

MINUTES OF HAMBRIDGE AND WESTPORT PARISH COUNCIL
MONTHLY MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY
8TH DECEMBER 2021 IN THE VILLAGE HALL

21/847 PRESENT:

Mr. S. Denley (Chairman), Mr. P. Masters (Vice Chair), Mr. R Maidment, Mr. R Meecham, Mr. A Dance (County Councillor) & Mrs L. Brooks (Clerk). There were no members of the public present.

21/848 APOLOGIES:

M Stanton (District Councillor)

Ms. J Lock (Other commitments)

21/849 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

Councillor Denley declared an interest regarding footpaths - Proposed diversion of footpath L 9/22, Hambridge

21/850 MINUTES:

The Minutes from the November meeting have been circulated. They were agreed and signed.

Proposed: Cllr. Masters

Seconded: Cllr. Maidment

Agreed unanimously.

21/851 PUBLIC TIME

21/851/a Public Time:

No members of the public were present.

21/851/b District Councillor:

Councillor Stanton was not present at the meeting but he did send a report that was circulated to all the Parish Councillors. It included:

Planning

Now delayed to end January is the publication of the joint councils' Phosphates Strategy, including a Supplementary Planning Document to provide a guide to developers and landowners in finding solutions to phosphate pollution; it will then need to be approved by all four district councils and County. Thereafter, applications will be considered only if they include a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) showing how the development will not add phosphates to the Levels or how this will be mitigated by phosphates reductions elsewhere. Most planning applications are hence still on hold because of the ruling made by Natural England in August 2020.

At SSDC's request, the government has formally designated our parishes with a population of less than 3,000 as 'rural' under section 157 of the Housing Act 1975. This means that, in future local plans, developers could be required to include Affordable Housing even when they are intending to build fewer than 10 houses, which is the current break point. However, our current Local Plan is regarded by the planning process and authorities nationally as 'out of date' and no longer relevant, because at present we cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of housing and suitable land for it.

Unitary Authority

The government has now confirmed that elections to the new Somerset Council (Unitary Authority) will be held as planned in May 2022. 110 Councillors will be elected, representing the current county electoral divisions, with two elected for most of these.

The new council will replace the current Joint Committee which is overseeing the restructuring with effect from the fourth day after the May elections. To make all this happen legally, the government will need to pass a Structural Changes Order, which is expected in March.

The current district and county councils will remain formally in existence until April 2023, by which time all their powers are expected to have been legally transferred to the new council. The Joint Committee and the five current Chief Executives and their teams will be working up to that point on the restructuring, including the appointment and transfer of staff from employment by the preceding councils to the new one. To simplify this process, the government has determined that the new council will be a 'Continuing Authority' such that current County Council will form the basis of the new council.

21/851/c County Councillor:

Councillor Dance attended the meeting. He discussed the County Council elections which are now set for next year. The elections are scheduled to take place on 5 May 2022 and these will be to elect 110 Councillors who will serve a five year term. For their first year, the Councillors will take responsibility for all current County Council services and oversee the local government reorganisation to establish a single unitary council on 1 April 2023.

From April 2023 the 110 Councillors of the new Somerset Council will assume the responsibility for all local government functions for Somerset, including those of the current four District Councils.

District councils will remain until 31 March 2023 and the Councillors serving those Councils will continue in their roles until that date. The Government is proposing to align the city, town and parish council elections with the elections in May 2022.

It is anticipated that there will be a full boundary review after the May 2022 elections and ahead of the subsequent elections in May 2027.

Cllr. Maidment asked County Cllr. Dance if there was any update on the piece of wasteland between the canal basin and main road where tins of paint had been left exposed following the removal of a shed, which had been reported at the September Parish Council meeting. Cllr. Dance said that the site had been investigated and the results from the inspection were that the tins were no risk. Cllr Dance will forward the report to Cllr.Maidment.

21/851/d P.C.S.O. Report:

Nothing to report

21/852 MATTERS ARISING

1. Banking – progress on transfer to Unity Bank

The Chairman will proceed in transferring monies across to the Unity Bank account from the Nat West account. The Clerk reported that she had now applied for the precept which will be paid into the new account. The Chair will go ahead and open a second account which will be the reserve account. **Action: Chairman Cllr. Denley**

2. SSDC Rangers Scheme:

The Ranger has unfortunately had Covid and has only just started to come back to work. He now has a backlog of jobs to do around the villages that he is responsible for. He does not need to be present for the training for the speed sensor as he already changes some for other Parish Councils.

