

HAMBRIDGE & WESTPORT PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THE 13th JANUARY 2020 @ 8PM

IN THE VILLAGE HALL

PRESENT:- Simon Denley (Chairman), Richard Maidment, Richard Meecham, Jon Lock, Paul Masters and County Cllr Adam Dance.

659). **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence had been received from County Cllr Mike Stanton.

660). **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of Interest.

661). **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THE 9TH DECEMBER 2019**

The Minutes of the meeting were approved on the proposition of Cllr Simon Denley, seconded by Cllr Richard Maidment, subject to an amendment to Min, 655(f). Brewers Lane should read Isle Brewers Lane.

Adjournment to Allow Public Comment

- a). *A resident advised that there is a plan to put toilets into the Church and create a community space at the back with a mini kitchen. A question was raised as to whether the Parish Council could approve a grant. Cllr Richard Maidment asked what the cost was estimated to be and was advised that a figure in the region of thirty thousand pounds had been mentioned. It was understood that the work had to be done to certain specifications. Cllr Simon Denley asked if anyone had looked at the Old School House. It must be connected to the main sewer and they might be able to cut into their pipe work. Cllr Paul Masters asked if the Diocese would be able to contribute to the funding and was advised that they had been given a list of people they could contact. District Cllr Adam Dance said that you would not be able to obtain any grants unless three quotations were obtained. He recommended that Viridor could also be approached. It was considered that, in principle, the Parish Council could give a grant but, the question of how much would have to be agreed.*
- b). *The resident who runs the village shop said that she was struggling at the present time and her option was to close it. It is a question of just how much the residents want the shop and the support it gets. She has tried everything over the past two years to make it work. She has taken out one loan after loan to subsidise it and cannot afford to do so anymore. It is a question of how much the residents want the shop. it could be sold so that it can be run as a Community Shop. They have always said that if it paid for itself, they would run it but, it has never done that. If it was taken over as a Community Shop, the question of wages would disappear. Cllr Simon Denley asked if it was run as a Community Shop, would the Post Office remain? It was thought that the one at Kingsbury was run by a volunteer. Whereas she has to pay for everything, at Kingsbury they get help from the Parish Council. District Cllr Adam Dance said that the District Council has probably given £50,000 towards that shop over the years. Cllr Simon Denley said as a private enterprise it could not offer finance but, as a Community Shop, it would be able to offer grants. It was considered that we definitely needed a shop. Unless we come up with a plan, she definitely cannot continue. District Cllr Adam Dance considered that what she had done was commendable. It may be possible for the Parish Council to fund a sign saying, 'come to our village shop'. He said it would be sensible to hold*

a public meeting. In the meantime, he would speak to the gentleman who owns the land on which we could put a sign. An article could also feature in the Newsletter.

662). **REPORTS FROM DISTRICT & COUNTY COUNCILLORS**

District Cllr Adam Dance referred to the email about the Unitary. The County Council have said that they want Somerset to have a Unitary and so get rid of all the Districts and just have one council. He has just come back from Warwick University where he has been on a Leadership Academy where there are councillors from all political parties from all over the country. There were five Unitary Councillors and when asked what they thought about it, they said that they did not recommend it and explained why. His personal feeling would be to keep District and County and work in collaboration together. Imagine one Unitary Authority dealing with the planning in the whole of Somerset. There would be say, 289 councillors in Somerset going down to about 80 which happened in Dorset. If you had some planning here you will not have 2 councillors sat here, you will have one. My ward may be five times as big but, he might not be on the planning committee because there will be a certain amount of people, it will not be every councillor in Somerset as it is at present. Say there are only twenty for the whole of Somerset, you will have people looking at your planning that live in Bruton or Taunton . How are they going to know about this community? In his opinion, it would be diabolical.

,Cllr Richard Maidment said that was contrary to what the leader of the County Council was saying. He said we would be saving an enormous amount of money. District Cllr Adam Dance said that is because Somerset County Council is the second worst County in the country for finances and all the District Councils have got money. So, if it all goes into one, they will take all our assets, money and sell our buildings off which will initially give a lot of money to pay their debts off. We have put a plan in to say that all the Districts will work in collaboration, starting now saving money. Not in five years' time when the Unitary would probably happen anyway. So, we can save money now. The County will not work with Districts. They do not want any of our options. They are all going to start working together saving money Unitary is basically down to the Government as to what will happen. It is not necessarily going to be down to local people. Speaking to all the councillors on the course, everyone in the Unitary said that it was the worst thing that ever happened for the local community and for their people. They cannot get hold of their councillors because they are too busy covering their area. He said that when residents do get a say, could they think long and hard. It might save money initially. The County and the four Districts are talking to the Minister when we find out who he is. He just hoped that it is not political.

663), **MATTERS ARISING**

a). **Footpaths generally – update**

Cllr Simon Denley said that we are hoping that the Rangers' Scheme would be able to undertake this work. The Clerk advised that Chris Hollins had telephoned her and it was a question of arranging for him to come to one of our meetings. Cllr Simon Denley would email him again and see if he could attend our February meeting.

