

HAMBRIDGE & WESTPORT PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THE 14th OCTOBER 2019 @ 8PM

IN THE VILLAGE HALL

PRESENT: Cllrs Simon Denley, (Chairman), Jon Lock, Richard Maidment, Richard Meecham and Paul Masters. District Cllr Mike Stanton was also in attendance.

633). **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence had been received from County Cllr Adam Dance.

634). **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

635). **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THE 9TH SEPTEMBER 2019**

The Minutes of the meeting, having been circulated to the members, were approved and signed on the proposal of Cllr Richard Maidment.

636). **MATTERS ARISING**

a). **Footpaths generally**

Cllr Simon Denley said that we recently had a discussion with Vicky Taylor, who is the Footpaths' Diversion Officer and she had come out and had a look on site. This is regarding Footpath L192 but, also talking about the state of footpaths in general. With respect to the footpath that has been an ongoing concern for many years, there is the possibility that we can apply for a diversion. A couple of years ago we had put forward a couple of proposals for changing the routes so that we could actually access the footpath down to the canal. He felt that it looked favourable for either one of those proposals. The next step is to make the application and to consult with the landowners. He said that it might seem a conflict of interests in that the part of the previous footpath route on the map actually cuts through part of his garden. It might be better if one of the other councillors took this on and he stepped aside, so there is no conflict of interests. All the forms have been sent through and the various maps etc. Cllr Simon Denley said that there was an issue at the bottom of the footpath because it is missing a footbridge. It is the responsibility of County Highways to replace footbridges. There is the possibility that they might be able to look at alternative funding or alternative methods of putting a footbridge across. We have stressed that it is important to get this footpath re-instated as it is the main footpath through the village to go down to the canal. It could open up a lot of opportunities for walkers etc., taking into account the concerns of the landowners. This item would be put on the Agenda for the November meeting.

Cllr Simon Denley referred to concerns that had been raised by a resident concerning the general state of footpaths in the area which seem to be in poor repair and overgrown. In some place there are signs missing. The Parish Council does what it can but, we are told that these complaints must be passed on to the County Highways because they are responsible for sorting it out. It would appear that they only employ one or two people to cover this area. A resident said that they rely on volunteers and the Ramblers also get involved. She felt it was against the rules. Another resident said that he had made some enquiries with the Environment Agency and they are quite tight for time and they said that residents could undertake some work but, it would be at your own risk. Following further discussion, during which various points of view were expressed, Cllr Simon Denley said that there are some grants available to enable people to access the countryside. There are two that he knows of and he would study them to see what is available.

b). **Pavement kerbstone damage at Westmore Lane – update**

Cllr Simon Denley said that he had not received any update on this item. It is on the list to be done but, where on the list is not known. The Highways Department had done some indifferent patching but, he would follow this up.

c). **Caravan parked at Westport – update**

Cllr Simon Denley said that he had called the police last Monday because he was concerned. A white van had appeared near the caravan on which the middle character of the number plate had been taped out and there was a lot of activity cutting back hedges etc. The PCSO he had spoken to before had suggested that the gentleman was of interest to them. They had assured him that something would be done. He had not heard anything back so, he called them again on Thursday and had eventually managed to contact the PCSO involved. She advised that Police Constables had attended but, could not report the outcome. He noted that the missing centre character of '3' on the van's number plate had been exposed. He had gone onto the DVLA website and it would appear that the van is not taxed, has no MOT and no insurance, also, the gentleman had been driving the van. Driving passed this morning he could not believe that the ground had been dug up.

Cllr. Mike Stanton said he had raised the situation with the relevant planning officer on the Saturday and she and the enforcement officer went to the site today. They could see that the work was being carried out by someone who does not own the land and has not applied for permission to do anything. The Council Planning Officers informed the gentleman that he must stop work on the site. The owner has got to be spoken to but, we do not know who the owner is. We need to identify the owner or the person that is renting it. A resident said that he has stated that he does own the land and he has bought it. When Mrs Snow passed away and that land was auctioned, one person bought it and that was her grandson. He has split it into two pieces. One was sold to a gentleman who wanted to build a house and the other one to a man in Bournemouth. The man in Bournemouth has allegedly sold it to the gentleman who is there now. He understood that the Environmental Agency will be coming out this week to check it over and also the trees and the bits of branches that have fallen into the canal will obstruct if there is a flood. A lot of loose soil that has been bulldozed off of the top and could also cause a problem with flooding.

Cllr Simon Denley asked District Cllr Mike Stanton if there was anything that we could do to gain some priority in this matter. He said that tomorrow, he would speak to Tim Wills, the Enforcement Officer, who was already very concerned about the situation. Cllr Paul Masters said that with the rain coming, there was a real risk of houses being flooded. Cllr Simon Denley said that the Parish Council will do what it can but, it is getting the other agencies to do what they are supposed to do.

