

OTTERHAMPTON PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

on

THURSDAY 7 DECEMBER 2017 HELD AT OTTERHAMPTON VILLAGE HALL

ANNUAL PRECEPT MEETING (6pm):

The financial information to determine next year's Precept was reviewed in detail. The following increases were unanimously AGREED as proposed by J.Evans and seconded by B.Leathwood.

1. Annual Grounds Maintenance by £500 to £2000 (extra cuts and weed spraying in the play area and for the main grassed areas);
2. Clerk's Expenses by £150 to £350 (to increase the internet allowance from 10 GB per month to 40 GB);
3. Play Area Reserves – by £1k to £2k (£1k per annum will be insufficient to build up anticipated repair or replacement costs.
4. Tree Maintenance Works – by £1500 to £3000 (as a result of urgent works identified in the annual tree survey)
5. Grants (internal to parish) – by £750 to £1500 (to provide match funding opportunities for Community Impact Mitigation (CIM) projects);
6. Combwich Track Maintenance Reserves – by £250 to £500 (£250 insufficient to build up anticipated maintenance costs);
7. Computing Equipment Reserves – by £100 to £200 (to ensure sufficient funds available for future equipment).

To accommodate the above changes, the Precept will need to be increased from the current £20000. The actual amount will be agreed at the January meeting following various scenarios to calculate the impact of a rise to the average Band D tax payer (as per the parish council element of the Council Tax. **Action: Clerk**

COMBWICH WHARF UPDATE (Alan Lynch – Hochtief and Ross Edwards – EDF):

A.Lynch advised that the first stage has just been completed, generally on time and to budget. The contractors have tried to keep the noise and disruption to a minimum. Only 8 of the 10 days usage of the barge was required and nothing untoward was found that would prevent use of the wharf. Prior to the next phase, advanced notification will be given to enable communication with the School regarding parking on the Wharf Rd. One boat owner has some issues he will take up with EDF outside of the meeting.

There is no fixed timescale for the next phase although R.Edwards (EDF) said he will give as much advanced notice as possible, and hoped to be able to give an update in the spring. The wharf needs to be operational in 2020.

PUBLIC SESSION:

1. Combwich Bus Stop

A resident expressed his extreme upset at the disturbance, disruption and inconvenience that the EDF staff buses are causing to residents at Crossways whilst using the bus stop, particularly during the early hours of the morning. An alternative location for a bus stop is being explored together with measures to be implemented as soon as possible to alleviate the problem. The parish council is unhappy at the level of disruption, and also as a consequence of vehicles being parked across the lane in protest, the Community free bus drivers are refusing to come into the bus stop to pick up passengers, forcing them to cross the C182 to catch the bus from the off-side lay-by. This is a safety hazard. We will attempt to resolve this issue. *Clerks note – a meeting was held with EDF on 11.12.17.*

2. Brookside Rd Parking

A resident suggested road narrowing barriers could be used to control speeds of vehicles coming into the village which in addition, could also help with parking problems. This option will be explored in the mix of options currently being considered. The parish council is in the process of speaking with Brookside Rd residents to seek their views. See also minute 102/17/1.

3. OPRA is considering replacing the pavilion on the Common and/or to increase its height off the floor because it has been flooded on a number of occasions. The planning permission for the pavilion dates back to 1989 so this will need to be viewed to assess if new planning permission might be required. OPRA is also considering applying for CIM funds to replace the existing ride on mower for a larger model. This could potentially be used to cut other areas in the parish.

PRESENT:

John Berry (Chairman), Dick Best (Vice-Chairman), Bob Birkenhead, Dave Cather, Julie Evans, Barry Leathwood, Rachel Perrett, Dist Cllr Julie Pay, Aly Prowse (Clerk) and 6 members of the public.

93/17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

There were no apologies for absence.

94/17 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 2.11.17:

The minutes of the meeting held on 2.11.17 were APPROVED and signed by the Chairman.

95/17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS:

There were no declarations of interest or dispensations applied for.

