

**MINUTES OF HAMBRIDGE AND WESTPORT PARISH COUNCIL**  
**MONTHLY MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 13<sup>th</sup> JULY 2022**  
**IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM, HAMBRIDGE VILLAGE HALL**

**22/925 PRESENT:**

Cllr. S. Denley (Chairman), Cllr. P. Masters (Vice Chair), Cllr. R Maidment, Cllr. R Meecham, Cllr G. Hill, & Mrs L. Brooks (Clerk). There were 3 members of the public present.

**22/926 APOLOGIES:**

M. Stanton (District Councillor)

Mr. A Dance (County Councillor)

**22/927 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:**

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

**22/928 MINUTES:**

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

Proposed: Cllr. Masters

Seconded: Cllr. Meecham

Agreed unanimously.

**22/929 PUBLIC TIME**

**22/929/a Public Time:**

Three members of the public requested an update to Footpath L9/22. One of the members of public had attempted to walk the footpath. However, due to a high fence which has now been erected through part of the footpath, means access has now been completely blocked. One member of the public reported that she had spoken to the landowner whilst trying to cross the field. Cllr Maidment and the Clerk informed the members of the public that all issues with footpaths and access issues should be reported directly to SCC Rights of Way Warden for Hambridge.

Sandra Harvey asked if more trees could be planted. The Parish Council explained that they had planted trees when SSDC held their last Great Parish Tree Giveaway in 2019. However, the trees provided were tiny cell grown trees and the success rate was minimal. The other issue the Parish Council had was finding suitable public locations for the trees to be planted. Some were offered to landowners but there was very little interest and uptake. Two oak trees will be planted in the autumn to mark the jubilee.

Sandra Harvey and Kristina Pitts asked if the Parish Council could ask landowners to stop cutting their hedges or not be cut so severely to allow them to flower & fruit for biodiversity/wildlife. Cllr Masters explained that this was not a Parish Council matter. He explained that landowners cut hedges for many reasons; including rental agreements and visibility (Hedgerows along roads and farm access tracks need to be cut annually to avoid obstruction). It was also explained that hedges are cut to prevent them growing out into fields and reducing the land available for cropping and grazing, which in turn would then have an impact on farmers livelihoods. Cllr Meecham also explained that they are also cut to keep them thick and bushy – this is particularly important in livestock areas where hedgerows still act as living fences. Cllr Meecham also explained how many farmers are now leaving at least a one/two metre uncut margin around the edge of mown fields to encourage wildlife.

Sandra Harvey also asked if the Parish Council could help with getting residents to make their gardens more ‘hedgehog friendly’. Again, the Parish Council felt this was not a Parish Council matter and it was up to the individual homeowner as to how they chose to manage their gardens.

\*Note\* - Both Sandra Harvey and Kristina Pitts requested their names to be included in the minutes and gave written consent for this.

**22/929/b District Councillor:**

District Councillor Stanton was not present at the meeting. He had sent a report beforehand which had been circulated. It included:

**Local Government Reorganisation:** With just 190 working days before the new unitary council comes into being on 1 April 2023, the four districts are working closely with the county council to integrate operations. Migration of council systems to a single IT platform is now planned, to be done in phases before 1st April 2023.

**Local Community Networks (LCNs):** these were proposed in the case for a single unitary authority as a way of involving our communities more in our work – something we also wish for. However, the plans made before May for them need substantial revision, not least because they do not include the matter of most concern to

localities, namely planning. And, surprisingly, no budget provision was made for establishing and staffing them. The two pilot LCN projects are now ending, so we will draw on the learning from those in redesigning them.

Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP): Garden Waste (Green bin): most subscriptions expire this week, so check that you've renewed – reminders seem not to have arrived with everyone: somersetwaste.gov.uk. Somerset's recycling rate is at an all-time high at 56% - well done everyone. We expect to be in the top 10% nationally when figures come out later in the year.

Grass cutting and surface dressing: this is underway – nearly 6,000 miles of roadside verge will be cut between now and September, up to one metre width except where more is needed for visibility at junctions. Some verges are being left uncut, to improve biodiversity. Reduced verge cutting on the A356 near Stoke-sub-Hamdon has preserved two colonies of rare bee orchids.

