



WEDMORE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting

Held at: Wedmore Methodist Church, Sand Road, Wedmore, BS28 4AJ

on: Wednesday 20th July 2022 **at:** 7:30pm

Present: Councillor James – Lloyd (Chairman), Councillor Beacom, Councillor Farley, Councillor Loughery, Councillor Smith, Councillor Reeson, Councillor Candy.

In Attendance: Mrs Lindsey Baker (Clerk), Councillor Costello (District Councillor), Councillor Harry Munt (County Councillor) Bill Hudson (Methodist Church Warden)

Apologies: Councillor Tinny, Councillor Thorogood

22.07.2 Reports from County and District Councillors

Councillor Costello: Polly addressed the meeting, she advised that she had recently attended a Licencing and General Purposes meeting. Presented to the committee was a proposal from Chapel Allerton Parish Council as they would like to increase the number of Councillors from the current five. The committee unanimously voted that Chapel Allerton Parish Council should reapply under the One Somerset framework. She had also attended a Grants Award Committee meeting where a summary was given – Close to £34,000 needs to be spent before the end of the financial year – Applications are still being accepted for the next 2 months. There was an update on RLT2 money for play equipment. Wedmore has secured its allocation, and Councillor Costello has asked that any surplus from surrounding Parishes may be re allocated, if not being spent. There was also discussion around the Combe Batch planning application. Councillor Costello advised that Sedgemoor have stressed their concerns about the development and have recommended its refusal – It continues to be in consultation. Councillor Costello then asked The Parish Council for any questions.

Councillor James – Lloyd asked about the possibility of being included in the notification of licenses that have been granted / applied for in the Parish and if it is possible to know the conditions of the licence.

ACTION – Councillor Costello will ask if it is possible to arrange this.

Councillor Munt: Harry Addressed the meeting and firstly apologised for not having been in attendance for the previous meetings since his election as County Councillor. He spoke of the appointment of Duncan Sharkey as the new chief executive of Somerset County Council - He will lead the council through the transition to the new unitary Somerset Council, formally becoming chief executive of the new authority on April 1, 2023. Mr Sharkey, a graduate of the University of Bristol, joins the council from the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Council, where he has served as chief executive since February 2019. He also spoke of how Somerset County Council had voted today Wednesday 20th July, to put additional focus into protecting Somerset's natural environment and biodiversity by declaring an Ecological Emergency. Members backed a motion put forward to declare an Ecological Emergency. The Council previously declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and has since worked with Somerset's four District Councils and other partners to develop the Somerset Climate Emergency Strategy "Towards a climate resilient Somerset". A busy time in Somerset County Council he explained that Somerset County Council has declared a cost-of-living emergency and is calling on the Government to take immediate action to reduce the impacts on local people. He also reassured the Parish

Council that although currently the structure for the new unitary council is unclear, he will continue to update the Parish Council with any developments. Councillor Munt then asked the Parish Council for any questions.

Councillor James - Lloyd followed on from the unitary council conversation and conveyed it was unacceptable that so many of the One Somerset meetings had been cancelled without notice or explanation. Councillors agreed that local communities are key into setting up the area networks and consultations should be had with Parish Councils prior to decisions being made. Councillor Costello also voiced concerns about the communication, stating that communication is key for our communities.

ACTION: Councillor Munt will feed back any information with regards to upcoming One Somerset Meetings

Councillor Costello gave thanks for the Parish Council's time and left the meeting at 19:56 pm

22.07.4 To confirm the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 15th June 2022

Councillor James - Lloyd addressed the Parish Council and confirmed everyone had read the minutes from the previous meeting.

It was accepted as an accurate record and the minutes signed

22.07.5 To confirm the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 22nd June 2022

Councillor James – Lloyd again addressed the Parish Council and confirmed everyone had read the minutes from the previous meeting.

It was accepted as an accurate record and the minutes signed

22.7.7 Consider the grant application from Wedmore Playing Field Management Committee in relation to the village field.

Councillor James - Lloyd confirmed that all members of the Parish Council had received and read the grant application presented by Wedmore Playing Field Management Committee.

It was agreed that they had – the application was tabled.

A lengthy discussion took place between all Councillors, on the need for the proposed works and on the request for a grant. Concern was expressed that the Parish Council have already provided a substantial amount of money (around £43,500) to the Wedmore Playing Field Management Committee for previous projects.

Decision: It was resolved unanimously by show of hands, not to approve the grant applied for by the Wedmore Playing Field Management Committee because greater clarity is required about the usage of the space, an inspection would be required to establish appropriate drainage is in place, and some of the methods detailed in the proposal for re-seeding and conditioning are not in line with the 'Green Ethos' adopted by the Parish Council. It was also further resolved that the Parish Council would not be against approving future grants for the community space if they are presented.

ACTION: Clerk to write a letter to the Wedmore Playing Field Management Committee with the decision.

22.07.8 Consider the contract presented by Wedmore Playing Field Management Committee in relation to the public toilet facilities at The Recreational Ground

Councillor James - Lloyd confirmed that all members of the Parish Council had received and read the proposed contract presented by Wedmore Playing Field Management Committee.

