

CURRY MALLET PARISH COUNCIL
ORDINARY MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Curry Mallet Parish Council
held on October 8th 2018, in the Curry Mallet and Beercrocombe Village Hall, Curry Mallet.

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

In Attendance: Cllr Sue Steele (part-time) and Cllr Clare Aparicio-Paul (part-time)

1666. Public Participation Time. No members of the public were present.

1667. To Receive Reports from the District and County Councillors on items that may be of interest. Cllr Sue Steele advised that implementation of super-fast broadband had been delayed from the timing set out per the September 'Gigaclear' letter circulated to Curry Mallet householders. Dowlish Wake's super-fast had recently been installed. Both Cllrs. endorsed the suggestion that Dorset & Somerset Air Ambulance was a charitable cause worthy of the Council's annual grant (as historically awarded to South Somerset Links).

Mr Townrow referred to the Sept. 26th SSDC Area North Committee suggestion that SCC/SSDC should effect a bulk purchase of winter grit from which parishes could buy, at economic cost, quantities appropriate to their needs (*cf.* Highways' historic provision *gratis* of 10 bags per parish); Curry Mallet Council, in preparing its budget for 2019/2020, would be mindful of the greater need for parish financing of services hitherto provided by the principal authorities.

1668. Declarations of Interest. None.

1669. Apologies and reasons for absence. None.

1670. Minutes of previous meeting.

The minutes (draft V3) of the meeting held on September 10th 2018, were approved *nem con*, and each page was duly signed by the Chairman as being an accurate record of proceedings.

1671. Matters of report arising from previous meetings.

1472 – Lloyds Bank to Unity Trust. Following investigation, it was established that Lloyds' Bank (business account) could accommodate the appropriate authorisations (incl. BACS payments) needed to conform to legislative requirements placed on parish councils, without incurring any extra costs. Mr McKeown therefore proposed that both the Council's bank accounts remain with Lloyds, with the necessary changes put into effect. All members agreed. Clerk would complete Lloyds' application form to initiate the required changes. Mr Townrow proposed that the third Lloyds account, subsequent to renaming as 'Curry Mallet Maintenance Fund', be utilised for the Play Area Sinking Fund and that £600 be transferred over as the 2018/2019 contribution. Unanimously agreed. Clerk would obtain the relevant forms.

1586.4 – Transparency Code Grant (Clerk's laptop and website training). 'Teapot Creative' had been contacted re the website training which would be undertaken by the Clerk during November 2018. It was determined that the laptop & accessories would be purchased in March 2019, cash-flow permitting. Mr McKeown would contact Teapot regarding their earlier offer of free training for 2 people for Council/Village Hall related data-input to the website.

1621.1 – Clerk's Employment. Mr Townrow referred to the SLCC Model Contract of Employment's clause 9.2 which, for satisfactory performers, incorporated annual progression through the scale-points, in addition to annual cost-of-living increases. As this progression had not been offered previously to CMPC Clerks, Mr Townrow now proposed an alternative of increased hours from 3.0 hours per week to 3.5, from April 2019, plus annual cost of living increase. The extra hours would reflect incremental Clerk workload for administering the Play Area, compliance with new AGAR regulations, contacting Highways & Streetscene (fly-tipping etc.), following the retirements of long-serving members. SALC/NALC guidance was 4 hours/week, so 3.5 hours/week seemed appropriate, and was agreed by all members.

1622.2 – Installation of defibrillator. Draft CRiSP grant application completed; amend to include costs of channelling an electricity spur for the equipment. Mr Allard, as Village Hall Committee Chairman, undertook to obtain a quote for the work required. Clerk would email Anna Smith (Assistant Community Responder Officer for Somerset), to confirm in principle, the Council's intent to proceed with the South West Ambulance Service package, albeit subject to a successful grant application for 50% of the costs.

1646.3 – Chapel House, Overgrown Burial Area. Mr McKeown reported his further, unsuccessful, attempts to make contact with the new owners and the Fivehead Baptist minister. Mr Townrow reiterated that responsibility for enforcement of the Planning Condition lay jointly with SSDC and the South West Baptist Trust Corporation. On their behalf, Mr McKeown agreed to persist in his efforts to contact the owner and Baptist minister regarding this matter.

