

**OTTERHAMPTON PARISH COUNCIL**  
**Draft MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**  
held on  
**THURSDAY 1 APRIL 2021, 7.00pm (on ZOOM)**  
*To be approved at the following meeting*

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

T Gardener expressed an interest in minute 47/21/3/a. There were no other declarations of interest or 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.

**PUBLIC SESSION:**

1. Concern expressed that the May election polling station will be in Stockland Club as Otterhampton Village Hall will not be available due to the refurbishment. The location could make it difficult for parishioners from Combwich to get to. The parish council was not consulted, although it was believed that the district councillors were. There may have been other locations more suitable in the village. It was suggested that the parish council should be consulted in future. See minute 56/21/3d.
2. The brick enclosure surrounding a pipe in the bank of the brook alongside Estuary Park has collapsed. It was AGREED to report this to the Environment Agency. **Action: Clerk**

**Ward Councillor Reports**

In the absence of both ward councillors there was nothing to report.

**PRESENT:**

Julie Evans (Chair), Bob Birkenhead (Vice-Chairman), Marie Beckley, Tina Gardener, Rachel Perrett, Aly Prowse (Clerk), 4 members of the public.

**44/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:**

Apologies for absence were received from Andy Darch, Lindsey Parsons and Ward Cllr Julie Pay.

**45/21 MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 4.3.21:**

The minutes of the meeting on Zoom held on 4.3.21 were APPROVED and signed by the Chair.

**46/21 PLANNING MATTERS:**

1. **39/19/00011** – Application of lime render (listed building application) 60 Crossways. WITHDRAWN
2. **39/19/00014** – Repairs to leaking roof, chimney stacks, roof timbers) 60 Crossways WITHDRAWN
3. **39/20/00012** – Roof and change of use from silage clamp to silage clamp and livestock building. Lower Hill Farm, Otterhampton. AWAITING DECISION
4. **39/21/00001** – Replace 2 Velux windows on front elevation with 2 pitched roof dormer windows at 46 Estuary Park. GRANTED PERMISSION.
5. **39/20/00013** – Outline planning permission with some matters reserved, for the erection of up to 60 dwellings and associated infrastructure. REFUSED PERMISSION
6. **39/21/00002** – Conversion of existing storage barn to living accommodation at Fender House, 6 Brookside Rd. This application was received on 1.4.21, too late for this meeting. It will be discussed at the next meeting subject to obtaining an extension to the closing date for comments (25.4.21) from SDC.
7. **39/21/00003** – Application for Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas (as for 39/21/00002 above).

**47/21 FINANCE:**

1. **Bank Balances** - Current A/C £1404.90; Deposit A/C £16543.59; Reserve A/C £20832.65
2. **The following payments were AGREED:**
  - a) Mrs A Prowse - £545.50 (Mar salary £511.89, plus misc. exp. £22.81 & £14.39 Zoom subscription)
  - b) Mrs A Prowse - £44.99 (Replacement Somerset and NHS flags)
  - c) SDC - £167.23 (Empty litter bin at play area Oct 20 – Mar 21)
3. **CONSIDERATION OF OPPT'S RECOMMENDATION RE HINKLEY POINT C COMMUNITY GRANT FUND APPLICATIONS AT ITS MEETING ON 31.3.21:**
  - a) Expression of Interest (EOI) No 15 – OPRA Ride-on Mower; £11180 applied for.

This application seeks to replace the existing aged mower, predominately used to regularly mow the large common. Match funding of £1240 will be provided by OPRA.

OPPT unanimously approved this application and recommended that the parish council support the application to be submitted for consideration at the Hinkley Point C Community Panel on 20.4.21. J Evans asked if the charity folded, what would happen to the assets. T Gardener to confirm but she believes the assets would be redirected to a local charity with similar aims.

Councillors unanimously supported this EOI as proposed by J Evans and seconded by R Perrett.

**Action: Clerk**

- b) EOI No 16 – Re-surfacing of Play Area and new Seesaw; £27092 applied for. This application seeks to re-surface the safety surfacing in the play area and to replace the seesaw which was broken 5 months ago. Match funding of £13000 will be provided by the parish council.

OPPT unanimously approved this application and recommended that the parish council support the application.

- The Clerk provided a tender evaluation of the three tenders received; one contractor declined to tender. B Birkenhead reported on the meeting held in the afternoon of 1.4.21 to discuss the tenders, also attended by A Darch and the Clerk. The lowest tenderer only guaranteed the surfacing for 3 years so was discounted. The other two tenderers carried guarantees of five years and both were recommended by the SDC Parks and Open Spaces Manager. The middle and highest tenderers both met the specification although the difference in price was £6724. The middle tenderer was recommended at a cost of £40092. This companies' seesaw was also preferred as it was more robust and had the wider age range of 3-12 years.
- Councillors voted unanimously to award the contract to this tenderer as proposed by J Evans and seconded by T Gardener. The contractor will be advised he is the preferred contractor subject to grant funding approval. The contractor will be asked if he could reduce the cost of the seesaw as it was almost £3000 and to also provide a colour swatch of the surfacing. **Action: Clerk.**

Councillors unanimously supported this EOI as proposed by J Evans and seconded by T Gardener.