96/17 WARD REPORTS:

Cllr Pay advised that Cllr Mike Caswell is away on holiday, and following a period of illness will not return to council duties until the New Year; we wish him well. Cllr Pay has been busy with planning applications and recently attended 'Safeguarding' training which she found very useful.

Cllr Pay left the meeting at 8pm

97/17 PLANNING MATTERS:

1. **39/17/00012** – Variations for previous planning consent 39/13/00004 & 39/10/00003 for 3 dwellings, 9 Church Hill, Combwich. AWAITING DECISION.
2. **39/17/00014** – Erect detached garage/garden store and demolish existing garage. AWAITING DECISION.
3. **SDC Roll out of Electronic Consultations for Planning Applications.**

This will take effect from 2.4.18. This may cause problems at various locations in the parish where internet coverage is poor. In addition, we do not have an A3 (or larger) printer which will present difficulties printing large plans and maps and we don't own a projector to project onto a wall at parish council meetings. It will be difficult looking at plans on ipads / iphones etc. SDC has invited parishes to raise any concerns and difficulties by 18.1.18. We have already done this, requesting that we continue to receive hard copy documents as per minute 82/17/4.

98/17 FINANCIAL MATTERS:

1. **Bank Balances** - Current A/C £2882; Deposit A/C £15091; Reserve A/C £9379.
2. **The following payments were AGREED:**

Mrs A Prowse	£396.11	(November salary including £57.45 miscellaneous costs)
Grant Thornton	£360.00	(External Annual Audit to 31.3.17)
Crestmoor Construction Ltd	£3198.15	(Barrier refurbishment at the Combwich retaining wall)
S.Criddle	£ 30.00	(Computer diagnostics)
Woodland Southwest Ltd	£354.00	(Vegetation removal along Wharf Rd)
Hill House	£ 20.00	(Stear Forum meeting on 8.11.17)
M.Ingram	£560.00	(Refurb barn doors and fence across brook by Wharf Rd)

99/17 ITEMS FROM THE LAST MEETING:

1. **Review of the Action List (for actions not covered by the agenda):**
 - a) **No 7 – Add R.Perrett to Bank Mandate.** This will be actioned in the New Year.
 - b) **No 9 – Cannington Playing Fields** – A meeting will be held in the New Year. J.Evans and B.Birkenhead will visit the playing fields before the meeting to consider potential use of the facilities.
 - c) **No 10 – Parking on Combwich Track** – J.Berry spoke to the resident concerned who advised the vehicle parked near her property, is a visitor. If parking on the track increases, we could consider erecting a barrier at the start of the track with access for residents and others with access rights.
 - d) **No 11 – NHS Health Checks.** We will chase the NHS for a date for this to happen. **Action: Clerk.**
 - e) **No 13 – PRoW and Hedge by Riverside Farm.** The Clerk will seek quotations to remove the vegetation from the brownie copse and to cut back the hedge. **Action: Clerk.**
 - f) **No 16 – Combwich Ponds.** The Planning Inspectorate (PI) responded. It appears that there will be no acceleration with our case which remains at no. 40 on the list (only 16 of these have been heard). With the recent exposure and involvement of I.Liddell-Grainger regarding a footpath on Blue Anchor beach, B.Leathwood suggested we write to him to ask for support. This was AGREED. Barry will draft the letter which will be signed by the Chairman. **Action: B.Leathwood.** *nb Clerks note – subsequent to the meeting further correspondence received advising SCC has been given 6 months to resolve the matter by the Secretary of State.*
 - g) **No 17 – a)** The play area has been sprayed with a safe week killer
 - h) **No 19 – l)** Ship Lane nameplate. This has been ordered by SDC.
 - i) **No 20 – Future Chairman's Position.** J. Berry said he will stand down as Chair at the January meeting and will remain as a councillor until March which is when he will be moving to Cyprus. We have received some interest from a resident regarding the future councillor vacancy.

100/17 PLAY AND RECREATION AREA:

The Clerk wrote to Wicksteed in mid-November outlining the reasons why we believe they should be responsible to address the ground settlement issues in the play area. She will chase them for a response. **Action: Clerk**

101/17 ENHANCEMENTS:

1. **Grounds Maintenance Contract**

As requested, Clean Surrounds (SDC) submitted a quote to amend the contract as below:

- a) Play area from 7 cuts per annum to up to 14 times @ £25 per cut (up to £175);
- b) All other grass cutting from 7 times to up to 10 times @ £125 per cut (up to £375);
- c) Spray the play area to kill the weeds (with approved chemicals for play areas) @ £30 per occasion, normally April (and September if required). The play area has been sprayed in November at no cost.
- d) Initial cut of the wildflower area; thereafter include in the normal schedule – The cost to clear the area is £96, and then it will be included in the normal cutting regime at no extra monthly cost.
- e) SDC supplied a sack of bulbs. Some will be for use at Otterhampton and others where the wildflower patch was. B.Birkenhead volunteered to plant them.
- f) The option to take up year 2 of the contract will be discussed at the January meeting. **Action: Clerk**

2. **Tree Survey**

The formal tree survey has been submitted. We will need to discuss a programme of works. This will be an agenda item for January's meeting. **Action: Clerk**

102/17 HIGHWAYS

1. **Brookside Rd Parking.**

Face to face consultation with residents regarding the suggestion of double yellow lines is continuing. So far, there is little support; residents generally feel they can sort the parking out amongst themselves; another property has recently created a parking area in their garden and it is likely another property will do the same; it would be unenforceable and may cause added inconvenience to residents. In addition, the fly-parking appears to be under control, although we need to maintain pressure on EDF (see Public Session).

2. **Crossways bus shelter, kerbing and associated issues**

Highways were asked to look at the broken kerbs and eroding verge caused by the EDF staff buses (SPS) driving over them. We are concerned at the mud on the roads as a result. Highway's advised that any attempt to carry out remedial works would be futile and that those vehicles unable to negotiate the junction should cease using it or for the junction to be widened which unfortunately Highways could not fund.

3. **Bolham lay-by**

Highways were sent photographs on 15.11.17 showing the dreadful state of the lay-by caused by the HGV's travelling to and from Hinkley Point, pulling in to 'lay- up'. Mud is being dragged on to the road between here and the Combwich junction, which when coupled with the mud from the bus shelter entrance being transported on up towards to Dame Withycombe Hill, is creating a considerable safety hazard on our roads. Highways responded quickly and attended the following week agreeing that SCC has an obligation to maintain the lay-by, so presumably it will be scheduled for repair.

4. **Biffen's Corner**

Reference minute 87/17/2g, Highways advised that the Department for Transport does not permit the use of mirrors on the public highway. They are classified as unauthorised signs because experience shows that rather than improving safety, a mirror could increase safety risks (reflect light and interfere with driver's vision; reduce the ability to judge an oncoming vehicle's speed; create an unreasonable dependence on the mirror; if dirty, distort or restrict the view and are a target for vandals). It was also suggested that the parish "would probably be best off arranging for a contractor to remove vegetation at the corner as the Highway's budget to carry out hedge trimming has dwindled".

The other option we suggested e.g. road widening to the north of the junction could be considered under the Project Management Office (PMO) Boards. This is where 3rd parties contribute financially towards work on the highway, but need to be considered along with other priorities in the County. This will need further investigation, landowners will need to be approached and funding opportunities will need to be explored.

5. **C182 - Accidents**

The parish council is concerned with safety aspects on the C182 particularly between Combwich and the Biffen's Corner junctions. Over the last 12 months there have been 6 accidents that we are aware of (and a number of near misses) plus 2 other accidents between Combwich and the new Rodway roundabout. Fortunately, no-one has been seriously hurt. The Clerk ensures any accidents we are aware of are reported to Andy Coupe at SCC as we continue to press for road safety improvements. Our concern also includes the safety of residents at Dame Withycombe cottages who need to cross the road to access the village, which is clearly becoming increasingly difficult because of the speed and volumes of traffic.

103/17 MEETING REPORTS:

- 2.11.17 Transport Forum – J.Evans advised that the minutes have been circulated. The main items from the meeting included the Cannington Cycleway will be officially opened on 11.12.17; the roadworks at J23, J24 and the A39 are on schedule; the EDF staff bus-pass system has encountered technical problems;

residents are encouraged to keep reporting fly-parking to EDF (0800 096 9650) and the next meeting workshops on 1.2.18 will focus on Combrich Wharf and Marine Transport.

- 8.11.17 Steart Forum – D.Best said a presentation was received on the Bridgwater Tidal Barrier Scheme. This is planned to start by 2020 and finish by 2023. Discussions are ongoing to determine the height to raise the flood defence levels by. The WWT Community Focused Forum agreed to change the previous dog walking restrictions; dog owners will need to keep dogs under 'effective control' and asked to put dogs on leads only in wildlife sensitive areas. The Bristol Port Company has now executed all its options to purchase land between Wall Common and Stolford, but still no start date for the scheme.
- 9.11.17 Community Forum – D.Best was unable to attend the Forum.
- 28.11.17 Parish Cluster – B.Leathwood and the Clerk attended. There will be a special meeting in January involving those parishes adversely affected by Hinkley Point C, who want a targeted approach.
- 5.12.17 OPPT – The Expression of Interest form and Guidance Notes were approved at the meeting and are ready to be issued to individuals, groups and organisations who wish to pursue projects.
- 104/17 FORTHCOMING MEETING NOTIFICATION:**
13.12.17 - Village Hall
11.1.18 – OPPT (To review and update the Community Plan)
- 105/17 CORRESPONDENCE/COMMUNICATION:**
- 1. General List (Received/Sent)**
 - a) Agnes Dougall requested the renewal of her Combrich Track Parking Permit. This was AGREED. It was noted that there are now only two permits in operation. **Action: Clerk**
 - b) Open Spaces – Donation request. As we already subscribe, this was not supported.
 - c) External auditor appointment from 2017/18 will be PKF Littlejohn LLP.
 - d) Wessex RFCC (Regional Flood and Coastal Committee) strategy for 2017-2021.
 2. Mendip Community Transport – Request for a donation. As we have a number of parishioners who use this service, it was AGREED to give a donation of £100.
 3. Brookside Rd Garages – we were surprised to receive the email from Homes in Sedgemoor advising the site has been earmarked for development and likely the garages will be demolished in the future. The existing empty garages are in very poor condition and will not be let. We will enquire what sort of development is anticipated. **Action: Clerk**
 4. Stockland Bristol Parish Meeting – J.Sivyer (Chairman) advised that the parish meeting wish to explore a possible 'Grouping' with Otterhampton parish. There was insufficient time available to discuss this item so it will be an agenda item next month. **Action: Clerk**
- 106/17 REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES:**
- 1. Hinkley Liaison**
There was nothing to report.
 - 2. Steart Ward (D.Best)**
The sea buckthorn project has gone well. Planting of the trees and shrubs will take place this weekend.
 - 3. OPRA (B.Leathwood)**
The senior citizen's Christmas dinner held on 2.12.17 was very successful.
 - 4. Village Hall**
The next meeting is on 13.12.17.
 - 5. Otterhampton Parish Project Team (OPPT) -** See minute 103/17.
 - 6. School Liaison (R.Perrett)**
Rachel attended a meeting with Andy Sandercock, the new Head. The discussion to amalgamate with the Bridgwater Academy Trust is in progress. Information concerning the School will be sent to Rachel in future.
 - 7. Public Rights of Way (B.Birkenhead)**
There was nothing to report aside from mention of uncut grass around the bench at Crossways.
 - 8. Otter Tales (B.Leathwood) -** The deadline for the next edition is 6.1.18
 - 9. Otter Wheels**
The scheme is approaching its 200th journey.
- 107/17 DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING:**
The next meeting will be on Thursday 4 January 2018 at 7.00pm in Otterhampton Village Hall.
The meeting ended at 9.15 pm.

Signed: (Chairman)



Date: 4 January 2018