

OTTERHAMPTON PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

held on

THURSDAY 4 NOVEMBER 2021, 7.00pm at Otterhampton Village Hall

- The meeting commenced with a minute's silence in memory of Ann Leathwood, who passed away recently. Ann had been a stalwart in the community in her role with Otterhampton Parish Recreation Association (OPRA) over many years and also wife to Barry, our former councillor and Chair. Our condolences are sent to Barry and his family.
- B Birkenhead welcomed Mrs Mel Catchpole who is going to be our new Parish Clerk with effect from 1.12.21. Mel was present to observe proceedings.

DECLARATION(S) OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS:

There were no 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 Caswell

- Recycling Centre, Saltlands – The rules, consistent throughout Somerset, are that a car is allowed to tow a trailer into the centre, but a van towing a trailer may not. A trailer can be disconnected from a van and pushed through.
- The 'Somerset Blue Note' was previously circulated indicating business as usual.
- The Draft Structural Change Order – will be published on 5.11.21. It will include that the election in May 2022 is not certain yet, the preference is for 110 councillors (2 councillors per division), there is improvement to the previously suggested boundaries and Vesting Day will be 1 April.
- The Bridgwater Tidal Barrier Scheme is all in place and awaiting Government approval.
- B Birkenhead asked Cllr Caswell to enquire why the mobile libraries are no longer calling at schools. **Action: Cllr Caswell.**

Cllr Pay

- Cllr Pay previously circulated notes detailing the various meetings she had attended during the month.

2. General

- No fly parking issues
- Council was asked if any progress has been made following the request from the Combwich and District WI to plant an oak tree. A location has not yet been identified but this will be followed up. **Action: B Birkenhead.**
- Disabled bay in Riverside – The lines have faded badly and need to be re-lined. Highways to be advised.
Action: Clerk

PRESENT:

Bob Birkenhead (Acting Chair), Marie Beckley, Andy Darch, Tina Gardener, Rachel Perrett, Lindsey Parsons, Aly Prowse (Clerk). Ward councillors Julie Pay and Mike Caswell, 4 members of the public.

130/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Apologies for absence were received from Julie Evans.

131/21 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.

132/21 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. **39/21/000010** – Amended application to single storey extension to west elevation and new dormer windows to existing house at Brufords, Steart. PERMISSION GRANTED.

133/21 FINANCE:

1. **Bank Balances** - Current A/C £8745.38; Deposit A/C £9544.53; Reserve A/C £24735.02.

2. **The following payments were AGREED:**
 - a) Pains Fireworks - £874.80 (OPRA village firework display 7.11.21)
 - b) GeoXphere - £40.50 (Parish On Line annual membership)
 - c) Mrs A Prowse - £561.53 (Oct salary £528.53, plus misc. exp.£18.60 & £14.39 Zoom sub)
 - d) SDC - £610.80 (Grounds maintenance works Apr – Oct)
 - e) B Birkenhead – £181.24 (Village buoy and Phone box refurbishment)
3. **Approval of six-monthly account's statement to 30.9.21**
The six-monthly reconciliation of accounts showed both the receipts and payments and the total bank balance at 30.9.21 totalled £44834.14. There were no questions asked. The statement was signed by the Acting Chair.
4. **Approval of the release of the £20k contingency fund for the village hall Hinkley C Community Grant**
To meet the date of the grant panel meeting (29.10.21) both the parish council and OPPT agreed via email to approve the previously agreed contingency sum (when the main grant was approved) to be released upon receipt of invoices and an explanation of what the contingency was being used for.
5. **2022/23 Precept meeting date**
The Precept meeting was arranged for Thursday 9 December, 7pm in the small meeting room of the village hall (if available). **Action: Clerk**

134/21 CLERK'S REPLACEMENT:

Mrs Catchpole has accepted the offer of appointment as Parish Clerk subject to the terms and condition of her contract, which is going to be finalised in a closed meeting after the conclusion of the parish council.

135/21 STEART WARD (A Darch):

A report was previously circulated. The main items included uncertainty over internet provision for residents; high tides are imminent and biosecurity will need to be increased for people who keep chicken and ducks, due to reports of Avian Influenza (information will be sent to Steart residents). A request was also made to erect an information board to explain the small common known locally as 'Backrap' following the enhancement work completed a couple of years ago, explaining why it is there and who can use it. This was AGREED.

