



# Wedmore Parish Council

## Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting

**Held at:** The Council Rooms, Grants Lane, Wedmore, BS28 4EA **on:** Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> February 2024 **at:** 7:30pm

**Present:** \*Councillor Farley, Councillor Tinney, Councillor Smith, Councillor Blackshaw, Councillor Banwell, Councillor Loughrey.

**In Attendance:** Mrs Lindsey Baker (Clerk), Councillor Munt, Councillor Martin (\*entered 19:39pm), Tessa Munt, 5x Members of the Public.

### **Public Participation:**

1x Member of the Public – Speed limits and Pavements. The Member of the Public feels very strongly that pedestrians should be prioritised for safe passage while traversing the village. Councillor Smith responded to the Member of the Public on both the Pilcorn Street Pavement Project and the previous investigation work on the speed limit. He understands the frustrations and concerns raised, but believes the key is in formulating a mechanism to police the speed limit which is currently not in place. Residents are also pertinent to the situation, if all abided the rules could greater things be achieved.

### **24.02.1. RECEIVE ANY APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** (and record approval if appropriate) lga1972 s85 (1))

Councillor Beacom, Councillor Weale, Councillor Thorogood.

### **24.02.2. RECORD ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None to record

### **24.02.3. CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2024**

Councillor Farley addressed the Parish Council and confirmed everyone had read the minutes from the previous meetings.

It was accepted as an accurate record and the minutes signed.

### **24.02.4. RECEIVE THE CLERKS REPORT AND RESOLVE ANY SUITABLE ACTION REQUIRED.**

Councillor Farley asked if all the councillors present, had had the opportunity to read the clerks report, it was confirmed they had, no action required.

### **24.02.5. RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE OUTCOME OF THE COOMBE BATCH PLANNING APPLICATION 50/20/00054 FROM COUNCILLOR FARLEY.**

Councillor Farley gave an overview of the development committee meeting held on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> February in relation to the above application. She thanked everyone for their continued support during the last 3 years whilst this application has been undecided but was very pleased to advise that the application had been refused on the following grounds. 'The proposed development is in a prominent location by reason of its elevated position and location on the rural edge of the settlement which would detrimentally impact on the transitional rural approach to the village. The infilling of development along the frontage of Wells Road as proposed, due to the elevated position, would result in an urbanising appearance, out of keeping with the rural character of the furthest extent of the Conservation area impacting on the appearance of this edge of settlement site. The development would therefore conflict with paragraph 135 of the NPPF, Local Policies D2 - Design, D19 - Landscape of the Local Plan, D26 - Historic Landscape, and NHP Policy WED5- Design.'

### **24.02.6. MATTERS ARISING AND QUESTIONS RAISED BY COUNCILLORS** – NOTE: FOR INFORMATION ONLY AS RESOLUTIONS CANNOT BE AGREED AT THIS AGENDA ITEM

**Councillor Smith** – Provided an update on Pilcorn street, including the recently received proposals from Somerset, he asked that it be added to the next agenda for resolution on next steps.



## Wedmore Parish Council

### 24.02.7. FINANCIAL MATTERS

*a) AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS 01<sup>ST</sup> JANUARY – 31<sup>ST</sup> JANUARY 2023 (TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM CLLR'S SMITH AND FARLEY)*

Councillor Smith agreed they had carried out the monthly checks and they were accepted as an accurate record to date. It was resolved to approve payment of all invoices until the next meeting.

*b) INVOICES PAID SINCE THE LAST MEETING – AS SHOWN ON THE ATTACHED DOCUMENT*

It was agreed that the invoices paid were authorised.

*c) TO APPROVE PAYMENTS TO BE MADE - 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**

### 24.02.8. APPOINT AN INTERNAL AUDITOR FOR THE YEAR 2024 PROPOSED BY THE CLERK AS RICHARD YOUNG (S151 LGA 1972)

The clerk confirmed the reason for needing to appoint an internal auditor, this was accepted by the council. She also presented the reasons in favour for using Richard Young. Councillor Banwell asked if the clerk was able to confirm if Mr Young had Professional indemnity (PI) insurance cover. The clerk advised that although there were no statutory requirements for an internal auditor to have this, she would confirm with Mr Young if it was in place.

**RESOLVED:** Following confirmation of if Mr Young holds PI cover he shall be appointed as the internal auditor for 2024. If not, another proposal will need to be brought to the council. Proposed by Councillor Banwell, Seconded by Councillor Smith.

**ACTION: Clerk will confirm with Mr Young and inform the council.**

### 24.02.9. RESOLVE TO INVEST A FURTHER £100,000.00 IN A SEPARATE LLOYDS FIXED TERM INVESTMENT FOR 6 MONTHS. (S12 LGA 1972)

Councillor Farley asked those present if all members present agreed that a further £100,000.00 should be invested in a fixed term savings account. Councillor Banwell queried the current interest rates being received and suggested that the clerk should explore rates for a longer period. The current rate being offered for 6 months is 3.5% and the clerk confirmed that there is currently no interest paid on funds in the current account.

**RESOLVED:** Councillor Smith proposes that £100,000.00 be invested in a fixed term investment account for 6 months. By which time the clerk will have explored the possibility of other interest rates for future investment. Councillor Banwell seconded the motion.

**ACTION: Clerk will investigate other investment opportunities and interest rates for longer periods of time for future investment.**

### 24.02.10. RESOLVE THE GRANT APPLICATION FROM WEDMORE TENNIS CLUB IN RELATION TO NEW FLOOD LIGHTING (S111 LGA 1972)

Councillor Farley asked the members if they had read the application presented and if there were any questions for the representative present.

Several questions were answered by the representative and Councillor Farley asked if there was a proposal.

**RESOLVED:** Councillor Smith proposes a letter of intent will be issued to Wedmore Tennis Club for the sum of £2,500 subject to the appointment of a contractor. This is seconded by Councillor Loughrey.

**ACTION: Clerk to write to Wedmore Tennis Club with the outcome.**

### 24.02.11. RESOLVE THE GRANT APPLICATION FROM CATHY BUTTERWORTH ON BEHALF OF WEDMORE HEALTH AND WELLBEING (S137 LGA 1972)

Councillor Farley summarised the application and opened the floor for member deliberation. Councillor Banwell advised she is not in favour of supporting this application, as she does not believe the directory is sustainable.

A discussion ensued.



## Wedmore Parish Council

Councillors Farley and Smith comment that previously the Council has supported this application, but there is now concern that although the event is well attended, the rest of the application includes aspects that the council are unable to support under the current grants scheme.

**RESOLVED:** Councillor Banwell proposes that a £250.00 be award to enable the event to go ahead. This was seconded by Councillor Blackshaw. This was agreed by a majority vote.

**ACTION:** Clerk to write to Wedmore Health and Wellbeing with the outcome.

### **24.02.12. RESOLVE THE GRANT APPLICATION FROM WEDMORE FESTIVAL IN RELATION TO HANDRAILS FOR RAKED SEATING AT THE VILLAGE HALL**

Councillor Banwell addressed the Member of the Public representing the Wedmore Festival and advised that she was not in favour of supporting the application because it had been established the raked seating is not owned by Wedmore Festival.

A discussion ensued.

**RESOLVED:** Councillor Banwell proposes that although the members are sympathetic to the circumstances of the application, this application must be declined given that Wedmore Festival are not the owners of the raked seating. She poses that if Wedmore Village Hall were to apply for a grant for the same purpose it could be deliberated further. This was seconded by Councillor Blackshaw.

**ACTION:** Clerk to write to Wedmore Festival with the outcome.

*1x Member of the Public Leaves at 20:25pm*

### **24.02.13. RESOLVE AN APPLICATION FOR CIL FUNDING TOWARDS THE THEALE VILLAGE HALL RESTORATION AND IMPROVEMENT PROJECT (LGA 1972) Section 151**

Councillor Farley asked Councillor Banwell to take the lead on this agenda item as she has been working with the committee. Councillor Banwell started by saying it was positive to see the charities commission have returned the lease finally, and that she had also attended the presentation to the community. She hadn't understood the plight of the village hall until her recent visit. Councillor Banwell spoke of the application and Councillor Farley confirmed that Theale Village Hall remains a Priority for the Parish Council.

The clerk advised that if the council were minded to vote in favour of the application they could do so under S.135 of the LGA, however until such times as a copy of the signed lease was available, the clerk did not believe that the application could be granted in consideration of the Accounts & Audit Regs 2015, as that requires effective arrangements for the management of risk and the Parish Council's ability to comply with Assertion 5 of the AGAR, which requires financial risks to be assessed and measures put in place to mitigate those risks.

Further discussion ensued.

**RESOLVED:** Councillor Banwell proposes to defer this agenda item for one month to ensure the lease has been obtained, to allow the committee to explore some cost saving measures, and for the clerk to research the implication of VAT. This was seconded by Councillor Blackshaw.

**ACTION:** Clerk to seek professional advice on the implications of VAT for the project.

*3x Members of the Public leave 20:56pm.*

### **24.02.14. REPORTS FROM SOMERSET COUNCIL COUNCILLORS (by invitation)**

#### **Councillor H Munt**

- **BUDGET:** Somerset Council has voted through plans to set a balanced budget for the coming financial year but received a stark warning of significant challenges in the years ahead. Described as a "budget to avoid a S114

Wedmore Parish Council

Signed:

Date:



## Wedmore Parish Council

notice”, Members agreed to a range of measures to bridge a funding gap of £100m for 2024/25, including significant savings, increasing Council Tax by 5%, and using reserves (a council’s equivalent of savings). The proposals also include a ‘capitalisation direction’ of £36.9m – this is where councils are given permission by Government to borrow money or sell assets to pay for day-to-day running costs. Some of the services initially put forward for savings have been protected through devolution and partnership working with City, Town and Parish Councils. This includes savings linked to Somerset’s CCTV service, Yeovil Recreation Ground, Taunton Visitor Information Centre, highways maintenance, RNLI lifeguard provision, school crossing patrols, and important democratic functions. Negotiations with Somerset’s household waste recycling centre contractor will continue before any savings in this area are taken forward. A link to the Full Council papers, including the final list of savings proposals, can be found on Budget Meeting, Full Council ([democracy.somerset.gov.uk](https://democracy.somerset.gov.uk)) page.

- **FLOODING:** Somerset Council is marking the ten-year anniversary of the 2014 floods with the message that resilience and adaptation are more important than ever. This winter marks ten years since the wettest winter for 250 years left large swathes of the county underwater for weeks, devastating communities, businesses, and farming. February 4, 2014, saw the then Prince of Wales escorted through flood waters to the cut-off village Muchelney to meet residents and farmers. The following day, two severe flood warnings were issued for parts of the Somerset Levels, with residents in several villages advised to evacuate and Royal Marines deployed to help reinforce flood defences at Burrowbridge. Much flood defence and risk management work has taken place since 2014, at a cost of around £80m as part of a 20-Year Flood Action Plan (FAP) delivered by local authorities, the Environment Agency (EA), the Parrett and Axe Brue Internal Drainage Boards which are all part of the Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) partnership set up to give Somerset an extra level of flood protection. As a result, even though this winter has been the wettest since records began in 1910, the areas devastated in 2014 have not been badly affected. More flood risk management works are planned, and the SRA is currently developing a new Strategy and Flood Action Plan for the next ten years. However, across Somerset, the impacts of climate change mean that resilience and adaptation to flood risk will need to play a bigger part in Somerset’s future.

*Councillor Martin left 21.16pm*

### **24.02.15. COMMITTEE REPORTS – For information**

- **Footpath maintenance program update (Clerk, Councillor Banwell & Councillor Farley)**

Councillors Farley and Banwell and the clerk attended an informal meeting with members of Women of Wedmore in relation to a footpath maintenance program. It was a productive meeting, and a date has been set for the next meeting for Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> April.

- **Green Wedmore Upcoming Event Dates include here.**

Green Wedmore will be using the Village Carpark for the next Freecycle event on Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> April.

- **Isle of Wedmore News Update**

The clerk advised her, and Councillor Tinney had attended the IOW News committee meeting on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> February and were pleased to report that the committee had passed a motion to review the constitution. A working party was set up and a further update will follow soon.

### **24.02.16. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING**

- **Pilcorn Street** – Resolution for feasibility study (Councillor Smith)
- **Theale Village Hall Committees** – Resolution for an application for CIL funds.

**All business conducted the meeting was closed at 9:22 pm**

**Next Meeting:** Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2024