

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

Minutes of the meeting of Curry Mallet Parish Council
held on February 12th 2018, in the Beercrocombe & Curry Mallet Village Hall, Curry Mallet.

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

In Attendance: SSC Cllr Clare Aparicio- Paul (part-time for min. 1577)

1576. Public Participation.

As for November & January meetings, no member of the public was present.

1577. To receive reports from County and District Councillors on items that may be of interest

- .1 The County Council Conservative Group's briefing sheet, having been circulated, was noted: Ms Aparicio-Paul referred to the current SCC Consultation regarding future demand for public libraries and requested that the parish's residents indicate their support for retaining their local branch libraries; the Langport library was instanced as a modern, well-equipped, and much-utilised facility, but its continued existence would depend on the demonstrated level of support from residents within its catchment area. The Consultation (with closing date April 22nd) would be mentioned in the forthcoming issue of the parish newsletter.
The Highways England further public consultation regarding a preferred route for the new stretch of A358 between West Hatch Lane and the M5 was discussed; Mr Townrow referred to his discussion on January 23rd at Monk's Yard with Highways' personnel, at which he had been advised that any improved access from the M5 (and south-east of Taunton) to Musgrove Hospital was a planning responsibility within the County Council's Strategic Plan. Ms Aparicio-Paul undertook to relay this concern for improved access to her County colleagues.
- .2 The new Boundary Commission proposals, for re-defining SSDC wards, projected no changes for Islemoor Ward.
- .3 Ms Aparicio-Paul referred to the Somerset Waste Partnership/CET 'Waste Education Programme' commencing in Feb. 2018, for increasing schools' awareness of society's need for more comprehensive re-cycling. Mr Frazer would notify Curry Mallet Primary School about this initiative and Ms Aparicio-Paul would contact Mrs Devereux.
- .4 South Somerset Area Highways were thanked for their liaison with the Skanska sub-contractor who undertook the Jan. 18th patching of Marshway, thereby facilitating the depositing of redundant 'planings' for Parish Volunteers' subsequent use in filling various road-edge craters to improve safety for vehicles and pedestrians.

1578. Declarations of Interest.

No new interests were declared. Mr Allard's interest as Chairman of the Village Hall Committee was reiterated.

1579. Apologies for Absence.

SSDC Councillor Sue Steele, who was still recovering from having been unwell.

1580. Minutes of Previous meeting.

Each page of the draft minutes (V3) of the January 8th meeting was duly signed by the Chairman as being an accurate record of the proceedings and would be incorporated into the Minute Book (which had been found).

1581. Matters Arising.

1375 – Popes Cross Notice Board. Installation would now take place on Sunday Feb. 25th, starting at 10.30am; availability of an angle-grinder was sought, with which to disconnect the existing board's metal posts and to shorten those of the new board. Mr Allard would contact the householder at No. 12 Pope's Cross for supply of water and of electricity. The installation activity would be photographed for the May newsletter. (*done*)
Mr Frazer had received formal approval from Yarlington Housing Group for installing the new board on their verge, in front of the car-parking area. Mr Townrow provided a map of the immediate locality, evidencing a grid-reference, as sought by Yarlington. Mr Frazer had contacted SSDC Area North regarding the extent of their grant, and had been advised that the amount paid remained valid.

1472 – Bank Mandate Forms. The Chairman had obtained a mandate form from Lloyds Bank, with which to have himself added to the list of authorised signatories to the Council's accounts; two of the existing signatories authorised this additional name. This procedure, together with the Council's letter of authority, should enable Mr McKeown to progress the documentation needed both to change the name of the Magna Carta Account and also to permit the Council's utilisation of electronic banking at Lloyd's.

1474 –Ladder for Access to Sheep-wash. No further action undertaken by Mr Townrow due to higher priorities.

1538 – Broken Rail on L8/24 by Sheep-wash. The Chairman had been in contact with George Montague, the local SCC Rights of Way Area Ranger, but the repair still remained outstanding.

1557– South Somerset Links’ Grant; cancellation of cheque 576. The returned cheque was duly marked ‘cancelled’. Mr Townrow would contact Mr Eddie Watts of Isle Valley Transport for background copy for the next newsletter issue, outlining the services his company could provide for people without their own transport. (*done*)

1569 – Naming of Footpaths in Memory of Local WWI Fallen. The Chairman would contact the parishioner who had suggested this naming, and invite her to progress the proposal directly with SCC Rights of Way.

