

**CURRY MALLET PARISH COUNCIL  
ORDINARY MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes of the meeting of Curry Mallet Parish Council  
held on January 8<sup>th</sup> 2018, in the Curry Mallet and Beercrocombe Village Hall, Curry Mallet.

**Present:** Mr P McKeown (Chairman), Mr R J Allard, Mr L W Frazer, & Mr G K Townrow.

**In Attendance:** SSDC Cllr Sue Steele, (part meeting)

**1561. Chairman's Remarks.**

- .1 Mr McKeown made reference to the recent passing, after lengthy illnesses, of two prominent and hitherto active members of the Curry Mallet community; John Tanner had died on December 28<sup>th</sup>, aged 80, and would be remembered for his production and co-ordination of the annual Christmas Shows, 1999 – 2004. Frank Conway, who died on January 1<sup>st</sup>, had been a member of this parish council for ca. 20 years up to November 2011; having lived life-long in the village Frank represented traditional values and, over many years, had ensured that Higher St and Headwell were well-gritted in the winter and free from flooding through clearance of the drain gullies. The Council expressed its condolences to the Tanner and Conway families and to their friends.
- .2 The forthcoming refurbishment of Curry Mallet Stores & Post Office was noted with enthusiasm; Phil & Jane Scott were commended for their success in having secured a grant. The Council hoped that these improvements would contribute to increasing the shop's foot-fall and economic viability.
- .3 Following the resignation of Shaun Dale as Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer, as of November 30<sup>th</sup> 2017, members of the Council were asked to contribute to the overall administration until such time as a successor became operational. For this interim period, Mr Frazer would assume the Parish Paths Liaison Officer portfolio, Mr McKeown would handle liaison with Lloyds Bank, and Mr Townrow would prepare meeting agendas and minutes. Other responsibilities were still to be assigned, but the Council had immediate need of a book-keeper.

**1562. To receive reports from County and District Councillors on items that may be of interest**

- .1 The County Council Conservative Group's briefing sheet had been circulated; closure of the A361 main road for re-surfacing, between the A38 junction and the Sedgemoor boundary, was to commence on Feb. 19<sup>th</sup> for 3 weeks and would impact Curry Mallet residents' journeys to Bridgwater and the northern suburbs of Taunton.
- .2 The decision of the Dept. of Communities & Local Government, not to award Somerset with Business Rate Retention 'Pilot Status', would necessitate an additional £4 million cost savings for the County Council. Mrs Steele noted that both RNAS Yeovilton and the NHS Trust for Musgrove Hospital had sought waiver of their business rate obligations; if granted, the resultant loss of income for the local authorities would have significant impacts on service provision. Cost savings at Musgrove had been achieved by improved utilisation of consumable supplies, following the introduction of bar-code reading at the point of use.

**1563. Declarations of Interest.**

No new interests were declared by those present.

**1564. Apologies for Absence.**

Mr Beck, due to illness, & County Councillor Aparicio-Paul, who was attending Aller & Pitney council meetings.

**1565. Minutes of Previous meeting.**

Each page of the draft minutes (V2) of the November 13<sup>th</sup> meeting was duly signed by the Chairman and would be incorporated into the Minute Book, when it had been located.

**1566. Matters Arising.**

**1375 – Popes Cross Notice Board.** A Work Party, on Sunday January 29<sup>th</sup> at commencing at 10.30am, would install the posts and erect the new board; Mr McKeown would provide concrete mix for the posts and water would be obtained from a nearby householder. It was noted that the invoice from 'Displays for Education' had quoted a price of £483.84 including VAT, Mr Frazer having secured a discount of 10% from the supplier. The grant from SSDC Area North (50% of net price = £201.60) would be claimed retrospectively by Mr Frazer.

**1472/1474 – Banking.** Mr McKeown would present himself to Lloyds Bank, Taunton Branch, to notify staff that he would be the Council's point of contact pending appointment of a new Clerk & RFO; he would obtain mandate forms, for authorisation by the Council's current signatories to the accounts, both to access Lloyds' electronic banking facilities and also to change the name of the 'Magna Carta 800 Committee' account.

