

**OTTERHAMPTON PARISH COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**  
held on  
**THURSDAY 5 NOVEMBER 2020, 7.00pm (on ZOOM)**

**DECLARATION(S) OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS:**

Following advice from the Sedgemoor District Council (SDC) Monitoring Officer, councillors AGREED that a 'blanket' dispensation will be applied for regarding the proposed housing development at Brookside Rd. **Action: Clerk**  
There were no other declarations of interest and no dispensations applied for. Member's Interests are disclosed at the time of taking Office. This information can be viewed on the (SDC) website.

**PUBLIC SESSION:**

**1. Cycle Path**

- a. Gary Perrett attended to give an overview of EDF's draft proposals for the cycle path from Combwich, through the WWT Steart Marshes, along Steart Drove to link with the proposed Right of Way Order to upgrade the footpath to a bridleway from Steart to Hinkley Point. These are two separate schemes but EDF will be hopeful that following a planning application to upgrade the bridleway with a surface suitable for commuting cyclists that employees of EDF Hinkley C would travel this route to work instead of using the C182 between Combwich and Hinkley Point.
- b. The Combwich to Steart element of the scheme will also be subject to a planning application, details of which will be presented at the Transport Forum on 26.11.20. EDF has offered to fund the Combwich to Steart cycle path and the upgrade of the surfacing of the bridleway.
- c. There is speculation that the surface will be tarmacked; the cycle path may be lit; there will be a large increase in the number of cyclists; and the route will be overly signposted. Mr Perrett does not believe any of these things will materialise.

(See also minute 45/20)

**2. Brookside Rd Development**

A resident said if 'some' development is agreed, he would not like to see the top fields opened up; unhappy with the access roads.

**3. Ward Reports**

Both Ward Councillors provided reports in advance of the meeting.

**4. PCSO Report**

PCSO Jason Wyatt submitted a report in advance of the meeting.

**PRESENT:**

Julie Evans (Chair), Bob Birkenhead (Vice-Chair), Marie Beckley, Andy Darch, Tina Gardener, Lindsey Parsons, Rachel Perrett, Aly Prowse (Clerk) Ward Councillors Mike Caswell and Julie Pay; 6 members of the public.

**42/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:**

There were no apologies for absence.

**43/20 MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 1.10.20 and 28.10.20:**

1. The minutes of the meeting on Zoom held on 1.10.20 were APPROVED and signed by the Chair.
2. The minutes of the extraordinary meeting on Zoom held on 28.10.20 were APPROVED and signed by the Chair.

**44/20 PROPOSED HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AT BROOKSIDE RD**

The Chair said following the presentation by Walsingham Planning at the October parish council meeting, we had not received a lot of feedback. The community will need to decide if it wants a village hall, how big and where it should be located. The Chair asked each councillor for comments; these are summarised below: -

- Significant concerns about flooding and drainage issues on both sides of Brookside Rd. It is questionable whether houses could be built on the south side of Brookside Rd because it is in a flood zone 3 and is a 'rejected site outside of the development boundary' by SDC.
- Position of the village hall is not suitable as there is no access to it via School Lane. The community was consulted on a potential village hall on level ground at the entrance to Brookside Rd.

- Conversely, access is not wanted via School Lane because of the existing congestion on School Lane and Church Hill. Access to the School/village hall through a development could help to alleviate these problems through the village.
- The suggested location of the village hall could lead to the opening up of further fields and additional subsequent development which would not be acceptable.
- A small development would be acceptable if its need can be demonstrated. Almost a thousand new houses have recently been approved west of Bridgwater in various villages.
- Would not like an estate full of designer houses, must be a suitable housing mix.
- The Public Right of Way (PRoW) must not be extinguished.
- Whether a car park could be provided at the bottom of the village with access from where children could walk to school.
- Access to the new development is too close to the Combwich/C182 junction; an increase in parking problems and parking must not spill over into Brookside Rd.
- We asked how the 36/24 housing split was arrived at. This would be tested against the SDC Local Plan Policy Tier 3a (which largely states a development must be appropriate to the scale, design and existing character of a settlement). As this proposal is outside of the local settlement boundary, the affordable housing provision is key to determine the number of houses permitted. Potentially, there are a number of other criteria for consideration including a development appropriately contributing to local infrastructure priorities in agreement with parish councils.
- We should re-visit the Community Plan to ensure it is still relevant and amend if not.
- A Housing Needs Survey will be paramount before any development continues. We will continue to put pressure on SDC for this to be progressed. Cllr Caswell will follow this up at SDC.