1571.4 –SSDC Finance Receipt of Precept Form. As yet, there had been no formal acknowledgement of receipt, and the Chairman would seek confirmation.

1573–SCC Civil Contingencies & Second Parish Contact for Emergencies. Mr Townrow had still to notify the CCU.

1582. Village Hall Lease Renewal.

- .1 The Chairman reported on the January 31st meeting with Rachel Saltonstall, SSDC’s Principal Property Solicitor: A copy of her initial response (e:mail Feb 7th) was passed to Mr Allard for Village Hall Committee consideration; this response set out her concerns regarding the need for the Council to be fully indemnified against any financial mismanagement or failures to comply with legal obligations for which the VHC was entirely responsible. Mr Allard reminded the Council of the existing indemnity set out under clause 13 of the 1987 Trust Deed, and he undertook to liaise with Robert Horne of Community Council for Somerset as to this clause’s legal standing under the Charities Act. Mr Townrow requested that Mr Horne, or another Community Council officer with the requisite legal expertise, should speak with Ms Saltonstall to seek to assuage her concerns.
- .2 Mr Allard asked that the new lease’s title page description be amended to ‘Lease of land and buildings known as Curry Mallet & Beercrocombe Village Hall, Curry Mallet Taunton’. Mr Allard expressed concern that clauses 6.6 & 6.13 of the new lease, relating respectively to ‘Painting’ and to ‘Advertisements’, were unduly prescriptive and therefore onerous: It was noted that ‘Painting’ had not been stipulated in Sarah Bird’s ‘Heads of Terms’ letter dated June 7th (and therefore not discussed on July 24th with Ian Clarke), although it was acknowledged that landlords would afford themselves maximum powers over their property interests in respect of the prevailing states of repair, and that this would be a standard Duchy tenancy provision. Mr Townrow, from the Ian Clarke discussion, was of the view that the ‘Advertisements’ clause was similar in intent to that of clauses 3.5 (re ‘Filming’) & 6.14 (re ‘Use’); for the ‘use’ clause, amendment to add the underlined wording “...may be hired out to raise funds to pay for the maintenance and enhancement of the demised premises and to raise funds for community purposes...” had been included at the Council’s behest without demur by the Duchy. By inference, any advertisement of filming undertaken within this ‘community purposes’ scope would also be permitted. The Chairman would apprise Ms Saltonstall of these deliberations by the Council.
- .3 At the Village Hall Committee’s request the Chairman would, as a matter of courtesy, apprise Beercrocombe parish council of progress towards renewal of the Hall Lease.
- .4 Mr Allard awaited feedback from the Duchy Land Steward’s Jan. 18th inspection of the Hall fabric, for her ‘Condition of Dilapidation’ Report as at the commencement of the new lease.
- .5 Allocation of responsibility for insurance was discussed: It was agreed that the VHC would carry cover against loss or damage to the building and its contents, and likewise against public liability and personal injury occasioned to the hall’s visitors and its employees/volunteers. The parish council would obtain public liability and personal injury cover for the Play Area, as discussed previously (see min. 1539).

1583. Outdoor Play Area.

- .1 Mr Allard pointed out that the lower part of the Hall’s grounds west boundary was the responsibility of the owner of the adjacent field, so that access for maintenance between the hall side of the hedge and the play equipment, would need to be sufficient for a tractor undertaking flailing. It was recognised that this stretch of hedging had become severely overgrown and that usable width of the Hall’s grounds could be increased by cutting back this undergrowth. A Work Party would undertake this cutting back (*done, Feb. 16th, releasing an additional 2 metres of ground*).
- .2 To maximise general utilisation of the Hall grounds, the basket swing posts would be re-positioned *ca.* 2 metres south and west of where pegs had presently been located, *ie.* closer to the edge of the car-parking area.
- .3 The Chairman would consult with Rob Parr of SSDC Leisure Services regarding suitability of particular species of hedging for locations where children played, in order to take advantage of the Duchy Steward’s offer to supply.
- .4 The Chairman would consult with Simon Williams of Play U.K. (Playgrounds) Ltd, regarding his interest in installing the proposed basket swing and ‘Big Foot’ array.

