

MINUTES OF HAMBRIDGE AND WESTPORT PARISH COUNCIL
MONTHLY MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 8th NOVEMBER 2023
IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM, HAMBRIDGE VILLAGE HALL

23/1066 PRESENT:

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

23/1067 APOLOGIES:

Cllr G. Hill

Cllr. J. Roundell-Greene (Unitary Councillor)

23/1068 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

Nothing to report.

23/1069 MINUTES:

The Minutes from the October meeting had been circulated. They were agreed and signed.

Proposed: Cllr. Meecham

Seconded: Cllr. Maidment

Agreed unanimously.

23/1070 PUBLIC TIME

23/1070/a Public Time:

Nothing to report

23/1070/b Unitary Councillor report:

Unitary Councillor Dance updated the Parish Council on the latest financial situation at Somerset Council and discussed the budget options. Somerset Council have issued a letter to Parish Councils informing them of asset and service devolution – passing over the financial responsibility of vital services to Parish Councils to pay for. Cllr Dance explained the enormous financial challenge that is facing Somerset Council. The rising cost of social care, together with inflation, plus a failure by government to bring forward the promised Fair Cost of Care policy, have contributed to the emergency. Also, the decision by central government to dramatically reduce funding for local authorities over recent years, plus the decision of the previous administration to freeze council tax for six years in a row, has led to an emergency position. This is now going to have a massive effect on the Parish Councils budget and precept.

23/1070/c P.C.S.O. Report:

Nothing to report.

23/1071 MATTERS ARISING

23/1071/a Defib funding update

Cllr Meecham updated the Parish Council on the defibrillator situation. The Department for Health and Social Care have launched an initiative to help fund public accessible defibrillators. The fund will provide 2,000 new public access defibrillators for communities across England - 100 applications will be selected by DHSC to receive a fully funded AED and External Heated Cabinet - 1900 applications will receive partial DHSC funding for an AED and External Heated Cabinet – organisations will be required to provide their own match funding of c. £750. Cllr Meecham has applied on behalf of the Parish Council.

He explained he is also in talks with The Red Cross regarding a scheme they are running.

Action: Cllr. Meecham

23/1071/b LCN Meeting

The next LCN meeting for the Levels and Moors Group will take place on Monday 13th November at Edgar Hall in Somerton. Cllr Masters and Cllr Meecham will both attend online and update the Parish Council at the December meeting.

23/1071/c Wreath for Remembrance Sunday

The Chairman, Cllr Denley has ordered a wreath to mark Remembrance Sunday. It will be laid on the War Memorial on Sunday.

The Clerk will arrange payment of £25.00.

23/1072 PLANNING:

23/1072/a Matters for report:

Nothing to report.

23/1072/b Decisions Notified: The Clerk had been notified on the following:

Nothing to report.

23/1072/c Applications for consideration.

Nothing to report.

23/1073 FINANCE:

23/1073/a Matters for report

Draft budget - planning

The Clerk had received a letter only that afternoon from Somerset Council outlining the difficult financial situation they are in and the devolution of assets and services to Parish Councils. This had been circulated to the Parish Councillors before the meeting. The Parish Council will become financially responsible for many services including – dog bin emptying, Grit bins – filled twice a year , Street cleaning - 2-3 times a year, roadside verges – cut twice a year, weed treatment , fly tipping – costs to remove it, drains – jetting, collapsed drain repairs, drain clearance.

The Parish Council need to have funds to pay for this plus have an emergency fund for items that require urgent repairs. The only way the Parish Council will be able to fund these services is by having a significant rise in their precept.

The Parish Council are looking at ways to be able to take the cost of these services on and are all working hard at the budget for 2024-25.

23/1073/b Matters for Resolution

Nothing to report.

23/10573/c Cheques Payable:

All paid via Unity Trust Bank – direct online transfer.

PAYMENTS MADE IN NOVEMBER			
Louise Brooks	Salary – October 2023	£	419.36
HMRC	NI & PAYE October 2023	£	110.20
Louise Brooks	Expenses & home office Allowance – October 2023	£	40.00
Max Von Tyszka	Mowing of churchyard - October 2023	£	200.00
Max Von Tyszka	Mowing of recreation field – October 2023	£	360.00
Somerset Council	Rangers hours for October 2023	£	211.26

Proposed: Cllr. Masters

Seconded: Cllr. Maidment

Agreed unanimously.

23/1074 CORRESPONDENCE:

The Clerk reported that all correspondence received, had been forwarded to the Parish Councillors.

23/1075 FOOTPATHS:

Clerk reported that any footpath issues to be reported straight to SCC Rights of Way Officer.

23/1076 MEMBERS' REPORTS/ITEMS FOR NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING:

Members' Reports:

Cllr Maidment requested that the Ranger cut hedge to improve visibility at Westport.

Items for next Agenda:

Defibrillator

LCN report

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.30pm

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 13th DECEMBER 2023 at 7.30 pm in the village hall.