Cllrs Pay and Caswell left the meeting at 7.40pm

136/21 ENHANCEMENTS:

1. Bicycle stands at Crossways

Bicycles belonging to Hinkley C staff catching staff buses are being left at the bus shelter propped up against trees and the welcome feature. The 'Take A Stand' Life Cycle UK community benefit scheme will provide and install bicycle stand(s) free of charge subject to Highways' approval (as land owners). It was AGREED to contact Bernadette Thompson (coordinator) to clarify the process, then councillors will need to agree how many stands and the style required. Once this information is agreed, permission will need to be sought from Highways. **Action: Clerk**

2. Combwich buoy refurbishment

B Birkenhead kindly agreed to undertake the refurbishment of the buoy and has started replacing some of the rotten timber. He has ordered paint to repaint the buoy which will be done when weather permits. The refurbishment may be finished by the end of 2021.

3. Biffens Corner – Vehicle Messaging Activation

It was noted that this long-awaited initiative has been installed and fully operational to the western side of Biffens Corner. It will flash drivers to warn them of speeds circa 50mph, warning of the junction ahead.

137/21 REVIEW OF ACTION LIST:

1. General

- a) No 1 – Housing Needs Assessment (HNA). The Clerk again emailed SDC's Mr Harvey on 30.10.21 for an update on our outstanding request for a HNA. It has been observed that there are (possibly) mammal boxes in the hedges in the Brookside Rd field (site of previous planning application for a housing development). This is the reason for our urgency for the HNA. It was AGREED to email Cllr Caswell to ask him to pursue this with SDC on our behalf. **Action: Clerk**
- b) No 2 – Play area pathways. B Birkenhead said quite a few stones have been removed (for use as drainage for the buoy) and the area looks slightly better. Action continues to produce a contract specification and go out to tender to refurbish the paths. It was also noted that some vandalism had occurred to the litter bins at the play area. We seldom experience vandalism so the situation will be monitored.

- c) No 3 – Annual Wharf Rd Maintenance – A quotation for his work was requested on 10.10.21. This will be chased. **Action: Clerk**
- d) No 5 - Wharf Rd Enhancement – We are awaiting a response following the meeting with EDF on 7.10.21. This will be pursued. **Action: Clerk**
- e) No 8 – Signage and ‘Slow’ markings on the road warning of the play area. A playground sign has been erected but it is not in the location that was agreed in February 2021 as per the Highways map. A complaint was received by a resident objecting to the sign as it is outside of their property. It was AGREED to contact Highways to request that the sign is repositioned as per the agreed location. This will be communicated to the complainant. **Action: Clerk**
A Darch and L Parsons suggested traffic in School Lane is not too much of an issue currently; Mondays seem to be worse as it is the day when the children go swimming.
- f) No 9 – Safety enhancement at Dame Withycombe Hill for residents crossing the C182. It was AGREED to again pursue a response from Highways following our email of 7.10.21. **Action: Clerk**
- g) No 14 – Abandoned vehicle on ‘private forecourt’ in Ship Lane. The Clerk is trying to establish if this is a private layby. Action continues.
- h) No 17 – County Lines Drugs. T Gardener advised that the meeting to discuss this issue as proposed by Nether Stowey Parish Council had been cancelled due to a lack of interest from parish councils. It was AGREED to check what SDC is doing regarding this subject and whether there is the possibility of getting involved. **Action: T Gardener**
- i) No 18 – Water safety rescue equipment for the pill area. This was discussed with EDF during its update to the parish council on 7.10.21. Response awaited from EDF. **Action: Clerk**
- j) Allotments – Whilst the parish council would like to be able to provide allotments for residents, it does all depend on land acquisition/opportunities. A previous suggestion for a field adjacent to the Brownie Copse was considered unsuitable due to security and access issues (re vehicles on the track and parking). Allotment holders will require a shed for storage of tools and equipment. EDF is aware that we are seeking land for allotments (in the vicinity of the Wharf for example) as Immy Selby was asked during the discussion regarding the additional EDF community support offered when the wharf becomes operational. It was AGREED to add allotments to the action list to ensure the item remains in focus. **Action: Clerk.**

138/21 CHANGES TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT:

This was covered during Cllr Caswell’s ward councillor report earlier in the meeting.