It was agreed that they had – the proposed contract was tabled.

The Clerk addressed the members and tabled correspondence that had been sent and received since the agenda was published and the meeting taking place with regards to a maintenance issue, where the public toilet had become broken and subsequently blocked over the weekend. A full discussion took place. It was noted that the plumbing and other services are in another part of the building that is not accessible from the area detailed on the plan in the proposed contract, and that there is no mention of the water or electricity rates and who would assume responsibility.

Decision: It was resolved unanimously that the proposal be refused at this stage. The current layout means the area shown on the plan is integral to the rest of the building and not stand alone. It was proposed by Councillor James - Lloyd that the Parish Council and the Wedmore Playing Field Management Executive meet to discuss a possible resolution to best move forward with providing a serviceable asset for the community. This was seconded by Councillor Smith.

ACTION: Clerk to write a letter to the Wedmore Playing Field Management Committee with the decision.

22.07.9 Discuss the future of The Methodist Church building after its closure

Malcom Gale, Property Steward for Somerset Mendip Methodist Circuit had approached the Parish Council regarding possible future uses for the church following its closure on 31st August 2022. The Parish Council were invited to view the building. Mr Bill Hudson was in attendance and answered questions raised by the Parish Council. He confirmed the building is Grade 2 listed. A wide-ranging discussion took place, points made included the desire for further flexible community space and the need for a space / service for teens and younger adults within the immediate community.

Decision: It was agreed that further investigation is required – more information is needed in relation to the running costs, further consultation will be pursued with the Methodist Church, Professionals within this field and the community.

ACTION: Clerk to make further contact with Malcom and request the running costs for a typical year, establish what responsibility would be assumed for the graveyard and request an insight into previous successful projects of similar extent.

ACTION: Councillor Beacom to approach Professionals within the field.

ACTION: Councillor James - Lloyd to approach local organisations tentatively to gauge interest.

22.07.10 Consider the maintenance procedure and current condition of all memorial benches and parish notice boards

A presentation by Councillor Farley on the current condition of all parish benches and notice boards was received and noted. Discussion ensued and it was further noted that there was a previous maintenance rota in place however this has since lapsed. Although most are well looked, after some memorial benches are in particularly poor condition.

Decision: It was agreed that a rolling maintenance program should be reinstated, and that this be managed by the creation of a 'working group' It was also agreed that all future replacements would be made with recycled plastic units rather than wood to alleviate future maintenance costs.

ACTION: Councillor Smith to approach David Ewens, in relation to forming a 'working group'

ACTION: Councillor Farley will speak to Father Richard about the siting of further memorial benches.

ACTION: Clerk will add update to August meeting Agenda

22.07.11 Consider the adoption of a memorial bench policy.

Councillor James - Lloyd tabled a document which detailed a Memorial Bench Policy, Following the revelations from the discussion taken place under 22.07.10 Councillor James - Lloyd proposed the adoption of a memorial bench policy and Councillor Smith seconded the motion.

Decision: By show of hands it was unanimously agreed that a Memorial Bench Policy be adopted by the Parish Council.

22.07.12 Consider the outlying maintenance and responsibility currently undertaken at the Carpark, Blackford Village Hall, and Wedmore Playing Fields.

The Clerk, shared points raised by members of the community about current responsibilities for maintenance, this included the hedge cutting at the Carpark that backs onto residential properties within Worthington Woods. It was demonstrated that previously the Clerk had arranged for both sides of the hedge to be cut, despite there being no precedent for obligation. In similar circumstance the grass outside of Blackford Village Hall and in the area adjoining the new MUGA facility at the playing fields has been maintained monthly at a cost to the community despite it being the responsibility of others.

Decision: A final decision was made to continually monitor and review spending for maintenance, with the introduction of cost centre allocation and cost code breakdowns and further accessible reporting, spending will be more accurate and transparent. Grass cutting to land adjacent to the MUGA facility will stop immediately, as will the grass cut at Blackford Village Hall. The hedge trimming will be carried out to the hedge on the carpark facility side only.

ACTION: Clerk to discuss the changes to grass cutting and hedge trimming with Will Jackson and report back to the members of the community with regards to the hedge in the carpark.

22.07.13 Consider upgrading the public toilet floors in The Borough

The Clerk presented correspondence from a Parishioner who had raised the condition of the floor particularly in the men's public toilet. A full discussion took place.

Decision: This is an area that maintenance has perhaps been overlooked in recent years. Quotations should be gathered for future consideration.

ACTION: Clerk to gather quotes for possible floor upgrade / renovation

22.07.14 Consider the applications by Western Power for maintenance at various locations

Assessment documents were tabled by the Clerk obtained from Western Power Distribution. Most of these works are free of charge due to legal obligations.

ACTION: Clerk to scan and email the documents to Councillor Reeson who will confirm if any cost would be involved for the removal of diseased trees as mentioned in part of the report.

22.07.15 Financial Matters

(A) Audit of Accounts 01/06/2022 – 30/06/2022

The Audit of accounts was tabled by the Clerk, and they were accepted as an accurate record to date.