Cllr Caswell left the meeting at 8pm

**45/20 PUBLIC PATH CREATION ORDER (upgrading to a bridleway of public footpath, Steart-Hinkley Point) and CYCLE ROUTE (Combwich through WWT Steart Marshes to Steart)**

1. Public Path Creation Order consultation (closes on 20.11.20).
  - a. Councillors are generally supportive of this proposal as it now stands, which would encourage safer cycling and riding away from the C182. Concern was expressed by A.Darch, supported by others, of the safety aspect of additional cyclists and horse riders using the busy Steart drove between the start/end of the bridleway, to access the bridleway/cycle path into the Steart Marshes opposite the WWT main car park. The parish council will request that SCC seek either an extension of the cycle path/bridleway beyond the exit at the WWT main car park to the Steart 'hump' i.e directly opposite the start/end of the bridleway or to try and seek a southerly route from the WWT compound through the Bristol Port Scheme land and out to Catsford Common, Stolford. Both these options would not require access on Steart drove. This will be the basis of the parish council's response. **Action: Clerk**
  - b. Draft proposals to tarmac the bridleway (3.5m width) which would be subject to a future planning application, would not be supported for a number of reasons including SSSI and other designations; not in keeping with the environment; may encourage 'boy racers' on quad bikes etc and the general opinion that few Hinkley C commuting cyclists would use the route anyway, preferring the speediest route.
2. Cycle route Combwich to WWT Steart Marshes main car park
  - a. It is difficult to speculate on EDF's plans as they will not be presented until the Transport Forum on 26.11.20. We do know however, that the objective is to provide a safe route for commuting cyclists to Hinkley Point; a continuation of the C182 cycle path. Therefore, the surface will need to be appropriate for commuting cyclists but tarmac or lighting would not be acceptable. Safety concerns were expressed for the high volume of multi-users/uses of the paths and possibly for cyclists travelling through Combwich plus additional traffic attracted to the village adding to the parking 'squeeze'/fly parking.

**46/20 PLAY AREA**

1. Wooden marker posts and concrete bollard  
B.Birkenhead and the Clerk met to discuss the requirements to replace the temporary wooden bollards on the verges around the play area and the replacement damaged concrete bollard. Approximately 25 posts will be required. Councillors AGREED for this work to go ahead. A specification will be prepared to enable the work to go out to tender. **Action: Clerk**
2. Repair of seesaw  
The quotation from Wicksteed to repair the seesaw is £1200 plus VAT. T.Gardener proposed we don't repair it but replace it with something different. This was AGREED. The school children will be consulted. **Action: R.Perrett.** It would make sense not to replace the item until the surfacing issue has been resolved.

3. Ground settlement issues legal claim – S Hellard (SDC Legal Department) has apologised for not having processed the letter to Wicksteed. He asked if we wanted him to continue, and in which case, he undertook to complete the letter within the next week or so. It was AGREED to write to him to proceed with the letter as soon as possible as we have concerns about the limitation period expiring. Action: Clerk
4. A.Darch asked if the strip of tarmac along the common in Riverview could be repaired as there are a lot of potholes which fill with water. The Clerk said it is unclear who owns the land and whether it is part of the highway, and hence if the responsibility to repair the potholes will be Highways. Future agenda item.  
**Action: Clerk**

**47/20 PARISH SHORE PROJECT – BROWNIE COPSE (Consideration for Local Nature Reserve LNR status)**

1. The project group met on 3.11.20. Notes were produced detailing the plans which include the proposed area for designation as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) including the Common, the dividing drainage ditch, the sea defence (bund) and the Brownie Copse. A detailed management plan will need to be drawn up for submission to Natural England which will encompass a number of initiatives including native woodland habitat, fresh water habitat and an outdoor classroom in the Brownie Copse; new grassland management regimes for the bund banks to protect and enhance grassland species that are part of the existing SSSI without impinging on current access rights of locals; instigating and planning new monitoring and survey programmes for local residents and a new interpretation panel. A number of key partners are already on board, but further engagement is required.
2. One of the main objectives is for community engagement including the school children and not to put extra responsibility on the parish council. The worse-case scenario should effort wane is that it would revert back to existing condition.
3. Councillors were split in their views from it being an exciting and interesting project for the community and the environment, to the project appearing to have ‘mushroomed’ from just the original Brownie Copse. There are a number of considerations, including the implications on the existing designations (e.g. the existing Village Green status); grass cutting regime; additional visitors to the village (parking considerations). Perhaps we need to be more cautious in our approach and certainly before changing anything.
4. It was AGREED to invite Mark Ward to the next meeting so that he can answer any questions and explain the plans in more detail. **Action: Chair/Clerk**

**48/20 VILLAGE HALL REFURBISHMENT – FUNDING BID**

1. The extraordinary parish council meeting on 28.10.20 was held to consider the revised village hall refurbishment funding application from the Hinkley C Community parish fund. Councillors unanimously AGREED to support the recommendations of the Otterhampton Parish Project Team (OPPT) to award £198000 plus an additional 10% contingency that could be approved by OPPT and the Parish Council.
2. The Somerset Community Foundation subsequently approved the application at its meeting on 30.10.20.

