

**OTTERHAMPTON PARISH COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 10 FEBRUARY 2016**  
**IN OTTERHAMPTON VILLAGE HALL**

**PUBLIC SESSION:**

B.Johnson, on behalf of Comwich Cruising Club, attended to present a paper to try and make a case for the parish council to reconsider the decision it made on 15.12.15 which told the Cruising Club that it must remove the shipping container from the Common. The Chairman said Members would be unable to review the paper at the meeting, but undertook to review the paper and respond after discussion at the next parish council meeting on 3.3.16.

**PRESENT:**

Barry Leathwood (Chairman), Heath Bennett, John Berry, Dick Best, Bob Birkenhead, County Cllr John Edney, Dist Cllrs Mike Caswell and Julie Pay, Aly Prowse (Clerk) and 5 members of the public.

**128/15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:**

Apologies for absence were received from Julie Evans and Rachel Perrett.

**129/15 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7.1.16:**

The minutes were APPROVED and signed by the Chairman.

**130/15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:**

There were no declarations of interest.

**131/15 WARD REPORTS:**

1. Cllr Edney
  - a) For the first time in 6 years, there will be an increase in Council Tax amounting to circa £50 per annum for an average Band D taxpayer. A formal announcement will follow.
  - b) The Cannington by-pass is now open which has led to a dramatic reduction in heavy traffic through Cannington. There is little difference in terms of time or distance for either route. B.Birkenhead asked if traffic calming measures will be introduced through Cannington. Cllr Edney replied that traffic monitoring will be undertaken in March, after a period of time given for the scheme to 'bed in'.
  - c) Cannington Parish Council (in conjunction with Otterhampton) has submitted an Expression of Interest (EOI) from the Community Impact Mitigation (CIM) fund for a lengths-man scheme. The next step is a full application which will require a more detailed description of the work required, terms of employment etc. Cannington will take the lead, but we will meet with them before the application is submitted. It was also recorded that this scheme will be in addition to the work of our village gardener, not a replacement.
  - d) J.Berry asked Cllr Edney about the government grant of £2m mentioned in recent press reports. Cllr Edney said this will be subject to a discussion next week but it looks as though the additional grant will be made. It will however not alter the budget submission.
2. Cllr Pay
  - a) SDC will be holding a meeting in two weeks' time to complete its budget.
3. Cllr Caswell
  - a) The Core Strategy (Local Plan) consultation has closed. This is an important document looking at every aspect of the Plan, hoping to produce a document to answer the District's needs to 2032.
  - b) Regarding Council Tax, flooding costs are always an issue. SDC is pushing for disaggregation (that all Councils pay the same) as not all do. Currently the amount paid is based on where the flood water ends up, which SDC is arguing should also consider where it flows from and en-route.

**132/15 PLANNING MATTERS:**

39/15/00002 – (Outline) Single Dwelling, land west of The Cottage, 21 Steart Rd.

D.Best said the application is an outline at this stage with no detailed information. SDC would address the issue of a new build on a flood plain together with access issues. Members present had no objections at this stage.

**Action: Clerk**

**133/15 FINANCIAL MATTERS:**

**1. Balances**

Current A/C £1320; Deposit A/C £13901; Reserve A/C £7400.

**2. The following payments were AGREED:**

A.Prowse £262.14 (Clerk's salary for January plus £46.89 other costs including shovels £10.28 and McAfee software £19.99).

