by SSDC) was agreed. Mr Townrow had updated his schedule setting out the derivation of band D equivalent council tax levy from the precepted amount, the number of chargeable households and the government Reduction Scheme offset. The revised schedule, covering the period 2012/2013 – 2017/2018 would be circulated to Council members. The rationale for the £4,500 budget for 2017/2018 had been explained in the December newsletter, and members were asked whether this explanation had engendered any comment within the community. It was agreed to defer until the February meeting the decision to proceed with the budgeted contact verge-cutting in May, as had been undertaken in 2015 and 2016. Consensus thus far had been that this expenditure was worthwhile, and more soundings would be taken by members.

It was noted the invoice from SCC Highways for siting the new village-entry sign (on Rockway) had yet to be received (£160:00). The Clerk to Beercrocombe PC would be requested to provide their cheque for 2016/2017 newsletter printing cost as soon as practicable in March, so that the cheque can be presented for payment within the current financial year.

Internal Auditor – Mr McKeown to contact Pam Crafter to ascertain if she would be willing to undertake this responsibility again in 2017. Mr Townrow would arrange with the Clerk for members to be provided with a copy of the 2014 Practitioner's Guide Appendix 9, 'An Approach to Internal Audit Testing', to facilitate general awareness as to councils' requirements for compliance with the obligatory procedures.

It was noted that from 2017 the new Smaller Authorities governance would prevail, and that after completion of the 2017 Annual Return's scrutiny by Grant Thornton, the new auditors (for a five-year term) will be PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP.

The Council's Finance group had yet to meet, to review the External Auditor's Observations with regard to the Curry Mallet Annual Return submission for 2016.

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

1. PMP (Nov 16 issue)	£85.12	Cheque no 546 issued
2. HMRC	£136.00	Cheque no 547 issued
3. S Dale Wages Q3	£203.96	Cheque no 548 issued

Bank Reconciliation at 31st December 2016:

Current Account and Cash Book	£3555.46 (minus uncleaned cheques totalling £120)
Treasurers Account	£2864.16
Total	£6419.62

Details to be reviewed and validated by Mrs Clarke.

1415. Attendance at forthcoming & recent meetings and feedback on meeting attended

- 22 November – Precept Setting Workshop at SSDC Finance, attended by Mr Townrow, Mr McKeown and the Clerk, had proved very useful.
- SALC Area Meeting on 15th December, attended by Mr Townrow, had included
 - a Productivity Analysis prepared by Heart of SW England LEP, to encourage development of scientific and engineering skills within Somerset, through either the proposed University of Somerset or more apprenticeships being offered by local commercial /industrial companies.
 - That enhanced, more specific, local training was being progressed, sponsored by SALC for member councils, and to be undertaken at Parish Council meetings rather than at formal training sessions.
 - that capping by government of smaller councils (precept < £500,000) would not be implemented for 2017/2018, although escalation in council tax levies would be kept under review.

1416. Correspondence

Several items of correspondence had been previously circulated to members including:

- South West Waste Partnership newsletter, & 'Recycle More' initiative (see min. 1406 first para.)
- Reporting issues on rural roads; reporting of pot-hole locations via www.travelsomerset.co.uk website
- CCS Winter Newsletter
- 'Somerset Prepared', Civil Contingencies; Clerk to notify SCC that Mr Townrow would be the parish's Somerset Emergency Community Contact
- Police & Crime Commissioner's December Newsletter
- It was also noted with sadness that Sam Winter was leaving SALC shortly. She had been most helpful to the Parish in her 4 years with SALC.

1417. Items of report from members

- Mr McKeown and Mr Townrow had collected and distributed the parish's allocation of Winter Salt to 5 additional householders, thereby increasing the total complement around the village to 21 householders. Mr Townrow to circulate his grit spreading guidelines to the new recruits (*Done*).
- Re the relocation of the Grit Bin for the Fieldgate locality, Mr Townrow would contact Highways`. (*Post meeting update, the bin has since been re-located onto Highways' land at a specified location on the west side of Staundle Lane and filled with grit – thanks to swift action by SCC Highways*).
- Mr Allard is dealing with the broken movement-activated light by the village hall car park. It will also be relocated closer to the road, as previously requested. (mins. 1381/1349 refer).
- Mr Townrow noted with sadness the untimely death of Penny Collins over the Christmas period. While she had resided in the village only since September 2015, having moved from Manchester, she was already a well-known and well-liked member of the community. Her funeral service will be held on 20th Jan.
- Mr Beck reported on overgrown hedging along the upper stretch of Back Lane and will notify SCC Highways. Similarly, an overgrown stretch of hedge outside Marshway Cottage was encroaching onto the road and was in need of trimming by the householder.
- It was noted that the electricity supply to parts of the village was due to be disrupted at various times on 12th January.

Next meeting will be held on Monday February 13th 2017 in the Village Hall at 7.30pm



Shaun Dale Clerk to the Parish Council