The 2018 NALC Practitioner's Guide (for updated electronic banking procedures) should be published in March.

**1474 –Ladder for Access to Sheep-wash.** Mr Townrow had yet to follow up the Alton ladders' alternative design.

**1538 – Broken Rail on L8/24.** Mr Frazer to follow up with Tracy Sutton /Les Braunton of SCC Rights of Way team.

**1543 – Excessive field run-off flooding Marshway.** Volunteer field ditch clearance over Christmas had improved drainage for east-bound flows in the ditch on the north side of Stowey Road, adjacent to the Wildlife Trust's field. Further clearance work, including removal of hedgerow growth from the ditch, remained necessary. Flooding at the Stowey Road/Cathanger Lane junction, arising from a blocked culvert, was noted.

**1557- Annual Grant to South Somerset Links.** Mrs Steele confirmed that South Somerset Links had ceased trading; fate of the Council's grant cheque (#576 for £40.00) would be established by Mr McKeown from Mr Dale. Community transport for people without their own vehicles could be provided by Eddie Watts of Isle Valley Transport, Isle Brewers; Mrs Steele would provide contact details for inclusion in the February parish newsletter.

#### **1567. Village Hall Lease Renewal.**

New Lease Agreement

The Chairman reported that Rachel Saltonstall, the SSDC Principle Solicitor for Property Services had been asked to take over the Curry Mallet Village Hall lease-renewal portfolio in consequence of Ian Clarke's sad demise. A meeting with Ms Saltonstall would be arranged as a matter of urgency, for Messrs. McKeown & Townrow to review the detailed Conditions pertaining to the new lease (as received by her from Farrer's, the Duchy's solicitors). The Council expressed its gratitude for SSDC officers' continuing commitment to this lease renewal. An informal meeting of council members would be held on Monday January 22<sup>nd</sup>, to review these detailed Conditions (which Mr Allard considered to be little changed from those set down in the original 1987 Lease). As noted under min. 1553, a codicil would need to be added to the Lease's 'Outside Space' heading, to reference the Play Area within the hall grounds, its equipment, and any supporting concrete fixtures below the surface. The Village Hall Committee would also review the detailed Conditions, as a matter of urgency.

Condition of Dilapidation Report

Mr Allard had had contact with the Duchy Land Steward, for their Building Surveyor to apprise the present state of repair by which to set a base-line for the new lease. (Subsequently notified; Sarah Bird to visit on January 18<sup>th</sup>).

#### **1568. Outdoor Play Area.**

The content of the Duchy Land Steward's e:mail of December 13<sup>th</sup> indicated some misunderstandings as to the Council's present circumstances, - the needs for a slimmed-down project scope and also for more interesting equipment (vide the 'Big Foot') to be distinctive from that in the village school's grounds. These considerations would be reviewed with Sarah Bird (*now to visit on January 18<sup>th</sup>*).

The Chairman reported on the Dec. 14<sup>th</sup> meeting with Rob Parr, SSDC Leisure Services' Senior Play & Youth Facilities Officer. Mr Townrow's Notes of that meeting had been circulated to members. Key points were

- the need for the Council to manage its cash-flow during the period between receipt of s106 monies and the estimated £6,500 total payments to suppliers of equipment, installation and supervision, to cover the incremental £1,300 VAT charge which could be re-claimed subsequently from HMRC.
- Rob Parr would make representation to SSDC management for deferring the December 2017 deadline for accessing the £6,551 s106 monies (consolidated capital + revenue elements). Mr McKeown would notify Mr Parr formally of the Council's resolve to bring this Play Area project to fruition.
- the difference in types of matting, both to meet safety criteria and to protect the grassed ground surface from scuffing, was noted.
- once opened for use, the Play Area would have a board erected on which contact 'phone numbers would be listed, for parents/guardians to notify the Council or VHC in the event of any equipment failure/malfunction or other hazard associated with the facility.