1649.1 – Response to Internal Auditor’s Report. Mr McKeown advised the Council’s formal response to the Internal Audit Report had been sent to Steve Altria on 2nd October.

1672. Village Hall Lease Renewal.

- 1. Issues of contention.** Mr Townrow advised, on perusal of the latest lease documentation, that new clauses and conditions had now been added by the Duchy’s solicitors, including a prohibition on the felling/management of trees on the grounds of the Village Hall, irrespective of their condition. All members agreed this stipulation warranted consultation with the Duchy Land Steward, given the issues of liability arising from unsafe trees (howsoever arising), prior to signing the lease. New wording had been added to section 6.9 and new clause 6.25 placing increased energy efficiency obligations on the Village Hall Committee. Mr Allard, on behalf of the Village Hall Committee, confirmed its acceptance of these energy efficiency obligations. Mr Townrow would advise Rachel Saltonstall, requesting that she notify the Duchy’s solicitors of this updated status regarding their latest amendments. Mr McKeown would contact Sarah Bird, the Duchy’s Land Steward, to set out the Council’s concerns regarding the additional stipulations. Mr Allard noted that the Duchy rental was paid in arrears, so payment for Sept. ’18 – March ’19 period should still be invoiced at the new lease’s lower rate.
- 2. Concordance of Trust Deed & Lease.** The latest version of the lease, received from Rachel Saltonstall in September, had been passed to Robert Horn to scrutinise on the Council’s behalf, to establish concordance between the terms & conditions as set out in the new lease’s clauses and the provisions enshrined in the new Trust Deed. He would be advised that the new stipulations had yet to be accepted and currently unresolved.
- 3. Loss of major hiring (Angling Trust) & scope to redress financial shortfall.** The loss of hiring revenue via Angling Trust was ascribed to the newly installed Play Area. Mr Townrow proposed an increase in annual grant from the Council to the Village Hall, from £500 presently to £800 for 2019/2020 financial year, (to reflect the wider community use of the hall facilities as authorised under power s133, of LGA 1972). The proposed increase had been factored into the budget forecast for the next financial year, and was agreed by all members present.

1673. Village Play Area Project.

- 1. Play area Equipment installed.** Equipment had been fully installed, inspected by Rob Parr (Senior Play & Youth Facilities Officer - SSDC), and opened for public use on 26th September. The recreation area has already been extensively utilised and enjoyed by the children of the parish. Clerk would forward a copy of the Post-Installation Inspection to BHIB, for their records. SSDC Area North Committee has been thanked for its officers’ support. An invoice was awaited from Weavo in respect of the fencing materials; Mr McKeown to negotiate replacement of surplus posts & concrete by provision of six more rails for a second, lower, run of spans.
- 2. Timing for release of final instalment of s106 monies.** Mr McKeown had been advised by Rob Parr that receipt of an invoice or similar from the Council, detailing predicted expenditure/maintenance needs, would trigger release of the outstanding £965.17 tranche (originally allocated for long term maintenance). Mr McKeown would respond accordingly.
- 3. Cash-Flow cascade for Sept. – Nov.** Mr Townrow’s Cash Flow Projection (dated: Sept. 15th), noted the timings of payments vs current reserves, and demonstrated the adequacy of the Council’s reserves. Agreed by all present.
- 4. Arrangements for special VAT reclaim.** HMRC had advised the Clerk to undertake the VAT reclaim via the new online process, which would enable individual reclaims to be submitted on an *ad hoc* basis.
- 5. Implementation of road safety measures and maintenance of equipment.** Mr Townrow’s Note (email to Paul Jarvis: Sept. 30th) re protection of the matting and of equipment metal uprights, for VHC volunteers when cutting grass, was reviewed and acknowledged by the Council. Rob Parr had suggested the installation of a second, lower, railing would render the path’s safety chicane more effective as deterrent to children running down to the road. Mr McKeown would speak with Simon Williams to obtain a quote for both railings, as he was the installer approved by SSDC. Mr Dove’s quotation was noted, and he would be asked to lay concrete for the section of path to be widened. Garry Warren’s Sept. 18th visit, re installation of ‘Children at Play’ street signs, was noted.

