

PAWLETT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Held virtually on Zoom on Monday 5th October 2020, commencing at 7.10pm
(in the format to be presented to the next meeting for approval)

Present:

Cllrs W Barnard (Chair), A Warner (Vice-chair), A Baker, M Thomas, M Smith, J Kingman
C Morrison-Jones (clerk)
1 x members of the public.
SCC Cllr M Healey

Public speaking:

- Parking in Old Main Road; nothing further to report.
- Kissing Gate; temporary repairs have been recently carried out by a parishioner. perhaps a replacement of the whole construction could be considered
- Blocked Drains; the previously reported drains are still blocked. Additionally, the one outside Mako Lodge in Vicarage Lane is also blocked
- A38 footpath; still overgrown
- Parish Lengths man; PPC has previously considered this on many occasions
- Right hand side (from Chapel Road) of Lippitts Lane needs cutting back

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

None

2. County and District Councillor Reports

Cllr Healey had previously sent a report which has been circulated amongst Members. Additionally, he noted that:

- The SCC Climate change emergency fund is now open. £5000 -£75,000 grants available for any project to mitigate climate change (the fund opened on 1st Oct for 6 weeks, the 2nd fund starts in the new year)
- District Council had a full council meeting last week and have sent their business case to central government

Cllr Healey had no explanation as to the lack of engagement with the Parish Council from Cllr Woodman. It was agreed that the clerk should write to the leaders of SDC and SCC to ask for help in ensuring that Cllr Woodman engage with his electors.

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

4. Matters arising from the previous meeting:

a) Parking Old Main Road / Monmouth Farm Close junction

No updates received on this issue.

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

The clerk has again reported the blocked drains and overgrown A38 footpath to Highways, but has yet to receive a response.

5. Update – the various Somerset Unitary proposals

SCC led the charge by offering a single Unitary

The four districts are offering to join districts together to form two new authorities.

SCC Cllr M Healey reported that he voted for change at both District and County level but personally is unhappy with the level of bickering between councillors over the way forward

and is unsure why any unitary bid is being pursued in the midst of all the Covid-19 issues. Somerset, Yorkshire & Cumbria bids to form a unitary are currently being considered by government.

Cllr M Healey left the meeting at this point

6. Roads and Footpaths:

a) Kissing Gate on The Drain

MT reported that she had looked at it at the beginning of the month and that it needs repairs. Thanks were given to the parishioner who has recently carried out temporary repairs.

The future of the gate needs considering; councillors questioned if it is necessary as it restricts buggy and wheelchair access but agreed that it does form a barrier to stop children exiting out onto the road too fast. It was suggested that 'zig zag barriers' such as on the Green could fulfil both functions. It was agreed to gain quotes for both safety barriers and kissing gates in order that prices can be compared. Until a parish handy person (see agenda item 10) could be identified WB offered to liaise with any contractors on this. WB offered to contact his fencing contractor for one quote but in order to gain comparisons councillors were asked to forward any potential contractors/information to Will.

b) Bench on Gaunts Road

This bench has been reported as loose. WB reported that he had looked at it but wasn't of the opinion that it was an issue – the ground had probably dried out and therefore the anchor pegs had become slightly loose. The rain will tighten it up, but WB will recheck.

c) Pound Road / Chapel Road junction

MT reported a recent near miss at this junction. WB reminded councillors that the PC had previously visited this issue and achieved the installation of the three new bollards and re-lining but as no accidents had been recorded for this junction there was no evidence to present to Highways to request infrastructure changes. Councillors asked the Clerk to contact Highways highlighting the serious safety concerns regarding this junction and request traffic calming measures, with the suggestion of sleeping policeman, be installed.

d) Any other matters concerning Highways or Footpaths

None

7. Play area and outdoor gym: any matters to report

AW noted that there were no issues to report. He has greased the swings as noted at the previous meeting.

8. Planning:

a) Housing Survey

A housing needs survey has recently been distributed to households in the parish by a company named Arc4. PC is not aware of any proposed developments/sites in the village at this point, but WB pointed out that the village is likely to grow in the future.

b) Update on possible planning breaches noted at the previous meeting

The potential breaches identified at the last PC meeting have been clarified by SDC as falling within the planning conditions of the development as it is allowed for the future occupants of the homes to live onsite in temporary accommodation during construction

c) Any potential planning breaches in the parish

None

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

Application 41/20/00011/AGE 40 Chapel Road, Pawlett

Erection of a single storey extension to the rear (NE) elevation, conversion of loft, erection of detached garage and ancillary building.

Resolved – to support on the basis that the proposals are in keeping with the character of the area.

9. Christmas Tree on the Green

This year it was suggested that as, due to Covid restrictions, it would not be possible to hold a lighting up ceremony or carols around the tree that maybe having a tree wasn't appropriate...with the contrary view being offered that it could be seen as a gesture of solidarity in difficult times.

It was resolved by a majority to purchase a similar tree to last year (14-15' high approx). AB offered to arrange the purchase of the tree and further logistical details would be discussed at the November PC meeting.

10. Consider engaging a parish lengths man

Councillors clarified that this wasn't a person to be employed by the Parish Council but someone who can do small jobs on an invoice basis as and when necessary.

The Clerk was requested to compose an advert for the noticeboard and website asking if anyone in the village is interested, highlighting the need for insurance and a roadside working license. WB's contact details to be given to use for all enquiries.

11. Update - Transport and Works Act: Proposed Bridgwater Tidal Barrier

Councillors resolved that the PC needs to respond to the most recent submission from the Environment Agency; the modelling veracity needs to be challenged as it was felt that they have underestimated the number of houses in Stretcholt that will be impacted, in the order of 40 is considered the correct number by Councillors.

Councillors felt that only a modest overtopping has been modelled, not a complete failure as stated. The overtopping of 1981 shows that the EA assertions are incorrect as a breach would be far more catastrophic than the overtopping of 1981 where flooding made it as far as the A38.

Additionally, in calling the defences on the Pawlett Hams secondary defences the assumption is that the primary defences are maintained to designed standard and currently they are not. Secondary defences only work if the primary defences work correctly.

The Clerk was requested to contact the Environment Agency representative who co-ordinated the tele-conference at the beginning of lockdown to ask for confirmation of the number of properties that the EA considered 'at risk' and to request that the modelling data that was promised was forwarded to the PC.

Clerk to circulate the draft response to DEFRA between members before submission.

12. Financial Matters.

a) For report

i) Payments approved since the last meeting

C Morrison-Jones	£490.50	salary - Sept 2020
C Morrison-Jones	£19.76	expenses & reimbursements
Green Energy (Sept 2020)	£9.20	electricity on the green

ii) Amounts received

None

b) To consider changes to the Financial Regulations to enable online banking

The clerk had previously circulated a proposed new version of the Financial Regulations that accommodated the adoption of online banking and the acquisition on a PC debit card.

Councillors resolved all in favour of adopting new regulations and proceeding with registering for internet banking, as agreed at the previous meeting.

c) Any other financial matters notified to the Clerk

None

- 13. Date and time of the next meeting: Monday 2nd November, commencing at 7pm, via the Zoom virtual platform**

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 20.41