

CURRY MALLET PARISH COUNCIL
ORDINARY MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Curry Mallet Parish Council
held on April 8th 2019, in the Curry Mallet and Beercrocombe Village Hall, Curry Mallet.

Present: Mr G K Townrow (acting chairman), Mr R J Allard, Mr D R Beck & Mr L W Frazer.

1735. Public Participation Time. No members of the public were present.

1736. To Receive Reports from the District and County Councillors on items that may be of interest.

Mr Townrow spoke with gratitude in recognition of Cllr Sue Steele's service to the parishes within Islemoor ward during her sixteen year tenure as their District Councillor. Over this period Curry Mallet had benefited from many SSDC grants, and those for the Village Hall kitchen upgrade, the Morrell's Lane drainage, the Magna Carta village sign, the Pope's Cross noticeboard, and the hall footpath chicane were instanced.

The County Council Conservative Group's briefing sheet was reviewed; concern was again expressed regarding the future of the Hankridge Park & Ride terminus when, in September 2019, the twelve-month financial support ceased from Taunton Deane Borough Council.

1737. Declarations of Interest. None.

1738. Apologies and reasons for absence. Mr P McKeown (illness).

1739. Minutes of previous meetings.

Minutes of the meeting held on March 11th 2019; version 3 was approved, *nem con*, as drafted.

When preparing for the April 4th Finance Group meeting (to finalise the Receipts & Payments for 2018/2019), it became apparent that minute numbering had been replicated for the Council's September & October 2018 meetings; to avoid confusion in future correspondence, the September minute numbers would carry a (S) suffix and those for October would carry a (O) suffix. On re-inspection, several Finance minutes' payment details had stated an incorrect split between net cost and VAT amount.

1740. Matters of report arising from previous meetings.

1472 – Lloyds Bank. The Play Area 'Sinking Fund' Account had been opened, with the agreed £1,382.00 being transferred from the 'Business Account'. Within the past week and utilising the online authorisation process, £1,000 had been transferred from the 'Business Account' to the 'Current Account', in order to provide sufficient cash flow to facilitate payment of the April 2019 cheques.

The online BACS facility was also reportedly up and running, and would be tested for the Council's next payment to a supplier of services (eg. Westley Harris). The Clerk would obtain a Mandate Form from Lloyds to facilitate closure of the 'Magna Carta 800 Account'. Mr Beck advised his registration for 'on-line' banking, for authorising the Council's transactions, was now operational. The Clerk's application for 'telephone access' (to establish current balances, recent transactions & transfers) had been superseded by the successful implementation of the online business banking tools, therefore the 'telephone access' facility would not be progressed.

1586.4 – Transparency Code grant. The laptop, scanner and software bundle had been purchased, within the £622 budget, and included 5 years' storage on the Cloud and 3 years' MacAfee anti-virus cover. Curry's/PC World repair & technical support cover (applicable 24/7) had been purchased for the bundled items, representing an incremental cost of £7.00 per month to the Council; this received unanimous agreement from all members present.

1622.2 – Defibrillator Installation. Mr Townrow proposed that the defibrillator rental agreement be implemented as soon as the 2019/20 Precept monies had been received, insofar the £1,258.25 VAT Reclaim had yet to be received. All members present agreed. It was noted that installation of the electricity spur would need to be arranged as soon as the defibrillator had been ordered, and ideally before the May 20th copy deadline for the next newsletter issue.

1646.3 – Chapel House, Burial Area. Formal response from the Baptist Union's local representative was still awaited.

Subsequent to the meeting, Mr McKeown reported that the Pope's Cross resident, whose relative's grave was in the south-east burial area, had met with the new owner of the adjacent property and that an accord had been reached regarding the provision of access to, and future maintenance, of the area.

