

**OTTERHAMPTON PARISH COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

on

**THURSDAY 2 NOVEMBER 2017 HELD AT OTTERHAMPTON VILLAGE HALL**

**PUBLIC SESSION:**

There were no members of the public present.

**PRESENT:**

Dick Best (Acting Chairman), Bob Birkenhead, Dave Cather, Barry Leathwood; Rachel Perrett, County Cllr Mike Caswell, Diist Cllr Julie Pay and Aly Prowse (Clerk).

**78/17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:**

Apologies for absence were received from John Berry and Julie Evans (Julie attending the Transport Forum).

**79/17 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 5.10.17:**

The minutes of the meeting held on 5.10.17 were APPROVED and signed by the Chairman.

**80/17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS:**

D.Cather (Minute 90/17/c). Correspondence in relation to access at The Towers, Combwich.

**81/17 WARD REPORTS:**

1. Cllr Caswell received many complaints about the roadworks in Cannington. These are due to be completed by 10.11.17. Businesses affected by the disruption are not eligible for compensation.
2. The Sedgemoor Local Plan is now under consideration by the Planning Inspectorate.
3. Cllr Pay has been busy with Licensing Panels and had recently attended an Audit & Governance Seminar.  
Cllr Caswell and Cllr Pay left the meeting at 7.15pm

**82/17 PLANNING MATTERS:**

1. **39/17/00012** – Variations for previous planning consent 39/13/00004 & 39/10/00003 for 3 dwellings, 9 Church Hill, Combwich. Councillors OBJECTED to amend the status of plots 2 and 3 from semi-detached to detached because of visual domination / proximity to properties in Nursery Close and School Lane.
2. **39/17/00013** – Prior notification of demolition of outbuildings at the Anchor Inn. NO ACTION REQUIRED.
3. **39/17/00014** – Erect detached garage/garden store and demolish existing garage. SUPPORTED.
4. **Planning Training 12.10.17.**  
R.Perrett and the Clerk attended and thought the training was very useful. A decision has been made to cease providing hard copy planning documents; available only online in future. This will present difficulties for clerks/councillors with poor broadband coverage, plus trying to make sense of large plans on iPhones etc. We are disappointed that this is an apparent fait-accompli and will write to SDC advising that Steart and Otterhampton have poor broadband coverage and because the Clerk resides at Steart, request that we continue to receive hard copy documents. **Action: Clerk**

**83/17 FINANCIAL MATTERS:**

1. **Bank Balances** - Current A/C £1259; Deposit A/C £18465; Reserve A/C £11253.
2. **The following payments were AGREED:**

Mrs A Prowse	£347.28	(October salary including £8.62 miscellaneous costs)
Pains Fireworks	£835.20	(OPRA Fireworks Display 5.11.17)
RT Signs	£ 79.20	(2 x "No scooters of bikes" signs for play area)
SDC	£557.28	(Ground maintenance June – Sept 2017)
Parish Online	£ 33.60	(Get Mapping – renewal of annual subscription)
3. **Bank Mandate**  
R.Perrett agreed to be a bank signatory to ensure we have sufficient cover once J.Berry leaves.
4. **Accounts Check**  
D.Best has completed a routine check of the payments/receipts ledger, bank statements, invoices and cheque book stubs and found no issues.

**84/17 ITEMS FROM THE LAST MEETING:**

1. **Review of the Action List (for actions not covered by the agenda):**
  - a) **No 4 – Street Lighting at Combwich Junction.** As per minute 87/17/1, this item will be removed from the action list.

