



Wedmore Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting

Held at: The Council Rooms, Grants Lane, Wedmore, BS28 4EA **on:** Wednesday 17th April 2024 **at:** 7:30pm

Present: *Councillor Farley, Councillor Beacom, Councillor Tinney, Councillor Smith, Councillor Blackshaw, Councillor Banwell, Councillor Loughrey, Councillor Weale,

In Attendance: Mrs Lindsey Baker (Clerk), Councillor T Munt,

Public Participation:

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

Councillor Thorogood, Councillor H Munt.

24.03.2. RECORD ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None to record

24.03.3. CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20TH MARCH 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 were signed.

24.03.4. CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING HELD ON 26TH MARCH 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 were signed.

24.03.5. RECEIVE THE CLERK'S REPORT AND RESOLVE ANY SUITABLE ACTION REQUIRED.

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

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

Councillor Beacom

- Has recently attended multiple training sessions the first being some Councillor refresh training, which she found to be very useful, especially the updates given on legislation. Secondly, she attended a webinar on BNG (Biodiversity Net Gain) following a change in legislation. BNG is now mandatory for all major developments from 12th February 2024 and for small sites from 2nd April 2024. Under the Environment Act 2021, all planning permissions granted in England (with a few exemptions) except for small sites will have to deliver at least 10% biodiversity net gain. Significant on-site habitats and all off-site habitats are secured for at least 30 years for at least 30 years via conditions, planning obligations or conservation covenants; It does not change existing legal protections for important habitats and wildlife species. It maintains the mitigation hierarchy of avoiding impacts first, then mitigating and only compensating as a last resort.
- Has attended a Warm in Wedmore debrief. The main updates include losing David Hopkins as part of the organising team ahead of next year's initiative and Wedmore Power Co-Op will likely not sponsor the hall fees for next year. The team have agreed that a new sponsor will be sought ahead of confirmation of the initiative running next year.



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Councillor Weale

- Has been continuing to liaise with Bel Deering (SRA) They have spoken at length about strategies that could be integrated within the existing Emergency Plan. By making the strategies measurable we should be able to access some funding. The next steps include a walk around the at-risk properties. Incorporating signposting for FWAG (Farming, Wildlife Advisory Group) and EVAG (Environmental Volunteer Action Group) – Further update to follow.

Councillor Banwell

- Recently attended an informal meeting with other stakeholders to discuss footpaths. She has been researching Countryside stewardship. The Environmental Land Management update sets out how farmers and land managers will be paid for various actions, instead of the payments they received under the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). The new rules aim to incentivise responsible environmental stewardship as well as food production. This includes improved access to the countryside. The new policy will subsidise the creation of new permissive routes, with different tiers of funding for different types of routes. The funding available is quite a bit more than was possible under the CAP funding. Julia will monitor this to try and incorporate this with the approach with local farmers.

Councillor Tinney

- Advised that the landlords have now left the Sexey's Arms, Blackford. The Parish Council have been advised that Rebecca Kimber-Danger (Fowler and Fortescue – Rural Asset Management on behalf of the Sexey's, Bruton Estate) will be attending the meeting in June.

Councillor Smith

- Read complaints from concerned residents on Grants Lane, relating to the supposed increase of usage by large agricultural vehicles, HGVs and the general speed of traffic. Councillor Smith had passed these concerns through to Aileen Fletcher (Somerset Traffic Manager) at Somerset Highways who was able to give a brief explanation of the situation. She was able to advise that if the section concerned is a public highway, weight limits can be enforced through a Traffic Regulation Order, giving the police authority to enforce restrictions on heavy vehicles. Weight restrictions are usually considered to protect the environment or structures like bridges. If a restriction is necessary, alternative routes must also be provided. However, some routes may seem unsuitable for HGVs, but if no alternatives exist, restrictions could just move the issue elsewhere. Exceptions to weight restrictions often apply to vehicles making deliveries, emergency services, etc. So, vehicles needing legitimate access, like for deliveries, are allowed. Given Wedmore's rural nature, farm traffic may increase at times. Councillor Smith will relay Somerset's response to the Members of the Public.

