

**OTTERHAMPTON PARISH COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

held on

**THURSDAY 7 OCTOBER 2021, 6.30pm at Otterhampton Village Hall**

**COMBWICH WHARF UPDATE (EDF – Vicky Dingwall and Alex Routiere)**

VD – Vicki has returned to the role, covering Immy Selby's temporary secondment for a year.

- The visitor centre at Cannington Court is now open, Monday to Fridays 9.30am-5pm; booking not required.
- A brochure is being developed covering the wharf's operational stage.
- She asked that residents keep EDF informed of any issues or concerns.

AR – Alex will be the point of contact based at Combwich Wharf.

- Major construction works are complete. The wharf is now ready to receive deliveries.
- Work has started installing 2m acoustic wooden fencing. This will remain throughout the wharf's operation.
- Road surfacing at the wharf edge is complete.
- Dredging will be carried out every six weeks throughout the project
- Working hours 8am-6pm, some Saturdays 8am-1pm
- To support future deliveries, a bypass lane will be built adjacent to the private road access.

Question and Answer session

Q – Safety concern re the height of the acoustic fencing as wharf staff will be unable to look over the top to see what is going on in the river below. AR will raise this with the team.

Q – Concerns raised re young adults swimming in the pill during the summer and using the wharf's 'condemned' ladders; would EDF consider providing safety lines and poles as rescue equipment should anyone get into trouble in the pill. VD took an action to look into this.

Q – Does the new bypass lane involve a storage area (AR said no) and was there a planning application submitted. This will be confirmed by VD.

A couple of residents commented that the project has generally gone very well and thanked EDF for minimal disruption to the village during the refurbishment. B Birkenhead thanked Vicki and Alex for attending the meeting.

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

A Darch (minute 117/21/4) and R Perrett (minute 127/21/3). 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.

**1. Ward Councillor Reports**

Cllr Pay – due to a family bereavement, Cllr Pay has not been at SDC for the past 6 weeks so had nothing to report.

Cllr Caswell mostly covered the restructuring within the new Unitary Council. The SDC and SCC councillors combined will reduce from 269 to circa 80, which could result in one councillor with a 6000 constituency; elections for the shadow unitary council will be held in May 2022, before becoming the vesting authority in 2023.

- T Gardener asked Cllr Caswell why SCC councillors are not meeting parish councils face to face and why meetings are not being held in the SDC offices? Cllr Caswell suggested it is because social distancing measures cannot be observed. Tina attended the conference at Junction 24 earlier and said social distancing was not evident.
- R Perrett raised the apparent inconsistencies and frustration whilst using the Recycling Centre at Saltlands. It appears the rules are not applied consistently whilst using cars and trailers. This will be raised with Somerset Waste Partnership. **Action: Cllr Caswell.**

**2. General**

- No fly parking to report currently.
- Allotments – whilst the parish council would like to be able to provide allotments, it doesn't own any land aside from the Common which would not be suitable or permissible. Some enquiries have been made with local land owners but nothing available. A Darch suggested approaching WWT to ask if it would be willing to allow some of its land to be used. T Gardener said Cannington Parish Council has allotments and people outside the parish can apply and could be allocated an allotment if no-one from Cannington is on the waiting list. There is a small area of land near the Brownie Copse which may have potential if available, although it may not be suitable due to occasional waterlogging. This item will be retained on the agenda/action list.

Cllrs Pay and Caswell left the meeting at 7.30pm

**PRESENT:**

Bob Birkenhead (Acting Chair), Marie Beckley, Andy Darch, Tina Gardener, Rachel Perrett, Lindsey Parsons, Aly Prowse (Clerk). 4 members of the public attended the EDF presentation but did not remain for the meeting. B Leathwood joined the meeting later to give an update on Combwich Ponds (minute 122/21/2)

**115/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:**

Apologies for absence were received from Julie Evans.

**116/21 MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 7.10.21:**

The minutes of the meeting held at Otterhampton Village Hall on 7.10.21 were APPROVED and signed by the Chair.

**117/21 PLANNING MATTERS:**

1. **39/21/00002** – Conversion of existing storage barn to living accommodation at Fender House, 6 Brookside Rd. AWAITING DECISION.
2. **39/21/00003** – Application for Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas (as for 39/21/00002 above). AWAITING DECISION.
3. **39/21/00008** – Loft conversion and erection of single storey rear extension, 28 Estuary Pk. PERMISSION GRANTED
4. **39/21/00010** – Amended application to single storey extension to west elevation and new dormer windows to existing house at Brufords, Steart. A Darch left the room at 7.35pm  
Councillors SUPPORTED this application as it is a reduction of the previously granted application.  
A Darch returned to the room at 7.40pm