- b) **No 7 – Combwich Retaining Wall nameplate.** The outstanding Brookside Rd nameplate has now been fitted which will complete the works. An invoice will follow.
- c) **No 8 – Members Interest Declaration** – SDC has been notified of D.Cather’s Member’s Interest amendment re his employment at Hinkley C.
- d) **No 9 – Cannington Playing Fields** – Cannington Parish Council (CPC) advised that J.Evans and/or B.Birkenhead will represent us at a meeting to be held in the New Year. CPC asks that representatives visit the playing fields before the meeting to consider possible options and use of the fields.
- e) **No 11 – NHS Health Checks.** Advised we would like to go ahead. Awaiting a response.
- f) **No 13 – PRow and Hedge by Riverside Farm.** Glenn Martin (SCC) advised B.Birkenhead that clearing the PRow is not a priority because of the footpath that runs along the bridleway (track). Therefore, we will seek quotations to remove the vegetation from the common back to the hedge, which will also be trimmed to give the ‘brownie trees’ room to grow. **Action: Clerk.**
- g) **No 16 – Combwich Ponds.** B.Birkenhead has submitted the appeal to the Planning Inspectorate.
- h) **No 18 – Play Area Signs.** These have arrived and will be put up shortly. **Action: Clerk.**
- i) **No 19 – CIM Fund Endorsement by Parish Council.** Val Bishop has agreed that all CIM applications to our £500k will be endorsed by OPPT/Parish Council first.
- j) **No 20 – Village Walk Actions.**
  - 1. The Wildflower Group have advised they can no longer manage the area. We will ask Highways to cut it now and thereafter, include within the ground’s maintenance contract. **Action: Clerk.**
  - 2. Kerb stones by bus shelter. Not K.Tyson’s remit, need to contact L.Hackling. **Action: Clerk**
  - 3. Welcome Sign fading. Keep under general review. Remove from action list.
  - 4. Weeds on pavements. SDC will be spraying the pavements and kerbs at the end of October. The Clerk was advised the weeds are sprayed three times a year.
  - 5. The Clerk wrote to the owner of the willow tree opposite the Post Office outlining our concerns that the willow may need attention.
  - 6. Clearance of the Wharf Rd vegetation has not been done yet.
  - 7. Replacement Ship Lane nameplate. **Action: Clerk.**
- k) **No 21 – Future Chairman’s Position.** D.Cather said he will be willing to stand as Chairman. R.Perrett offered to help when time permits. The councillor vacancy will arise in February 2018 so we will again informally advise the residents of the vacancy in the forthcoming Otter Tales.

**85/17 PLAY AND RECREATION AREA:**

- 1. B.Leathwood and the Clerk met with S.Mason, M.Turner (SDC) and Lynne Eggington (Wicksteed) on 17.10.17 to discuss the ground settlement issues. We are awaiting feed-back from Lynne, so the Clerk will contact her. D.Best suggested we could get a surveyor’s report to determine the cause of the subsidence which might determine a solution. C. Jarvis (Wicksteed) initially advised the issues could only be overcome by installing a surfacing system that incorporates an engineered base. This might not be permitted under the terms of the SSSI status. The gravel placed underneath the cradle swings (and then resurfaced) appeared to have solved the first subsidence issue that occurred shortly after the play area was finished. This might be a cheaper option.
- 2. The Clerk has submitted the final report to the West Somerset CIM Manager. This should complete our obligations under the grant agreement.

**86/17 ENHANCEMENTS:**

- 1. **Grounds Maintenance Contract**  
The Clerk has submitted the requirements to Clean Surrounds (SDC) to amend the contract as follows:
  - a) Play area from 7 times per annum to up to 14 times;
  - b) All other grass cutting from 7 times to up to 10 times;
  - c) Spray the play area to kill the weeds (with approved chemicals for play areas) price per spray as required thereafter;
  - d) Initial cut of the wildflower area; thereafter include in the normal schedule.
If the costs are not submitted within the next week, the Clerk will chase. **Action: Clerk**
- 2. Sedgemoor Tree Services will be sending through the completed tree maintenance schedule shortly.
- 3. **Daffodil Bulbs from SDC**  
The bulbs will be offered to Otterhampton and Steart (not in the WWT Steart Marshes area). B.Birkenhead suggested planting some in the area where the wild flower meadow was (Crossways).

**87/17 HIGHWAYS**

- 1. **Parish Site Visit of A.Coupe SCC (Acting Strategic Manager, Major Programmes) 13.10.17**

Councillors met with A.Coupe, early morning at the Combwich junction to observe the traffic flows on the C182; discuss the 50mph speed limit; the layby by Dame Withycombe Villas and the Biffen's Corner junction. It was beneficial to get Andy's views first hand. He thought the traffic flow at the junction worked well; he advised that lighting at the junction would not be possible on safety grounds re lack of appropriate speed limit in a derestricted area; he is sympathetic to Biffen's Corner concerns and supports seeking a solution as well as the layby width at Dame Withycombe cottages. He suggested these items should be taken forward to the meeting between the Clerk and K.Tyson (road safety engineer) on 1.11.17 together with our suggestions for the start and finish locations of the 50mph speed limit.