**49/20 PLANNING MATTERS:**

1. **39/19/00011** – Application of lime render (listed building application) 60 Crossways (AWAITING DECISION)
2. **39/19/00014** – Repairs to leaking roof, chimney stacks, damaged roof timbers (Listed Building Consent) 60 Crossways (AWAITING DECISION)
3. **39/20/00007** – Erect a dwelling at 21 Riverside, Combwich. (AWAITING DECISION)
4. **39/20/00008** – Conversion of detached garage into additional ancillary accommodation, Greenacres, Bolham. GRANTED PERMISSION.
5. **39/20/00010** – Erection of 2 agricultural buildings, Lower Hill Farm, Otterhampton. This application was received shortly before the meeting so we were unable to discuss it. An extension will be applied for so it can be discussed at the December parish council meeting. **Action: Clerk**

**50/20 FINANCE:**

1. **Bank Balances** - Current A/C £13027.89; Deposit A/C £20191.48; Reserve A/C £21111.75.
2. **The following payments were AGREED:**
  - a) Mrs A Prowse - £701.70 (October salary inc. £21.50 misc. office cost; £14.39 Zoom subscription, £153.92 pay award backdated to 1.4.20)
  - b) SDC - £720.00 (Annual grounds maintenance contract Jul-Sep, including the play area)
  - c) SDC - £668.83 (Twice weekly empty of 4 dog bins Oct – Mar 2021)
  - d) SDC - £167.23 (Twice weekly empty of litter bins in play area Apr-Sep)
  - e) GeoXphere - Ltd £36.00 (Parish online annual subscription)

- f) PKF Littlejohn LLP - £240.00 (Annual audit fee to 31.3.20)
- g) Tor Drilling Ltd - £7956.00 (Stearb borehole project – externally grant funded)
- 3. **Approve Half Yearly Accounts** – The accounts to 30.9.20 which were presented at the October meeting were APPROVED. The net bank balance was £55424.24.

#### 4. **Precept Meeting**

The meeting will be held during December for presentation at the January 2021 meeting. The Clerk will aim to get the precept information prepared by the December parish council meeting.

#### 51/20 **STEARB WARD:**

There was nothing further to report.

#### 52/20 **REVIEW OF ACTION LIST:**

The list of actions carried forward between the period 5.3.20 – 31.8.20 have mostly been deferred as lower priority due to Covid-19, therefore for now, only actions raised after this period will be reviewed. It was AGREED to review actions after this period. Many of these are agenda items with the exception of the following item:

1. Refurbishment of the BT phone box

Bob and Carol Birkenhead have volunteered to do the refurbishment. The materials required including the Defibrillator signs have been ordered.

R.Perrett is liaising with the volunteers to check the defibrillators. T.Gardener explained that the weekly checks are just a visual inspection, and only need the covers to be taken off and checked inside once a month. Further volunteers are required so another appeal will be included in November's Otter Tales.

#### 53/20 **MEETING REPORTS:**

24.9.20 – Community Forum – M.Beckley previously circulated a meeting report to councillors.

13.10.20 – Village Hall – This mainly covered the final plans for the revised refurbishment bid.

20.10.20 - Village Hall AGM – This was held mainly to dissolve the old village hall committee and transfer to the new Charitable Incorporation Organisation (CIO). All members were re-elected as trustees with CIO status.

23.10.20 – SSG – T.Gardener attended for R.Perrett and previously circulated a meeting report to councillors.

#### 54/20 **FORTHCOMING MEETINGS:**

10.11.20 – Village Hall

11.11.20 – Stearb Forum

26.11.20 – Transport Forum

#### 55/20 **CORRESPONDENCE:**

1. Mendip Community Transport – Report of the Charity's activities during Covid-19, including the continuation of the Slinky Bus which is used by some of our residents. It was unanimously AGREED to grant a £100 donation as we normally do each year. **Action: Clerk**
2. A resident wished to make us aware of the Somerset Climate Emergency Fund, requesting that we participate. The parish council is actively pursuing environmental initiatives through the Parish Shores project and the Tree and Open Spaces strategy group.
3. EDF – Would like to discuss ways to provide support for projects separate from the ring-fenced community fund money. I.Selby to be contacted to request what this involves. **Action: Clerk**

#### 56/20 **REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES:**

1. Otterhampton Parish Project Team (OPPT) – the team will meet as required.

2. Public Rights of Way – B Birkenhead – nothing to report, all issues are in hand.

3. Otter Wheels – Only emergency journeys are undertaken during the ongoing Covid-19 situation.

4. Otter Tales – The closing date for articles is 7.11.20.

5. School Liaison – R Perrett will email the Head to ask for ideas from the children about a new item of play equipment to replace the seesaw and to gauge interest in the school's involvement with the LNR proposals.

#### 57/20 **DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING:**

The next meeting will be on Thursday 3 December 2020, 7pm, on Zoom (unless informed otherwise).

The meeting closed at 9.28pm.

Signed: Original Minutes signed by the Chair

(Chair)

Date: 3 December 2020