

**OTTERHAMPTON PARISH COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**  
held on  
**THURSDAY 3 DECEMBER 2020, 7.00pm (on ZOOM)**

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

The 'blanket dispensation' for all councillors regarding the Brookside Rd housing development was approved as proposed by J.Evans and seconded by A.Darch. 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 Sedgemoor District Council (SDC) website.

**PARISH SHORES PROJECT (Mark Ward – Somerset Wildlife Trust)**

M.Ward outlined the background of the project which during a brainstorming session in the Village Hall during April 2019 identified two suggestions; a themed family day to celebrate mud and estuaries ecosystems incorporated within the Combwich Fete planned for July 2021 and a management plan to improve the Brownie Copse. Following various meetings over the past year, a proposal is now being put forward to extend the Brownie Copse project to include the main common, the drainage ditch and the flood bank encompassed within a Local Nature Reserve (LNR).

Nb Presentation slides are available from the Clerk.

Several questions were raised concerning the addition of the LNR status; whether it over complicated matters, the necessity, legality and whether in fact it provided any advantage. The whole Common (from the Pill to the first gate on the track, and including the Brownie Copse) belongs to the parish council and it is registered as a Village Green. In addition, both the main and small commons have Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) status. Councillors are however, keen to engage volunteers within the community to work on environmental projects and also, for the opportunity to involve the school children and the brownies.

Mark confirmed that we could revert to just the Brownie Copse, with or without trying to achieve the LNR status. See also minute 61/20.

**PUBLIC SESSION:**

**Ward Reports**

Councillor Pay provided her report in advance of the meeting. The key item was that at a Full Council meeting, the Stronger Somerset proposal was approved by SDC and was with the other four District Councils for approval. It will be submitted to the Secretary of State on 7.12.20.

**PRESENT:**

Julie Evans (Chair), Bob Birkenhead (Vice-Chair), Andy Darch, Tina Gardener, Lindsey Parsons, Rachel Perrett, Aly Prowse (Clerk) Ward Councillors Julie Pay; 4 members of the public.

**58/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:**

Apologies for absence were received from M.Beckley and Councillor Caswell..

**59/20 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 5.11.20:**

The minutes of the meeting on Zoom held on 5.11.20 were APPROVED and signed by the Chair.

**60/20 PLAY AREA**

**1. Wooden marker posts and concrete bollard**

The Clerk emailed Highways to ask if a Section 171 (for works carried out adjacent to a highway) will be required. This would take 3 weeks to gain approval. The work can then go out to tender.

**2. Hedge and wall adjacent to play area**

When the contractor tried to trim the bramble hedge, the remainder of the hedge collapsed. He stopped the work pending a decision from us to either leave the hedge as it is or to remove the brambles completely, which would then expose the wall and the play area. It was AGREED to remove the brambles from the Ash trees to the play area fence. We would then investigate reinstating the wall which although not listed is believed to be Victorian and could make a nice feature. **Action: T.Gardener.**

**3. Ground settlement legal claim**

The letter from S.Hellard (SDC) to Wicksteed has been finalised and is due to be sent to Wicksteed in the next week. It is hoped we should have a response from Wicksteed by or during February 2021.

#### 4. Signage for play area (age restriction and dog fouling)

The age restriction signage for the play area will read 12 years and under. The dog fouling signs will include a monetary sum as a penalty to try and deter offenders. Signs will be researched and suitable ones purchased. **Action: Clerk**

#### 61/20 **PARISH SHORE PROJECT – BROWNIE COPSE (Consideration for Local Nature Reserve LNR status)**

Councillors appreciated the work undertaken to date by M.Ward and the volunteers, and are keen to support conservation in the parish. The parish council would like to continue with the proposals at the Brownie Copse and ensure volunteer groups become established and self-sustaining before taking on too much. Councillors could not see any benefit of applying for LNR status given the existing registrations, governance issues and to potentially encumber the parish council with additional and unnecessary compliance requirements. M.Ward will be advised of the parish council's decision. **Action: J.Evans**