**118/21 FINANCE:**

1. **Bank Balances** - Current A/C £4554.90; Deposit A/C £15544.42; Reserve A/C £24734.82.
2. **The following payments were AGREED:**
  - a) Mr K Preston - £263.00 (Jul, Aug & Sep gardening £228 and play area inspections £35)
  - b) B Leathwood - £214.88 (Solopress, printing Otter Tales for September)
  - c) Mrs A Prowse - £562.72 (Sep salary £528.53, plus misc. exp.£28.30 & £14.39 Zoom sub)
  - d) Mr M Ingram - £100.50 (Installation of traffic sign on Wharf Rd)
3. **Budget Monitoring Statement to 30.9.21**  
There were no questions relating to the statement which showed expenditure to date of £64291.23 and income of £70344.23. The six-monthly accounts to 30.9.21 were circulated and will be presented for approval at the November parish council meeting.
4. **Income**  
SDC - £13000.00 (second half of Precept)  
B Johnson - £10.00 (purchase of 2 Millennium books)  
OPRA - £100.00 (annual barn rent)  
A VAT claim for refund has been submitted to HMRC for £12777.76, for the period 1.4.20 – 30.9.21

**119/21 CLERK'S REPLACEMENT:**

Councillors will meet to select the applicants for interview on 20.10.21, at 7pm in the village hall (small meeting room subject to its availability). The interview date and times, questions and interview panel will also be decided.

**120/21 STEART WARD:**

A report had previously been circulated by A Darch. The main items were that the internet provider for Steart advised the service will be withdrawn from 30.9.21; residents have secured a temporary solution until 30.11.21. Concerns are growing regarding EDF's proposals for the new cycle path through the WWT Reserve and onwards to Hinkley Point re the potential adverse environmental consequences.

**121/21 ENHANCEMENTS:**

1. **Play area pathways**  
The Clerk and B Birkenhead met a contractor at the play area to discuss options for the repair / reinstatement of the pathways. A specification will be written and will go out to tender. **Action: Clerk**  
Councillors AGREED to pick up the loose stones periodically when in the vicinity. T Gardener suggested using the stones as drainage for the area around the buoy.
2. **Wharf Rd Maintenance**  
It was AGREED to ask Wood-land South West Ltd to provide a quotation for the annual removal of vegetation along the Wharf Rd. **Action Clerk**
3. **Combwich track potholes**  
It was AGREED to award the contract to Mr Ingram at a cost of £812 on the basis of previous quotations received under competitive tender. R Perrett noticed WWT is carrying out work using heavy machinery and

diggers. We will check that WWT does not plan to use the track for access prior to commencement of the track repair. **Action: Clerk**

## **122/21 REVIEW OF ACTION LIST:**

### **1. General**

- a) No 8 – Highway's works. The Clerk was informed that Otterhampton Primary School is on the list of schools to have the '20 when lights show' advisory warning signage. It is envisaged this will be completed next year. The signage for the road by the play area should have been installed. The Clerk advised Highways that it is still outstanding. Highways promised to hasten this work.
- b) No 9 – Continue to pursue safety enhancement for Dame Withycombe Hill residents crossing the C182. This was raised with K Tyson on 8.9.21 but an answer is still awaited.
- c) No 21 – Combwich Ponds. B Leathwood joined the meeting to report on news he had received on 7.10.21. SCC has concluded its investigation and Mr Groves (case officer) has drafted a modification report based on his findings. The report will be on the SCC website shortly and will be subject to consultation until 15 November 2021 where any interested party can make comments or submit further evidence.

### **2. Outdoor table tennis tables**

A Darch said in principle, he liked the idea but thought the location would not be suitable due to the prevailing windy weather. In addition, the area around the play area gets waterlogged so ground conditions are not ideal and permission would have to be sought from Natural England re the SSSI status. L Parsons said there are table tennis tables in the village hall that have not been used for years. It was AGREED not to pursue this idea at this time, but to include the initiative on the Hinkley C Community Fund project list to see if it attracted further interest.

### **3. Combwich buoy refurbishment**

A Turnball advised B Birkenhead that he was unable to provide help with the buoy refurbishment as he does not have the resources or time. Bob has now made an approach to the Boat Club to see if it could help. A Darch may know someone he could ask. The Clerk suggested perhaps one of the local colleges may wish to take it on as a project for the students.

### **4. Wharf Rd Landscaping**

B Birkenhead and the Clerk met with V Dingwall and A Routiere (EDF) on 7.10.21 to discuss options for environment/enhancement of the verges along Wharf Rd. It is something EDF, together with Osprey the Tier 1 contractors, would like to help with if an appropriate project can be designed to be undertaken by its volunteers. V Dingwall will talk to the EDF ecologist and get back to us.