D.Best	£228.00 Battery for defibrillator (as per St John Ambulance invoice)
Income Received	£3.90 Western Power Distribution (Wayleave re pole on the Common)

#### 134/15 ITEMS FROM THE LAST MEETING:

##### 1. **Review Action List (for actions not covered by the agenda):**

- a) No 8 – Repair swings in children’s play area – B.Birkenhead has done this. **Action: Complete**
- b) No 11 – Haul Rd. Chase D.Stokes again. **Action: Clerk**
- c) No 12 – Parish lengths-man. Expression of Interest approved. This will proceed to full application stage. Cannington Parish Council are taking the lead. **Action: Ongoing**
- d) No 13 – Combwich track repair long and short term. To action in the spring. **Action: Ongoing**
- e) No 14 – Insurance claim. We have heard nothing since B.Leathwood contacted the claimants in January 2016. **Action: Ongoing.**
- f) No 15 – Shovels for Brookside Rd Garage have been purchased by the Clerk. **Action: Complete.**
- g) No 16 – Defibrillator training. D.Best advised this has been requested. **Action: Ongoing.**
- h) No 19 – Wharf Rd Vegetation Maintenance. **Action: late summer.**
- i) No 25 – Speed reduction initiative on C182. A response received from G.Warren (Highways) in relation to a request for 20mph limit in Combwich may have provided the answer. **Action: J.Evans to confirm.**
- j) No 26 – Broadband / Mobile Networks. B.Birkenhead has spoken with 4 network providers who advised people should check reception coverage with the provider before purchasing a mobile phone. It was also suggested that if people are unhappy with their coverage, they should write to the provider. Bob will put together an article for the next Otter Tales. **Action: B.Birkenhead.**
- k) No 27 – Mendip Transport / Slinky Bus information. No additional suggestions were made regarding future use of the 2 new slinky mini buses. Subsequently, we received a letter from Mendip Transport asking for a donation to help run the service. The information will be copied to members and added to the agenda for next month. **Action: Clerk**

##### 2. **Shipping Container on Combwich Common**

This topic was covered in detail during the public session. D.Best suggested the information was circulated to all members for consideration after the meeting. The Chairman made his position clear, whilst assuring the Cruising Club that the report will be considered fairly by Members. A response will be provided after the parish council meeting on 3.3.16, following formal discussion and the decision. **Action: Chairman & Clerk.**

##### 3. **Welcome Packs**

Y.Bulman has volunteered to put a ‘welcome pack’ together for new residents of the parish. Members are in favour of this initiative and AGREED to cover costs, which should be minimal.

##### 4. **Ramblers 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Bench**

B.Leathwood advised that he had spoken to J.Williams regarding the proposed location of the bench adjacent to the WWT entrance. She believed the area would be too busy and not particularly restful. After re-visiting the situation, Barry suggested a location 30 yards beyond, on the slightly raised bank on the corner. This was AGREED and will be communicated to the Ramblers’. **Action: B.Leathwood.**

##### 5. **Combwich Ponds**

B.Leathwood outlined the situation and said he was not pleased with the response received from SCC, who now advise that our application is unlikely to be heard for many years. Cllr Edney offered to take this up with SCC on our behalf in the first instance. He was given copies of the original letter from 2008 and recent correspondence. **Action: Cllr Edney.**

#### 135/15 CHILDREN’S PLAY AREA:

##### 1. **Safety Inspections February to April**

J.Berry volunteered to carry out the inspections. The Clerk to send him the inspection sheets. **Action: Clerk**

##### 2. **Vegetation Clearance**

We had 2 volunteers come forward to help clear the vegetation. Ideally this needs to be undertaken by the end of February. A working party will be organised for the next, or following weekend. **Action: Clerk**

##### 3. **Progress with Funding Applications**

The £38k CIM application to West Somerset Council will be presented to the Planning Obligations Board on 12.2.16, followed by WSC Cabinet on 2.3.16 and finally, at the WSC Full Council on 16.3.16.

##### 4. **Other**

WWT Steart Marshes has endorsed the project and has offered to work with us regarding signage. We may not have much flexibility at the play area as we will have to acknowledge SDC, WSC, EDF and Viridor as main sponsors. We will speak to Alys Laver informally at the Steart Forum on 19.3.16.