#### 62/20 **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, roof timbers) 60 Crossways AWAITING DECISION
3. **39/20/00007** – Erect a dwelling at 21 Riverside, Combwich. AWAITING DECISION
4. **39/20/00010** – Erection of 2 agricultural buildings, Lower Hill Farm, Otterhampton. SUPPORTED subject to PRoW BW 25/14 being retained (also for 39/20/00009 below)
5. **39/20/00009** – Erect agricultural building over existing concrete cattle yard, Lower Hill farm, Otterhampton. SUPPORTED.
6. **13/20/00024** – DCO requirement for condition relating to C8, Combwich Wharf landscaping works. FOR INFORMATION

#### 63/20 **FINANCE:**

1. **Bank Balances** - Current A/C £1610.55; Deposit A/C £20191.66; Reserve A/C £21111.96.
2. **The following payments were AGREED:**
  - a) Mrs A Prowse - £551.58 (Nov salary inc. £25.30 misc. office costs; and £14.39 Zoom subscription)
  - b) Mendip Community Transport - £100 (donation re Slinky Bus)
  - c) B.Leathwood - £219.60 (Solopress, November Otter Tales)
  - d) Wood-Land Southwest Ltd - £354.00 (Wharf Rd vegetation clearance)
3. **Income**  
OPRA - £100 annual rent for barn.
4. **Precept Meeting**  
The meeting will be held on 14.12.20, 7pm on Zoom.
5. **Village Hall Refurbishment – Match funding grant application**  
It was AGREED to grant £400 towards the SDC grant funding application as proposed by J.Evans and seconded by T.Gardener. **Action: Clerk**

#### 64/20 **STEART WARD:**

A.Darch reported on the Steart Forum held on 11.11.20 which mainly concentrated on the SCC proposed bridleway from Steart to Hinkley Point and the EDF proposal of a cycleway from Combwich through the WWT Steart Marshes to Steart. There was no appetite for either the cycleway or the bridleway users to be directed along the Steart Drove because of road safety concerns for multi users.

#### 65/20 **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. Many of these are agenda items with the exception of the following:

##### 1. **(C) Walsingham Planning (WP) – Brookside Road housing development**

An email was received from WP an hour prior to the meeting to advise that an outline planning application for 60 houses (including the sketched illustration) with all Matters Reserved, except for access, had been submitted to SDC. The Councillors were disappointed that we had not been consulted prior to the application's submission. The Housing Need Survey (HNS) is still outstanding from SDC which councillors feel is essential before any decision is made. We have been unable to carry out a detailed consultation with the community regarding the village hall and whether it is prepared to support a development of this size to deliver the village hall or road; consultation will be key. As we will be unable to hold a physical consultation a leaflet drop will be done. T.Gardener suggested this is not done until the application is received. It was

AGREED to write to WP expressing our disappointment in its actions and outlining the above comments. The Chair offered to draft the letter. **Action: J.Evans.** SDC will also be contacted re the outstanding HNA and specific advice from the planning department. **Action: Clerk**

**2. (F) Phone box refurbishment**

Councillors agreed that Bob and Carol Birkenhead are making an excellent job of refurbishing the phone box. B.Birkenhead said there may a little more expenditure for some parts he has to purchase.

**3. (5e) Village Sign Storm Damage**

P.Shaw asked the Clerk to ask if we will be repairing the Village Sign. She advised him that the sign is currently in the Brookside Rd garage and will be subject to discussion when some of the priority actions have been carried out but it is hoped we can utilise what is left of it. However, the structure is heavy and has toppled over twice, hence it would appear to be unsafe to elevate it again. **Action continues**

**66/20 HIGHWAYS:**

**1. Potholes along Riverview**

This area is believed to be part of the highway but confirmation will be required from Highways. The Clerk said if Highway did agree to fix the potholes, the work would not be able to proceed until the deep puddles dried up significantly. **Action: Clerk**