3. Speed Sensor – date for training and installation

The Chairman will send round suggestions of available dates for the training and installation of the speed sensor and see which suits the majority of people. The speed sensor will be up and running as soon as possible.

Action: Chairman Cllr. Denley

4. Dog Bins for Westport:

No decision has been made yet by SSDC as to whether Westport can have a dog bin or not. Clerk has chased this and will contact them again next week.

Action: Clerk

Cllr. Meecham reported that there was a hole in the bottom of the dog bin on The Green in Hambridge.

Cllr.Meecham will take the details and take a photo of what dog bin it is and email the Clerk who will get a quote for a replacement. The Ranger will then install.

Action: Cllr Meecham/Clerk

5. Flood Store

The Clerk reported that she had just received an email from SSDC in response to her request for some sandbags for the two villages. They asked for more details regarding flood resilience plans, number of houses that have flooded in the past, volunteers and relevant training they've received etc. The Chairman informed the Clerk that they did not have a flood plan and were just looking to create a flood store and hold some sand bags for when people required them, instead of having a mad rush to locate some and get them delivered in times of an emergency. The Chair explained there were houses in Water St that had previously flooded as well as houses in Westport. Some have had pumps installed to help alleviate the flooding problems whilst others have been supplied with sand bags. Cllr Dance was present at the meeting and told the Clerk to respond to the email with this information and copy him in.

Action: Clerk

6. Local Community Network (LCN): The Chairman reported on an initial meeting that he had attended on the 30th November, regarding forming a Local Community Network. The meeting was organised by Somerton and Langport Town Councils. He explained that LCNs will not replace Districts. They will have no responsibility to deliver services and little or no budget. The budgets and the responsibility to deliver services will rest with the new Somerset Council.

LCNs will, however, allow regions within Somerset to find their voice, determine their priorities, and plan for more locally sensitive actions.

The plan is that LCNs will provide framework for groups of parishes to work together.

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 23rd February 2022

21/853 PLANNING:

21/853/a Matters for report:

APPEAL IN RESPECT OF APPLICATION DECISION REFERENCE: 21/00181/S73A

Proposal: Application to vary condition 2 (approved plans) of planning approval 18/02149/FUL and as amended 19/02771/S73 to allow a minor increase in roof height, to ensure buildability and a continuous parapet.

Location: Land Adjacent Burgum. Westport, Langport, TA10 0BH

The Chairman reported that the Parish Council had now written to the Inspectorate dealing with the appeal, outlining the objections the Parish Council had.

21/853/b Decisions Notified:

Nothing to report

21/853/c Applications for consideration.

Nothing to report

21/854 FINANCE:

21/854/a Matters for report:

The Clerk reported that she has now applied for the Precept for 2022/23. She has also created an excel sheet with the last two financial years of VAT still to claim. As soon as the bank details have been changed over and funds transferred across, she will then start the process of re-registering the Parish Council with HMRC for VAT claims.

21/854/b Matters for Resolution:

Nothing to report

21/854/c Cheques Payable:

Louise Brooks	Salary for Nov 2021	£ 384.13	chq no: 562
HMRC	PAYE payment for Nov 2021	£ 96.00	chq no: 563
Louise Brooks	Expenses & Home office allowance Nov 2021	£ 40.00	chq no: 564

Proposed: Cllr. Denley

Seconded: Cllr.Masters

Agreed unanimously

21/855 CORRESPONDENCE:

All correspondence received, had been forwarded to the Parish Councillors.

The Chairman reported that he had been handed an invoice from HWRT regarding recent improvements that had been carried out at the village hall. They were requesting their £1,500.00 that is included in the precept.

The Clerk will add it to the January Agenda for payment. The invoice has to be on an Agenda for approval before payment is made.

21/856 FOOTPATHS:

Proposed diversion of footpath L 9/22, Hambridge:

The Chairman reported that he had now signed his consent form regarding the proposed diversion of footpath L9/22. The resident in Angel Cottage had also signed their part, which meant it was now just the Chairman of the HWRT to sign on behalf of the village hall.

Cllr Maidment will get this done and send of the application form.

Action: Clerk

21/857 MEMBERS' REPORTS/ITEMS FOR NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING:

Items for the next meeting: Any of the above which require follow-ups from this meeting.

- HWRT request for their precept money (£1,500.00) for improvements that have been carried out at the hall.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.30pm

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 12th January 2022 at 7.30pm in the village hall.