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# WEDMORE PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting**

**Held at:** The Council Rooms, Grants Lane, Wedmore, BS28 4EA **on:** Wednesday 15th February 2022 **at:** 7:30pm

**Present:** Councillor Beacom (Acting Chair), Councillor Smith, Councillor Banwell, Councillor Thorogood, Councillor Rant, Councillor Reeson.

**In Attendance:** Mrs Lindsey Baker (Clerk), Councillor Harry Munt, Steve Mewes and Geoff Carrs representing Green Wedmore

## to receive any apologies for absence (and record approval if appropriate)

Councillor Farley, Councillor Candy, Councillor Tinny, Councillor Loughery, Councillor Costello

## reports from county and district councillors (by invitation)

**Councillor Harry Munt** provided an update to the Parish Council on the new Somerset Council.

* Some things left from last month budget meeting are due to be voted on at the County Council meeting next week.
* A fairer council tax system. Currently, each district runs their own scheme. The creation of a single Somerset Council requires a single unified approach to supporting taxpayers on low incomes to help pay their Council Tax. The new scheme for Somerset does not exactly mirror any of the current district’s schemes which means most people currently getting Council Tax Relief will get a different amount from April 2023, with approximately 75% of Council Tax Relief customers getting more or the same as they get now. The new scheme is a banded income discount scheme, like the schemes currently run by South Somerset and Somerset West and Taunton Councils, but different to the means-tested schemes run by Mendip and Sedgemoor Councils. The banded income discount scheme is: Easier to understand; Easier and more efficient to administer; and Copes better with frequent changes to income those working and on Universal Credit. The new CTR scheme for Somerset will give those customers on the lowest incomes a 100% discount. The banded income discount scheme in Somerset from 1 April 2023.
* Somerset Council are thrilled that many of the services currently available throughout Somerset are being maintained despite original concerns. This has been made possible through the large savings made by combining roles of Councillors and Senior Council roles allowing savings of around £3m.
* The original declared major incident listing due to flooding, has been reduced to amber status thanks to increased pumping and regular review, as well as a break in the wet weather. This situation will continue to be monitored.
* The Local Community Networks Terms of Reference have been published and are available to view here ([*https://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=433&MId=1736*](https://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=433&MId=1736)) .
* Somerset County Council are currently lobbying Government to help for smaller businesses to meet rising energy costs.
* Somerset’s first net zero school has been granted planning permission by the county council. Orchard Grove Primary School in Taunton is set to cost £11.3 million and include solar panels for energy generation, as well as parking for electric vehicles. It is being built using a German construction idea called Passivhaus, meaning ‘passive house.’ This concept sees the building built with low energy use for heating and cooling in mind – to reduce the carbon footprint during use and after use. The school, with a capacity of 420, is set to open for students in September 2024.

Finally, a much sought after update on the Pilcorn Street project. Councillor Munt has now confirmed that the County Council are now onside and will help with progression of the project including the continuation of safety audits, assessments, and an independent review needs to be carried out. Councillor Munt asked that the Parish Council write a letter to the stating that we are keen for progress to be made.

All Councillors were very pleased to hear this news! Councillor Smith asked if it may be possible to meet someone onsite to discuss the project further, in the hope that traction can finally be made. Councillor Munt agrees this should be possible and that he is hopeful for positive progress.

**Councillor Beacom asked if any Councillors had any questions for Councillor Munt.**

* Councillor Reeson asked if the plans for the Net Zero School will be shared. These are available here *(https://www.orchardgroveschool.co.uk/school-info/school-plans-and-build-progress.htm)* He also commented it would be worthwhile making the annual energy usage reports available to the public to allow them to see the impact of smart usage in commercial buildings.

1. **to record any declarations of interest**

Nothing to report.

1. **to confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 18th January 2023**

Councillor Beacom 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.

1. **to confirm the minutes of the planning meetings held on 17th January and 31ST January 2023**

Councillor Beacom 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.

1. **public participation –** *(max. time 10minutes)*

Steve Mewes gave an update on a meeting with both Wedmore First School and Hugh Sexey Schools working with the Power Co-op who will be happy to do a retro fit assessment at both schools. This will allow them to evaluate where money can be saved. In the hope of allowing funds to be reinvested in the learning environment and classroom budgets. Research has been done into companies who offer this survey and have now been invited to come to assess the whole of both sites.

1. **matters arising and questions raised by councillors –** *note: for information only as resolutions cannot be agreed at this agenda item*

**Councillor Smith** – Footpath cheddar road (Holden Gardens) written to Blue Cedar – No response so far. Hopeful that this can be a collaborative process.