- c) EOI No 17 – Verge markers adjacent to the play area and entrance to the track on the common, plus refurbishment of the wall on the same verge; £4150 applied for. This application seeks to install robust verge markers on the verge and at the entrance to the track, and to refurbish the wall. One tenderer declined to tender and another did not respond to the invitation to tender.

OPPT unanimously approved this application to a maximum £4500 from the Hinkley C fund and recommended that the parish council support the application to be submitted to the Hinkley Point C Community Panel on 20.4.21.

It was unanimously AGREED to provide match funding of £1000 by the parish council as proposed by J Evans and seconded by M Beckley.

Councillors unanimously supported this EOI as proposed by J Evans and seconded by M Beckley.

All three EOIs will be submitted to Val Bishop on 2.4.21. **Action: Clerk**

**4. OTTERHAMPTON VILLAGE HALL £20000 CONTINGENCY FUND:**

Due to the urgency (i.e., the refurbishment commencement date of 29.3.21) it was unanimously AGREED by councillors via email to release the previously agreed £20000 contingency fund. This minute formally records approval of this action.

**48/21 STEART WARD:**

Nothing to report.

**49/21 REVIEW OF ACTION LIST:**

1. Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) – Notwithstanding the lack of a HNA in relation to the Brookside Rd planning application, it was unanimously AGREED to pursue the request for a HNA through SDC on behalf of the parish. **Action: Clerk**
2. Parish Shore Project – A meeting will be held on 22.4.21
3. Broken kerb stones at entrance to the bus shelter – This was reported in January but is still outstanding.
4. Noisy steel plate on C182 by Bolham Bridge – This defect has been repaired.
5. Soil erosion at brook – This does not appear to be as serious as first thought, but it will be kept under review.

6. Highways – a) SLOW markings and signage to identify the play area is still outstanding b) The Clerk has again requested consideration/ safety measures at Dame Withycombe Hill for residents whilst crossing the C182 to go to the village.
7. Flags for flagpole – following an action placed on the action list in March 2020 (among a number of actions deferred because of Covid-19) plus a recent request to the Chair that the parish council fly the Rainbow Flag (symbol of LGBTQ pride) the Chair drew up a list of possible flags to be flown throughout the year for discussion. The list includes St David's Day, St Patrick's Day, St Georges Day, Somerset Day, Queen's Birthday, Bristol Pride, Bonfire Night, Remembrance Day, St Andrew's day, Christmas. A debate ensued regarding flying minority group flags; some councillors expressed concern that it could lead to other groups, perhaps opposing groups wishing to fly flags, which might prove difficult for the parish council to decide which minority flags might be acceptable and which might not once a precedent was set. M Beckley said this issue had arisen at her place of employment and an all-encompassing banner including all equality groups had been adopted. Councillors thought something along these lines would be more appropriate and were happy with the other suggested flags. The Chair suggested deferring a decision until the next meeting.

**50/21 SUCCESSION MANAGEMENT:**

The Chair suggested that councillors might wish to consider whether they would like to stand for Chair or Vice-Chair at either the forthcoming annual meeting or in the future. Ideally a Vice-Chair can shadow a Chair to prepare to step up if necessary. Likewise, it might be pertinent to consider an assistant clerk to help out with the existing workload and be able to take over when the existing clerk eventually leaves. The Chair indicated that she will be happy to carry on although there may be absences depending on her treatment. The Vice-Chair said he may well step down from the role in May, although he would continue if no-one else wanted to take the position. The Clerk said having an assistant would need to be carefully considered as the clerk works from home so it may be difficult dividing the workload effectively. R Perrett added that the One Somerset/Stronger Somerset may have an impact on workload in general.

**51/21 ANCHOR INN – PERMISSION TO PLACE TABLES AND BENCHES ON THE COMMON:**

1. SDC Licencing conditions – from the latest Government guidance it would appear that the landlord will not now need to apply to have his licence extended if permission is granted to locate tables and chairs on the common, although planning permission is likely to be required. SDC has also outlined other requirements that public houses will have to comply with such as waiter service and serving drinks in sealed containers.
2. Insurance considerations – our insurance company said the onus must be on the landlord to take out his own insurance so that the risk is with him and not the parish council. The landlord would be required to provide proof of insurance to the parish council.
3. Village Green considerations - the Clerk wrote to the Open Space society for advice on how such an arrangement could impact on the Village Green rules and regulations. A response is awaited.
4. Neighbouring residents' consultation – emails had been received from one resident who has concerns for such an arrangement with regard to Village Green considerations, noise and accountabilities. Another resident advised he would not be opposed to this arrangement as long as it was temporary in line with the Government's 'road map'.

