



# Wedmore Parish Council

## Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting

Held at: The Council Rooms, Grants Lane, Wedmore, BS28 4EA on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> July 2024 at 7:00 pm

**Present:** \*Councillor Farley, Councillor Beacom, Councillor Tinney, Councillor Smith, Councillor Blackshaw, Councillor Weale,

**In Attendance:** Mrs Lindsey Baker (Clerk), Alistair Hopkins (Councillor in Waiting) 2x Members of the Public

### **Public Participation:**

- 1x Member of the Public raising concerns about parking and traffic concerns along Church Street. They would like the Parish Council's help and guidance regarding the change of road markings from a 'Keep Clear' to double yellow lines outside King Alfred Mews. The Member of the Public believes this was conducted by Somerset Highways without public consultation.
- 1x Member of the Public speaks specifically regarding item 24.07.5 and the circumstances surrounding ownership of Combe Lane.

### **24.07.1. RECEIVE ANY APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** (AND RECORD APPROVAL IF APPROPRIATE) LGA1972 S85 (1))

Councillor Loughrey, Councillor Smart, Councillor Thorogood.

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

No declarations of interest were recorded.

### **24.07.3. CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19TH JUNE 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.

### **24.07.4. RECEIVE THE CLERK REPORT AND RESOLVE ANY SUITABLE ACTION REQUIRED.**

The Clerk gave a short verbal update. She has applied SALC and the SLCC to undertake the CiLCA from September. SALC have sent through a learning agreement which The Clerk relays to the Parish Council for their recorded support in undertaking the qualification.

She also advised that following the letter sent to Somerset Pilcorn Street – Follow up

### **24.07.5. RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE OUTCOME OF THE COOMBE BATCH PLANNING APPLICATION 50/24/00021 FROM COUNCILLOR BEACOM.**

Councillor Beacom gave an important update regarding the recent planning application submitted for a hybrid development. The application, which included a full proposal for the erection of 26 dwellings along with access, associated open space, landscaping, and parking, as well as an outline application with some matters reserved for 4 self-build plots, has been a significant topic of discussion and concern within our community.

After careful consideration and despite the strong opposition expressed by the Parish Council, and many residents (207 objections), and the fact that the proposal is contrary to our Neighbourhood Plan, the Planning North Committee has made a unanimous decision to grant permission for the development. This decision is subject to the conditions detailed within the Officers' report and the completion of a Section 106 Agreement.

#### **Key Points of Concern:**

- **Community Opposition:** Our community has voiced substantial concerns about the impact of this development. Many residents have highlighted issues related to increased traffic, strain on local infrastructure, and the potential loss of our village's rural character.



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- **Contrary to the Neighbourhood Plan:** The proposed development does not align with the vision and guidelines set out in our Neighbourhood Plan, which was created to protect and enhance the unique character and needs of our area.
- **Parish Council's Stand:** The Parish Council has strongly opposed this application, reflecting the views and sentiments of our residents. We have advocated for development that respects our local plans and community needs.
- **Committee Decision:** Despite these strong objections, the Planning North Committee has decided to proceed with granting permission, citing specific conditions to be met as detailed in the Officers' report. The decision also involves the completion of a Section 106 Agreement, which typically includes contributions towards local infrastructure and amenities.

While this decision is disappointing for many, the Parish Council will continue to work diligently to ensure that any development proceeds with minimal disruption and maximum benefit to our community. Closely monitoring the adherence to the conditions set forth and advocating for the interests of our residents throughout the development process.

**ACTION: Send thank you letters on behalf of the Parish Council to all of the speakers and facilitators**

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

#### Councillor Farley

- Advised that the Cheddar and Axbridge LCN AGM is tomorrow evening (Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> July).

#### Councillor Beacom

- Asked The Clerk to verify with Somerset Council Planning North if Councillor Harry Munt is still a member of the Somerset North Planning Committee.

#### Councillor Smith

- Inquired about updates on the Pilcorn Street Pavement Project, The Clerk confirmed that no response from the Improvement Schemes Delivery Team has been received yet.
- He asked that the Highways Committee continues to address the parking and traffic management in the village.
- He emphasised the necessity of improving signage to the Car Park to encourage business traffic.

#### Councillor Weale

- The Emergency Plan is nearly complete, incorporating updates from Steven Mulvinhall's work and plans to present the plan to the Parish Council once all information is compiled.
- Has attended Glastonbury Town Council meeting with Councillor Smart with more meetings to come as necessary.
- Councillor Smith has been assisting Councillor Weale with highway-related issues.
- He has agreed to become a Wedmore Village Hall Trustee (appointment meeting in August).

#### Councillor Blackshaw

- has recently attended the IOW News AGM: John Ford was appointed as Chairman.
- They are now registered with HMRC and Insurance matters are being handled.

### **24.07.7. FINANCIAL MATTERS**

*(A) AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS 01ST JUNE – 30TH JUNE 2024 (TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM CLLR'S BEACOM AND WEALE)*

Councillor Beacom 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 ATTACHED DOCUMENT*

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

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

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Signed:

Date:



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### **24.07.8. RESOLVE TO OPEN A SECOND 'GREEN' BANK ACCOUNT**

In alignment with Wedmore Parish Council's Green Charter and the declaration of a Climate and Ecological Emergency in 2019, Councillor Beacom proposes in consultation with The Clerk to open a second 'green' bank account. This decision supports Green Wedmore's Zero Carbon Wedmore initiative, aiming for the parish to achieve Carbon net zero by 2030. The Green Charter emphasises the council's commitment to protecting local natural capital, generating renewable energy, reducing waste, supporting local and ethical buying, minimising water use, eliminating harmful chemicals, restoring nature, and promoting low-carbon transport. By opening this 'green' bank account, the council aims to ensure that funds for environmentally sustainable projects are managed efficiently and transparently, reinforcing its dedication to these values and the broader goal of community adaptation to climate change. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Weale and passed unanimously.