SSDC's Environment Action Plan to achieve net-zero carbon by 2030 through a 10% year-on-year reduction in emissions is now live on the council website.

Finances: councils nationally will face a £2.4bn hit from rising energy bills, prices for essential goods, and wages this year: South Somerset will need to review its income and expenditure in response to this current high inflation level, as will all households and individuals.

Planning & Phosphates: most applications are still held up pending launch of the long-delayed market in mitigation arrangements being set up by Wessex Water's EnTrade subsidiary.

22/929/c County Councillor:

County Councillor Adam Dance was not present at the meeting. He had sent a report beforehand which had been circulated. It included:

The New Administration: The recent county council elections have seen a change in administration at County Hall. Jo and Adam are working hard to get to grips with the challenges ahead and helping to put the heart back into Somerset. Adam is the portfolio holder for Public Health and Equality and Diversity, working across the county to in all aspects of health and wellbeing. Jo sits on the new the Environment Scrutiny Committee, which has been set up to deliver a greener, fairer Somerset.

In April 2023, Somerset Council will take over all services provided by the County Council & the 4 District Councils; everything from education and adult social care, to waste and planning decisions.

One of the biggest challenges the new administration has is the state of the County Council finances.

There are serious concerns about the "unitary bonus", sold as an annual saving of £18.5m to be invested in local services. This saving is looking increasingly unlikely. The budgetary pressures as we go unitary are enormous, driven not only by increased demand upon our services but also by inflation. The County Council has a vital role to play in supporting people through the cost of living crisis, and whilst we are committed to supporting our communities there are tough times ahead and we need to prioritise help for those in the greatest need.

In the villages: In the villages we are looking at roads and pavements. There are a great many potholes that need filling in and we have reported them to Highways. Speeding traffic is an ongoing problem and we are taking concerns in Watergore and Barrington very seriously and looking at ways of slowing down the traffic. This is something Parish Councils can get involved with.

Health and Wellbeing: The NHS Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group, and community and charitable sectors are redesigning nursing and residential homes. They will invest in new technologies and services which will help people remain living independently in their own homes. The aims are to boost investment into housing, to invest in new technologies, and improve the delivery of care and support services.

People between the age of 40 and 74 are eligible to get a free NHS Health check, to lower their risk of developing serious health conditions. The NHS Health Check is available every five years and for those who do not have a pre-existing long-term condition. For further information, or to book a test visit:

somersethealthchecks.co.uk /

Following on from No Mow May, some verges in South Somerset are enjoying a reduced cutting schedule. Verges at junctions will continue to be cut more frequently in the interests of road safety, but in areas where road safety isn't compromised the increased biodiversity is clear for all to see!

**22/929/d P.C.S.O. Report:**

Nothing to report

**22/930 MATTERS ARISING**

**22/930/a Grit Bins – update**

The Clerk reported that following an onsite meeting with Highways she had got them to agree to all four locations for new grit bins. The new locations will be

1. Westport - Ruskway Lane
2. School entrance
3. Hambridge – B3168 – past Westmoor Lane, heading down the hill (in Curry Rivel direction), on the pavement halfway down this hill. This is the only walking access into the village from the bottom part of the village and is well used with school children.
4. Hambridge – junction with Westmoor Lane and Ham Green.

The Highways manager confirmed all four new locations will be added to the list for filling which will take place in October. The Clerk will now order 4 x 160 litre grit bins in yellow to be delivered to Cllr Masters property. These will be installed by the SSDC Ranger but not until nearer the date of filling otherwise they are likely to disappear. **Action: Clerk**

**22/930/b Speed limit on B3168**

Cllr Maidment raised the issue again with regards to trying to get Highways to reduce the speed limit through Westport to Hambridge down to 30mph. This is following an accident a few months ago in Westport which resulted in a fatality. Cllr Maidment to compile a list of factual reasons to make a case for this, so County Cllr Dance can put it to Highways for consideration. **Action: Cllr Maidment**