**Councillor Reeson** – So far, no one has come forward to take on the organisation of The Street Fair, unfortunately time is running out and this may well mean it will likely not happen until a volunteer can be found to take this on.

**Councillor Banwell** – The Kings Coronation celebrations. Having spoken to other groups within the village with regards to plans and arrangements for the event. Rev. Richard Neill has some plans taking shape in St Mary’s including showing coronation alongside its usual coffee morning / with a possible picnic. No group are planning a community party as such. Councillor Banwell suggested that potentially something on the Sunday 7th May could be the best option. She posed the question Does the Parish Council want to organise anything? The Clerk confirmed that a request for a road closure should allow 12 weeks. Councillor Reeson says it is difficult to facilitate an actual event, the paperwork is the easy bit, it’s the getting the volunteers that poses the difficulty. To Request a road closure is (£500) + Marshalling, Councillor Reeson suggested using either The Lerburne or the Borough Mall would alleviate the need to apply for a road closure. Councillor Banwell proposes that she is happy to progress the idea – and if she can, find someone to take it on.

**Councillor Beacom** – advised the councillors that the council have been awarded £500. 00 from SALC, which should be spent on a community Heath or Wellbeing project. Councillor Smith suggested speaking with the Health Co-operative to see what projects may be suitable.

**ACTION: Add Kings Coronation celebrations to the March agenda for final decision.**

**ACTION: Submit a request to Somerset Highways for Road closure (It may not be needed).**

**ACTION: Add Health or Wellbeing project funds to the March agenda for resolution for spending.**

1. **financial matters**
2. audit of accounts 01st January – 31st January 2023 *(to receive a report from cllrs beacom and smith)*

Councillors Beacom and Smith confirmed they had carried out the monthly checks and they were accepted as an accurate record to date.

1. to approve payment on invoices, including those listed on attached document

It was resolved to approve payment of all invoices until the next meeting.

**ACTION: Clerk to pay any outstanding invoices**

1. to review the outcome of the ‘safe’ crossing project from axe valley vets and hugh sexey’s school

Councillor Beacom gave the background of this proposal and the suggested solicitors advice. She was also able to update the councillors on a meeting that Councillor Farley had taken with Hugh Sexey’s Headmaster, Mr Tatterton, they concluded that overall neither party are in favour of the proposed site.

Following a discussion

**Resolution:** Councillor Banwell proposes not to proceed the project any further this was seconded by Councillor Smith a vote affirmed that no further action will be taken by the Parish Council.

**ACTION: The Clerk will write to Mr Tatterton, Councillor Costello and Axe Valley Vets to advise of the decision.**

1. to discuss and resolve a grant application presented by green wedmore in relation to the wilder in wedmore event taking place in june 2023.

**Councillor Beacom invited Members of the public in attendance to explain more of this application.**

* Steve Mewes explained about the event. It is hoped, that by making it as inclusive and hopefully as free as possible people will be excited and willing to attend. It is possibly the biggest nature festival in the Southwest. Everything released so far has been met with enthusiasm and great support. Some businesses have been asked for sponsorship to which extent £1100 has been secured, a further application to the Community Power Co-op has returned £500. The group have been exploring the possibility of other income streams to generate income, potentially charging for the larger evening events.
* Geoff Carrs spoke of the legacy projects that are hoped will be left from the event. Working alongside other community groups to deliver them.

**Councillor Beacom asked if any of the Councillors had any questions.**

Councillor Banwell has some concerns particularly relating to the proposed revenue generated from the Café / restaurant as they seem very low. Steve Mewes was able to provide further updates. Advising that the Café will run for the whole weekend. At a cost of £700. Councillor Banwell also commented that an event that has grown in popularity so rapidly can lose focus.

Councillor Thorogood said the legacy projects sound wonderful and are important and could be hugely inspiring for children and teens. Councillors further agree that in fact this could be a really worthwhile event that could benefit from the £500 SALC funds given the proposals surrounding links with nature and mental health and encouraging young people outdoors.

Councillor Smith also suggests to Steve and Geoff that once the legacy projects are fully formulated a further application would welcome.

**Decision:** Councillor Reeson believes that the real demographic that could benefit from inclusion in this project are the early teens. He therefore proposes that if the criteria can be met with regards to the SALC funds support the initiative for the full £500. This is proposed by Councillor Reeson and Seconded Councillor Smith, the council vote to support the proposal unanimously.