(B) Approve payment of invoices

The recommendation to approve payment of invoices were approved.

ACTION: Clerk to pay outstanding invoices

22.07.16 Discuss the continuation of holding a Parish Council meeting in August

Councillor Thorogood had suggested that the Parish Council consider the August meeting be cancelled. In his absence, the Clerk tabled previous registers from meetings held in August 2019, 2020, and 2021 all were well attended. A discussion ensued.

Decision: It was decided that the Parish Council meetings will continue through August, but only urgent business will be conducted, limiting the time needed for the meeting.

22.07.17 Discuss possible dates for the 'Have Your Say' event

Following from last meeting some research had been carried out as to available dates and venues. Coupled with Councillor availability for the coming months a tentative time frame was discussed for October.

Decision: It was decided that as this event will be a standalone consultation all Councillors will need to be present, October was favourable – with available dates to be discussed and finalised.

ACTION: The Clerk to create a poll for available dates and consolidate members responses.

22.07.18 Consider the application for Co-Option of a new Councillor from Mrs Julia Banwell

At 21:10 Councillor James - Lloyd announced the meeting would become a closed session and asked all non-members to leave whilst deliberation took place over Mrs Banwell's application. Councillor Munt and Bill Hudson left the building and were advised they would be invited back in after a decision had been made. The application was discussed in detail.

Decision: Councillor Beacom proposed that Mrs Banwell should be Co-Opted to the Parish Council, Councillor Smith seconded this proposal and by show of hands the decision was confirmed unanimously.

ACTION: Clerk to contact Mrs Banwell, advise of her approved application and invite her to the next Parish Council meeting where she will be formally Co-opted.

At 21:28 Councillor Munt and Bill Hudson were invited back into the meeting.

22.07.19 Issues and Questions raised by Councillors

Councillor Beacom spoke of how she had attended the recent Somerset Climate Action Group meeting and had been pleased to hear that Wedmore's Green Policy document had been referenced.

Councillor Reeson asked if it was too late to submit the invoices from purchase of the jubilee bunting for payment.

Decision: The Clerk confirmed the remaining budget that had been agreed was still available, so once invoices had been submitted, they would be paid.

Councillor Reeson also requested that further discussion be taken around the potential purchase of an infrared camera.

ACTION: Clerk to add to September Agenda

22.07.20 Committee Reports – For Information only.

- Cemetery – Update on action taken from last months minutes (ref Sharpe Grave)
- Facilities and Allotments – Update on action taken from last months minutes (ref correspondence)
- Finance and General Purposes - Nil
- Housing – Nil
- Highways, Carpark and Brook – Lots of correspondence from Parishioners concerned about overgrown vegetation around the brook and highways. Councillor Smith also advised that he now

undertakes a monthly report in response to highways, as per the request from Aileen Fletcher (Traffic Engineer North Sedgemoor and West Mendip Areas)

- Planning – Nil

22.07.21 Reports from representatives on committees

- IOW News – AGM Meeting Thursday 21st July, update to follow
- Play Areas – The RLT2 Money has been secured – further funding options are being explored.
- SALC – Request to confirm if the LGA Model Code of Conduct has been adopted.
- Wedmore Playing Field Management Committee – Nil
- Village Halls – Wedmore Nil, Blackford Nil, Theale; Diocese have agreed to the new lease.
- Twinning – A few members are still planning to travel to France despite the fires that are now near St Medard de Guizieres. A letter of support will be written (**Action: Councillor Reeson to write the letter and Councillor Beacom will translate.**)
- Green Wedmore – The next meeting is scheduled for September.

22.07.22 Matters of Report, Correspondence, and Items for next meeting

- A. **Chairman** – Update on actions since the last meeting
- Leases, Councillor James - Lloyd and Councillor Farley have now reviewed the current leases that are in place, and most are in good order – There needs to be further review of the Scout hut lease. Further discussion needs to take place about a lease, like that of Terry's wood, being presented for Worthington woods.
 - Accident book / records are now being kept at the Council rooms following a dog bite incident which has been reported.
 - It is requested that any Councillor who corresponds with the community about planning applications copy in the Clerk, so she can forward them appropriately, for transparency, continuity, and completeness.
- B. **Clerk** – Overview of received correspondence since the last meeting
- Query about the nets at the Rec (J. Bulcock) – Wedmore Playing Field Management Committee
 - Discarded grass cuttings by planters - Wedmore in Bloom (S. Stewart) – Stronvox
 - Concerns about the licensing of Sand Cider Festival (J.Riley) – Sedgemoor District Council
 - Ongoing situation with parking outside the Council Office (E. Matthews) – Sedgemoor Homes
 - Trip Hazard / Injury risk (I. Penney) – Resolved
 - Second Phase development at the recreational facilities (S. Frost) – Wedmore Playing Field Management Committee
 - Overgrown vegetation / hedgerow at the Kelson Lane junction (F. Callaghan) – Stronvox
 - Dog attack – (Avon and Somerset Police)
- C. **Members** – Nil

All business conducted the meeting was closed at 21:45pm

Next Meeting: Wednesday 17th August 2022