



Queen Camel Parish Council

MINUTES OF THE MEETING of the PARISH COUNCIL held in The Marples Room at the Memorial Hall on Monday 12th December 2016 at 7.30pm

Present: Councillors **John Brendon (JB)** – Chairman
Chris Bennett (CB)
Andrew Hoddinott (AH)
Kate Oram (KO)
Jo Pender-Cudlip (JPC)
Terri Plummer (TP)
Simon Stapely (SS)

Apologies: Councillor **John Carnegie (JC)**
PCSO **Thelma Mead (TM)**

In attendance: **Patrick Pender-Cudlip (PPC)** - Clerk
Mike Lewis (ML) - County and District Councillor
9 members of the public

Procedural Items

- 1. Welcome and Introduction.** After welcoming Councillors and members of the public JB noted that for a three month trial period Agenda items would be projected onto a screen at Parish Council meetings and expressed a hope that this would be found helpful.
- 2. Public session.** The Chairman of the Playing Field Committee (PFC) expressed the hope that the Council would fund the Playing Field's operating costs so that the PFC could invest its other income in developing its facilities.
- 3. Apologies.** JC and TM sent apologies for being unable to attend.
- 4. Declarations of interest.** CB declared an interest in items 03.1 and 09.1 as a Director of the Queen Camel Community Land Trust (CLT) and a member of the PFC. AH declared an interest in item 09.1 as a member of the PFC, a Cricket Club coach and a Sparkford Scouts parent.
- 5. Councillor vacancy.** The Principal Electoral Services Officer of South Somerset District Council (SSDC) had informed the Council that no requests for an election had been received and that the Council may therefore now proceed to co-option. Having noted that no one had so far expressed an interest despite the vacancy being advertised Councillors decided to wait until the New Year before considering the matter further.
- 6. Standing Orders.** A review of the Council's Standing Orders' review was deferred until January.
- 7. Minutes.**
RESOLVED 7-0-0 [For-against-abstained] that the minutes of the meeting held on 14th November 2016 be confirmed and signed as a true and accurate record.

Business Items

01 [1216] Police and Safety report - A Police report emailed by TM was projected on the screen and CB summarized the Queen Camel crime figures on the police.uk website.

02 [1216] County & District Councillor's report - In his capacity as County Councillor ML explained that Somerset County Council (SCC) *Small Improvement Grants* were not currently available for Highways schemes but if they became available he would seek one to extend the 20mph speed limit within Queen Camel. He told the Council that SCC's projected overspend had been reduced from £24m. in October to £16m. in November and SCC hoped to achieve a balanced budget by the end of the financial year. He added that SCC had agreed a capital allocation of £104m. for asset management.

In his capacity as District Councillor ML explained that as part of its 'Transformation' process SSDC was reducing staff numbers but there was concern about the impact the departure of some highly experienced officers would have on Council services

Planning Applications were brought up the Agenda and discussed at this point for the convenience of interested members of the public. For details see **05 [1216]** below.

03 [1216] Outstanding actions:

- 1. Old school site** - Reports from the CLT Working Group (CLTWG) and its advisers had been circulated to Councillors. Speaking from the public gallery Rosemary Heath-Coleman (RHC) said that she had received the *Feasibility Study* earlier in the evening and been asked to correct typing mistakes after which she would pass it on to other members of the CLTWG who would discuss it at a meeting on Thursday 15th December. The CLTWG would decide if and when the study would be shared with Councillors.
Following a discussion about a *Community Asset Transfer* (CAT) it was **RESOLVED 6-0-0 that SCC be asked to let the Council know the terms SCC would offer to enable the parish to acquire the site by way of a CAT. RESOLVED 6-0-0 to prepare an application for the Department of Communities and Local Government seeking authority to borrow (but without any commitment to borrow) from the Public Works Loan Board in the event of the Council and parishioners deciding they wish to acquire the site for the community.**

After some discussion about the likelihood of workshops at Long Hazel in Sparkford becoming available to rent AH noted that the CLT's *Feasibility Study* would presumably include details of any premises in the locality which might be suitable for local businesses.

- 2. Neighbourhood Plan (NP)** - The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NPSG) had been in contact with a consultant who would review NP policies in January 2017, being paid out of the *Frontrunner* funds held by SSDC.