**ACTION: The Clerk will check the criteria for the money, and confirm to the Council**

1. to discuss and resolve any comments to be submitted in relation to the Application for a full variation to a premises licence for compton hall (bluebird/ formerly the music pantry) the borough, wedmore, bs28 4ad

Councillor Beacom addressed the councillors and asked if they had all had the opportunity to look at the application.

It was agreed they had.

**Resolution:** After a discussion it was agreed that the following comment be submitted to the Licencing Officer.

The Parish Council would like to support the application to vary the premises licence for Compton Hall (Bluebird / Formally the Music Pantry).

In line with the Wedmore Neighbourhood Plan, Chapter 8: ECONOMY.

The objective: “To maintain the position of Wedmore village as a lively retail centre and tourist destination.”

8.4 This policy seeks to maintain the character of Wedmore Village Centre and its diverse range of independent stores. The ‘Village Centre’ boundary is defined by the Sedgemoor Local Plan (2018) and is shown on the NP Proposals Map.

This application is also supported under POLICY WED10 – SMALL SCALE EMPLOYMENT SPACE

The Parish Council believes that varying the licence for this property will further increase the chance of visitors to the village and encourage them to consider it a destination of choice, for both residents and visitors. Whilst allowing further opportunity for employment within the area.

**ACTION: The Clerk to submit the above comment to the Licensing Officer.**

1. to discuss a financial contribution towards the cross farm play area following a presentation from Wicksteed.

The Clerk had forwarded all up-to-date information from Wicksteed with regards to an updated quote and answers to questions asked at a meeting with Wicksteed the previous week.

A lengthy discussion ensued; Councillor Banwell confirmed that there has not been a final quote submitted for consideration allowing a decision to be made. She also asked if the funds had been received from Sedgemoor as these are expected from both CIL (Community Infrastructure Levey) and RLT2 (Recreation, Leisure and Tourism) funds. The Clerk confirmed that correspondence had been received from both funding sources and these should be transferred in the coming weeks.

Councillor Reeson asked if ‘in theory’ the project be supported, up to a certain amount, could further progress be made. This figure would need to include the ongoing maintenance and liabilities including the annual inspection.

The Councillors were also aware that Councillor Loughery had asked for a re-configured track design. Although this has delayed the final figures being available the council support this decision, however councillors discussed having a separate meeting to discuss this to ensure they allow enough time to properly consider the revised figures. As the only person able to call an extraordinary meeting acting chairman Councillor Beacom suggests a meeting to be held on Wednesday 1st March.

**This was seconded by Councillor Banwell and agreed unanimously.**

**ACTION: Clerk to write and update Wicksteed on the deadline for submitting finalised figures to progress the project. It should also be confirmed that a previously requested maintenance quotation will not be needed. Confirmation also that the acting solicitor has not been able to get the plans from Acorn yet.**

1. to discuss and resolve a financial contribution for a new sign for worthington woods.

Councillor Beacom explained the background to the request with the help of Steve Mewes.

Councillor Banwell felt that the suggested wording may be confusing and result in fewer public donations being given to support the ongoing project. She suggested that some alternative wordings be agreed but was happy to support the project subject to an amendment to the wording.

**Resolution:** Councillor Reeson proposed that subject to an agreed alternative to the wording the sign be ordered. At a cost of £46.00 Councillor Rant seconded his proposal.

**ACTION: Clerk to send round robin for wording suggestions.**

**ACTION: Clerk to forward £46.00 to Green Wedmore on receipt of an invoice.**

1. **committee reports correspondence** *– For information*

* Facilities and Allotments – Schedule Meeting.
* Current Liabilities & General Purposes – Update on the Public Toilet regeneration. Councillor Reeson advised that He, Councillor Farley and Councillor Smith had met at the public toilets to discuss ideas including the possibility trying to include an accessible toilet depending on statutory regulations and dimensions. He has approached Architect James Leighfield from LSL Architecture ltd who has agreed to draw plans up free of charge at this stage. Although the roof repairs have not been accounted for.

The Clerk advised she had received an anonymous call regarding the public toilet facilities at the Rec and drug related incidents, she will write to Wedmore Playing Field Management Committee to advise and ask what Wedmore Parish Council we can do to deter this behaviour at the facilities.

* Highways, Car Park & Brook – Councillor Smith advised that following correspondence with members of the public he has approached the developer of the Holdenhurst site with the proposal that signage be added to show the new footpath allowing safe passage around the corner and into the village from the Carpark via Cheddar Road. At the time of the meeting, he had not received a response.

1. **matters of report, correspondence, and items for next meeting**
   1. Chairman - NIL
   2. Clerk – NIL
   3. Members – NIL

**All business conducted the meeting was closed at 9:03pm**