Councillor Farley

- Attended the LCN meeting last night together with the Clerk. The meeting focused on Access to Services. The overriding theme seems to be a lack of volunteers across the county. Together with the clerk she had also attended an LCN Highways Working group at Axbridge Town Hall on Thursday 18th April, which had been useful. There were heads of each of the Somerset Highways departments there who were able to give an overview of what they were responsible for. The Clerk had challenged on behalf of the Parish Council the ongoing Pilcorn Street Pavement Project citing lack of communication as a stumbling block for all parties leading to heightened frustrations from members of the public and councillors alike. This was accepted by the representatives and a request for the opportunity to reply to the Parish Council was accepted by the Clerk. Councillor Farley raised the inconsistency when self-reporting blocked drains/gullies, potholes and other highway issues. It was stated that this has been identified and the council are looking into rectification in some areas although it is not believed their software can be conditioned in such a uniform way at this time.

24.03.7. FINANCIAL MATTERS

(A) AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS 01ST MARCH – 31ST MARCH 2024 (TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM CLLR'S BEACOM AND SMITH)

Councillor Smith agreed they had carried out the monthly checks and they were accepted as an accurate record to date.

(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 THE ATTACHED DOCUMENT

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

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Signed:

Date:



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ACTION: Clerk to pay any outstanding invoices

24.03.8. TO APPROVE AND SIGN THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

The Clerk gave an overview of what was meant by the Annual Governance Statement.

Councillor Farley asked if the members were satisfied and in agreement with the Annual Governance Statement.

It was proposed the Annual Governance Statement be signed by Councillor Farley.

24.03.9. REPORTS FROM SOMERSET COUNCIL COUNCILLORS *(by invitation)*

Councillor Farley asked if Councillor T Munt would like to make a representation on behalf of Somerset Council.

She gave the following brief overview of news from Somerset Council:

- **Somerset Council renews support for unpaid carers:** Somerset's Commitment to Carers aims to enhance the quality of life for carers and those they care for. It will enable, support, and empower unpaid carers to easily access information, education, training and health and care services to support them while they carry out their vital caring roles. The strategy, which was launched on 19 March, can be read on Somerset Council's website here: <http://www.somerset.gov.uk/carers>.
- **Council proposes new 20mph speed limits following requests from communities:** A safety initiative is driven by local people in villages across Somerset. Last year there were several requests from across Somerset for either 20mph or 30mph limits following concerns about safety. In response, the Council invited all communities to apply for a 20mph speed limit if they were willing to fund the design and implementation and they are in line with Department for Transport criteria. These proposals are now moving forward, and the Traffic Regulation Orders are currently being advertised. The 15 proposed new 20 mph limits are in the following communities: Cannington, Castle Cary and Ansford, Chard, Chewton Mendip, Crowcombe, Ditchat and Alhampton, Ilchester, Monksilver, North Petherton, Othery, Otterford, Pilton, Ruishton, Trudoxhill, Wincanton
- **Somerset to get 25 new electric buses for the county's network in a major £14.7m investment:** The 25 new double-decker and single-decker buses will be funded by a £2.2 million grant from the Department for Transport's (DfT) Zero Emission Bus Regional Area scheme, along with a £12.5 in investment from First Bus South which operates Buses of Somerset, so are coming to Somerset at no extra cost to the Council. The electric buses will replace part of Buses of Somerset's current diesel fleet and overall, it is expected that each electric bus will save up to 60 tonnes of tailpipe emissions per year.
- **Road Safety Team launches campaign following 'disturbing' rise in road deaths:** The number of fatalities on county's roads at its highest since 2014. Tragically, 30 people died while travelling on Somerset's roads in 2023 – this is nearly 43% up on the figure for 2022 and the highest number of fatalities in 10 years. In four of the incidents, more than one person died. There is no particular cause or issue thought to be responsible for the increase, and according to Avon and Somerset Police 76% of the collisions involve one or more of the following five behaviours: Intoxicated driving, (drink or drugs), Careless or inconsiderate driving, Excessive Speed, Mobile phone use or distraction, or failing to wear a seatbelt. A further concerning factor is that nearly half of the fatal collisions were caused by a vehicle crossing into the path of another one. Of the 30 fatal casualties, 11 were car drivers, 12 motorcyclists, four were car passengers, and three were pedestrians.
- **Somerset Swimming Pools awarded funding for energy efficiency upgrades:** Somerset Council has been awarded £316,700 of grant funding from Phase 2 of the government's Swimming Pool Support Fund (SPSF). The ringfenced money from Sport England and the National Lottery will be used to install new energy efficiency measures in four Somerset leisure centres. Frome Leisure Centre and Wells Leisure Centre run by Fusion Lifestyle will get new swimming pool covers and Photovoltaic (PV) Panels installed on the roofs.
- **Rural businesses encouraged to apply for a new round of funding:** Following a successful first round of funding last year Somerset Council is encouraging businesses and organisations to find out if they are eligible for a grant from the UK Government's Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF). The second round is now open, and Somerset Council have allocated £2.5m which must be spent by the end of March 2025. Projects can apply for grants between £5,000 and £100,000 as long as they can meet the outputs and objectives of the programme and can provide match funding.