139/21 MEETING REPORTS:

13.10.21 – Village Hall (L Parsons)

Notes of the meeting were previously circulated. Key points included complaints about the acoustics in the hall (acoustic clouds are being considered as an additional purchase); the stage 2 refurbishment will commence on 22 Nov until Jan 2022 and income is gradually returning with active promotion to other user groups including use of the small meeting room.

15.10.21 – SSG (B Birkenhead)

P Evans is retiring as Hinkley Point B station director; it is the final run of the two Hinkley Point B units until July 2022; it will take 3 years to de-fuel; during the recent fire on Gas Turbine 7, fire protection automatically operated to extinguish the fire. The Fire Brigade was called as per policy. As a result of the fire 10L of oil leaked on to the beach. Formal minutes from the SSG secretary to follow as normal.

140/21 FORTHCOMING MEETINGS:

10.11.21 - Village Hall

18.11.21 – EDF Workforce Uplift Joint Forum (the Zoom invitation will be re-sent to councillors)

141/21 CORRESPONDENCE:

1. Remembrance Day – Tommy Soldiers

The Help the Heroes Flag is currently raised. The poppy cannot be affixed to the pole if was made for as the new village sign is too close. Other options to fix it will be explored.

2. Memorial Bench Request.

The request from a parishioner to erect a memorial bench in memory of Jane Upham in the location of the pill was AGREED. One of the existing old concrete benches will be removed to accommodate it. Details of the bench including size, materials and design are to be submitted to the parish council for approval first and the family will be advised that ongoing maintenance of the bench will be its responsibility. **Action: Clerk**

3. Fencing at Brookside Rd/Wharf Rd/Church Hill

A parishioner asked if the metal and wooden fencing around the brook could be improved to make the area more aesthetically pleasing. The metal fencing was erected as a safety measure as it straddles the retaining walls at the edge of the roads and conforms to SCC approved safety standards. The wooden post and rail fence was erected a couple of years ago as a safety measure to try and protect small children from entering the brook. The fencing has become more noticeable since the trees and vegetation were cleared. It was suggested that the wooden fence could be softened with some native hedge planting (although access will be required to maintain the banks). It was suggested that a hedge could be planted with reference to the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Celebrations. Further research required. **Action: All**

4. Queen's Platinum Jubilee Celebrations 2nd – 5th June 2022

T Gardener said OPRA may get involved with lighting a beacon but will consider this action after Christmas. This topic to be added to the action list. **Action: Clerk**

5. SDC Community Safety Officer (Hinkley Point Project)

Nicola Hale, the new Community Safety Officer has asked if she can introduce herself to councillors. It was AGREED to invite her to our next meeting on 2 December. **Action: Clerk**

6. OPRA firework display 7.11.21

OPRA has written to the parish council to request a member of the parish council attend the firework display. This is an insurance requirement. OPRA will be advised that both T Gardener and R Perrett will be attending. **Action: Clerk**

7. General List

- a) Environment Agency (EA) – Bridgwater Tidal Barrier Scheme planned ground investigation works. The EA will need to confirm if ground investigation works on the flood bank on the common in Combwich will be required.
- b) SDC Clean Surroundings – The trees we ordered will be ready for collection week beginning 15 November. The trees can be planted during National Tree Week, 27 November – 5 December.
- c) WWT Steart Marshes – Notes and actions re visitor management meeting in August. This meeting was attended by R Perrett and T Gardener.

142/21 REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES:

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

- a) Proposed diversion of footpath BW 25/14 at Lower Hill Farm Otterhampton – Councillors are SUPPORTIVE of the proposed alternative route that skirts around the farmyard. SCC to be advised. **Action: Clerk**
- b) Combwich Ponds – The consultation for comments to Denis Groves, SCC Rights of Way Modification Officer closes on 15.11.21.

2. OPRA – T Gardener

- a) Some vandalism has occurred to the pavilion roof.
- b) The annual firework display is on 7.11.21
- c) The senior persons Christmas Dinner is on 4.12.21

3. School – R Perrett

R Perrett will try to arrange a meeting after half-term and before the next parish council meeting.

4. Otter Tales

The deadline for articles is 4 November.

143/21 DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 2 December 2021, 7.00pm at Otterhampton Village Hall.

The meeting finished at 9.04pm

Signed: Original signed by B Birkenhead

(Chair)

Date: 2 December 2021