A resident questioned whether anything was being done about removing the caravan because there was a question of sanitation. They thought there was an eviction order issued to remove the caravan but, that has not happened. Cllr Simon Denley said that we would endeavour to establish the exact situation from the Enforcement Officer.

d). **Auto Speed Watch – cameras**

We had received information from three companies and if there was anything of interest we could ask them to come and give a demonstration. The Clerk would email the information to the councillors and this item could be placed on the November agenda. If the council was interested in a particular one, we could ask them to come and give us a demonstration.

637). **FINANCE REPORT**

a). **Accounts for payment**

The Clerk advised that the balance held in the Deposit Account was £24,611.29 and in the Current Account £12,973.02.

On the proposal of Cllr Richard Meechem, seconded by Cllr Richard Maidment, the following accounts were approved for payment.

Max von Tyska – Village grass cutting & Churchyard grass cutting/ maintenance	£495.00
Mike Evans -re. Village Hall	£ 15.00
Mike Evans – re. Wreath	£ 20.00
Mike Evans – re. Newsletter	£ 56.00
Clerk’s wages – October	£ 65.05

Adjournment to Allow Public Comment

Cllr Simon Denley read out an email that had been received from a resident concerning trees hanging over the road from Earnshill Estate opposite the Post Office. Recently one had fallen on to Earnshill Estate land and on a second occasion a large branch had fallen, partially blocking the road. cursory inspection finds large dead branches hanging over the road. He was concerned that at any point a branch or old tree could fall onto the road. This represents a serious risk to road users safety. Could the Parish Council please assure itself that the trees are safe. He has requested the Highways Department to ask Earnshill Estate to inspect the trees so that they are made safe. To-date, nothing seems to happen and we are coming into a season of high winds.

Cllr Simon Denley said that he would talk to Richard Combes to see what he can do about it and if there is a problem, we can go the next step. He would reply to the resident

Mike Evans thought there was a sum of £200 remaining from The Wellbeing Fund two years ago. The Entertainments Committee were thinking about getting some banners for the Big Breakfasts which seem to be doing quite well and we have two more coming up. They are quite creative in the way they design the banners so that you can change the dates on them. They cost about £20 per square metre and this was considered to be a good idea. He drew attention to the fact that there is still some funding that could be applied for and advised to apply for it.

A resident complained that she did not receive the Newsletter and Mike Evans would make sure that she received one.

638). REPORTS FROM DISTRICT & COUNTY COUNCILLORS

District Cllr Mike Stanton said that the District Council are working on a Climate & Environmental Strategy, which goes before the full council on Thursday and will feature on the District Council website. It covers things like putting in more electric charging points for cars, planting a lot more trees, ecology bio-diversity, The long term objective is to get the council itself to carbon neutrality or pretty near, by 2030. The council’s own buildings, vehicles and so on. The bigger problem for the district is that we are all driving around in our petrol and diesel cars, using gas boilers etc. and the government want to get that all changed by 2050. With regard to the District Council re-organisation, the restructuring that was done about two years ago resulted in more people leaving with voluntary redundancy. This has caused the planning department to become rather stretched but, we are well on the way to getting things right. It is a bit wearing for the councillors to have to explain why everything is working so slowly. South Somerset has no homeless people but, there is a begging problem and if you walk around Yeovil you will see people who look as if they are homeless but, they are not. Lastly, he was personally trying to put pressure to get more eco-friendly housing and building houses that will last for the next two hundred years.

District Cllr Mike Stanton said that he had County Cllr Clare Paul's report and offered to go through it. She reported that measles is a highly infectious viral illness which can sometimes lead to serious complications. Earlier this year the UK lost its measles free status due to the increased number of confirmed cases and evidence that transmission of measles had been re-established. The www.nhs.uk/conditions/measles website is available for information. Over 7,000 children visited libraries across Somerset to take part in 'Space Chase'. Two business-boosting enterprise centres for Somerset have taken a leap forward with construction work now underway in Wells. Gritting routes will have more money set aside for the winter services. Parish Councils are being asked to check their grit bins and to make sure that you apply for the salt.

639). **LAW & ORDER**

On the Avon & Somerset system for Area North, we have had 217 investigated crimes reported for the month of October and there were 27 arrests. There have been 34 reports of ASBOs for Area North. You can look at your crime stats for your Parish on the www.police.co.uk website and enter your village name.

640). **PLANNING REPORT**

There were no planning applications to report.

641). **CORRESPONDENCE**

There was no correspondence

642). **ITEMS FOR A FUTURE AGENDA.**

- a). Footpaths generally - update
- b). Caravan at Westport – update
- c). Speedwatch cameras
- d). Risk Assessment
- e). Development at Westmoor Lane

CHAIRMAN _____ **DATE** _____