**2. Outstanding highways issues**

There are 4 outstanding actions on the action list; 3 are a low priority. The children's play area "Slow" markings on the road will be pursued as we were advised by K.Tyson that this would be carried out in 2020/21 and as there is a lot more traffic around mainly due to people visiting WWT Steart Marshes, it has become a higher priority. **Action: Clerk**

**3. Dame Withycombe Hill (DWH)**

B.Birkenhead asked if we could request some safety enhancements outside of the cottages on DWH to enable residents to cross the road more safely. We will request a 40MPH speed limit (although it was thought unlikely to get this) pedestrians crossing signage and "Slow" markings on the road. **Action: Clerk.**

**4. General Repairs**

B.Birkenhead will report potholes on Ship Lane where it meets the track; around the manhole cover in Church Hill and where the road has subsided outside Mill House.

**67/20 MEETING REPORTS:**

**10.11.20 – Village Hall.**

- L.Parsons previously circulated notes of the meeting. It is hoped results of some of the funding applications for the village hall refurbishment will be known soon.

**16.11.20 – Zoom meeting with I.Selby EDF (notes by the Clerk previously circulated)**

- Combwich wharf contracts about to be signed between EDF and Hotchief (operational phase to deliver the AILs). Hotchief and EDF keen to do some additional works in the community.
- The help is not additional 'direct' funding, but 'helping hands' type resources.

**26.11.20 – Transport Forum.**

- A presentation included information on the cycleway.
- The community bus will commence again on 7.12.20.
- Our request for employees who live in Combwich that they continue to travel to park and rides to catch the buses instead of being collected from the Combwich bus shelter once Covid-19 is over, was refused.

**68/20 FORTHCOMING MEETINGS:**

8.12.20 – Village Hall

16.12.20 – SALC AGM

**69/20 CORRESPONDENCE:**

**1. General List**

- Mendip Community Transport – Thanking the parish council for its donation of £100.
- Somerset Community Foundation – Hard copy annual review 2019/20
- Riverside – Clinical waste overflowing from the bins was reported to the Crimson Hill Director after receiving advice from the SDC Waste Department. This is the second occurrence.
- SCC Rural Transport Survey – this will be completed at the precept meeting 14.12.20
- EDF would like to give a Combwich Wharf update at the February parish council meeting. **Action: Clerk**

**2. Bolham Rd Bridge**

“New Bolham Bridge” signs suddenly appeared at the edge of the bridge. We don’t know why as although we emailed the SCC Bridge Team, we received no response. A local resident advised that the old listed bridge will be repaired during January/February 2021.

**3. Somerset County Council Chair Awards**

Our existing nomination can stand although there has been a request for nominations for people in communities who have given exceptional help and service during the Covid-19 pandemic.

**4. Save Climate (Somerset action in villages for the environment and climate)**

J.Evans and B.Birkenhead, after attending an on-line presentation, would not recommend our involvement in this particular project. However, the Chair said she would like us to have a standard “Green Agenda” item

**70/20 REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES:**

1. Otterhampton Parish Project Team (OPPT) – the team will meet as required.
2. Public Rights of Way – B Birkenhead – The outstanding issue at Steart is unlikely to be resolved before 1.4.21 because it encompasses the winter coastal path route (redirected during this period).
3. Otter Wheels – Only emergency journeys are undertaken during the ongoing Covid-19 situation.
4. Otter Tales – The next edition will be January 2021.
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: **Action continues**
  - The Head has advised Rachel that she is very keen to involve the School in the Brownie Copse project.

**71/20 DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING:**

The next meetings will be on Monday 14 December 2020, 7pm (Precept) and Thursday 7 January 2021, 7pm (main meeting) on Zoom (unless informed otherwise).

The meeting closed at 9.03pm.

Signed: Original signed by B.Birkenhead

(Acting Chair)

Date: 7.1.21