

MINUTES, PAWLETT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Held virtually on Zoom on Monday 4th January 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
C Morrison-Jones (clerk)
2 x members of the public.
SDC councillor J Woodman

Public speaking:

- Work was carried out during Christmas week to clear some of the drains in Pawlett (especially in Chapel Road). However, the 3 drains (A38 - from Vicarage Lane down to the bottom of Bristol Road) are still blocked.
- Potholes/road repairs -in particular Vicarage Lane and River Road there are several places in much need of repair and possible resurfacing
- Delightful looking Christmas Tree for 2020. Would it be possible for PPC to consider the purchasing of more lights for the Christmas Tree this year?
- Agenda Item 10 a). A difficult situation given the pandemic restrictions but welcome the right course of procedures.
- Concerns the removal of kissing gates outside Barton House.

1. To receive any apologies for absence and disclosures of interest

Apologies of absence received from Cllr M Smith

Disclosures of a pecuniary interest J Kingman (landowner), agenda item 10a

Disclosure of a pecuniary interest M Thomas (adjacent property owner), agenda item 10a

2. County and District Councillor Reports

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

SDC Cllr J Woodman

- Is asking for District to prepare a monthly report, similar to County
- Please report as much as you can onto the SCC 'report a pot hole' website.
<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/report-a-pothole-or-road-defect/> Can also use the site to report blocked drains. A lot of Highways crews are supporting vaccination roll out and traffic control so there may be a delay in responses at present

3. Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 7th December 2020

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.

Cllr J Woodman left the meeting at this point

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) Somerset Climate Emergency Fund

MT reported that she was sad to say that due to the short time available she hasn't made any progress on this. MT to keep a watching brief on any other 'green' funding opportunities that becomes available.

c) Any other matters arising from the minutes not covered by the agenda items below

None

6. Roads and Footpaths:

a) Kissing Gates on The Drain

The work is expected to be carried out on 7th January. WB will inspect the work once completed. WB to talk with the path's exit neighbour regarding their concerns and ensure design is suitable for purpose

b) Any other matters concerning Highways or Footpaths

As raised in public speaking, potholes and road repairs are required in Vicarage Lane and River Road

7. Transport and Works Act: Proposed Bridgwater Tidal Barrier

The communication discussed at the December meeting has been lodged with DEFRA. Nothing further to report at present.

JK raised the issue of the current bank erosion. WB said that the EA is aware of the issues and have verbally committed to maintaining the bank. There is a need to keep a watching brief and to keep monitoring and taking photographs of the banks. It was noted that photographs need to be taken from the same location every time to allow for an accurate comparison over time.

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

The banners advising on the safe use of the play areas that were purchased before Christmas have been put up. The outdoor gym remains closed.

The anticipated national lockdown expected to be announced tonight may cause this to be revised – the clerk to monitor new regulations and advise councillors of any new restrictions.

9. The granting of dispensation/s to Member/s declaring an interest in agenda item 10a, potential residential development of land to the west of the A38

No dispensations requested or granted

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

10. Planning:

a) Potential residential development of land to the west of the A38: Arrangements for a community meeting with developers to explore the potential for a 'community asset' being offered as part of the development plans

The Parish Council has been contacted by AAH Planning Consultants regarding a potential residential development on land in the parish to the west of the A38. Further information received indicates that the area of land under consideration is a currently undeveloped area immediately to the left of the A38 after the exit from Manor Road (when travelling in the direction towards Stretcholt and Huntspill). As part of the application, the developers have indicated that they are keen to provide something that could be a benefit and asset to the local community (their examples being perhaps a village shop or community centre?) As resolved at the December meeting councillors, whilst wishing to engage in a positive manner with developers in order to maximise the benefit to the community, require all engagement to be carried out in an open and transparent manner. A such, a Community Meeting (via Zoom) is in the process of being arranged for January (date yet to be confirmed) where the developers would present a short presentation outlining their development plans and what they wish to be able to offer the community. The floor would then be opened up to attendees to ask questions regarding the development, focusing on

the aspect of the offer for inclusion of a community asset, what this may entail and the opportunity for suggestions to be put forward for further consideration. Councillors would then be able discuss suggestions arising from the village meeting at the 1st February Parish Council meeting. Zoom limits the number of attendees to 100, so places will be allocated on a 'first come, first served' basis.

Parish Councillors welcomed the offer from the developers and were keen to engage positively but noted that in order to gain village support and engagement the developers need to provide as much information as possible to the community in regard to their plans. The clerk to continue finalising the details of the meeting and organise the dissemination of this information around the village when details are finalised.

JK & MT rejoined the meeting

b) Any potential planning breaches in the parish

None

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

None

11. Christmas Tree on the Green

Councillors agreed that it was a lovely tree this year and thanked all those involved. WB has now removed the lights and the tree has been lowered to the ground. It will be removed shortly. The stand to be stored in WB's barn until needed next year.

More lights to be purchased for next year and consideration given to how a star could be added to top of tree.

12. Parish lengths man / handyperson

As requested, the clerk has contacted local parish councils regarding their arrangements for a lengthsman/handyperson: Woolavington engage the services of a local firm and is invoiced monthly, Puriton employ an individual for a contracted number of hours each week.

As previously discussed, an employee of the PC is not the preferred option of councillors as continuous employment of an individual carries certain overheads and the work in the parish is not sufficient to merit a fixed number of hours per week. Councillors felt it was better to continue with the contractors currently lined up to do items of work.

Councillors resolved to maintain on the ongoing agendas an item for small parish maintenance tasks and to authorise the clerk to proceed with engaging contractors to fulfil the tasks without having to return to council for further authorisation. The maximum budget for each individual task to be organised by the clerk under such delegated powers was agreed to be £500.

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

13. Councillor training

WB has sent out reminders that councillors need to remain up to date with their training by taking advantage of the courses run by SALC and to contact WB if they would like some more bespoke training organised by the PC.

14. Website Accessibility

The clerk reported that she has contacted several local website developers and is awaiting feedback and further information to report back to councillors with.

15. Financial Matters.

a) i) Payments to approve

C Morrison-Jones	£432.00	salary - Dec 2020
C Morrison-Jones	£120.92	expenses and reimbursements
Greenacres	£2,700.00	parish grass cutting 2020
Green energy	£9.50	electricity on the Green, Dec 2020

ii) Amounts received

None

b) Online banking – update

No further information or updates have been received from NatWest

c) Earmarked reserved funds

At the December meeting, the clerk proposed that council considered ringfencing some of the Parish Council's reserves for specific uses. Councillors resolved to ringfence funds for specific projects or uses as below:

election expenses	£5,000
play ground equipment	£15,000
street furniture	£2,000
community projects	£2,000
repairs and maintenance	£3,000

d) Agree Parish Council Budget and set Parish Precept for 2020/21

The clerk had previously circulated to councillors the anticipated financial position for year end 2020/21, together with a suggested projected budget for 2021/22.

Councillors resolved that the precept for 2021/22 should be set at £18,000. This represents a decrease of £1,000 on 2020/21 with the resulting charge for a band D household being reduced by 5% to £43.34

e) Any other financial matters notified to the Clerk

None

- 16. Consider resolution that, due to the confidential and sensitive nature of the business to be transacted, agenda item 17 is to be conducted in confidential session with the public and press excluded**

Unanimously agreed

The one member of the public left the meeting

17. Employment matters

Councillors resolved to remunerate the clerk in lieu of untaken annual leave for 2020/21, to be paid in staged payments over the remainder of the 2020/21 financial year.

Councillors also resolved to increase the clerk's contracted working hours to 44 hours per month due to the increased workload, and also authorised the clerk to enrol the PC onto a pension scheme if necessary to comply with the relevant legislation.

- 18. Date and time of the next Parish Council meeting: Monday 1st February 2021, commencing at 7pm, via the Zoom virtual platform**

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 20.42