

CURRY MALLET PARISH COUNCIL
ORDINARY MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Curry Mallet Parish Council
held on March 11th 2019, in the Curry Mallet and Beercrocombe Village Hall, Curry Mallet.

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

Attendance: Cllr Clare Paul (part-time) & three prospective candidates for election in May to the parish council.

1721. Public Participation Time. No matters were raised by those parishioners in attendance.

1722. To Receive Reports from the District and County Councillors on items that may be of interest.

Cllr Clare Paul reported that agreement had been reached between the County and District Councils for the Langport Library to be utilised as contact point for public access to services provided by SSDC (as provided hitherto in the Bow St. Community Information Centre). Commencement date and weekly availability of this facility awaited finalisation. The County Council Conservative Group's 'briefing sheet' was noted; points raised and responded to were

- re the 2019/2020 Highways' budget, the additional £200,000 added for restitution of the historic 'Winter Gritting network' was noted with satisfaction, as was the cancellation of projected savings from cutbacks to gully-emptying and jetting.
- The boost to Bridgwater's economy, arising from infrastructure projects associated with the Hinckley Point C power station construction programme, was noted with enthusiasm; the BBC Radio 4 programme of Feb. 15th hosted by Emma Britton, regarding the new accommodation facility, was instanced as providing national publicity.
- In response to a query, Clare Paul advised that the South-West Local Enterprise Partnership had been allocated £33 million of the government's recently announced £1.6 billion "Stronger Towns Fund" for the English Regions.

1723. Declarations of Interest. None.

1724. Apologies and reasons for absence. Mr L W Frazer (on holiday) and the Clerk (family illness)

1725. Minutes of previous meetings.

Minutes of the meeting held on February 11th 2019; version 2 was approved, *nem con*, as drafted.

1726. Matters of report arising from previous meetings.

1472 – Lloyds Bank. The action from the previous meeting, (to meet with the branch's Business Manager to resolve outstanding issues, - see min. 1713.1) remained outstanding; Mr Townrow expressed concern that several issues (eg. BACS transfer facility & opening the 'Sinking Fund' account) needed to have been executed prior to March 31st financial year-end. The Chairman and the Clerk to expedite.

Mr Allard advised his registration for 'on-line' banking for authorising the Council's transactions, was now operational. Mr Beck would clarify the status of his registration application. The status of the Clerk's application for 'telephone access' (to establish current balances, recent transactions & transfers between accounts) would be ascertained.

1586.4 – Transparency Code grant. Mr Townrow noted that the DCLG grant awarded in March 2018 (for posting Council documents on the village website) was to be utilised within 12 months of issue; delay thus far in purchase of the Clerk's laptop and ancillaries had resulted from a lack of Lloyds' BACS facility, but adherence to this timing deadline should now be achieved by recourse to the Chairman's personal credit card, with reimbursement of the £622 + VAT by the Council. The Chairman and Clerk would aim to effect purchases before the end of March, in order to benefit from Currys/PC World advantageous financial year-end prices.

1621.1 – Clerk's Employment Contract & Salary level from April 2019. The Personnel Committee had yet to meet, both to review Mr Townrow's re-drafted SLCC model contract and also to devise associated policies thereto.

Mr Townrow advised the new pay scales as determined by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services (including parish council clerks) which historically this Council had used for setting its Clerk's annual salary level; the new rate for spinal column point 15 employees was £9.77 per hour, and it was agreed by all members that Mrs Dowell be paid at this rate, effective from April 1st 2019.

1622.2 – Defibrillator Installation. The Clerk had established a two-week lead-time for delivery /installation of the cabinet after receipt of order confirmation, and Mr Allard advised that the electricity spur could be fitted promptly. Final decision regarding placement of the order (£1,800 + VAT) would turn on the prevailing cash-flow status vis à vis receipt timing for the £1,258 VAT reclaim. Various views were expressed regarding optimal location of the cabinet on the east wall of hall outside the Committee Room.

1646.3 – Chapel House, Burial Area. The Chairman was awaiting a formal response from the local representative of the South-West Baptist Corporation; his 'phone conversation with the Baptists' Louise Webb had indicated that documents relating to the Corporation's legal responsibilities (for maintenance of the grave areas) were known to exist and would be located for review. Mr Allard noted that the SSDC Planning Condition, requiring the owners of the Chapel House to "maintain access to these grave areas", was limited to ensuring that access was not precluded by installation of any fencing or other physical impediment.

1720.1 – Annual Parish Meeting. Mr Townrow recommended abandonment of his 'separate meeting' proposition unless his article in the February newsletter generated a positive response from at least 13 parishioners (5% of the adult population). Failing such a positive response, he now recommended (a) that a short APM be convened immediately before the Council's April 8th meeting, in order to meet the legal obligations of stating the year-end balances of the Council's Accounts and presentation of a report from the Chairman and (b) that a final meeting of the Council be held on April 29th (the date originally set aside for the APM) to ensure satisfactory conclusion of all currently outstanding business. These recommendations were agreed.

1727. Village Hall Issues.

- 1. Lease.** Following Paul Jervis' affirmation that the Village Hall Committee had accepted the terms and conditions per draft version 8 of the lease (his e:mail of March 9th refers), Mr Townrow had notified Rachel Saltonstall that she could now advise Farrer & Co that this version was acceptable to both parties within the parish. The Chairman would similarly advise Sarah Bird, the Duchy Land Steward.
- 2. New Hall Trust Deed.** Mr Allard had tidied-up the draft deed as annotated by Robert Horn, and had forwarded it to the Chairman & Clerk. A copy would be forwarded to Mr Townrow for checking.

1728. Village Play Area Project.

- 1. Annual Inspection.** The Clerk's quotation of £125.00 + VAT, received from 'The Play Inspection Company' (as utilised by Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall Committee), was noted. The Clerk was requested to ascertain from Rob Parr whether, in his former SSDC Leisure Services role, he had had dealings with this company.
- 2. Paint from Wickstead for covering scratches on 'Big Foot'.** Simon Williams had undertaken to paint over these scratches when he visited the site for installing the hall footpath chicane (on March 15th).
- 3. Hedge Planting.** A Work Party on Sunday March 24th would prepare the ground and plant the whips; the Chairman doubted whether there were sufficient whips for an offset double row of planting, and additional stock might need to be purchased for planting next November. There was a difference of opinion regarding the necessity for creation of a wide trench rather than a slit-trench for the planting.
- 4. Pedestrian Access Chicane.** Following the March 2nd meeting with contractors Neil Dove and Simon Williams (Clerk's Notes dated March 10th refer), subsequently the concreting was scheduled for Tuesday March 12th, weather permitting, following digging out the base area on March 11th. Prior to this work, one of the younger parishioners had driven his mobility scooter around the intended positioning of the railings (as designated on March 2nd and, on March 6th, had confirmed the suitability of the positioning. Mr McKeown would send to Sarah Bird a copy of his drawing setting out the disposition of the chicane railings, for her to incorporate within the Hall Lease's side-letter documentation.
- 5. Safety & Responsibility Signage.** Mr Townrow's draft sign, as circulated on February 15th, would be re-sent to Mr Allard, for copying, laminating and affixing to the Play Area fence.

1729. Footpaths and Rights of Way Updates.

- 1.** Inspection of replaced rail on L8/24 by the sheep-wash; still awaiting response from SCC's George Montague.

2. Mr McKeown showed photographs of SSDC bulbs now in bloom, following planting by Mr Frazer in ground adjacent to footpath L8/24, upside of the original sheep-wash wall. The photos would be provided to Mr Townrow for possible use in the May newsletter and for forwarding to SSDC Streetscene, Horticulture Services.
3. Gratitude was expressed to Stud Farm for clearance of the fallen tree, across footpath L8/9, on their land.

1730. Planning

It was noted that application 19/00247/HOU, for oak timber garages, No 1 Pope's Cross, had been received after publication of this meeting's agenda; as SSDC Planning had sought receipt of any Observations by March 23rd, and that the application did not appear contentious, it was agreed to review the drawings and specifications. After this review, all members were minded that the Council had no Observations to make and SSDC would be thus notified.

1731. Finance.

1. The following payments were duly authorised and cheques prepared

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| • Duchy of Cornwall (playing field rental, 6 months to March 2019) | £52.50 (+ £10.50 VAT) | chq. 633 |
| • PMP Printing (February parish newsletter x 16 pages) | £148.80 (no VAT) | chq. 634 |
| • Mr G K Townrow (reimbursement, manure drag ex Mole Valley Farmers) | £26.00 (+ £5.20 VAT) | chq. 635 |

2. The following expenditure was approved

- SSDC Streetscene, (re Greenham clothing & equipment, ex CRiSP grant), to max. of £88.14 (+ £17.63 VAT)
- Currys/PCWorld, (computer & ancillaries ex Transparency Code grant), to max. of £622.00 (+ £124.40 VAT)

The Greenham items comprised 750mm traffic cones x 2, cone sleeves x 5, cone barrier x 1, & 'breathable' hi-vis trousers x 1 pair. Utility of the cone barrier was queried by a member of the public and would be re-checked with Greenhams. The Currys/PC World equipment comprised a laptop & software + scanner.

3. **Clerk's Salary from April 2019.** As per min.1726.3, gross annual salary of £1,778.14 (£9.77/hour x 3.5 hours/wk) Details of the Clerk's expenses for the period may 2018 _ March 2019 incl. were awaited.
4. **Status of the VAT reclaim** for £1,258.25 would be ascertained from the Clerk.

1732. Annual Return for 2019.

1. The Chairman was awaiting a response from Steve Altria regarding his willingness to conduct the Council's Internal Audit for 2018/2019; concern was expressed that this confirmation be sought as a matter of urgency.
2. The Clerk would be requested to present her Receipts & Payments Schedule for 2018/2019 & year-end Bank Reconciliation for ratification at the Council's April 8th meeting.
3. To ensure separation of the 'Sinking Fund' balance from the Council's routine current & business account balances at year-end, the transfer of £1,382 to the 'Sinking Fund' would be expedited before March 31st.
4. Details of changes in AGAR documents for the 2018/2019 External Audit were still awaited from PKF-Littlejohn

1733. Agree attendance by Councillors to forthcoming meetings & report on meetings attended.

The Clerk had, on Feb. 28th, attended the SSDC briefing for the May 2nd election for the new Council, and packs were provided to prospective candidates. SSDC Brympton Way deadline for receipt of applications was 4.00pm on April 3rd.

1734. Items of report from members.

Mr Townrow noted that

1. The Musgrove Hospital charity had now reached its £1million target for the purchase of an additional MRI scanner, to be operational from late summer 2019. (The Council had matched individual parish donations totalling £100).
2. A recent Survey conducted by the BBC on average Ambulance Response Times for emergencies was noted to show an average of 9 mins. 52 secs. for the TA3 postcode, cf. 7 mins. 41 secs. average emergency response for England.
3. A copy of the 'Somerset Prepared' Emergency Plan for Communities was exhibited. It was hoped to provide a detailed Plan for Curry Mallet before the end of April.

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Monday 8th April, 2019, in the Village Hall at 7.30pm.

GKT (16/03/19).