

OTTERHAMPTON PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

held on

THURSDAY 23 MARCH 2023, 7.00pm at OTTERHAMPTON VILLAGE HALL

31/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Apologies were received from Brian Bolt and Mike Caswell.

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.

PUBLIC SESSION (INCLUDING WARD COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

1. Ward Councillors Reports

- No ward councillors were present.

2. General

- A portable toilet has been installed on Combwich Ponds land next to a resident's back garden. Clerk to check if planning permission is needed for a semi-permanent installation.
- The new school sign that states a 20mph limit when the lights are flashing has been installed on School Lane. To have effect the sign would be better placed on Brookside Road or the bottom of Church Hill. The traffic going up the hill during school run times does seem better due to the school putting out bollards.
- B Birkenhead stated he was happy to continue with the maintenance of the buoy and telephone/defibrillator box.

PRESENT:

Lindsey Parsons (Chair), Rachel Perrett (Vice Chair), Gina Mear (Clerk), Mike Haycraft, Tina Gardener, Connie Sanders, Amanda Gibbons, Andy Darch and six members of the public.

32/23 MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 09.02.23

The minutes of the meeting held on 09.02.23 were APPROVED and signed by the Chair.

33/23 PLANNING MATTERS:

1. 39/23/00001 Erection of side (North) extension to detached garage. 4 Kiln Close, Combwich. All councillors agreed to support the application.

34/23 FINANCE:

1. **Bank Balances** - Current A/C £6,931.91; Deposit A/C £28,363.36; Reserve A/C £20,121.55.
2. **To agree the budget statement for February 2023.** All councillors agreed the budget which was circulated prior to the meeting.
3. **The following payments were AGREED:**
 - a) G Mear - £555.15 (Clerk Salary)
 - b) B Leathwood - £249.71 (Otter Tales)
 - c) H Brooks - £1,910.00 (Wharf Road Trees)
 - d) Sedgemoor Tree Service - £684.00 (Wedding Cake Tree)
 - e) SDC - £167.23 (Play Area Bin)
 - f) SDC - £180.00 (Grass Cutting)
 - g) Glasdon UK Ltd – 1,383.05 (Play Area Benches)
4. **Income Received**
 - a) OPRA - £812.00 (Fireworks)
5. **Bank Signatories.** C Sanders and M Haycraft agreed to become signatories on the bank account.

35/23 UNITARY COUNCIL

The required officers are not yet in place. The local officers and planning will be the same for the foreseeable. Major planning applications will go to a committee.

36/23 REV. ALISON WATERS

1. Ecclesiastical Parish Boundaries

Rev. Waters was not in attendance to advise but we are aware that she will be covering a larger area. Stogursey and Fiddington parishes will become a new benefice with Cannington, Stockland and Steart and Otterhampton with Comwich

2. St. Peter's Church Hedge

It was agreed that the hedge needs to be cut back and this is the responsibility of the church. Clerk to contact Rev. Waters.

37/23 OTTER TALES

There are currently 16 pages in total. To add an additional four pages will cost £70. It was felt that more advertising would ruin the flow of the newsletter so it was decided to profile one or two businesses in each copy with possibly adding a link to their business website on the Comwich.org.uk website. Clerk to contact both businesses that have been in touch to advise them to contact B Leathwood.

38/23 COMBWITH PONDS RIGHTS OF WAY ACCESS

Following the application to Somerset County Council in 2007 to re-open the footpaths around the ponds, a resolution was received in April 2022 opening the footpaths and adding an entrance. An objection was received and all contact from SCC was ceased. A Freedom of Information request was made and the only additional information that came from that was that the application had to be referred to the planning inspectorate with a timetable in place. This has now been passed to Cllr Caswell to see if he can put some pressure on SCC to find out more information.

39/23 ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Antisocial behaviour in Comwich has been on the increase with evidence of drug taking in the play area shelter also reported. It has been reported to PCSO Wyatt with no response at the time of the meeting. An email has been sent to S Walker of EDF to see if there is any response to her request to their community police for more of a police presence in the village. R Perrett attended a meeting with the Avon & Somerset Police Crime Commissioner where she was advised that all antisocial behaviour be reported through the A&S Police website.

40/23 STEART WARD

The Livefree Kitchen at Steart Marshes is going well. It doesn't appear to have attracted more visitors to the area. There are currently high spring tides. Fibre optic broadband may be being installed into the village; this is yet to be confirmed. There is no news on the cycle path.

41/23 HIGHWAYS

B Bolt and M Caswell are meeting with K Tyson on 19th April to address the various issues. The position of the school sign has been noted.

42/23 ENHANCEMENTS:

1. Wharf Road – The tree work has been completed and now the area needs to be tidied up. It was noted that one of the large trunks left that was to be used as a bench has been taken. A working group will meet at 10am on Saturday 15th April at Wharf Road. K Read, our contact at the Greater Quantock Landscape Development Fund, has requested a Teams meeting to gather more information for our grant application. It was decided that wildflower seeds need to be planted soon and to ask K Read if it is okay to go on and purchase this.
2. Village Maintenance – The next project is Wharf Road as above.
3. Volunteer Projects – Clerk to email the emergency plan to T Gardener and all volunteers. Offers of volunteering to help with the brownie copse have been received.
4. New Grounds Maintenance Contract – This was put out to tender. Because of the commercial sensitivity it was resolved that this item would be discussed after the meeting was closed to the public.
5. Village Gardener – The village gardener is retiring at the end of March but has offered to continue with litter picking and play area inspections. It was agreed for him to continue with the

play area inspections but there is a group of volunteers to do a litter pick. SDC can provide pickers, bags and hi-vis jackets.