6. **Increased hall car parking area.** Mr Allard advised that there is no benefit from widening the car parking area adjacent to the 'Disabled Parking' space.
7. **Warranty for play equipment.** Clerk would contact Thomas Freke to obtain the manufacturers' warranties for the basket swing, stepping blocks and 'Big Foot' equipment.

1674. Footpaths and Rights of Way Updates.

1. **Replacement rail on L8/24 by the sheep-wash.** Mr McKeown has sent photographs of the broken rail and its replacement to George Montague (local SCC Rights of Way Ranger), for confirmation of it being satisfactory.
2. **Loose rail across stream between Lower Street entrance and the school gate.** Mr Allard advised the rail has been reported as loose, and this was the County Council's responsibility to maintain and repair. Clerk would notify the SCC 'Rights of Way' Team Manager, Peter Hobley.

1675. Finance.

The following were approved, and cheques were raised accordingly:

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| Triangle Training (subject to invoice), payment for First Aid Course | £300.00 (no VAT) Chq. No. 611 |
| Clerk's Salary (gross); payment for September | £117.61 (no VAT) Chq. No. 612 |
| Play UK Playgrounds Ltd; installation of 'Big Foot' & supply of matting | £678.00 (+ £135.60 VAT) Chq. No. 613 |
| Jaam Design Limited (Thomas Freke – playground equipment) | £3,672.00 (+ £734.40 VAT) Chq. No. 614 |
| Village Hall Committee (in lieu of hire charge for First Aid Course) | £70.00 (no VAT) Chq. No. 615 |
| Clerk's Monthly Salary - standing order form (sign off) | £117.61 (no VAT) Signed Off. |
| P. McKeown (reimbursement for Bradfords' auger hire) | £53.10 (+ £9.00 VAT) Chq. No. 616 |
| The Duchy Of Cornwall (Playing Field Rent) | £52.50 (+10.50 VAT) Chq. No. 617 |

- Air Ambulance (£50.00) proposed for annual grant previously awarded to S. Somerset Links; all present agreed.
- Budget 2019/2020 & Latest Estimate for 2018/2019; validity of assumptions reviewed; Mr Townrow proposed a 5% increase to £4,987 for 2019/2020 precept, to meet the additional costs placed on the Council by SCC / SSDC devolving of powers & responsibilities to parish councils, plus maintenance costs & Sinking Fund for the Play Area, additional Clerk working hours (min. 1671.3) and increased grant to VHC (min. 1672.3). Agreement in principle was unanimous; budget to be formally agreed and signed off by the Council at the November meeting.

1676. Annual Return. PKF Littlejohn response to request for confirmation of receipt of 'Certificate of Exemption' was automated email advising that exempt councils would not receive confirmation and should not expect further contact from the external auditor until the 2018/19 AGAR guidance is published. (*Confirmation subsequently received*).

1677. Agree attendance by Councillors to forthcoming meetings & report on meetings attended. CRISP Community Resilience Conference on 25th October and SALC AGM has been scheduled for 29th October; Mr Townrow would attend both events, and the Clerk would endeavour to attend the latter.

1678. Items of report from members.

- 1 – **GWR 'naming the train' initiative.** Mr McKeown advised the Council that all necessary information had been provided to Trowbridge Town Council and the initiative was being progressed.
- 2 – **Cracking of School playing field surface.** Rob Parr's advice had been sought regarding possible remedial action; his advice was that the occurrence of cracking due to drought was a natural phenomenon and therefore unlikely to be considered valid for compensation, either from the Duchy (as landowner) or from BHIB (the council's insurer). It was noted that the school had sought advice from SCC team leader for grounds & landscape, who had recommended that the cracks be filled with ca. 10 tonnes of top soil and reseeded, which the school had then progressed and financed. Clerk would notify the Duchy and BHIB of the school's actions. It was suggested that the Council could grant £100 to the school as a gesture of goodwill (with disclaimer of liability), to help defray the costs incurred. (*Subsequently agreed by all members present, after further consideration*).
- 3– The Council's condolences were expressed regarding the recent death of Trevor Willes, on 15th September, soon after his 89th birthday.

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Monday 12th November, 2018, in the Village Hall at 7.30pm.

SLD (14/10/18).