Ward Cllrs left the meeting at 8.05pm

#### 136/15 PARISH ENHANCEMENT:

##### 1. **Dog Waste Bins and Dog Waste Dispensers**

The Clerk provided a summary of estimated costs. To relocate the bin near the phone box to the Brookside Rd garage's area and install a new 56ltr bin in its place, plus purchase 2 dog bag dispensers on a trial period, would cost circa £470. The annual costs to service the new proposal would rise from the existing cost of £1114 (6.4% of the precept) to £2135 (11.5% of the precept). In principle the proposal was AGREED, although it needs to be confirmed where to site the dog bag dispensers. J.Berry thought the worst areas of dog fouling are on the approach to Steart Marshes on the track and Wharf Rd. **Action: All**

**2. Clear Gravel at Junction of Church Hill/Brookside Rd (by the wall)**

J.Berry suggested the unsightly pile of gravel and black plastic membrane by the wall is cleared. It was AGREED to ask K.Preston if he is able to do it. **Action: Clerk.**

**3. Annual Grass Cutting Contract**

It was AGREED to retain the existing grass cutting contract with SDC as members felt it represented good value, although it was agreed that we should go out to competitive tender next year to confirm we are getting value for money. **Action: Clerk**

**4. Wildflower Meadow**

This was discussed following a copy of an email sent to us from M.Lloyd-Brown in response to a complaint the wild flower group had received. There have been a number of comments as at times the area is unsightly which is unfortunate as it is at the entrance to the Village. D.Best said it is a nice idea but in hindsight possibly in the wrong place as for a wild meadow to flourish, the fertility of the soil needs to be reduced. However, he is aware that the group is following a long term plan which should work if sufficient time is given. Members thought that if excessive thistle and campion is removed/reduced other plants may have a chance to establish. It is a delicate situation and it was suggested that an informal chat is held with the group. S.Hill (parishioner) suggested the group put an article in Otter Tales so at least parishioners could have an understanding of what it is trying to achieve. Any progress to be reported at the next meeting.

**137/15 HIGHWAYS ITEMS:**

**1. Combwich/Crossways lay-by Proposal and Consultation**

This proposal has been met with the general approval of residents. We only received two letters of slight concern which have been or will be addressed. The parking of the School buses cause problems at times by blocking the road adjacent to the bus shelter which if it continues, could be a problem blocking the exit for Crossway's residents. This needs to be resolved with the provision of a proper pull-in for the buses. Subject to this being actioned, members AGREED to proceed with the proposal. **Action: Clerk.**

**2. Other Highways Issues**

It was AGREED to arrange a meeting with the new Highway's engineer, Gary Warren to discuss the outstanding issues we have raised. This will include the speed limit for the village (although Gary has responded that it is unlikely a permanent speed limit could be adopted); suggested change of priority at junction of Brookside Rd/Church Hill; trees requiring attention; vehicles parked along the verge alongside Combwich Common/Anchor Inn; entrance to the enhanced play area; Steart flood poles and reflective bollards at Dame Withycombe Hill. **Action: Clerk**

**3. Speed Indication Device (SID)**

D.Grabham (SCC) has agreed to site a further SID box as a trial. Members did not think the previously sited box near Nursey Cl was in the right place. Suggestions included either Church Hill or Ship Lane. This will be discussed when we meet G.Warren. D.Grabham to be kept informed. **Action: Clerk.**

**4. Review of Disabled parking Spaces**

B.Leathwood said although the spaces are used from time to time, we should perhaps consider reducing it to one space as rarely are both used together, particularly since we introduced the permit system for parking on the Combwich track for blue badge holders/disabled drivers of the parish. We may also need more room to improve the access for the enhanced play area. This can also be discussed during our meeting with G.Warren.

**5. Public Rights of Way (PRoW) Proposal**

B.Leathwood received a written proposal from J.Sivyer to amend the PRoW across Mr Passmore's field in Otterhampton to provide better access to the WWT Marshes and the track to Combwich for Stockland Bristol residents. Discussions are ongoing with those affected by the proposal. A meeting has been arranged with S.Littler (SCC) and interested parties prior to the Steart Forum on 18.2.16.

**138/15 FORTHCOMING MEETING NOTIFICATION:**

18.2.16 – Steart Forum

23.2.16 – Cluster Meeting (including our RLT3 funding application for the Play Area re outdoor gym equipment)

25.2.16 – Transport Forum. Cancelled, now on 28.4.16

26.2.16 – SSG

**139/15 MEETING REPORTS:**

**14.1.16 – Community Forum (B.Birkenhead)**

- a) Still no Financial Investment Decision on Hinkley C, and although the site is “standing still”, EDF is trying to re-employ people.
- b) Dist Cllr Sue Goss complained about the severity of the tree cutting along the C182.
- c) An update on the Community Impact Mitigation (CIM) funds available.
- d) There are no immediate plans for the cycle path project to include a route between Combwich and Hinkley Point.

S.Hill reported that he is involved in the noise insulation scheme with EDF for residents overlooking the wharf.

H.Bennett left the meeting at 9.05pm

**140/15 CORRESPONDENCE/COMMUNICATION:**

**Received/sent (excluding items covered by agenda or action list):**

- a) Mendip Community Transport seeking a donation. Agenda item for next meeting. **Action: Clerk.**
- b) Becky Foyle (Stockland Bristol) advising of the beach clean at Steart, on 5.3.16, 10.30–12.30pm.
- c) Somerset Libraries Service – The service at Steart will be withdrawn from April 2016 due to lack of use.
- d) SCC – Advising a temporary 30 mph speed limit during the installation of the cycle path between Cannington and Combwich.
- e) SCC – Advising it has voted to stop the upkeep of traditional fingerpost road signs. There is a bureaucratic procedure we should comply with if we wish to maintain them ourselves. B.Birkenhead said there are 3 such posts in the parish.
- f) Combwich Track Parking Permit – B.Leathwood reported that 2 permits have been issued to date.
- g) NALC – Advising the procedure should the parish wish to be involved in lighting a beacon to celebrate the Queen’s 90<sup>th</sup> birthday.

**141/15 REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES:**

**1. Hinkley Liaison (including SSG):**

The National Grid Hinkley C Connection Project has been approved by the Secretary of State.

**2. Steart Ward (D.Best):**

WWT has launched a new project to explain the rationale of the Steart Marshes and to promote the conservation ethos of WWT. A new member of staff, Lucy Bartlett, has been employed for this purpose on an 18 month contract and will mainly involve community engagement and the volunteer programme. A steering group has been set up which Dick has been asked to join, representing the community and volunteers. He will bear in mind the potential disturbance and disruption of additional visitors (possibly rising from 8000 -10000 to 30000) with limited parking and facilities available.

**3. OPRA (B.Leathwood):**

- a) The Fete Committee meeting was well attended which means the fete will go ahead on 2.7.16.
- b) Easter activities are being organised.
- c) OPRA has recently bought a digital projector which is available for other groups to use.

**4. Otterhampton Parish Project Team (OPPT):**

The project team’s concentration is focused on the enhanced children’s play area currently.

**5. Village Hall (H.Bennett) :**

Unfortunately Heath was unable to attend the meeting as it clashed with the parish council meeting tonight.

**6. School Liaison (J.Evans):**

Julie had emailed a report from the School’s recent OFSTED. It left the school in “Requires Improvement” but that was not a bad outcome and contained a lot of positive comment. 2 areas were graded “good” and “improvement” noted in 4 areas. The report also mentioned that the new head has made a very positive start.

**142/15 DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING:**

The next meeting will be on Thursday 3 March 2016, 7.00pm at Otterhampton Village Hall.

The meeting ended at 9.20 pm.

Signed  
(Chairman)



Date: 10 February 2016