**22/930/c Parish Council notice boards:** Chairman Cllr Denley announced that he has finally got permission from the landowner that they are happy for a slightly larger notice board to be installed where the existing one is in Hambridge. The second one is for Westport. Clerk to go ahead and order the two notice boards (resolution made in the June meeting), in green (with a green background) and get them delivered to Cllr Masters for the SSDC Ranger to install. Payment will be made in two instalments (half when order is placed and half on completion and receipt of notice boards). Clerk to arrange. **Action: Clerk**

**22/930/c Curry Rivel Food Bank – poster for social media and notice boards:**

Clerk asked for confirmation that the poster provided by the Curry Rivel Food Bank had been erected on the notice boards and also been posted on social media. The Chairman Cllr Denley confirmed they had.

**22/931 PLANNING:**

**22/931/a Matters for report:**

Nothing to report

**22/931/b Decisions Notified:**

Nothing to report

**22/931/c Applications for consideration.**

Nothing to report

**22/932 FINANCE:**

**22/932/a Matters for report:**

1. End of 1<sup>st</sup> quarter accounts

Unity Trust Bank Current account	£	41,426.14
Total as cash book	£	41,426.14

A bank reconciliation and spread sheet of all transactions was emailed to all Parish Councillors prior to the meeting.

Cllr Maidment took the accounts to give to the internal auditor for examination and sign off.

2. VAT claim update: The Clerk reported that she has now been able to submit a VAT claim with HMRC which covers the last 2 years of purchases.

**22/932/b Matters for Resolution:**

Payment of August invoices without a meeting:

August payments are to be approved by email at the time the August PC meeting would normally take place, by a minimum of 2 Parish Councillors. Clerk to pay the relevant payees. All payments made will be included on the September Agenda and these will be reported at the September meeting. This is only relevant for any payments that have either been signed off in the last budget, or where a resolution has been made at a previous meeting. This includes salaries, grass cuttings, land maintenance, SSDC Ranger (budgeted items), plus grit bins and notice boards (items where a resolution has been made).

Proposed: Cllr. Denley

Seconded: Cllr. Meecham

Agreed unanimously.

**22/932/c Cheques Payable:**

Louise Brooks	Salary – June 2022	£ 411.73	Pd via Unity Trust
HMRC	NI & PAYE June 2022	£ 86.60	Pd via Unity Trust
Louise Brooks	Expenses & home office Allowance – June 22	£ 40.00	Pd via Unity Trust
M Von Tyszka	Churchyard mowing June x 3 @ £100.00 per session	£ 300.00	Pd via Unity Trust
M Von Tyszka	Recreation ground maintenance June 5 x mowing @ £110 per session, hedge cutting & weed spraying	£ 605.00	Pd via Unity Trust
Cox & Co Payroll Services	Payroll services – July, August, September	£ 90.00	Pd via Unity Trust
SALC	Councillor Training April 28 <sup>th</sup> inv no: 0772	£ 50.00	Pd via Unity Trust
SALC	Councillor Training May 3 <sup>rd</sup> inv no: 0796	£ 30.00	Pd via Unity Trust
SALC	Councillor Training June 8 <sup>th</sup> inv no: 1042	£ 25.00	Pd via Unity Trust
SALC	Councillor Training June 22 <sup>nd</sup> inv no: 1171	£ 50.00	Pd via Unity Trust
SSDC Ranger scheme	Rangers hours for June 22	£ 384.14	Pd via Unity Trust
BT	Wifi a village hall - June 22	£ 53.94	Pd via Unity Trust

Proposed: Cllr. Meecham

Seconded: Cllr. Masters

Agreed unanimously

**22/933 CORRESPONDENCE:**

All correspondence received, had been forwarded to the Parish Councillors. There were extra items that the clerk discussed.

**22/934 FOOTPATHS:**

Footpath L 9/22, Hambridge:

See public time above

**22/935 MEMBERS' REPORTS/ITEMS FOR NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING:**

Reminder – no meeting in August. Next meeting: 14<sup>th</sup> September

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.55 pm

**The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> September 2022 at 7.30pm in the village hall.**