

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

on

**THURSDAY 7 SEPTEMBER 2017 HELD AT OTTERHAMPTON VILLAGE HALL**

**BRIDGWATER TIDAL BARRIER UPDATE – ENVIRONMENT AGENCY (EA)** (Andy Hohl and Amy Cocker)

The EA gave a summary of the current proposals. These include to build improvements to the downstream defences to provide a standard of protection (SOP) of 1 in 200 to Combwich, Chilton Trinity and Pawlett (i.e. the same as Bridgwater). This will mean raising sections of the existing online defences; building new lengths of secondary defences and continue to maintain the existing online defences. For Combwich, the design proposals at this time (subject to further consultation both technical and public) will equate to raising the defences within Combwich village in the range of 300mm to 600mm (e.g. harbour wall, flood bank and walls by the Pill) upstream online embankment 600mm to 900mm; downstream online embankment 400mm to 500mm and a new offline secondary defence embankment south of Combwich 1.0m to 1.5m. A public drop-in session will be held in Combwich late September or early October to explain the outline proposals and to receive feedback. See also minute 55/17 below.

Questions and answers included:

- (Q) Define a 1 in 200 event. (A) The chance of that event happening is 1 in 200 in any year or 0.5% chance; a 1 in 100 event has a 1% chance.
- (Q) Concerns that 600mm raising of existing defences through Combwich is high e.g. harbour wall. (A) 600mm results from the current proposal to provide 1 in 200 SOP. If the community object to this a reduced SOP could be considered, however the tidal flood risk to properties would increase.
- (Q) Is there an increase flood risk in Combwich as a result of the barrier scheme. (A) No, there is no increased flood risk. The EA currently propose to provide the same SOP of 1 in 200 to Combwich as proposed for Bridgwater.

More information is available on SDC's website <https://www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/article/1659/Bridgwater-Barrier>

Ward councillors M. Caswell and J. Pay left after the EA presentation at 7.15pm, as they had to attend another meeting.

**PUBLIC SESSION:**

The three members of the public also left after the EA presentation although prior to this, one of them advised that the fly-parking at Brookside Rd has improved as there are generally fewer vehicles parking there.

**PRESENT:**

John Berry (Chairman), Dick Best (Vice-Chairman), Bob Birkenhead, Julie Evans, Barry Leathwood; Rachel Perrett and Aly Prowse (Clerk).

**48/17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:**

Apologies for absence were received from Dave Cather.

**49/17 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 6.7.17:**

The minutes of the meeting held on 6.7.17 were APPROVED and signed by the Chairman.

**50/17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS:**

There were no declarations of interest or dispensations applied for.

1. Future Chairman's Position

This was discussed because of J.Berry's move abroad in February 2018. A new Chair will be required and we will need to co-opt a new councillor. The Clerk asked SDC's legal department if following a resignation letter from John, we could advertise for a councillor whilst he was still in post to reduce the period we would be without a councillor for a 'seamless process'.

*Clerk's note – SDC subsequently confirmed this would not be possible. John will need to or could resign as Chair to fill this position first. We can only start the co-option process once a resignation has taken effect.*

J.Evans said she would not mind chairing the meetings but would have little time to do anything else.

D.Best had declared at the time of being appointed as Vice-Chair that he would not be able to undertake the Chair's role. He believes the Chair should live in Combwich to provide the main focus. He also said we had previously discussed individuals with various responsibilities should 'step up more' so it may be time to start doing this to lessen the onus on the Chair. One councillor was absent from the meeting so we do not have his views. Agenda item for the next meeting. **Action: Clerk**

**51/17 WARD REPORTS:**

There were no reports.

**52/17 PLANNING MATTERS:**

1. **3/32/17/005** - Construction of a Waste Encapsulation Plant, Hinkley A (AWAITING DECISION)
2. **39/16/00009 APPEAL** - Dwelling and creation of access, 14 School Lane (AWAITING DECISION)
3. **39/17/00007** – Dwelling & Garage, Plot 5, 9 Church Hill (SUPPORTED WITH CONDITIONS)
4. **39/17/00006** – Certificate of Lawfulness re existing use of farmhouse as a house of multiple occupation, Moxhill Farm, Combwich (AWAITING DECISION)
5. **39/17/00008** – 2 storey extension to form annex, Greenacre, Combwich (GRANTED)

**53/17 FINANCIAL MATTERS:**

1. **Bank Balances** - Current A/C £831; Deposit A/C £12214; Reserve A/C £11253.
2. **The following payments were AGREED:**

Mrs A Prowse	£346.72	(July salary including £8.06 miscellaneous costs)
Mrs A Prowse	£354.64	(August salary including £15.98 miscellaneous costs)
Play Safety Ltd	£113.40	(Annual external play area inspection)
WJ Frost	£432.00	(Installation of verge markers along the common)
SDC	£278.64	(Annual grass cutting Apr-Jun 2017)
JRB Enterprise Ltd	£305.76	(9600 Dog bags for the dispensers) **
Sedgemoor Tree Services	£720.00	(Pollard willow tree)

