

WEST HATCH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting of the West Hatch Parish Council held remotely via Zoom on Tuesday 26th January 2021

20/39 ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

Councillors: Read (Chairman), Harrison-Sleap, Kerr, Lodge, and Middleton

Apologies: Cllrs Bray, Knight,

Public: Cllr J Thorne (SCC), 3 parishioners

20/40 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interests.

20/41 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council meeting held remotely on 24th November 2020, were approved as a correct record and will be signed by the Chairman at a later date.

20/42 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

- **Update on Speeding issues (20/23)**

The Clerk is still waiting for a response from Highways and she will chase this. There may be a delay in responding as many SCC Officers have been deployed to work on other duties related to the Coronavirus pandemic.

- **Memorial to Dougal Clark (19/58)**

The Council considered some suggested wording for the commemorative plaque which was agreed. Cllr Lodge will progress the matter.

- **Parish Fingerpost restoration project (20/21)**

As funds have been earmarked in the budget for restoration work, it is hoped that preliminary work will start once the weather has improved and the latest lockdown has ended. One of the fingerposts on the Parish boundary has already been restored by Stoke St Mary PC.

20/43 PARISHIONERS' FORUM

Mr Wheatley advised the Council that Meare Green Lane will be closed for the week commencing 1/02/21. The Clerk had not received notification of this.

Ms Deering of the RSPCA advised the Council that the RSPCA will be carrying out some remedial work to trees on their boundary shortly.

The RSPCA is currently experiencing problems with pulsating water pressure and she enquired whether any other parishioners were experiencing the same problem. Cllr Harrison-Sleap, who lives near to the RSPCA, confirmed that he had the same problem and that Wessex Water were due to come and remedy the problem.

Ms Deering thanked the Council for its support for the RSPCA's planning application for a seal pond which was agreed a couple of years ago. Since then over 150 seals have used the facility and been released back into the sea.

20/44 REPORTS FROM THE COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

Cllr Thorne submitted his report prior to the meeting and this had been circulated to the members.

Items of interest included:

Local Government Reorganisation – An announcement from the Secretary of State is expected shortly as to which proposal will be subject to public consultation.

Cllr Thorne advised that if the One Somerset proposal is successful, there will be 110 Councillors initially reducing to 100 in 2026 following a ward review.

Somerset Community Fund – Grant monies are available for community organisations and the latest date for submitting bids is 22/02/21. The Clerk will promote this on the Council website.

20/45 TO CONFIRM CLIMATE EMERGENCY COMMUNITY FUND BIDS

Following the last Council meeting, it was confirmed that the Parish Council had submitted a bid containing three proposals for funding from the Somerset Climate Emergency Fund. All bids submitted will be evaluated and the Council will be advised in due course if their bid has been successful.

20/46 TO DISCUSS SWT LOCAL PLAN AND PROPOSED SETTLEMENT SITES AND IMPACT ON PARISH

The SWT Local Plan contains the Taylor Wimpey proposal to create a 'Garden Community' on the land that it purchased from the Crown Estate in Orchard Portman. One of the fields purchased is in West Hatch, on the boundary with Stoke St Mary. Several Councillors have misgivings regarding the land purchase by Taylor Wimpey and Rebecca Pow (MP) has been asked to raise the issue with the Secretary of State. Surrounding Parish Councils are opposing the proposal which would see the creation of hundreds of homes in open countryside and it was agreed that interested Parish Councils should come together to oppose the plan.

The Chairman will continue to liaise with John Thorne on this matter.

20/47 CDS UPDATE – NEW BROADBAND CONTRACTORS APPOINTED

Connecting Devon and Somerset has appointed Airband as the contractor for the area. They will deliver ‘pole to pole fibre optic’ to each property but implementation may not take place before 2024. A schedule of works will be announced in due course.

13 parishioners have registered with an alternative provider – Truespeed- who are able to make arrangements outside the CDS arrangement if it is commercially viable for them to do so.

20/48 TO DISCUSS HOW THE PARISH CAN ENGAGE WITH ALL MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY

Although the Council has a list of email addresses for approx. 50 parishioners, it is aware that the list is not exhaustive and does not include those parishioners who do not use email. It was agreed that a letter would be delivered to all properties requesting contact details and asking whether the resident wishes to receive information from either the Parish Council or Village Hall committee.

Cllr Kerr agreed to draft a suitable letter for the Council to approve.

20/49 FORMAL EXPENDITURE APPROVAL

It was **resolved** to make the following payments:

a) Clerk’s Salary	£294.00
b) LCN Renewal	£ 55.19

20/50 PLANNING MATTERS

Ref 47/20/0011– Application for two storey extension at Applegarth.

The Parish Council commented on this application which has subsequently been approved by the District Council.

Ref 47/20/0012/AGN – Prior notification of the erection of an agricultural barn at Meare Green Farm.

Approved by the District Council. The Parish Council was not a consultee to this proposal.

20/51 CORRESPONDENCE AND MATTERS OR REPORT FOR INFORMATION

- **Highway Matters**

The badger activity in Slough Lane has increased to the extent that excavations have undermined the road. The Clerk will report this again as a matter of urgency and request that an engineer assesses the suitability of the road for traffic.

Part of the road between Creechfield and the RSPCA has collapsed. It has been marked for repair but the Clerk will monitor the situation and chase if not repaired in a timely manner.

- **Annual Parish Meeting**

The Parish is statutorily required to hold an Annual Parish Meeting between 1st March and 1st June. New laws giving an exemption to this were passed in 2020 due to the Coronavirus pandemic. This exemption expires shortly and may not be continued.

The Clerk recommended that the Council considers holding the Annual Parish Meeting in April via Zoom to enable the Council to fulfil its statutory obligations. A date will be announced in due course.

20/52 TO CONSIDER DATE AND FORMAT OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 30th March 2021 via Zoom.

The meeting closed at 8.55 pm