2. **Parish Tour with Katherine Tyson (KT) Highways and the Clerk – 1.11.17**

The parish tour with KT was extremely beneficial. The Clerk had circulated notes to councillors. The main points/actions from the visit include:

- a) 50 mph speed limit likely to start at the Rodway Hill roundabout to just beyond Claylands Corner, Stogursey. A 50mph roundel will be placed on the road just prior to/south of Biffens Corner junction. Similarly, either a roundel or 'slow' marking just before the Combwich junction (north).
- b) A sign indicating a double bend (north) of Combwich junction.
- c) Agreed that it is potentially dangerous using the Dame Withycombe cottages layby and subject to consultation with residents (as some of the verge would need to be removed) the layby could be widened. KT suggested we apply to our County Councillor to support this work for funding through the Small Improvement Scheme (SIS) initiative.
- d) The Police bollards in Brookside Rd are a matter for the Police.
- e) Double yellow lines as suggested by a Brookside Rd resident were discussed (see minute 87/17/3).
- f) Visitor parking at The Towers. KT saw no danger from cars parking on the road near the Village Hall; albeit a possible inconvenience at times. If the drive is obstructed, such that resident's cars cannot get out, then it is a Police matter. If the Police recommended to Highways that further action should be taken e.g. white lining following Police action a number of times, then this may be a consideration.
- g) Biffen's Corner. KT will look at the legislation surrounding the use of a mirror at the junction. It is not normally permitted. She will also check the legalities regarding compulsory instruction to remove the vegetation at the wall of the first property which restricts the view of oncoming traffic.
- h) The Clerk asked if it would be possible to take the bend away 200 yards north of the junction and in effect, remove the blind spot. KT will rule out the options in g) above first. She would then need to discuss with the Highway's Team whether this could be an option. Funding could be a problem although it could also be considered as a SIS initiative.
- i) Warning junction sign 'posts' at the Stockland/Otterhampton/Steart junction were erected some time ago but not the 'signs'. KT to follow up to ensure the job is completed.
- j) An "access only" plate will be added to the No-through Road sign at the Steart Gate car park following an action from the Steart Focussed Community Forum meetings.

3. **Brookside Rd Parking**

- a) A resident's suggestion submitted to Highways for alternate double yellow lines (DYL) from the start of Brookside Rd to just before Nursery Cl was considered. KT said alternate DYL would not be practical, neither did she see the need to extend them beyond Estuary Park. KT suggested if following consultation with residents, DYL is an acceptable option, she thought the near side of the road (re number of dropped kerbs) would be the preferred option.
- b) Resident's parking permits were discussed but discounted as they are restrictive, complex, have cost implications; and need to be re-apply for annually. They could potentially worsen the situation.
- c) KT sent councillors 2 proposals reflecting the above considerations; one showing DYL no waiting at any time and another time restricted e.g. no waiting between 8am and 5pm. Councillors witnessed the problem, noting it was particularly bad during early evenings and could present a risk to emergency vehicle access. Vehicles are also stacking up to the junction, causing queuing on the C182. Councillors are concerned that the use of DYL would not be palatable for everyone and undertook to speak to as many residents of Brookside Rd as possible over the coming weeks to seek views. The impact to restrict parking here will almost certainly affect parking elsewhere in the village so any action must be considered very carefully. An appropriate response will be sent to the resident. **Action: Clerk**
- d) B.Birkenhead wondered if the SDC Brookside Rd garages are all taken, as if not, they could be being used which might help to alleviate the situation. **Action: Clerk.**

88/17 **MEETING REPORTS:**

1. **11.10.17 –Village Hall.** D.Cather attended and gave an update from the OPPT meeting.
2. **17.10.17 – Otterhampton Parish Project Team (OPPT).** Val Bishop (Somerset Community Foundation) gave an update on the process. It was a very useful meeting as progress can now be made. The

Community fund is open and the first panel will sit in January to consider applications. D.Cather said he will step down from OPPT as if he gets elected as Chairman there may be the opportunity for conflict.

3. **27.10.17 – SSG.** The minutes have been circulated.

