

OTTERHAMPTON PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
held on
THURSDAY 6 MAY 2021, 7.15pm (on ZOOM)

DECLARATION(S) OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS:

L Parsons declared an interest in minute 61/21/4. 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:

No general issues were raised.

Ward Councillor Reports

Cllr Pay previously submitted her report but added that at a full special council meeting held on 30.4.21 SDC voted to hold a referendum to vote on One Somerset or Stronger Somerset either by post or online. A Darch asked where the general public could find information on this issue. T Gardener said a leaflet was sent out circa one month ago. Cllr Pay advised SDC could be contacted via clairefaun@sedgemoor.gov.uk Information will also be included with ballot papers.

PRESENT:

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

59/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Apologies for absence were received from Ward Cllr Mike Caswell.

60/21 MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 1.4.21:

The minutes of the meeting on Zoom held on 1.4.21 were APPROVED and signed by the Chair but with one amendment; minute 49/21/7; the line 'plus a recent request to the Chair that the parish council fly the Rainbow Flag (symbol of LGBTQ pride)' was deleted.

61/21 PLANNING MATTERS:

1. **39/20/00012** – Roof and change of use from silage clamp to silage clamp and livestock building. Lower Hill Farm, Otterhampton. AWAITING DECISION.
2. **39/21/00002** – Conversion of existing storage barn to living accommodation at Fender House, 6 Brookside Rd. This application was SUPPORTED.
3. **39/21/00003** – Application for Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas (as for 39/21/00002 above). This application was SUPPORTED subject to consideration of the Conservation Officer.
4. **39/21/00004** – Installation of disabled access ramp at Otterhampton Village Hall. This application was SUPPORTED.
5. **13/21/00015** – Request for discharge of requirement relating to C9 fencing at Combwich Wharf, Hinkley Point C (FOR NOTIFICATION).

62/21 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 - £546.89 (Apr salary £511.89, plus misc. exp. £20.61 & £14.39 Zoom subscription)
 - b) Mr K Preston - £185.50 (Village gardening Jan-Mar £80.50 & weekly play area inspections £105.00)
 - c) SDC - £180.00 (Annual grounds maintenance, March 2021)
 - d) Otterhampton Village Hall - £400.00 (match funding grant for refurbishment)
 - e) SCC - £232 (Section 171 licence for installation of marker posts) nb this cheque not raised as confirmation is required from SCC which licence/licence fee is appropriate.
3. **Village Hall Annual Grant**

It was unanimously AGREED to award the annual grant of £1300 (5% of the precept) plus £200 for hire of the hall for meetings held or instigated by the parish council. **Action: Clerk**
4. **Increment award for Clerk**

It was unanimously AGREED to award the Clerk an annual increment, a rise of £199.68 per annum.

5. Income Received

SDC £13000.00 (50% Precept)

6. Approval of Annual Accounts

It was unanimously AGREED to APPROVE the annual accounts to 31.3.21

7. Insurance renewal

It was unanimously AGREED to renew the annual insurance with BHIB at a cost of £864.60, noting that this is year 3 of the 3-year agreement. **Action: Clerk**

Ward Cllr Pay left the meeting at 7.30pm

63/21 HINKLEY C COMMUNITY FUND GRANTS:

1. OPRA mower – T Gardener reported that the grant has been APPROVED, subject to completion of the grant agreement, provision of financial information and confirmation that the proposal has been discussed with Natural England regarding the SSSI status of the common.
2. Resurface the play area and verge marker posts – The Clerk reported that the grant has been APPROVED, subject to the completion of the grant agreement, provision of financial information and confirmation that the proposal has been discussed with Natural England regarding the SSSI status of the common.

64/21 STEART WARD:

Nothing to report.

65/21 REVIEW OF ACTION LIST:

No 3 – Brick enclosure of pipe in the bank at Estuary Park. The Clerk spoke to the Internal Drainage Board (IDB) who inspected the pipe and advised there was no current cause for concern. The IDB will make the Environment Agency aware to ensure it checks it again during the autumn inspection.

No 6 – Nether Stowey parish council have been informed that we are not interested in forming a new Cluster Group in relation to the One Somerset/Stroger Somerset proposals at this time.

No 7 – Magnox has been advised that we wished to continue participation of the SSG and to confirm our representative.

No 8 – The parish nominees (Jane, Peter and Robert Wright, Lyn Carter and Helen Jowett) for the Somerset Medal have been notified to SCC.

No 9 – The resident who raised the issue of children's safety crossing the road by the play area has been responded to.

From this point it was noted that the Clerk, A Darch and L Parsons were having internet connection problems.

No 10 – S Hooper has been notified that the parish council approved her request to use the Common for Pilates whilst the village hall is undergoing refurbishment.

1. Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) – D.Harvey (SDC) responded on 21.4.21 advising that his colleague Becky Wood, will be making contact to discuss further.

A.Darch left the meeting as he lost internet connection.