### **5. Parish council website**

The Combwich website was instigated by OPRA and is maintained by B Leathwood (on behalf of OPRA). It does however, need updating. The Village Hall now has its own website and the 'All things Combwich website' Facebook page has circa 600 followers. We also have Otter Tales. Barry is going to get a small group of interested parties to look at the various mediums to discuss if information can/needs to be consolidated. He will arrange a meeting for late November.

## **123/21 GOVERNANCE – EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY:**

The amended Equality and Diversity policy was APPROVED and SIGNED by the Chair. The Clerk suggested we should develop a Grievance procedure as part of the Governance of the parish council as referenced within this policy.

## **124/21 CHANGES TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT:**

Both T Gardener and B Birkenhead attended the Parish and Town Council conference at J24 on 7.10.21. Tina stayed the full 5 hours and further to her input in the Public Session, briefly summarised the key proposals:

- There will be 85-110 councillors, each responsible for circa 5500 constituents.
- There will be 15-20 Local Community Networks across Somerset. Draft Boundaries to be decided in November.
- A Structural Change Order will be submitted in the next couple of weeks.
- Although agreed in principle, a formal decision to proceed with elections in May 2022 will not be confirmed until March 2022.
- Under a Unitary Council, an election period for councillors will be 5 years.
- There will be asset devolution from County to Parishes, with delegated authority. For further discussion.
- Cornwall and Wiltshire Unitary Councils were formed in 2009. Wiltshire reported that it had still not got everything right, indicating that it will be a long process.

**125/21 MEETING REPORTS:**

**15.9.21 – Village Hall**

Notes of the meeting were previously circulated by L Parsons. Key points included; lots of activities have restarted, awaiting invoices for the refurbishment, solar panels are working so electricity bills should be lower and awaiting tenders for phase 2 of the refurbishment.

**16.9.21 – EDF Stakeholder Reception**

B Birkenhead represented the parish council. He enjoyed the event which included a tour of the new visitor centre at Cannington Court. T Gardener said visitors are requested to use the car park and not to park on the nearby roads. Tina has put both Otterhampton and Cannington Parish Councils' names down on the waiting list for a tour of Hinkley Point C Station.

**23.9.21 – Community Forum**

Notes of the meeting were previously circulated by B Birkenhead. Good progress is being made on the technical aspects of the build including Unit 1 turbine hall. The largest turbo-alternators in the world are being manufactured in France. EDF in response to a question, advised that the carbon footprint of HPC (grams of CO2 produced per kilowatt hour) is 12g/kWh for nuclear, 490g/kWh for gas and 820g/kWh for coal. Concerns were raised regarding the housing of contractors and the associated parking problems with the many houses of multiple occupation (HMOs) in villages. Formal minutes will be sent out from EDF in due course.

**26.9.21 – Otterhampton Wilder Community**

This was not generally well attended but it is hoped that the project will evolve over time.

**126/21 FORTHCOMING MEETINGS:**

13.10.21 - Village Hall

15.10.21 – Village Hall AGM

Precept - normally this is done in November, but it was decided to defer until December to involve the new clerk.

**127/21 CORRESPONDENCE:**

**1. Future Parish Elections**

The result of the SALC consultation to bring the 2023 elections to 2022 was 96 for, 12 against.

**2. Remembrance Day – Tommy Soldiers**

In view of the cost of the Tommy soldier silhouette (preferred option) at £650 each, trying to find the right location plus storage for it, it was DECIDED that more research is required. It will be too late for this coming Remembrance Day but it will be an Agenda item for next month.

**3. Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Opinion EDF cycle path through Steart Marshes**

Mr Gripton has copied the parish council in on various items of correspondence between himself and SDC as he is challenging the decision made by SDC that the cycleway is not EIA development and will not require an Environmental Statement (ES).

**4. General List**

- a) SDC Clean Surroundings advised we could have a sack of daffodil bulbs. It was AGREED to share a sack with Fiddington Parish Council. The bulbs will be planted on the grassy area opposite Nursery Close.
- b) EDF Escort Training on 17.10.21.

**128/21 REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES:**

**1. Public Rights of Way (PRoW) – B Birkenhead.** Nothing to report.

**2. OPRA – T Gardener.** The AGM was held last week. 4 new volunteers attended, plus a further one expressed interest this week. It is OPRA's 21st year this year.

**3. Otter Tales -** The deadline for articles is 4 November.

**4. School -** R Perrett had previously sent a report to councillors. The parking has stopped at the school, which is creating a problem elsewhere in the village. T Gardener suggested approaching The Anchor to ask if vehicles could park in the car park whilst dropping off and collecting children from the school. Rachel will speak to the Head after half-term.

**129/21 DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING:**

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 4 November 2021, 7.00pm at Otterhampton Village Hall.

The meeting finished at 9.48pm

Signed: Original signed by B Birkenhead

(Acting Chair)

Date: 4.11.21