6. Play Area Bin – The last invoice received stated that the cost for this will stay the same for the next year. It was agreed to continue with Clean Surroundings.

43/23 ACTION LIST

1. Harbour Noticeboard – It was agreed to ask M Ingram if he can replace the old noticeboard with a new post to hold a lifebuoy.
2. Emergency Plan – As above (42/23/3).
3. OPRA Barn – Leaks to be repaired by OPRA. M Ingram to be asked to repaint walls.

44/23 MEETING REPORTS:

1. **08.03.23 – Village Hall (L Parsons)** - No meeting was held. An email was received from the Village Hall asking for a grant for the King's Coronation. All were in agreement to fund the airshot rifle competition at a cost of £317.
2. **24.02.23 SSG** – R Perrett attended the meeting and her report was circulated prior to the meeting. It was advised that flasks (containing nuclear waste) would not depart from Hinkley Point B if there were any issues on the roads and have plans in place if they are already on the road and an incident such as a traffic accident occurs. Magnox (Hinkley Point A) is going to be changing its name.
3. **02.03.23 Homes in Sedgemoor (HiS)** – There was an introduction to affordable housing properties. People have to sign up on their website and bid for a property. HiS are hoping to obtain more land in Nether Stowey to build affordable housing. Villages can ask landowners for land on which to build affordable housing.
4. **07.03.23 Avon & Somerset Police Crime Commissioner** – As above (39/23). A councillor is needed to attend the next meeting, date not yet known.
5. **16.03.23 Transport Forum** – No one attended.
6. **20.03.23 School** – Postponed.

45/23 REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES

1. **Public Rights of Way (B Birkenhead)** Defects have been reported and dealt with. Defects can be reported on Roam Somerset. The gates on the paths by the boat club have gone missing.
2. **OPRA (T Gardener)** A donation has been made to the new gardening club. There is an Easter Egg hunt on Good Friday and then an Easter quiz on Easter Sunday.
3. **Defibrillators (R Perrett)** There was a meeting of all the volunteers. A free training session per defibrillator can be taken up if the parish council can pay for the hall hire. All were in agreement to fund this. T Gardener to coordinate the training session which could be on a Saturday morning. The four-year contract ends next year.

46/23 FORTHCOMING MEETINGS:

1. 12.04.23 – Village Hall
2. 24.04.23 – School

47/23 CORRESPONDENCE/COMMUNICATION

- a. **Skate Park** – Residents have asked for a skate park but unfortunately there is no land available in the village. Cannington is hoping to install a pump track on the playing fields if permission can be obtained to change the car parking.
- b. **Church Hill New Builds** – Following concerns raised about the height of the buildings, an email was received from the planning enforcement officer following his visit to the site. He had spoken to the builder who assured him that he checks the levels regularly and will continue to do so. He was not able to check the height himself but was satisfied to accept what he had been told.
- c. **Combwich Ponds – response** – Following a complaint of antisocial noise accessing the ponds at the bottom of Estuary Park, the angling association advised that they firmly enforce accessing the ponds within the specified times.
- d. **Wharf Road** – A complaint was received regarding the tree work on Wharf Road and people racing up the road to take the logs as his child was nearly knocked off his bike.
- e. **Somerset Life Magazine** – A journalist was in touch to advise she was doing an article on Combwich which will be in the June issue. She spoke to several people in the village.

- f. **Advertising for Local Businesses** – Two people have been in touch with regards to advertising their businesses, one would like a board at the entrance to the village, the other would like to place an honesty stall near the phone/defibrillator box. This was covered above (37/23).
- g. **Speeding Vehicles on Wharf Road** – A recycling truck was reported to have been speeding on Wharf Road. The clerk reported it to Somerset Waste Partnership/Suez and drivers have been advised not to use the road because of the weight limit. Other vehicles have also been seen speeding so the clerk will contact all the organisations that use the road.
- h. **CPR Training** – The offer to do CPR training was clarified but because of the session offered with the defibrillator training it was decided not to take up this offer at this time.
- i. **Antisocial Behaviour** – Emails were received advising of antisocial behaviour. This has been covered above (39/23).
- j. **Brownie Copse** – An email was received from the Brownies regarding the poor state of the Brownie Copse. Unfortunately, due to bird nesting season not much can be done to the area at present. Clerk to connect volunteers with A Gibbons to lead a working party.

48/23 DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 13th April 2023, 7.00pm at Otterhampton Village Hall.

The meeting finished at 8.40pm

49/23 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT

The clerk sent the tender to four businesses and by the deadline two tenders had been returned. After the meeting closed to the public, councillors discussed the tenders and unanimously agreed to accept the lowest tender. All parties would be notified of the decision.

Signed:

(Chair)

Date 13 APRIL 2023