2. Flags – Following last month's discussion, the Chair said a vote had not been held whether the Rainbow Flag should be flown or not. A further debate ensued. Councillors were asked their views; these ranged from the need and importance to be supportive and inclusive of minority sectors to questioning whether it is within the remit of the parish council to promote minority sectors, cautious about setting a precedent, would it open the floodgates for all sorts or requests for flags to be flown and confusion in how to deal with questions and possible challenges from parishioners. A vote was taken; 2 in favour; 3 against and 1 abstention.

Clerk's note: See para within minute 72/21

3. Items for June agenda – Refurbishment of the buoy and damaged village sign (items 3 and 5d respectively, from the actions' list carried forward 5.3.20-31.8.20). **Action: Clerk**

66/21 ANCHOR INN – REQUEST FOR TABLES AND BENCHES ON THE COMMON:

The Clerk visited the landlord to discuss the request and the responses received so far from SDC and our insurance company. We had been waiting for a response from the Open Spaces Society. The landlord advised that the requirement had only been temporary until further Covid restrictions have been lifted. The Landlord had more or less concluded that due to the 'legalities' it would probably not be worth his while and hopefully he would be able to accommodate a sufficient number of customers in the car park on the benches and tables he

has provided; he would see how things progress. A subsequent response was received from the Open Spaces Society. The advice was not definitive, but it suggested three main things: -

1. In general, the provision of facilities to assist in the enjoyment of recreation would not be an offence, but nothing must be done which interferes with the rights of local people to use the green for lawful sports and pastimes.
2. If the village green (TVG) and the provision of three tables would not diminish the area available, and the tables were to be used by local inhabitants, for instance when not being used by the pub, then it may be possible to argue that there would not be a breach of the legislation. Alternatively, to argue that the provision of three tables is for the better enjoyment of TVG, especially if they are made available for use by local inhabitants.
3. However, unlike land registered as common land, there is no consent process to allow works/encroachments on TVG and therefore there is a small risk that the matter could be referred to the magistrate's court. The Defra guidance suggests that the size of the green and the proportion of the land used for an encroachment are relevant matters for the court.

67/21 CHANGES TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT:

See the Ward Councillor report on page 1.

68/21 MEETING REPORTS:

13.4.21 – Village Hall.

L Parsons previously circulated notes of the meeting. The refurbishment was going well; however, some asbestos has been found in a couple of places which had to be dealt with so there may be a slight delay to the planned completion date.

13.4.21 – EDF Workforce uplift

The Chair and Clerk had a Zoom meeting with A Goodchild and I Selby to advise that EDF in conjunction with SDC, is trying to source additional accommodation for employees and land for parking in order to meet the anticipated peak in the workforce in two years' time. There would be some financial support to the four main parishes if any help can be identified.

22.4.21 – Parish Shore (Otterhampton Conservation Group)

This was quite well attended, including a number of younger people. A family taster event was arranged for 23.5.21 to meet at the Brownie copse.

69/21 FORTHCOMING MEETINGS:

11.5.21 – Village Hall

22.5.21 – Community Forum

23.5.21 – Otterhampton Conservation Group wilder community family taster event.

A Darch re-joined the meeting

70/21 CORRESPONDENCE:

1. EDF would like to give an update on Combwich Wharf at the 3.6.21 parish council meeting. It was DECIDED to defer the update until the July parish council meeting as we will be unable to meet in the village hall and venues elsewhere may not be able to accommodate the required safety measures.
2. Complaint about low flying helicopters
A fairly new resident of Estuary Park complained about the noise over a couple of evenings at circa 10.30pm. It was thought to be the Army on training manoeuvres in the vicinity of the river. An appropriate response was sent to the resident.
3. General List
Other correspondence, apart from weekly briefings etc, was incorporated within the agenda.

71/21 REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES:

1. Public Rights of Way (PRoW) – B Birkenhead

The field behind Brookside Rd has been ploughed up to the verge. This may flatten with use over time. Key to the PRoW role is consultation and communication with farmers.

2. Otter Tales

The deadline for articles is the 6 May. B Leathwood has more material than space. Councillors AGREED to give 'editorial licence' to Barry to extend the edition by up to 4 pages if required.

3. School liaison – R Perrett

Nothing to report. Rachel is hoping to meet with C Luce (the Head) soon.

The Clerk left the meeting at 8.20pm and did not re-join as she lost internet connection

72/21 DATE AND TIME OF THE ANNUAL MEETINGS:

Post the Clerk leaving the meeting, the Chair advised she was reluctant to leave minute no 65/21/2 where one councillor was unable to vote because of technical issues. A Darch was asked which way he would have voted. His vote would have changed the outcome to 3 for, 3 against, with 1 abstention, leaving a casting vote to the Chair. The Chair was reluctant to make a casting vote with the clerk not present and when off agenda. Councillors therefore AGREED to review the vote at the next meeting and if possible, to find a different version of the Rainbow Flag.

The next parish council meeting will be held on Thursday 3 June 2021, 7pm, at a venue to be confirmed

The meeting finished at 8.30pm

Signed: Original signed by J.Evans

(Chair)

Date: 1 June 2021