**89/17 FORTHCOMING MEETING NOTIFICATION:**

2.11.17 – Transport Forum  
8.11.17 – Steart Forum  
9.11.17 - Community Forum  
28.11.17- Parish Cluster  
5.12.17 – OPPT

**90/17 CORRESPONDENCE/COMMUNICATION:**

**General List (Received/Sent)**

- a) OPRA – A member of the parish council is required to attend the firework display on 5.11.17. The Clerk will write to confirm that a councillor will be present. **Action: Clerk**
- b) Mr R Forgan, Crossways – Concerned at the disruption and inconvenience of the EDF buses picking up Hinkley Employees from the bus shelter. D.Cather said there is no need for the buses to drop off passengers at the bus stop - this could be via the layby on the C182 (village side). R.Edwards (EDF) will be advised of our thoughts. **Action: Clerk**
- c) Mr B Sparkes – 2 letters; one in respect of access issues outside the Towers and the other containing general queries in the village. The Clerk will respond accordingly. **Action: Clerk**
- d) SCC – Advising the date to pick up winter salt if required. We hold sufficient stock currently.
- e) Devon Fire and Rescue Risk Management Plan Consultation until 31.12.17.
- f) Magnox – Various dates/locations of drop-in sessions re transportation of Intermediate Level Waste from other power stations to Hinkley Point A.
- g) SDC – Boundary Commission revised proposals for the South West (we are not affected).
- h) SDC – Community Health Fund Grants up to £1k, apply by 1.12.17.
- i) Avon and Somerset Crime Commission PCC Community Action Fund (grants up to £3k).
- j) Environment Agency (EA) acknowledging our response to the Bridgwater Tidal Barrier consultation.
- k) Mr T Jones – concerns re EA flood defence plans for Combwich re the Bridgwater Tidal Barrier Scheme.
- l) M.Lloyd-Williams - copy of wildflower group meeting notes.
- m) SDC – Local Plan notification of examination hearing by the Planning Inspectorate.
- n) Somerset Rivers Authority – Half year progress report.

**91/17 REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES:**

**1. Hinkley Liaison**

Nothing to report

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

Dick reported from the Community Focussed Forums to discuss the Dog walking leaflet, visitor numbers, traffic and communication. Dogs will be permitted off leads in more areas but will be required to be under effective control and asked to be put on leads in wildlife sensitive areas; the map on the leaflet will be withdrawn; WWT is developing a strategy for visitor numbers and will be mindful where possible about over-promotion of the Scheme; WWT acknowledged communication had diminished somewhat and this has also been addressed.

Dick advised that the Nether Stowey Fire Brigade had responded to a call taking out the defibrillator and then putting back into service. Dick is unsure if it had been a genuine emergency requirement or a fault.

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

Barry is heavily involved with the lantern parade and Firework display on 5.11.17. The “old folks” Christmas dinner will be on 2.12.17.

**4. Village Hall**

The next meeting is on 10.11.17.

**5. Otterhampton Parish Project Team (OPPT)**

Circa 20 responses were received from the consultation to update the existing project list. These will be reviewed and the project list amended if appropriate.

**6. School Liaison (R.Perrett)**

Rachel attended a meeting on 1.11.17 with Mrs Mills and Mr Blackmore.

- a) The ongoing problem of cars was discussed and Rachel advised of the “voluntary one-way system” around the village. This will be put in the School’s newsletter. The staff are also looking into resurrecting the “walking bus”.

- b) The idea to produce a dog fouling poster was raised. Rachel will attend a short assembly before Christmas to promote the competition. The parish council will judge the entries and also provide a / some prizes.
- c) The numbers attending the School are unfortunately dropping.

**7. Public Rights of Way (B.Birkenhead)**

Bob was advised that the problem with the PRow near Dame Withycombe cottages is the responsibility of Wessex Water. Bob is checking the gates and signposts for defects throughout the parish.

**8. Otter Tales (B.Leathwood)**

The deadline for the next edition is 5.11.17. There may be an issue with an article regarding Nuclear Power/Hinkley C. Councillors queried if the newsletter is the right vehicle for this type of article and also felt that whilst censorship of the newsletter might not be appropriate, they did not want to compromise the newsletter if EDF chose to withdraw sponsorship. Alternatively, we could give EDF the "right to reply".

**9. Otter Wheels**

The scheme is running well but it could do with more drivers.

**92/17 DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING:**

The next meeting will be on Thursday 7 December at 7.00pm in Otterhampton Village Hall (to include the Combwich Wharf update).

The meeting ended at 9.55 pm.

Signed:

Date: 7 December 2017

Chairman