Councillors expressed concern that this situation is very complex and perhaps one that the parish council is not able to manage adequately. It was AGREED to contact the landlord to advise that notwithstanding the above considerations, we have other reservations such as litter and noise; we would like to know how he proposes to overcome them. **Action: Clerk**

**52/21 ENHANCEMENTS:**

See minute 47/21/3/b and c.

**53/21 CHANGES TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT:**

1. Stronger Somerset/One Somerset  
Because of the potential impact the changes could have on the parish council, this item will be kept on the agenda.
2. Quantock Cluster Group  
The Nether Stowey Parish Council Chairman has written to parish councils in the original Quantock Cluster suggesting collective thinking on what services, and to what level, parish councils may wish to consider taking on given that the unitary councils are proposing differing levels of engagement with parish councils. Councillors decided they would not wish to try and pre-empt the outcome of the One Somerset/Stronger

Somerset decision and would prefer to wait and see what happens before committing resources. Nether Stowey Parish Council will be advised. **Action: Clerk**

**54/21 MEETING REPORTS:**

**9.3.21 – Village Hall.**

L Parsons previously circulated notes of the meeting. The refurbishment commenced on 29.3.21.

**18.3.21 – Transport Forum**

- A Darch previously circulated notes of the meeting. He raised our concerns that additional traffic due to the Hinkley C staff uplift may have a safety impact at Biffen's Corner. EDF said it does not believe the uplift will exceed its predictions to warrant any safety improvement.
- The Hinkley C Community bus will restart in mid-April.

**55/21 FORTHCOMING MEETINGS:**

13.4.21 – Village Hall

22.4.21 – Parish Shore (Otterhampton Conservation Group)

**56/21 CORRESPONDENCE:**

1. Hinkley Point A and B Stakeholder group nominated representative – we will confirm that we wish to continue membership of the SSG and R Perrett is our representative. **Action: Clerk**
2. Somerset medal to honour Somerset County unsung heroes – It was AGREED to nominate family members at the Post Office (the Clerk will check if a 'family' can be nominated), L Carter and H Jowett. **Action: Clerk**
3. General list
  - a) An email expressing concern at the lack of a physical barrier between the play area and the road in relation to childrens' safety prior to the wall refurbishment being carried out. Councillors said that the play area is fenced; the entrance to the play area has always been 'open' and road markings and signage is due to be actioned by Highways. The parish council believes there is only so much it can do and parents also have a responsibility to supervise their children whilst at the play area. We will respond and thank the resident accordingly. **Action: Clerk**
  - b) PFK Littlejohn – the submission date for the external annual audit is 2.7.21. The Clerk will approach our usual person to undertake the internal audit of the accounts, as part of the process.
  - c) Sharn Hooper – requested permission to use the common for Pilates sessions until the village hall reopens following its refurbishment. Councillors AGREED to this request. **Action: Clerk**
  - d) Further to item 1 in the public session above, we will write to SDC to express our disappointment that the parish council was not consulted regarding the choice of a polling station location on 6.5.21 and to request that we would be in the future. **Action: Clerk**

**57/21 REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES:**

1. Public Rights of Way (PRoW) – B Birkenhead
  - During Covid, parents taking/collecting children from the School were asked not to drive up School Lane during certain times and instead, to walk children to school which included using the PRoW up over Brookside. This has made School Lane, Church Hill and Ship Lane much safer. B Birkenhead asked R Perrett if she could talk to the head teacher to make this arrangement permanent.
  - B Birkenhead advised that there is a PRoW BW25/33 that runs between the verge along Riverside and the play area on the common. Whilst not signposted and not known by many, it could be an issue if the tables and chairs requested to be placed in this vicinity by the Anchor Inn potentially prevent its use.
2. School liaison – R Perrett
  - R Perrett will talk to the school head after Easter. She will explain the situation regarding the seesaw.
  - T Gardener said that OPRA will go ahead with a socially distanced Easter Egg Hunt for the children during the Easter holiday and delivered 81 Easter Eggs to the school.

**58/21 DATE AND TIME OF THE ANNUAL MEETINGS:**

The Annual Assembly, Annual Meeting and general parish council meetings will be held on Thursday 6 May 2021, 7pm (on Zoom).

The meeting finished at 9.15pm

Signed:

(Chair)

Date: