

OTTERHAMPTON PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

held on

THURSDAY 1 JUNE 2021, 7.00pm at Otterhampton Primary School

DECLARATION(S) OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS:

L Parsons declared an interest in minute 75/21/4. R Perrett declared an interest in minute 84/21/1. 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:

- Allotments – general interest expressed to seek ground for allotments. A couple of landowners have been approached without success. The Clerk spoke to EDF to ask if there may be an opportunity on land around Combwich Wharf. The parish council will keep this item under review for any opportunities that may arise.
- Broken slat in bench by the Buoy. Repairs are in hand.

Ward Councillor Reports

Cllr Pay and Cllr Caswell previously submitted reports.

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, 2 members of the public.

73/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Apologies for absence were received from Ward Cllr Mike Caswell.

74/21 MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 6.5.21:

The minutes of the meeting on Zoom held on 6.5.21 were APPROVED and signed by the Chair.

75/21 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. AWAITING DECISION.
3. **39/21/00003** – Application for Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas (as for 39/21/00002 above). AWAITING DECISION.
4. **39/21/00004** – Installation of disabled access ramp at Otterhampton Village Hall. Amended application for a minor change to the ramp and confirmation that the Trustees sought advice from Land Registry (LR) whether the land the ramp is to be sited on is registered to anyone. LR confirmed the land is not registered. The Trustees have applied for ownership. Council AGREED no further comments to SDC are necessary.
5. **13/21/00015** – Request for discharge of requirement relating to C9 fencing at Combwich Wharf, Hinkley Point C. GRANTED – SUFFICIENT INFORMATION.

76/21 FINANCE:

1. **Bank Balances** - Current A/C £2000.60; Deposit A/C £20043.87; Reserve A/C £37733.01.
2. **The following payments were AGREED:**
 - a) Mrs A Prowse - £579.71 (May salary £545.17, plus misc. exp. £20.15 & £14.39 Zoom subscription)
 - b) Mr B Leathwood - £208.62 (Solopress – May Otter Tales)
 - c) SDC - £668.93 (Empty 4 dog bins, twice weekly, April- September 2021)
 - d) 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. **To approve the annual external audit to 31.3.21**
 - a) Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement
This was unanimously APPROVED
 - b) Section 2 – Accounting Statement
This was unanimously APPROVED

The audit return has been APPROVED by the internal auditor; Mr R Williams, and together with Section 1 and Section 2 above, will be submitted to the external auditor PKF Littlejohn by 2.7.21 **Action: Clerk**
Ward Cllr Pay left the meeting at 7.30pm

77/21 REVIEW OF PROCEDURES:

1. Existing Procedures
 - a) Standing Orders
Councillors are content that the existing procedure does not require amendment.
 - b) Financial Regulations
Councillors are content that the existing procedure does not require amendment.
 - c) Code of Conduct
Councillors are content that the existing procedure does not require amendment. Amendments will normally be directed by SALC.
2. Approve new Safeguarding Policy
 - a) The draft Safeguarding policy was unanimously APPROVED and was signed by the Chair. M Beckley was thanked for her assistance with the policy.

78/21 STEART WARD:

A Darch previously circulated his report, the main items included: -.

- A Steart Forum will be held during the end of June or early July.
- A new part time warden employed by Natural England and funded by EDF has started on the Bridgwater Bay National Nature Reserve.

79/21 ENHANCEMENTS:

1. Re-surface the play area
Funding has been secured to resurface the play and outdoor gym areas and to install an 'engineered base' (hardcore). This should prevent the ground settlement problems experienced and the carbon blacking of the existing surface in the extreme hot weather. In addition, a new see-saw to replace the broken one will be installed. We are awaiting confirmation when the work will commence, but we hope it will be during July. The work will take one week to complete, during which time the play area will be unavailable.
2. Verge marker posts and refurbishment of the wall by the play area
This work is due to start 5.7.21 and will take approximately 3 weeks to complete.
3. Village sign
It was AGREED to repair the existing sign and to re-site it in the existing location but at a low to ground level, rather than up high as previously for safety reasons. Nic and Jim Doble offered to put some planters around the base. The Clerk advised that a plan of any new additions ought to be approved as the land belongs to Highways and permission, and possibly a Section 171 licence, may need to be obtained first. M Beckley suggested a 'quick' site visit of the area with Nic and Jim to look at what they have in mind in the next couple of weeks.
4. Repair of the Combwich buoy
B Birkenhead in conjunction with A Turnball (Community Engagement from EDF) is arranging to get the buoy repaired. Some of the wooden sections at the base of the buoy are rotted and will be repaired. We may need to arrange to take the cage off. The concrete plinth may need raising to ensure the buoy is not set into the grass, particularly in the winter.
5. Wharf Rd speed and weight limit sign
Following some complaints from residents, it was AGREED to arrange new and more obvious 10mph and 3 tonne weight limit signage to be erected at the start of the Wharf Rd. **Action: Clerk**

80/21 REVIEW OF ACTION LIST:

1. General
 - a. No 1 - Housing need assessment - chase action from SDC. **Action: Clerk**
 - b. No 4 – Broken kerb stones by bus shelter – chase action from Highways. **Action: B Birkenhead**
 - c. No 8 – Village Hall grant letters. The response from S Barton that the Hall rent will rise to £250 from £200 per annum with effect from 1.4.22 was noted.
2. Review of longer-term action list
 - a. No 1 – Boundary wall (Ship Lane). Repairs have been carried out to the wall near the top. This item can be removed from the action list. New owners are now in the property further down where subsidence has occurred. A letter will be written to the new occupants advising them of parish council concerns. **Action: Clerk**

- b. No 4 – Breakfast Club parking at the school. This issue has improved and can be removed from the action list.
 - c. No 5 – SCC Chairman' award. The nomination of R Wright will stand when the next opportunity to nominate him occurs. This item to be removed from the action list
 - d. No 7 – Landscaping options for Wharf Rd. There may an opportunity to use some of the soil removed from the play area on the margins of the Wharf Rd should an option be to plant the verges. The sub-group of B Birkenhead, T Gardener and the Clerk to meet to discuss and try and come up with some suggestions. **Action: B.Birkenhead/T.Gardener/Clerk**
 - e. No 8 – Vegetation removal at Biffens Corner. If the opportunity arises, the Clerk will have an informal discussion with the houseowner to ask if he will consider removing the vegetation for safety reasons. **Action: Clerk**
 - f. No 9 – Possible replacement bus shelter. Remove this from the action list as at such times if this does become a requirement, it can be raised at the time.
 - g. No 10 – Subsidence issue Church Hill. Include with the Church Hill/School Lane survey by SCC Highways in the summer.
 - h. No 11 – Erosion of grassed area opposite the Village Hall. Retain on action list.
 - i. No 12 – Parking limit in layby opposite the Post Office. This is no longer an issue and can be removed from the action list.
3. Rainbow Flag
Following a number of discussions and an attempted vote to fly the Rainbow Flag (disrupted at the last meeting because of poor internet connection) a further vote was held. Votes for: 3; Votes against 4. The rainbow flag will not be flown on the basis of a majority decision.

81/21 CHANGES TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT:

A local referendum vote has been held to ascertain Somerset residents' views. The results will be out towards the middle of June.

82/21 MEETING REPORTS:

11.5.21 – Village Hall.

L Parsons previously circulated notes of the meeting. After some initial delays work on the hall is going well. It is unlikely the hall will be finished before the end of June.

20.5.21 – Community Forum

M Beckley previously circulated notes of the meeting. Much of the focus surrounded the accident report on the collapsed silo and the uplift/change in staff numbers at Hinkley Point C.

23.5.21 – Parish Shore (Otterhampton Conservation Group)

This was quite well attended. Work included clearing the paths through the brownie copse. It is hoped interest will grow and it is hoped the initiative can be publicised at the village fete if it is held.

83/21 FORTHCOMING MEETINGS:

8.6.21 – Village Hall

25.6.21 - SSG

22.7.21 – Transport Forum

84/21 CORRESPONDENCE:

1. Resident query re bank repairs of the brook by Estuary Park
A resident enquired if the parish council could determine whether an agency could or should undertake repairs to the bank at the base of her garden as it is eroding into the brook. The Clerk checked with the Drainage Board, the Environment Agency and EDF who all advised that the bank is the responsibility of the riparian owner so they could not be of any assistance. There is no further action that the parish council can help with. The resident has been informed.
2. School Lane & Church Hill
Following a complaint by a resident to Highways about lack of safety for school children walking to school, Highways advised that Otterhampton School has been selected to undergo a survey in the summer regarding possible safety signage enhancement. The parish council has asked to be involved and will use it as an opportunity to raise other outstanding issues.
3. General List
 - Hinkley C – offered free bags of gritting salt and will deliver. **Action: Clerk**

- Cars parked along Riverside – these are at times parked in dangerous places including on the bend by the play area. This may become more of a problem when the verge marker posts are installed.
- Children swimming in the pill – concerned residents have written to make us aware of secondary school aged children swimming in the pill. It was AGREED to erect some warning signage, speak to EDF re wharf access and R Perrett to talk to the school to ask if the RNLI could possibly attend to talk to the children (acknowledging it is probably not primary school children)
- CAB – AGM on 23.7.21, via Zoom to discuss constitutional matters only
- Environment Agency – awaiting a decision on the Bridgwater Barrier planning consent but in the meantime, it will be carrying out bat surveys mid-may and great crested newt surveys during the summer evenings
- SCC Isobel Pring – asking if the parish may be interested in “litter boards”. A Darch volunteered to have one in Steart.

85/21 REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES:

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

B Birkenhead is currently busy clearing vegetation away from stiles throughout the parish

2. Otter Tales

The deadline for articles is the 4 July.

3. School liaison – R Perrett

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

4. OPRA – T Gardener

- The new mower should be delivered in the next week. The old mower has been sold.
- Permission was granted to allow OPRA to stage a cricket match on the common in August in memory of Murray Lister who formerly organised the event.

86/21 DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETINGS:

The next parish council meeting will be held on Thursday 1 July 2021, 7pm, at the Village Hall if the refurbishment is complete. EDF is due to give an update on Combwich Wharf, but this may not be possible if we are unable to hold the meeting in the Village Hall.

Nb post meeting – the Village Hall will not be ready by 1.7.21. permission will be sought from the school to ask if we can meet there again.

The meeting finished at 8.30pm

Signed: B.Birkenhead (Acting Chair)

Date: 1 July 2021