

OTTERHAMPTON PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

held on

THURSDAY 5 JULY 2018, 7pm, at OTTERHAMPTON VILLAGE HALL

PUBLIC SESSION:

No items were raised.

PRESENT:

Dave Cather (Chairman), Julie Evans (Vice-Chair), Dick Best, Bob Birkenhead, Murray Lister, Rachel Perrett, Ward Cllrs Mike Caswell and Julie Pay, Aly Prowse (Clerk), 2 members of the public.

31/18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Apologies were received from Barry Leathwood.

32/18 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11.6.18:

The minutes of the meeting held on 11.6.18 were APPROVED and signed by the Chairman.

33/18 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS:

There were no declarations of interest or dispensations applied for other than those declared to SDC as part of Member's Interests disclosed at the time of taking Office. This information can be viewed on the SDC website.

34/18 WARD REPORTS:

- a) Cllr Pay was disappointed at the sparse attendance from parishes at the Parish Cluster meeting on 19.6.18.
 - b) Cllr Caswell gave an update of the Sedgemoor Local Plan. The public consultation should begin towards the middle/end of August. He advised that the cycleway from Cannington to Combwich has been swept and hedge cutting should commence soon. Finally, he said there has been some talk regarding the formation of a unitary authority.
- The Ward councillors left the meeting at 7.15pm

35/18 PLANNING MATTERS:

1. **39/18/00004** – Installation of 5 replacement windows, Crossways Farmhouse. GRANTED.
2. **39/18/00005** – Erection of detached building to provide living accommodation and garage; demolition of existing garage, Greenacre, Bolham Bridge. GRANTED
3. **13/18/00024** – EDF Hinkley C request for discharge of requirements relating to C28, flood resilience, Combwich Wharf land to south of Estuary Park. NOTIFICATION ONLY.
4. **13/18/00025** – EDF Hinkley C request for discharge of requirements relating to C27, rhyne crossings, Combwich Wharf land to south of Estuary Park. NOTIFICATION ONLY.
5. **Planning Training 27.6.18** – The Clerk attended this course but felt it was very basic and probably more suited to beginners and new councillors with no experience of the planning process. However, two things were emphasised; we should make it clear to parishioners that we are only Consultees and not decision makers and secondly, site visits are encouraged as long as we only seek understanding and/or clarification of the application and not to offer any opinion.

36/18 FINANCIAL MATTERS:

1. **Bank Balances** - Current A/C £1608.06; Deposit A/C £11094.44; Reserve A/C £12400.45
2. **The following payments were AGREED:**
 - Mrs A Prowse - £499.93 (June salary inc £18.74 (gift for internal auditor) and £24.34 (misc office costs))
 - Mrs A Prowse - £54.85 (Ring binders, dividers, wallet envelopes)
 - SALC - £30.00 (Chairman's training course)
 - Hill House Christian Centre - £20 (Stear Forum venue)
 - B.Leathwood - £220 (printing July Otter Tales)
 - K.Preston - £436 (Village gardening, cleaning and Play Area weekly inspections, April-June 2018)
3. **Quarterly Budget Monitoring Statement to 30.6.18**

The Clerk highlighted the following:

 - a) Line 10 – New unbudgeted item re Otter Tales printing; year-end forecast of £820. This may rise to £860 re the price increase of £30 this month which needs to be confirmed. **Action: B.Leathwood**
 - b) Line 15 – Play Area (ground settlement repairs). The final cost for these works will be £3625 (excluding VAT of £725 and Wicksteed's contribution of £983). We had set aside £5k in Reserves last year. £1715 was paid in 2017/18, and £2060 in 2018/19 (hence it will look as though this was an unbudgeted item). The work is now complete and we await the final invoice of £150.

- c) Line 31 – Defibrillator for Steart (£1333). We received a grant (see line 9 Income) for this item in 2017/18 but did not purchase it until 2018/19. Again, the income/expenditure spans two financial years.

37/18 ITEMS FROM THE LAST MEETING:

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

- No 5** – Critical tree works to willow tree on Wharf Rd. **Awaiting invoice.** Nb the willow over the brook (Church Hill end) has branches in danger of falling. Sedgemoor Trees to be contacted. **Action: Clerk**
No 7 – Arrange for Common to be cut and white lining for Village Fun day 14.7.18. **Action: Complete**
No 12 – Combwich Ponds. Contact SCC for response re decision date June 2018. **Action: B.Birkenhead**
No 17 – Amend Standing Orders and Financial Regulations; produce suite of procedures for each member. **Action Complete**
No 20 – Letter to SCC re Mobile Library and School Plans for parking. **Awaiting response**

2. Dame Withycombe Hill (DWH)

The Expression of Interest application to widen the layby at DWH in front of the cottages has been agreed in principle subject to the final cost. The Utilities survey is complete which resulted in no major issues found. Highways will now produce a specification to be sent to the SCC contractor for a fixed price. This will determine if/how much A.Coupe is prepared to contribute. The works will then need to be scheduled into the overall SCC programme. The residents at DWH will be updated. **Action: Clerk**

3. Play Area – ground settlement works

The work is complete (see also minute 36/18/3b above).

38/18 ENHANCEMENTS:

1. Picnic benches on the Common

The consultation resulted in 8 letters/emails from residents in the vicinity of the Village Hall. All of these were firmly against the proposals re concerns of noise, litter, urbanisation, loss of privacy, safety and loss of quiet amenity of the Green. Residents also felt that there was sufficient seating on the bank overlooking the Pill. J.Doble recommended against fixed seating underneath the large tree which could have safety and insurance implications. Councillors therefore decided not to grant permission to the Village Hall's request. However, it was agreed to maintain the status quo i.e. to permit occasional use of the Green for ad hoc events, as proposed by D.Cather and seconded by R.Perrett. The Village Hall and residents will be informed of this decision. **Action: Clerk**

2. Verge marker posts on verge near play area

Two verge marker posts have disappeared from the verge. They are also getting knocked over quite frequently now. The grass verge is quite overgrown. The village gardener will be asked to trim around the posts so they are visible. **Action: Clerk.** These posts were only installed as a temporary measure, so we will need to discuss what we need to do in the long term. It was agreed to discuss when we have our summer meeting.

39/18 GOVERNANCE:

a) General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) – Privacy Notices

The two parish council Privacy Notices (General Public & Staff/Councillors/Volunteers) were APPROVED as proposed by D.Best and seconded by M.Lister.

b) Amendment to Code of Conduct

The amended Code of Conduct was APPROVED as proposed by D.Cather and seconded by R.Perrett.

c) Freedom of Information Policy

The draft Freedom Of Information Policy was APPROVED as proposed by D.Cather and seconded by J.Evans.

These procedures and policies will be placed on the Parish Website. **Action: Clerk**

40/18 MEETING REPORTS:

19.6.18 – Parish Cluster

The notes from this meeting had been previously circulated. One of the key points reported was that towards the end of the year a greater Police presence will be seen in the parishes.

21.6.18 – Tree Strategy and Open Spaces Sub Group

J.Evans briefly outlined the key areas from the meeting:

- a) there is scope for enhancement at the brownie copse and it could be extended.
- b) most of the trees in the village are the same type (Ash) so it would be nice to introduce more varieties particularly when the older trees need to be replaced.
- c) J.Doble will put together a plan with general costings. Ideally the plan will cover the next 5-10 years.

- d) The earlier suggestion to submit a grant application to clear up the brownie copse will be deferred until the whole plan in c) above, is finalised.
- e) When considering the Plan, we should include the request for a tree in memory of the late Mr Nurton. J.Doble to be advised (retain on action list also). **Action: Clerk**
- f) There is some confusion regarding the responsibility/ownership of the vegetation on the ground opposite Nursey Close. The Clerk understands that the land belongs to Highways. R.Perrett said she thought the vegetation was planted by the volunteer gardening group some years ago. We will contact Highways to clarify what we may or may not do in this area. **Action: Clerk**

21.6.18 – Chairman’s Training

The Chairman said he found the course interesting and of benefit. Below are the key points:

- a) It was emphasised that a Chairman should have a thorough knowledge of the Standing Orders and should have a good understanding with the Clerk who is the Responsible Officer.
- b) He was interested to hear how Frome Town Council runs its meetings and plans to attend a future meeting. Although a larger electorate than ours, 100 parishioners attend its meeting every month and their participation and opinions are actively sought. Dave would like a greater number of residents to attend our monthly meetings and is considering offering tea, coffee and biscuits to make meetings more welcoming.
- c) Parish councils are encouraged to restrict meetings to 2 hours (excluding the public session). We mostly achieve this and have already stated that we will aim for this, subject to the Chairman’s discretion. D.Best added that he would not like us to lose our informality in pursuit of a “target” meeting duration.
- d) It is recommended that Ward Councillors form part of the public session. It was AGREED we would adopt this suggestion as proposed by D.Cather and seconded by J.Evans.
- e) Items that require a decision should be in the top half of the agenda
- f) It is suggested that we should have an annual plan so that we can hold ourselves accountable. This could be in conjunction with the Precept.

27.6.18 – Planning Training

See minute 35/18/5 above

29.6.18 – SSG

We were unable to supply a representative for this meeting, although our new representative, R.Perrett will hopefully be available for the next meeting in October.

41/18 FORTHCOMING MEETING NOTIFICATION:

2.8.18 – Transport Forum

16.8.18 – Community Forum

42/18 CORRESPONDENCE/COMMUNICATION:

1. General List

- a) Neighbourhood Policing Team – Details of team members and contact details. This has been posted on the Notice Boards.
- b) SDC – Provision of Legal advice to parish councils at £100 per hour.
- c) Remembrance Day Silhouette Installation Grants – Whilst this scheme is probably too late to pursue, councillors would like to organise something in the parish to commemorate the 100-year anniversary. This will be discussed at our summer meeting. **Action: All**
- d) Highways - patching to roads between Otterhampton and Steart. Once the surface dressing is complete, L.Hackling will re-visit to consider if further patching of the passing places is appropriate, subject to the availability of funds in the maintenance budget.
- e) A resident copied an email to the Clerk he had sent to EDF re problems with the SPS buses early in the morning on 5.7.18. R.Perrett said she heard the beepers in Estuary Park. Hopefully this issue will be swiftly dealt with.
- f) Resident - Brambles are overhanging the wall which is restricting the use of the pavement on the right-hand side of the road as you enter the village. **Action: Clerk**

2. Weekly Doctor’s outreach surgery ceasing from w/c 23 July 2018

A response was received from the Practise Manager who advised the patient numbers for 2017 were 96; 34 patients attended the first 6 months of 2018. This averages 2-3 patients per week which when put into context. GP’s consulting at the main surgery are able to see 10-14 patients each surgery. We are advised that the service cannot be extended until the end of the year because whilst actively looking for a replacement GP the surgery will have to rely on locum support when possible, which could result in a reduced service for the Practise population if trying to service the branch surgery in parallel. We are assured that the Practise did not take this decision lightly or without proper consideration. Councillors felt they could not argue with the rationale behind the decision. However, we will ask whether the prescriptions will continue to be delivered to the Post Office on a Wednesday afternoon. **Action: Clerk**

3. SCC Chairman's Award for services to the Community 2018

It was AGREED to nominate Tina and Mike Gardener for their services to OPRA and the community over many years. This includes raising funds to provide grants to various organisations, the free Christmas Dinner for pensioners, Easter Egg hunt for the children, Village Firework display, Christmas Tree lights, mowing the common, and provision of loudspeakers and music for events held in the village. **Action: Clerk**

43/18 REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES:

1. Steart Ward & Defibrillators (D.Best)

- a) St Johns Ambulance has viewed both defibrillators in situ.
- b) 11.6.18 Steart Forum – a small working group has been set up to investigate the possibility of a borehole at Steart to compensate for the water supply that was cut off to the peninsula when WWT Steart Marshes was created. If feasible this could result in wet fencing for cattle, biodiversity in the rhyme system and possibly the reinstatement of the SSSI favourable condition which could help the population of Great Crested Newts that have all but disappeared because their habitat has not been maintained.
- c) WWT is reviewing traffic and visitor monitoring. Currently visitor numbers are circa 47000/48000 per annum.

2. OPRA (B.Leathwood)

Nothing to report.

3. Otterhampton Parish Project Team (OPPT)

- a) The next meeting planned for 9.7.18 is likely to be deferred until the end of July.
- b) It was reported that the Gig is proving to be very popular across all age groups.
- c) It was AGREED to apply for CIM funds for new parish noticeboards as proposed by B.Birkenhead and seconded by J.Evans. The Clerk is waiting to hear back from a representative of the Otterhampton residents whether they would like a notice board in Otterhampton. Once this is known an Expression of Interest will be prepared. **Action: Clerk**

4. School Liaison (R.Perrett)

- a) R.Perrett met the new Head, Clare Luce on 22.6.18 who appears to be very enthusiastic and wants to become involved in the community. Rachel will invite her to a future parish council meeting. Clare will ensure a regular article about the School is placed in Otter Tales. Rachel advised that a banner advertising the School at Crossways is not in the control of the parish council as the land belongs to Highways so it would be up to the School to decide. Our letter to the Mobile Library was also discussed re the parking problem; the Head said the School will be looking at the parking issue towards the end of July. The next meeting will be on 21.9.18.

5. Public Rights of Way (B.Birkenhead)

- a) B.Birkenhead is working around the parish (as a volunteer) clearing brambles away from furniture/benches. He had been approached by a resident complaining that he had an injury from brambles as he tried to use a stile and thought it was Bob's job to clear. Bob explained that it is the responsibility of the landowner.
- b) The footpath near Moxhill is blocked and has been reported to SCC.

6. Otter Tales (B.Leathwood)

B.Birkenhead did not think the quality of some of the photographs in Otter Tales were as clear as opposed to say, in the Stockland Gatepost. D.Cather stated that we had agreed to a trial period to the end of 2018 which will then give us the opportunity to review the success or not of the existing supplier/newsletter.

7. Otter Wheels

Nothing to report.




8. Other

It was AGREED as proposed by D.Cather and seconded by M.Lister that in future, representatives provide a brief report of their various posts of responsibilities in advance of meetings so that members can prepare questions etc. **Action: All**

44/18 DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING:

Traditionally we have no formal parish council meeting in August but have a village walk. As the tree strategy and open spaces group have effectively covered this, we will meet informally to discuss short and long-term strategy. We will meet on 26.7.18, 6.30pm at the Anchor Inn.

The meeting ended at 8.55 pm.

Signed:    (Chairman)

Date: 30.8.18