1731.3 – Clerk's Expenses for 2018/2019. The Clerk had prepared a schedule itemising her travel undertaken during the year and was suggesting a reimbursement rate of 25p/mile (*cf.* standard local administration rate of 45p/mile). Additionally, Mrs Dowell proposed a flat-rate payment to her of £12.00 per month (*cf.* HMRC maximum allowance of £18.00 per month) by way of recompense while conducting Council business, both for use of her home's heating, lighting, telephone & internet, and also for defraying her stationery costs. Both the proposed 25p/mile and £12/month rates were agreed, both for Mrs Dowell and as *de facto* policy in respect of any future Clerk's employment conditions. Payment to Mrs Dowell of £146.25 for 2018/2019 to be authorised at the Council's April 29th meeting.

1741. Village Hall Issues.

- 1. Lease.** Subsequent to detailed checking of each clause, on April 4th the engrossed copy of the lease was signed by the Council's Chairman and witnessed by its Clerk; the signed document would be returned to Rachel Saltonstall (*on April 11th*) for signing by the Duchy and thereafter being returned to the Council. In checking, Mr Townrow had noted that the engrossed copy incorporated photographs of envisaged play equipment, provided a year ago as being merely "indicative", rather than photographs of the actual items as now *in situ*. This inconsistency had been reported to the Duchy's solicitors, and photographs of the actual items had since been supplied. The Council's attention was drawn to clause 6.15 of the lease, which made specific reference to the tenant granting a licence to The Bell Inn for overflow parking: In that the pub's management had appeared to remove the two parking spaces allotted to the Bed & Breakfast units, and had erected a sign specifically directing patrons to use the hall's car park, it was agreed that some form of written licence be instituted between the Village Hall Committee (as managing trustee) and the pub, which set out terms for the licence arrangement and included an annual fee commensurate with its commercial benefit. The Council Chairman would consult the VHC Chairman.
- 2. New Hall Trust Deed.** As soon as the Duchy had signed the Lease, the draft Deed would be amended to reflect the new lease's commencement date and the prevailing annual rental amount; the Council Chairman & Clerk would then sign the Trust Deed, to enable it to be submitted by the Hall Committee to the Charity Commission.

1742. Village Play Area Project.

- 1. Annual Inspection.** The former SSDC Leisure Services officer had confirmed The Play Inspection Company to be a competent and reputable provider of inspection services; their current prices would be ascertained.
- 2. Quarterly Inspections.** SSDC were bundling their quarterly inspections of similar parish play facilities, based on geographic locations, and so were unable to specify a particular date/time for Curry Mallet's. However, it had been confirmed that a written report would be provided following each inspection and, should any faults be found with the play equipment, the Clerk or other responsible persons would be notified with immediate effect.
- 3. Hedge Planting.** A Work Party, on Saturday 30th March, undertook the planting of the new hedging. Concern was expressed regarding the need to keep the new growth well-watered until thoroughly acclimatised.
- 4. Pedestrian Access Chicane.** Simon Williams had installed the additional diagonal railings on April 1st, and the railings' overall workmanship was commended by the Council. Mr McKeown had sent revised photographs of the completed chicane to Sarah Bird (Duchy Land Steward). Mr Townrow recommended that the chicane railings be covered under the Village Hall Committee's insurance, rather than the Council's, their being a feature of the hall's grounds in general, rather than specific unto the Play Area. (*Subsequently agreed by the VHC Chairman*).
- 5. Safety & Responsibility Signage.** Mr McKeown would liaise with JAAMS Design to progress the one A3 general sign as specified under min. 1701.3; the laminated 'contact details' sign would be reprinted and replaced, following water ingress rendering the current sign illegible. The Clerk would contact the volunteers undertaking the weekly Play Area inspections, for provision of their Log Book so it could be submitted as part of the Internal Audit process.

1743. Footpaths and Rights of Way Updates.

- Inspection of replaced rail on L8/24 by the sheep-wash; still awaiting response from SCC's George Montague. *Update: Mr P McKeown advised George Montague had marked the interactive mapping tool utilised by SCC as complete; therefore the rail on L8/24 had been replaced to his satisfaction.*

- Subsequent to the meeting, it was noted that the metal railings, at the top end of path L8/25 had become twisted and were in need of repair or replacement.