\*\* In 16 months, we have used 10000 bags in the dispensers, circa 145 bags per week at a cost of £4.35.
3. **Budget Monitoring Statement to 30.6.17**

This was reviewed. The Clerk explained that funds set aside in Reserves from 2016/17 for expenditure in 2017/18 will be transferred to the current account when invoices are received (e.g Combwich retaining wall barrier fencing) hence the Reserves Account will diminish.
4. **Open Spaces – Consider Annual Subscription renewal at £45**

This was AGREED as proposed by B.Leathwood and seconded by B.Birkenhead. **Action: Clerk**
5. **The Pensions Regulator – Workplace Pensions**

The Clerk completed the enrolment duties and has received the declaration of compliance notice, thus we are compliant with this legal obligation. The Council does not need to participate in the scheme because the Clerk does not reach the earnings criteria (£833 per month).
6. **Annual External Audit**

The Clerk has chased Grant Thornton as the Return we submitted in May is still outstanding and must be displayed by 30.9.17. She was advised that the Smaller Authorities' Audits are still awaiting authorisation.

**54/17 ITEMS FROM THE LAST MEETING:**

1. **Stockland Parish Meeting**

Following a request from J.Sivyer (Chair) to explore a possible 'grouping' of Otterhampton and Stockland's administration he has conducted further research which revealed a number of complicated hoops in the process plus some other possibilities which were succinctly outlined in the recent Stockland Gatepost. Members had various views and concluded that it would not be particularly advantageous to us as we already have the ability to discuss common problems e.g. the C182. Members AGREED that we would await a formal approach before discussing further.
2. **Review of the Action List (for actions not covered by the agenda):**
  - a) **No 1 – Bus Shelter.** Work carried out during August. **Action Complete**
  - b) **No 9 – 50mph on C182.** B.Birkenhead said he thinks the speed limit should be 40mph.
  - c) **No 10 – Parking Permits on Track.** The vehicle previously reported parking off the main track in front of the gate to Mr Page's land, has allegedly been given permission by a resident. J.Berry will have a chat with the resident. **Action Ongoing: J.Berry**
  - d) **No 13 – Hedge by Riverside Farm footpath** – Unlikely this will be done before August, but B.Birkenhead will chase early September. **Action Ongoing: B.Birkenhead**
  - e) **No 16 – Combwich Ponds.** B.Birkenhead will hopefully be in a position to submit the appeal to the Planning Inspectorate by end of September / beginning of October. **Action ongoing: B.Birkenhead**
  - f) **No 17 – Play Area.** Wicksteed will replace the clip on the scrambler net shortly. They claim the grass on the safety surface is from seeds blowing on to the surface and taking root, rather than growing through and have suggested a 'playsafe' weed killer is applied. B.Leathwood believes the grass is growing through the surface as it is almost impossible to pull it out. (see also minute 57/17/2d below).
  - g) **No 18 - Collapsing wall at Ship Lane.** We have established ownership but we are unable to pursue. We will continue to monitor the wall, but will also advise L.Hackling (Highways) that we are unlikely to resolve. **Action: Clerk**
  - h) **No 20 – NHS Health Check.** The Clerk did respond by 30.6.17 as required but has not received any further communication. To Pursue. **Action: Clerk**

**55/17 BRIDGWATER TIDAL BARRIER – PRELIMINARY ENVIRONMENT INFORMATION REPORT (PEIR):**  
Following the presentation from the EA, D.Best suggested there might not be anything we could meaningfully contribute particularly as there are no detailed plans as yet. We will however respond to the PEIR consultation by 20.9.17 with the following comments: **Action: Clerk**

- We are pleased that the additional defences will be extended to Comwich
- There may be some concerns at the potential loss of amenity re the proposed increase in height of the harbour wall and whether consideration could be given to extending/improving the walkway.
- We feel more comments will come forward at the Comwich Drop-in Session

**56/17 HIGHWAYS**

**1. Biffens' Corner (C182/Otterhampton turn-off)**

Following the response from A.Coupe suggesting we talk to the landowners to try and find a solution which then might then receive financial and technical consideration by SCC, it was AGREED to arrange a site visit with the landowners in early October. We will also involve J.Sivyer in the discussion. **Action: Clerk**  
A further accident occurred in August involving a tractor and a Hinkley C employee's vehicle, together with a number of near misses which have been experienced. The Clerk has advised A.Coupe of these incidents.

**2. Other**

- a) Repairs to ruts/depressions have recently been carried out at Steart village; surface dressing of the road between Steart beach and Biffens' Corner has been programmed for summer 2018; repairs to pothole and ruts at passing places between Biffens' Corner and the WWT compound will be carried out in the next couple of months.
- b) Gary Warren ('Signs and Lines") is no longer covering the Sedgemoor Area and has been replaced by Katherine Tyson. The Clerk has requested a meeting with Katherine to discuss the outstanding issues (e.g Dame Withycombe Hill safety markers) when she returns from annual leave mid-September.