**RESOLVED:** The Parish Council shall open a second 'green' bank account to facilitate the management of environmentally sustainable projects. This action is taken under the powers conferred by Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972, as it is conducive to the efficient administration of the council's functions.

**ACTION: Complete and submit the necessary application forms and documentation to the selected bank.**  
**ACTION: Ensure the account is set up and operational, with authorised signatories as per the council's financial regulations.**

### **24.07.9. RESOLVE TO CO-OPT A NEW COUNCILLOR FOLLOWING AN APPLICATION FROM MR. ALISTAIR HOPKINS**

Councillor Farley provided an overview of Mr Hopkins' application. The council acknowledged Mr Hopkins' dedication and experience, deeming him a valuable addition to the team. Following a proposal for co-option from Councillor Jacky Farley seconded by Councillor Phillip Weale, the decision to co-opt Mr Hopkins is agreed as it aligns with the council's ongoing commitment to representing the community's interests effectively.

**RESOLVED:** The Parish Council shall co-opt Mr. Alistair Hopkins as a new councillor to fill the existing vacancy. This action is taken under the powers conferred by Section 89 and Section 83 of the Local Government Act 1972.

**ACTION: Notify Mr Hopkins of the council's decision and provide details of the next steps, including an induction session for Mr Hopkins to familiarise him with council procedures, responsibilities, and ongoing projects.**  
**ACTION: Arrange for Mr. Hopkins to sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and complete the Declaration of Interest.**

### **24.07.10. RESOLVE TO MAKE AN ANNUAL DONATION TO WEDMORE IN BLOOM**

Councillor Farley provided a brief historical overview of the Parish Council's support for Wedmore in Bloom. Recognising the significant contribution of Wedmore in Bloom to the community's aesthetic and environmental quality, Councillor Farley proposes the council resolve to continue its financial support. The annual donation is intended to assist Wedmore in Bloom in maintaining and enhancing the local environment, consistent with the council's Green Charter and its commitment to sustainability and community well-being. Councillor Weale poses that the council should review the impact of the donation periodically to ensure it continues to meet community needs effectively.

**RESOLVED:** The Parish Council shall make an annual donation to Wedmore in Bloom of £1000.00 index linked under the powers conferred by Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972, recognising the direct benefit this organisation brings to the community. Therefore, the total amount received in 2024, considering the indexed adjustment, is £1,034.

**ACTION: Inform Wedmore in Bloom about the decision and the expected timeline for the donation. The letter will include a request to monitor the impact of the donation and gather feedback from Wedmore in Bloom to assess the effectiveness and continued relevance of the support ahead of the Parish Council budget setting in September.**



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**ACTION: Arrange for the timely disbursement of the donation to Wedmore in Bloom, following the council's financial procedures.**

## **24.07.11. DISCUSS AND RESOLVE THE CONTINUATION OF FUNDING TO BLACKFORD, THEALE AND WEDMORE VILLAGE HALLS**

Councillor Farley presented an overview of the Parish Council's previous financial support to Blackford, Theale, and Wedmore Village Halls. She highlighted the initial reasons for the funding, the impact it has had over the years, and the current financial landscape. A discussion ensued which covered several key points:

**Sustainability and Self-Sufficiency:** The council deliberated on the long-term sustainability of continuously funding the village halls. It was noted that the village halls have become increasingly self-sufficient over the years.

**Financial Constraints:** With increasing demands on the council's budget for other community projects, the council needs to reassess its funding priorities. Councillor Smith noted that while the village halls are important, other pressing community needs might require more immediate financial attention.

**Alternative Funding Opportunities:** The possibility of the village halls applying for specific project grants rather than receiving automatic annual funding was discussed. This would allow the council to allocate funds more effectively based on current needs and projects with significant community impact.

**Impact on Village Halls:** Councillor Tinney raised concerns about the potential negative impact on the village halls if funding was discontinued. Councillor Blackshaw suggested that the village halls be encouraged to apply for grants for particular projects, which could help mitigate any adverse effects.

**Community Involvement and Transparency:** Ensuring transparency in the decision-making process was emphasised. The council agreed that it is essential to communicate the reasons behind the decision clearly to the village halls' management committees and the wider community.

Following this lengthy discussion Councillors proposed to discontinue funding to Blackford, Theale and Wedmore Village Halls, this proposal was agreed upon unanimously.

**RESOLVED:** The Parish Council shall discontinue funding Blackford, Theale, and Wedmore Village Halls under the powers conferred by Section 133 of the Local Government Act 1972, effective from 17th July 2024, Village Hall Management Committees will be welcome to apply if necessary through the grants application process if they have a particular project in mind.

**ACTION: Inform the management committees of Blackford, Theale, and Wedmore Village Halls about the decision and provide detailed reasons.**

**ACTION: Issue a public notice explaining the decision to ensure transparency.**

## **24.07.12. REPORTS FROM SOMERSET COUNCIL COUNCILLORS (BY INVITATION)**

None were present.

## **24.07.13. COMMITTEE REPORTS – FOR INFORMATION**

Councillors agreed on the following meeting dates for committees:

**Parish Council:** Focus on Priority Setting for the next 5 years - Wednesday 21st August – 7:00 pm

**Planning Committee:** W/C 5<sup>th</sup> August – 7:00 pm

**Highways Committee:** Wednesday 14th August – 7:00 pm

**All business conducted the meeting was closed at 19:52**

**Next Meeting: Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> August**