

# MINUTES, PAWLETT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Held virtually on Zoom on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2021, commencing at 7.00pm  
(in the format to be presented to the next meeting for approval)

## **Present:**

Cllrs W Barnard (Chair), A Warner (Vice-Chair), A Baker, J Kingman, M Thomas, M Smith  
C Morrison-Jones (clerk)

3 x members of the public.

SCC Cllr M Healey

Jill Loader, Census Engagement Manager (present for her presentation only)

## **Presentation:**

Prior to the start of the formal meeting Jill Loader, Census Engagement Manager for Somerset from the Office for National Statistics, delivered a short presentation regarding the census that will take place this year, on 21st March 2021:

- The census is compulsory for the population for England & Wales.
- The data collected is used to underpin the service delivery in the county and sheds light on long term trends
- Her role is to engage populations, especially more challenging populations
- A pack will be sent to each household (between 1<sup>st</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> March) to allow for completion online, but a paper version can be requested
- Emphasised that personal data is kept entirely confidential and not released for 101 years. It is not shared with any other government department.
- Online benefits are increasing the speed of the census data being processed – useful data to be available by the end of the year
- Census support centres are hoped to be set up across the county (if covid allows) to enable people to be helped complete their forms. A large field support team are being recruited to assist

*Jill Loader left the meeting at this point*

## **Public speaking:**

- Three potholes in Vicarage Lane were repaired on 26<sup>th</sup> January and other areas have been marked out for attention.
- A38 pavement vegetation clearance took place on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> January with the mechanical equipment used leaving deep scarring to the pavement
- The 3 blocked drains reported again on 25<sup>th</sup> January

### **1. To receive any apologies for absence and disclosures of interest and consider grants of dispensation.**

Apologies of absence received from SDC Cllr J Woodman

Disclosure of interest J Kingman (landowner), agenda item 9a

Disclosure of interest M Thomas (adjacent property owner), agenda item 9a

### **2. County and District Councillor Reports**

SCC Cllr M Healey had previously sent a report that had been circulated to councillors

- SDC has new chief executive
- By the end of this week government will give opinion on how unitary bids are progressing.
- May 2021 Elections MAYBE delayed – further confirmation to be awaited

### **3. Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021**

The minutes were approved by Members for signature by the Chairman as a true and accurate record of the previous meeting. The minutes will be signed when the Parish

Council next meet in person.

#### **4. Vacancy on the Parish Council**

There is still one vacancy on the Parish Council to be filled by co-option. Any interested parishioners are requested to contact the clerk or any parish councillor for more information and to register an interest.

#### **5. Matters arising from the previous meeting:**

##### **a) Speeding at Dunball**

To be carried forward to the next meeting

##### **b) Any other matters arising from the minutes not covered by the agenda items below**

None

#### **6. Roads, Footpaths and River Bank:**

##### **a) Kissing Gates on The Drain**

WB reported that this work hasn't yet been carried out by the contractors engaged by the Council who have been in touch that their workforce has been impacted by Covid and they are still awaiting the delivery of the cross bar. It is hopeful that the work will be carried out next week.

##### **b) Tree planting on the Green**

MT reported that Chew Valley Trees have quoted for five trees (species specified in circulated document) for £1071 + VAT (including planting and bracing work) to be planted along the A38 along the green. Additional quotes were received for various species of 'Christmas tree'.

Concerns were raised about planting close to the A38 (both from a road safety and future maintenance aspect) and the long-term potential of the root spread damaging the retaining wall.

Councillors resolved that in principle that it would authorise the clerk to place an order for purchase and planting of the five specified trees, plus 1x15 litre *Abies lasiocarpa compacta* @ £77 + VAT, to be planted 4 metres from the outer fence line of The Green.

MT was asked to obtain a planting plan (to be circulated for final approval) from Chew Valley Trees to clarify the proposed planting spacings and potential root spread at maturity of the trees.

##### **c) Any other matters concerning Highways, Footpaths or River Banks**

i) The clerk reported that she had received assurance from SDC Cllr J Woodman on 26<sup>th</sup> January that he would look into the drains on the A38 that require clearing

ii) The church warden had connected the clerk last week to request the path be cleared as was a slip hazard. Since then, contact was made again stating that the problem had been rectified.

#### **7. Minor Parish maintenance issues**

i) Installation of two grit bins - The clerk reported that she hadn't yet engaged the agreed contractor to install the grit bins as she was waiting for their first contract – The Drain- to be carried out in order that quality of work could be assessed.

ii) Fingerpost sign on River Road crossroads is overgrown and needs repainting. Clerk to investigate costs etc – may need to be rescheduled as a major job requiring full council approval for funding as it is a SCC historic fingerpost

iii) Painting the electricity box on green – AW is taking this on when the weather improves

#### **8. Play area and outdoor gym: Any matters to report**

i) AW- nothing to report. Gym is still closed with the signs still in place. Play area banners are up and there are no ongoing maintenance issues

ii) At the community meeting there was a demand for new, better play equipment. £15,000 has been ringfenced in the Parish Council funds plus amounts that could be grant funded.