Possible housing development - The planning consultant Richard Edge (RE) who had spoken to the Council in October (at a meeting closed to members of the public) on behalf of a local landowner about a possible housing development had asked for another meeting.

RESOLVED 6-0-0 that RE be invited to attend a regular Council meeting if he had proposals to put forward or wanted to answer questions.

3. **Fields in Trust** - an application to join the scheme was about to be submitted.
4. **Phone box** - the requisite remedial work has been completed and the electrical system certified as compliant with current standards.
5. **Emergency Community Contact** -
RESOLVED 7-0-0 that Gary Linscott and CB be appointed parish contacts under the Somerset Emergency Community Contact scheme.

04 [1216] Highways:

1. **Traffic audit** - Councillors were supportive of an offer from a member of the public to organise a traffic audit and asked PPC to obtain more details.
2. **Speed Indicator Device (SID)** - SCC Highways gave notice that they plan to install a SID on the A359 at Sparkford Hill for the weeks commencing 20th February and 28th August 2017, and on the West Camel road for the weeks commencing 6th March and 11th September 2017.
3. **Drains** - Highways would be informed about drains which needed clearing.

05 [1216] Planning Applications:

1. There were no new planning applications.
2. Councillors took note of the following updates on earlier applications:
 - 16/04701/TCA 2 Tithe Barn, High Street** – Notification of intent to carry out remedial works to a hawthorn tree and two crab apple trees within a conservation area. Permitted.
 - 16/04556/TCA Hayley Cottage, High Street** – Notification of intent to prune three trees in a conservation area. Permitted.
 - 16/04361/FUL Camel Farm, Marston road** – Erection of timber stable block and horse arena. Permitted, with conditions
3. Councillors took note of the recent planning applications in nearby parishes:
 - 16/04746/COL Steart Road Garage, West Camel** - Certificate of Lawfulness for existing use of garage to carry out repairs and MOTs.
 - 16/05094/FUL West Farm, Mudford (resubmission)** Retention of enlarged site for concrete manufacture, office space & aggregate storage.

06 [1216] Councillors' reports and motions - None.

07 [1216] Other reports and motions:

1. **Parish Council & Parish Groups** - Councillors considered an email of complaint from three Parish Group leaders (see Appendix) that Councillors had been critical, unfair, unappreciative and discourteous in respect of Parish Group reports at the Council meeting in November. JB explained that no disrespect was intended but it was difficult to set a proper Agenda and give due consideration to reports if they were received only shortly before a meeting. It was agreed that items for the Agenda should normally be received by the Clerk no later than the Sunday night eight days before a (Monday) Council meeting.
2. **Communications Group (CG)** - Following a discussion of the CG report it was **RESOLVED 6-0-0 to accept recommendations at the end of the CG report that the CG be dissolved, that responsibility for the Welcome Pack be transferred to the Parochial Church Council (PCC) if such be the wish of the PCC and that JPC and PPC continue exercising their existing responsibilities in respect of the website.** PPC was also asked to thank CG members for all they had done to promote parish communications over the years.

3. **Environment Group** - The EG report was discussed at length and it was agreed: that spending money on fingerposts would be discussed at the January meeting, that JPC would contact SCC about necessary footpath maintenance, that JPC would seek permission to reprint the Parish Walks leaflets, that JPC should produce and display replacement posters to discourage dog fouling, that CB and PPC would ask SCC Highways to remove surplus signage that JPC would contact SSDC about stiles and the elusive Parish Ranger. It was **Resolved 7-0-0 that in principle money previously allocated for stile repair be spent repairing stiles, either through the Parish Ranger scheme or by employing an independent contractor.**
4. **Flood Committee (FC)** - The FC report was noted and Councillors expressed gratitude to Laura Paul and Nick Howman for all they had done for the community as Road Closure Coordinator and FC Chairman respectively.
5. **Safety Group (SC) and Neighbourhood Watch (NHW)** – Councillors considered an email from NHW Coordinator Sue Cole and RHC and were confident that NHW's important work did not require the mediation of any Parish Group.
6. **Community Plan** - Councillors agreed not to proceed with an update of the 2005 *Community Plan* at present, the better to concentrate on the *Neighbourhood Plan*.
7. **Survey '16** - copies were distributed and had been posted on the website.
8. **Shredding of Christmas trees** - PPC would check arrangements with Streetscene.
9. **Parish Environment Warden** - JPC had taken over this role from Sue Howman
10. **Clerk's hours and salary** - PPC and AH would check that these were correct and Councillors agreed that PPC should be paid for additional work relating directly to previous years including preparing VAT returns for 2014-15 and 2015-16.