**57/17 ENHANCEMENTS:**

**1. Comwich Retaining Wall Area**

- a) The Brookside Rd nameplate is still outstanding as at 30.8.17.
- b) Following the pollarding of the willow tree and vegetation removal by the brook we have been made aware of a potential safety issue because the brook is now exposed and whilst not generally a problem when the water is low, during heavy periods of rain when the brook is high and there is very fast flowing water, it could be dangerous. It was therefore AGREED to obtain a price to erect a post and rail fence at the top of the brook, as proposed by D.Best and seconded by B.Leathwood (first checking with Wessex Water to ensure their work here would not compromise the proposal). **Action: Clerk**

**2. Play Area**

- a) The concept of the verge markers to prevent parking is working well, particularly during the day which is reducing the risk to children crossing the road unsighted.
- b) It has been noted that one of the concrete bollards at the entrance to the play has been knocked by a vehicle and could be unsafe. We will get this looked at. **Action: Clerk**
- c) The 'home-made' sign to ask children not to take scooters or bicycles into the play area has been 'removed'. As this practise is still ongoing, it was AGREED to get a more professional sign made up and to affix securely. **Action: Clerk**
- d) There are instances of ground settlement underneath some of the safety surfacing which is of concern. It is not clear if the contractor is responsible, but it needs to be resolved. Initially we will request Scott Mason (SDC Parks & Open Spaces Manager) visit the site to give us advice on both this issue and the grass growing through the surface (minute 54/17/2f also refers). **Action: Clerk**

**58/17 MEETING REPORTS:**

- 1. 6.7.17 –Transport Forum.** This was partly reported at the previous meeting (minute 40/17/1b) and minutes have been circulated. Julie added that a review regarding double white lines on Dame Withycombe Hill will take place and the distance required beyond Biffen's Corner for the 50mph limit needs to be determined.
- 2. 18.7.17 – Hinkley C Site Visit.** Members reported the visit had been both interesting and useful.
- 3. 20.7.17 – Community Forum.** The minutes have been circulated previously.
- 4. 21.7.17 – Steart Forum Community Focus Group.** D.Best reported that 2 useful and positive meetings have been held, resulting in clarification of the dog walking issues on the Steart peninsula; previous instructions that dogs must be on leads will be replaced with dogs are required to be under 'effective control' and the request for dogs to be on leads will be restricted to sensitive areas only; the strategy for visitor numbers to the Marshes was also discussed in great detail and proposals to improve communication with the local community have also been addressed.

5. **3.8.17 – Village Walk.** An action list has been produced which will be incorporated into the main action list for review at future meetings.

**59/17 FORTHCOMING MEETING NOTIFICATION:**

13.9.17 – Steart Forum  
3.10.17 – Joint Parishes Meeting at SDC  
5.10.17 – Transport Forum  
19.10.17 - Community Forum  
27.10.17 – SSG

**60/17 CORRESPONDENCE:**

1. **Cannington Playing Fields**

Cannington Parish Council is opening discussions with nearby parishes to canvass ideas and support for the use of its playing fields. Members are in favour of this particularly because of the access via the cycle path. Ideas such as a tennis court; skateboard park/BMX track were initial thoughts. It might be possible to apply for funds from the wider Hinkley Point CIM fund if use by multi parishes. Cannington Parish Council will be informed of our initial interest and support. **Action: Clerk**

2. **General List (Received/Sent)**

- a) SDC – Notification of RLT2 and 2 Funds available
- b) RoSPA Play Safety – Amended Play Area report following an error by the Company
- c) Parish Champion – No nomination this year
- d) Zurich Insurance – Confirmation that the 69 Estuary Park case has been formally closed
- e) A potential problem of a caravan appearing at the Steart Beach Car Park with the occupant declaring she intended to permanently reside there was averted when she left voluntarily after 8 days. The Police were informed at the time
- f) Recent correspondence about WW2 MI6 activity in an underground ‘bunker’ at Steart has recently come to light. The Clerk will circulate information to Members but research for a fuller account together with photographs is still ongoing.

**61/17 REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES:**

1. **Hinkley Liaison**

Fly Parking – email from A.Cockcroft (EDF Hinkley C) explaining the current actions in place to combat the problem (previously circulated to members).

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

The sea buckthorn, albeit stubborn, is gradually being eradicated.

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

Nothing to report.

4. **Village Hall**

The next meeting is on 13.9.17.

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

The revised Terms of Reference as agreed by OPPT on 22.8.17 were APPROVED. The next meeting is on 17.10.17.

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

Rachel will make contact with the School in the next couple of weeks.

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

A resident has communicated directly with G.Martin (SCC) re the footpath / brook issue at her Estuary Park property backing on to the footpath to Bolham.

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

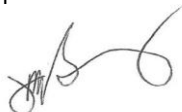
The deadline for the next edition is 10.9.17, with publication the following week.

9. **Otter Wheels**

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

**62/17 DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING:**

The next meeting will be on Thursday 5 October 2017 at 7.00pm in Otterhampton Village Hall.  
The meeting ended at 9.25 pm.



Signed:  
(Chairman)

Date: 5 October 2017