WB thought that a budget of £30,000 would hopefully finish the skate park and purchase a large wooden play structure for the Green and offered to research financial implications and potential funding through Virador.

*JK & MT left the meeting at this point due to a declared interest (placed in virtual waiting room)*

**9. Planning:**

- a) Consideration of matters resulting from the Community Meeting of 25<sup>th</sup> January regarding potential residential development of land to the west of the A38 and the offer of provision of a 'community asset', specifically**
- **What assets/s would the parish council consider beneficial**
  - **The future governance/management of proposed assets**

WB again stressed that the Community Meeting held last week, and discussions held tonight at the Parish Council meeting were not a discussion of a planning application or even potential design because as yet there is no application or design to discuss.

The Community Meeting was organised in response to a request from the developers to better understand the needs of the village in terms of the additional benefit a site could provide (if granted planning consent), and the format gave the village a small opportunity to participate in a process that is normally conducted solely by the developers themselves behind closed doors. Without such input the village risk ending up with resources not suited to its specific needs or even worse, buildings or equipment it has no use for but have to maintain. The Parish Council felt it would be better to offer villagers input to steer whatever is proposed.

The meeting was in no way intended to suggest that the Parish Council is for or against any particular development, that judgement will be reserved until an application is before the council in a public meeting.

If a planning application does come forward from the developers, it will follow the normal path and there will be opportunity for local residents to comment on any proposals, either through the Parish Council, or directly to Sedgemoor.

Several suggestion of community assets were raised at last week's meeting:

Play / Outdoor gym facilities were already covered by the Parish Council

Any new facility would be on the edge of the village and not link in with the centre of the village, but a shop would get good footfall from A38

WB- village deserves a village shop. He believes that the failing of the 2 shops was a 'perfect storm' and does not demonstrate that the village cannot support a shop that had sufficient scope and stock.

AB- premises for pre-school would be a welcome asset as present room is not suitable  
Resolved:

To reply that the community wished to engage with the developers and thank them for their chance to allow the community to put their thoughts forward. The meeting is the first part of a longer process of village engagement and the PC would welcome more substantial plans to enable further comment and engagement.

The PC can cover the need for play equipment so it is felt that developers need to focus on other suggestions such as a shop and alternative premises for preschool / youth club youth space. The PC would prefer such assets to be self funding / pay for its own maintenance and not be a drain on PC / village resources

*JK re-joined the meeting*

*SCC Cllr MH left the meeting at this point, together with 1 member of the public*

**b) Any potential planning breaches in the parish**

None

**c) Any other planning related matters notified to Clerk in advance of the meeting**

None

*MT rejoined meeting*

*1 member of the public left the meeting at this point*

**10. Consider grass cutting arrangements in the Parish for 2021 and 2022 seasons**

Quotes had been received from three companies and circulated to councillors

The merits and disadvantages of all quotes were considered

Resolved:

To offer the contract to Sedgemoor District Council for a one year contract (2021 cutting season only) and companies be invited to re-tender again for the next year

**11. Website, consider quotations received to rebuild website**

The clerk reported that she has been in discussion with three providers. Quotes have been circulated to councillors for a basic website build that would cover the statutory requirements of the Parish Council under the Transparency Code and GDPR and Accessibility legislation.

Resolved:

The new website should be minimum to fulfil statutory requirements of the PC to the village. Councillors resolved to award the build and ongoing maintenance and hosting contract to Somerset Webservices, with the clerk awarded delegated powers to finalise the design and build process.

*1 member of the public left at this point*

*WB's internet connection dropped out – AW took the chair*

**12. Consider adopting a Communications Policy**

The clerk had previously circulated a draft communications policy to consider for adoption by Councillors.

Resolved:

To adopt the draft Communications Policy as presented

**13. Financial Matters.**

**a) Council pension scheme – update**

Following the resolution agreed by councillors at the January meeting (agenda item 17) the clerk confirmed that the Council has been enrolled as an employer in the NEST pension scheme, with its contributions at the statutory minimum rate of 3% of qualifying earnings as the auto enrolment threshold had been exceeded. A variable direct debit has been set up to service the NEST payments

Councillors resolved to continue at the 3% employer's contribution if the employee's status drops from automatic enrolment to entitled enrolment.

**b) i) Payments to approve**

C Morrison-Jones	£945.52	salary (Jan 2021+ pay in lieu of untaken annual leave)	
NEST	£32.74	employer & employee pension contributions	D/D
HMRC	£23.49	PAYE/NI contributions	
Green Energy	£9.50	electricity on The Green (Jan 2021)	

**ii) Amounts received**

None

**c) Online banking – update**

The forms requesting online banking access and a debit card for the use of the clerk have been countersigned (by AB & AW) and submitted electronically to NatWest for actioning.

**d) Request to purchase of "Charles Arnold-Baker on Local Council Administration – 12th Edition"**

The clerk requested that the Parish Council purchase a copy of the above book in order that an up to date reference to Local Council Administration and Law was available.

Resolved:

To purchase

**e) Any other financial matters notified to the Clerk**

None

**14. Date and time of the next Parish Council meeting: Monday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021, commencing at 7pm, via the Zoom virtual platform**

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 20.54