1744. Finance.

1. The following payment was duly authorised and cheques prepared

Vantage Construction; additional concreting to Village Hall Path £264.00 (+ £52.80 VAT) chq. 636

2. The following charges were approved, subject to presentation of VAT invoices.

P McKeown; reimbursement re cost of Laptop & ancillaries (min. 1731.2) £613.30 (+ £122.66 VAT) chq. 637

Westley Harris; May verge-cutting; up to budgeted cost of £320 (+ VAT)

P McKeown; reimbursement re cost of Play Area hedging material £52.08 (+10.41 VAT)

Wicksteed; paint for repairs to 'Big Foot' array (Play Area project) £47.50 (+ £9.50 VAT)

SSDC for traffic cones x 2, reflective sleeves & clothing, (min. 1731.2) £48.73 (+ £9.75 VAT)

- Monthly direct debit to Currys/ PC World re repair & technical support (£7.00 per month) – Approved
- Amendment to monthly Standing Order (re Clerk's gross salary) from £117.61 to £148.18, with payment date amended to the 10th of each month. Agreed
- Additional £102.43 payment to Clerk for employment early in May 2018 (to reflect start date as per draft contract) was agreed; cheque to be raised at the meeting to be held on 29th April.
- Cheque 627 was cancelled; a new cheque in amount of £113,73 + £22.75 VAT for the revised Weavo invoice would be issued to Mr McKeown and authorised at the meeting to be held on 29th April.
- Beercrocombe Council repayment of newsletter printing costs for 2018/2019; deficient by £7.92; Mr McKeown would approach Beercrocombe PC regarding maintaining the historic 70;30 apportionment of overall costs.
- Update re VAT Reclaim for £1,258.25; – still awaiting confirmatory response from HMRC.
- To Note: s137 power for 2018/19 = £2,078, an increase from the £2,020 for 2017/2018/18.

1745. Annual Return for 2019.

- Steve Altria had accepted re-appointment as the Internal Auditor for 2019; timings for his Audit had yet to be confirmed.
- Those members present signed off both the Receipts & Payments for the 2018/19 financial year and also the year-end bank reconciliation. Motion proposed by Mr Beck, and seconded by Mr Frazer.
- The Annual Governance Statement, updates to the Assets Register & Risk Methodology, and the schedule detailing 2018/2019 payments exceeding £100.00 would be signed off at the meeting to be held on 29th April.

1746. Agree attendance by Councillors to forthcoming meetings & report on meetings attended.

Mr Townrow reported on the Policing Report by Sgt. Rob Jameson to the SSDC Area North Committee on March 27th; the Report made reference to various changes to local neighbourhood policing resources and priorities, - seemingly instituted last October, of which he was entirely unaware through his usual Neighbourhood Watch communication channels. The general paucity of communications to enable NHW Co-ordinators to operate effectively was deeply dispiriting and would be raised with the Constabulary's senior administration.

1747. Items of report from members.

- Representation by the Ward Member to SSDC Planning, regarding the auctioning of the house at Latcham Farm, was noted by Mr Beck. The District Councillor's concerns related to enforcement of Conditions stipulated in the October 2017 approval of planning application 17/03556/FUL. The Council had no Observations to make regarding this representation.
- Mr Frazer, who was not seeking re-election to the Council, noted his participation in the County Council's Strimmer project (for parish volunteers to augment the Rights of Way team's maintenance of public footpaths). Since the Strimmer project was exclusive to parishioners who had undertaken SCC training, Mr Frazer's authorisation by SCC to undertake footpath strimming remained valid irrespective of his future lack of direct connection with the parish council.

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Monday 29th April, 2019, in the Village Hall at 7.30pm.

SLD (17/04/19).