24.03.10. RESOLVE THE PURCHASE OF AN UNKNOWN TOMMY STATUE TO COMMEMORATE THE D-DAY 80TH ANNIVERSARY

Councillor Beacom presented her proposal to purchase the commemorative statues. She has approached the PCC as to what they would consider regarding placement aside from the Memorial. They confirmed they preferred the pair of unknown Tommy's for £325.00. Councillor Beacom also poses that to commemorate the D-Day Anniversary specifically the Parish Council could purchase 10 lamppost signs, like the Poppies for an additional cost of £47.99.

This proposal is made by Councillor Beacom and seconded by Councillor Banwell.

Wedmore Parish Council

Signed:

Date:



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RESOLVED: The Clerk will order the Unknown Tommy Statues and the 10 Lamppost Signs and liaise with Will Jackson about when they will be erected. *(Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972)*

ACTION: Clerk to order statues and Lamppost Signs

24.03.11. RESOLVE TO APPLY FOR THE ROAD CLOSURES FOR WEDMORE STREET FAIR, WEDMORE HARVEST HOME AND LAMPLIGHT

THE CLERK ADVISED FOLLOWING A MEETING WITH SOMERSET

(Section 235 of the Local Government Act 1972)

As P S JB

24.03.12. COMMITTEE REPORTS – For information

- **Councillor Beacom** - gave an update following the Extraordinary Meeting, which was attended by councillors, Property Link UK (South) representatives, and members of the public, this meeting allowed the council to review amended plans of an application to the Planning Department for a new development at Combe Batch, Wedmore. Changes include adjustments to roofline heights and landscaping. Concerns from six members of the public were raised, including issues with the proposal's compliance with planning regulations, translocation of a hedge, and accessibility considerations.
 - Asked for volunteers to help man the council stand at the Wellbeing Day on Saturday 4th May, Councillor Beacom will follow up with Councillors via email.
- **Councillor Loughrey** - advised that a Cemetery meeting has been scheduled for Thursday 2nd May at 11:00 am
- **Councillor Smith** - advised that following raised concerns from residents, it would be advantageous to investigate the installation of a couple of extra SID posts, more discussion would be required but as a suggestion the following locations are likely; the brow of St Medard and Latcham Road. A Highways meeting will be scheduled for later in May - the date will be confirmed.
- **The Clerk advised that she proposes that the** Parish Assembly scheduled for Wednesday 22nd May will be advertised with an Arrival time of 6:30 pm with the Meeting starting at 7:00 pm promptly.

24.03.13. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

None to record

Councillor T Munt Leaves at 20:23

24.03.14. TO RESOLVE TO EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC (LGA 1972 SS 100 & 102) (PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960 AS AMENDED.)

No members of the public or press are present at this time.

24.03.15. TO RECEIVE NOMINATIONS AND RESOLVE THE WINNER OF THE HENRY BUTT TROPHY FOR 2024 AS NOMINATED BY THE PARISHIONERS.

The clerk presented all the nominees for this year's award, Councillors voted confidentially by ballot, the votes were counted and the winner was announced to councillors by the Clerk.

ACTION: The Clerk will write to all persons who nominated and were nominated for the award this year inviting them to attend the Parish Assembly on Wednesday 22nd May 2024.

All business conducted the meeting was closed at 8:40 pm

Next Meeting: Wednesday 15th May 2024