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

There was no update on this item.

c). **Development at Westmoor Lane**

Cllr Simon Denley said that he had received an email from Tim Wills of South Somerset District Council, which he read out to the members. He noted that the land was also known as the Withy Patch and was a former asset of the Environment Agency which has since been sold. He was not

aware of the date that they disposed of the site but, this has very little relevance at this stage. Officers have been to the site recently and saw the caravans in situ together with cars and other associated item. There was no-one there at the site at the time when he knocked. He has taken some photographs. The previous case officer had been Alex Skidmore but, when the specialists relinquished their enforcement cases, they had been allocated to him en bloc. This has resulted in a significant increase in cases. He pointed out that he has written to the owner of the site and at the time of sending this email had received no response. He has drafted a Planning Contravention Notice, which is basically a set of bespoke questions about the use of the land and ownership. It also seeks to obtain detailed information in order to be able to deal with an alleged breach of planning control. It gives an opportunity for the person subject to the planning contravention notice an opportunity to provide information and are compelled to complete and answer that form. Failure to respond is an offence. As he is not local to the area, he would appreciate any background information that residents might have. He hopes to serve the Notice as soon as possible.

Cllr Simon Denley had thanked him for the information and there was an opportunity this evening for anyone who has information about the site to make it known. A resident said that some laurel bushes had been planted and some stakes have been put in on the opposite side of the canal. Someone has also dug a very big hole. It was thought that it was originally intended for agricultural and equine use.

d). **Woodland Trust**

Cllr Simon Denley said that this item was tied-up with the planting of trees in item (h). He had applied for some trees and the closing date was the 3rd February after which we will know if we have been successful. He had mentioned it to the Recreational Trust and there is the possibility of planting some trees on their land and also on land belonging to Richard Combes. The Primary School might also be interested. Cllr Simon Denley said that if we do not get the trees he has ordered, District Cllr Adam Dance had said that there were other sources to apply to.

e). **Auto Speed Watch – update**

We were waiting to hear from Curry Rivel Parish Council as to when they would be having a demonstration of this equipment.

f). **Hambridge Mill Project – update**

Cllr Simon Denley said that we should be having representatives from Savilles at our next meeting. The Clerk would contact them for confirmation.

g). **Request for road safety mirrors at Isle Brewers Lane and Ruskway Lane – update**

Cllr Simon Denley said that he had not received an update on this item. He was going to talk to a resident who lives in Isle Brewers Lane but, had not yet done so.

664). **FINANCE REPORT**

a). **Accounts for payment**

The following account was approved for payment on the proposal of Cllr Simon Denley, seconded by Cllr Richard Maidment:-

Clerk's Wages - - January	£65.05
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b). **SETTING OF PRECEPT FOR 2020/2021**

The Clerk had prepared a schedule showing the income and expenditure to the end of December 2019, excluding vat, against the Budget for the year 2019/2020 and copies were circulated to the

members for information. A detailed discussion took place on the various elements relevant to the Precept for 2020/2021. Taking into account the views expressed by the members, the following schedule contains the recommended allocation for each element of expenditure and was unanimously agreed.

	Precept for 2019/2020	Expenditure to end December	+ or - Precept	Precept 2020/2021
	£ -			
Clerk's Salary & PAYE 2019/20	£ 975.00	£ 887.40	-£ 87.60	£ 1,100.00
Clerk's Expenses 2019/2020	£ 300.00	£ -	£ 300.00	£ 300.00
SALC Fee	£ 150.00	£ 141.50	£ 8.50	£ 150.00
Audit Fees	£ 300.00	£ 336.00	-£ 36.00	£ 350.00
Grass Cutting	£ 4,000.00	£ 4,925.00	-£ 925.00	£ 4,000.00
Churchyard grass cutting				
Hambridge Churchyard Grant	£ 1,500.00	£ -	£ 1,500.00	£ 1,500.00
Training Courses	£ 200.00		£ 200.00	£ 200.00
H & W Recreation Trust	£ 1,500.00	£ 13,000.00	-£ 11,500.00	£ 1,500.00
Rent	£ 150.00	£ 144.00	£ 6.00	£ 150.00
Insurance Premium	£ 700.00	£ 669.59	£ 30.41	£ 700.00
War Memorial	£ 200.00	£ 59.00	£ 141.00	£ 200.00
General Maintenance	£ -		-	£ 1,000.00
Contingencies	£ 850.00	£ 47.00	£ 803.00	£ 850.00
Broadband and line rental charges	£ 400.00	£ 338.19	£ 61.81	£ 600.00
Future Projects	£ 1,285.00		£ 1,285.00	£ 300.00
Newsletters	£ 500.00	£ 312.92	£ 187.08	£ 500.00
General Charity	£ 200.00	£ 52.00	£ 148.00	£ 100.00
Totals	£ 13,210.00	£ 20,912.60	-£7,877.80	£ 13,500.00

665). **LAW & ORDER**

There was nothing to report.

666). **PLANNING REPORT**

a). **Application Received**

No. 19/03508/FUL

Change of use and conversion of the Old Chapel into one two bedroomed residential dwelling. Old Chapel, Hambridge, :Langport, TA10 0BA.

The Parish Council supports this application and would wish any original features in the interior of the building to be retained if possible. If there are any artefacts relating to the village that they should be transferred to the village/ The external of the building to remain the same including the stone plaque, windows and railings.

667). **CORRESPONDENCE**

The Clerk had received a notification from South Somerset District Council advising that Parish Councils could put forward the name of a councillor who had served as a Chairman of the Parish

Council and served his parish well Council to take part in a draw giving the opportunity to attend a Garden Party at Buckingham Palace in May. A random draw would be held to choose which candidate would be chosen.

CHAIRMAN_____ **DATE**_____