08 [1216] **Clerk's report** - none

09 [1216] **Finance:**

1. **Budget for 2017-18**

RESOLVED 7-0-0 that the following grants be awarded (the figures in brackets are the amounts previously agreed for the current year, 2016-17):

Parochial Church Council - £2258.00 (£1458)

Tennis Club - £1000 (£0)

RESOLVED 5-0-0 that the following grant be awarded

Playing Field Committee - £4350.00 [of which £1625 would be held in contingency for the development of Playing Field facilities] (£2725)

RESOLVED 7-0-0 that the following donations be awarded:

Sparkford Copse Trust - £150 (£150)

Camel Guides – £250 (£150)

RESOLVED 6-0-0 that the following donations be awarded:

Queen Camel Cricket Club - £250 (£250)

Sparkford Scouts - £250 (£250)

RESOLVED 7-0-0 that the following allocations be agreed:

Environment Group – £690 (£811)

Flood Committee - £3000 [including £2000 held as a contingency for mechanical improvements to the sluice gates unless this is found to be the responsibility of the riparian owner] (£1000)

Neighbourhood Watch - £100 (£0)

2. Payments agreed:

£35.00	ICO	Annual registration fee (data protection)
£362.70	P.Pender-Cudlip	November salary

3. **Accounts** for the first half year 2016-17 would be tabled at the January meeting.
4. **The Asset Register review** was deferred until the January meeting.
5. **VAT** - returns for 2014-15 and 2015-16 are being prepared for HMRC.
6. **Banking arrangements** - Natwest has changed its procedures and requires new signatories to complete new forms but once these arrangements are completed it will be possible to set up online banking if the Council so wishes

10 [1216] Incoming correspondence:

- MP's surgeries for December 2016- June 2017 have been published on the parish noticeboards and website.
- An email from SSDC Scrutiny Manager about Street Trading Policy was noted.

11 [1216] Advance Notices - none

12 [1216] Items for next month's Agenda - parking on pavements

13 [1216] Matters arising post-Agenda - none

14 [1216] Next meeting - 7.30pm on 9th January, 2017 in The Marples Room

The meeting concluded at 10.13pm

Signed:

John Brendon

Chairman

Date: 9th January, 2017

APPENDIX – Email (18/11/2016) to the Council from Parish Group leaders (07.1 above)

After the PC meeting we each found that the other two felt similarly that the criticism at the PC meeting at the lateness of the various reports was very unfair. Most were late because the relating meetings were held on the first available date for the group members. The groups were all trying to meet a **PC wish** to have the reports for November and it would have been encouraging if there had been acknowledgement of the time and effort put in by the volunteers, namely, attending PG meetings, preparing the subsequent report(s) and attending the PC meeting in order to answer any questions etc. We don't think that either the Chairman or the Councillors realised just how disheartening and discourteous the discussion over the various groups came across.

Communications meeting 29th October, report 1st November – turn round of three days and not late but it was quite evident that no one had read it, so even if the rest had been sent on the same date they would almost certainly not have been read either.

Environment meeting 7th November, report 11th November – turn round of four days.

Flood Committee meeting 3rd November, report 11th November – turn round of eight days

Safety/NW e-mail dated 12th November but not mentioned even as late communication.

As there is clearly not room on the notice boards for the above, may we suggest that the Minutes state 'see copy on website', thus ensuring they are available to the public (which we believe all Minute attachments are supposed to be). We (as the PG attendees at the meeting) are going to confer further about the request to submit the budgets on separate sheets and we will let you have these asap.

Finally, may we add that reports need to be produced by members around their other work commitments and this is not always quick or easy to achieve.

Kind Regards,

Rosemary, Steve, and Daniel

Clerk's note: Parish Group reports can be found on the website.