1584. Footpaths and Rights of Way.

Mr McKeown suggested the application of wood chippings to muddy areas of the parish paths (*eg.* upper & lower reaches of L8/25); he had had an offer of availability from Buster Brown of Higher St., who had surplus chippings from his business. Acceptability of wood chippings would be ascertained from SCC Rights of Way, prior to use.

1585. Planning.

No application details had been received for comment prior to issuance of the meeting agenda.

1586. Finance.

- .1 The following payments were approved, and cheques raised accordingly, -
 - Teapot Creative Ltd. (for annual website hosting fee) £150.00 (plus VAT) cheque 583 issued
 - Teapot Creative Ltd. (for annual renewal of Domain fee) * £35.00 (plus VAT) cheque 584 issued

* subsequent to the meeting, the Chairman received confirmation that the ownership of the domain name www.currymallet.org was held in trust by Curry Mallet Community Fund (the trading name of the website).
- .2 Webinar Jan. 24th conducted by new External Auditor, PKF-Littlejohn.

Mr Townrow reported on this detailed presentation by Rebecca Plane & Kerry Catling: Key observations were

 - Curry Mallet parish council was most likely to qualify for 'Exempt' status (unless an Intermediate Review was stipulated by the Auditor) such that completed Annual Return documentation (sections 1 & 2) no longer needed to be submitted. Publication on the village website of these sections and of other Return data remained a requirement under the Transparency Code.
 - In the absence of a sitting Clerk, the Chairman was to notify PKF-Littlejohn as soon as possible with his contact details, so that the Audit Documentation pack would reach him in March.
 - In April, the Chairman would need to contact PKF-Littlejohn to seek a deferment in deadline for their receipt of the 'Certificate of Exemption', from June 11th to June 14th, ie after the Council's June meeting.
 - A meeting of the Council's Finance Sub-group should be held forthwith, in order to review Grant Thornton's 2017 Observations (their letter Sept. 29th 2017), and to ensure that corrective measures were now place. This was necessary to fulfil the condition set out in point 7 of the Annual Governance Statement for 2017/2018.
 - It was agreed that a more authoritative Internal Audit be undertaken for 2018 and the Clerk of Creech St. Michael parish had been suggested. The Chairman would contact Mr S. Altria.
- .3 The Chairman sought assistance from other members with regard to administering the Council's financial affairs. At present, he was preparing a bank reconciliation, with assistance from Angie Clarke. The Chairman would establish with the previous Clerk as to whether the Council's submissions for reclaiming VAT utilised the HMRC Form 126.
- .4 Transparency Code Grant Application

Mr Townrow's application for a grant of £947.00, to cover costs of website training (2hrs.), purchase of a laptop computer, software & scanner and to defray costs of maintaining the website, was formally approved. The application had been forwarded to the SALC County Executive Officer, for onward provision to NALC.

1587. Reports from and attendance at meetings by Councillors.

Meetings on Jan. 18th with the Duchy Land Steward and Jan. 31st with the SSDC Solicitor had already been covered.

1588. Correspondence.

Re the Highways England A358 Consultation, most members favoured the blue or pink options, whereas Mr Townrow continued to favour the orange option first set out in their April 2017 Consultation.

1589. Clerk Recruitment.

- .1 The Chairman's appointment to the Council's Personnel Committee was approved.
- .2 The Job Advert had yet to be posted on the Hall Committee's Facebook page; mention of the vacancy would be included in the Council's report for the March newsletter, although closing date for applications was Feb. 23rd. Posting the vacancy on the Village website was suggested. Thus far, there had been 2 expressions of interest.

1590. Items of report from Councillors.

- .1 First-Aid refresher training; the Village Hall would be booked, provisionally for Sunday April 22nd, 9.00 – 5.00pm
- .2 Chris Cooper of SSDC Streetscene had reiterated his offer of a 'Flood Awareness' training session for volunteers.
- .3 Consideration would be given to conducting a 'Housing Needs Survey', given the prevailing difficulties for young families in obtaining suitable housing within the locality. The previous Survey had been undertaken in 2003 by Vaughan Lake, then of SSDC.

The next ordinary meeting of the Parish Council will be on Monday March 12th, 2018 at 19:30 in the Village Hall

GKT / 22. 02. 18