#### **1569. Footpaths and Rights of Way.**

Mr McKeown referred to a parishioner's enquiry regarding the feasibility of having the parish's Rights of Way named after local families who had lost members in the First World War. Such commemoration had been seen in another parish: Members noted that the names of the fallen were inscribed on plaques in All Saints' Church, and that descendants of several of those men were still living in the locality. The practicalities of bringing this project to fruition were discussed, and various issues were identified, viz

- that special signage would be needed, with suitable detail to reflect the significance of the naming;
- as Public Rights of Way were the responsibility of the County Council the issue of payment, for whatever commemorative signage was envisaged, would need to be agreed with the Rights of Way Team.
- the parish council had neither resource for management of this project nor for meeting its cost.

Mr McKeown would convey these views to the parishioner who suggested this project.

## 1570. Planning.

17/04352/S73 Amendments at Grain Barn (Vary Condition 2); now approved by SSDC Planning.

## 1571. Finance.

.1 The following payments were approved, and cheques raised accordingly, -

- PMP (Nov. 2017 newsletter printing; 20 pages x 240 copies) £164.35 (zero VAT) cheque 578 issued
- 'Tricky Warren' (for Patricia Bowerman's Play Area drawing) £100.00 (no VAT) cheque 579 issued
- 'Displays for Education' (Pope's Cross noticeboard) £403.20\* + VAT) cheque 580 issued

\*the grant from SSDC Area North, for 50% of the net cost of the board (£201.60), would be claimed retrospectively by Mr Frazer, who had secured a 10% discount on the price paid.

The letter from Taunton CAB, expressing thanks for the Council's £60.00 grant, was noted appreciation; similar acknowledgements of receipt were awaited from the Village Hall Committee and All Saints' Church PCC.

- .2 Pending receipt of advertising revenue, payment against invoices tendered (totalling £222) for hosting the village website and the annual domain fee, would be approved at the February meeting, in lieu of an annual grant of £100. Min. 1557 referred. It was recognised that the Local Audit & Accountability Act 2014 Transparency Code required that the Council's Annual Return data be posted on a publically-accessible website. The SALC County Secretary had suggested to Mr Townrow that training for inputting data to the website could qualify for a grant under provisions of the Code, and Teapot Creative would be contacted to establish a training charge. Pending recruitment of a Parish Clerk, it was agreed that Mr Allard would have most to gain from this training.
- .3 The salary payments due to Mr Dale & HMRC for October/November 2017 (total gross of £230.28) had yet to be issued, and would be recorded at the February meeting.
- .4 The Precept Form for 2018, incorporating the Council Tax Support Grant (£20) and Council Tax levy (£4,730) was approved and signed by the Chairman, who would forward it to SSDC Finance before the January 31<sup>st</sup> deadline.

## 1572. Reports from and attendance at meetings by Councillors.

December 14<sup>th</sup> with Rob Parr of SSDC Leisure Services. *Subsequently Sarah Bird, Duchy Land Steward January 18<sup>th</sup>.*

## 1573. Correspondence.

In response to Civil Contingencies' request for a second point of contact within the parish (already Mr Allard, for emergency use of the Village Hall), Mr Townrow's details would be notified, for utilisation of his NHW contacts.

## 1574. Clerk Recruitment.

The informal meeting on January 22<sup>nd</sup> would establish the information required for seeking applications; Mr Allard noted that the 2018 local authority pay settlement would be 2.0%, so the Clerk's salary from April 2018 would be at a rate of £9.047 per hour, equivalent to £1411.33 per annum or £117.61 per calendar month.

Mr McKeown would notify Lloyds Bank that Mr Dale was no longer in the Council's employ; members present authorised Mr McKeown to be the Council's prime contact with Lloyds and that the bank's routine correspondence (statements etc.) should be sent to him until further notice.

## 1575. Items of report from Councillors.

Mr Allard made reference to the Village Hall car park's compound for discarded Christmas trees, provided by SSDC Streetscene Services. The similar facility after Christmas 2016 had yielded *ca.* 25 – 30 discards, which had warranted continuation of this initiative. Householders' attention would be drawn to this impending facility in the November 2018 issue of the parish newsletter.

**The next ordinary meeting of the Parish Council will be on Monday February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2018 at 19:30 in the Village Hall**