



# Queen Camel Parish Council

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING of the PARISH COUNCIL held in The Marples Room at the Memorial Hall on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2017 at 7.30pm

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

**Apologies:** Councillor **Chris Bennett (CB)**  
PCSO **Thelma Mead (TM)**

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

### Procedural Items

- 1. Welcome and Introduction.** JB welcomed councillors and members of the public.
- 2. Public session.** No questions were asked or points raised by members of the public.
- 3. Apologies.** CB and TM sent apologies for being unable to attend.
- 4. Declarations of interest.** AH declared a possible interest in item 03.3, the *Fields in Trust* scheme, as a member of the Playing Field Committee.
- 5. Councillor vacancy.** For the present councillors agreed to continue advertising the vacancy. If it had not been filled by the time of the Annual Village Meeting (or any earlier Parish Meeting), residents could be encouraged to put their names forward then.  
(JC arrived at 7.38pm)
- 6. Standing Orders.** After considering suggested changes to the Council's Standing Orders and discussing their implications councillors accepted some and rejected others. It was **RESOLVED 7-0-0 [For-against-abstained] that the Clerk should incorporate the agreed changes into a revised draft of the Standing Orders which would be considered for adoption at the February meeting.**  
**Clerk's note:** The revised draft will be posted on the website.
- 7. Minutes.**  
**RESOLVED 7-0-0 that the minutes of the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2016 be confirmed and signed as a true and accurate record.**

## **Business Items**

**01 [0117] Police and Safety report** – PPC summarized a report emailed by TM.

**02 [0117] County & District Councillor's report** - ML informed the Council that in the coming year both South Somerset District Council (SSDC) and Somerset County Council (SCC) would be increasing the Council Tax by 5%-7%, in part because of the rising cost of care for the elderly.

ML said that SSDC was cutting the number of senior employees so as to find required savings of c.£2m. over the next two years and this would probably lead to a reduction in services.

ML clarified that the changes to the recycling and rubbish collection regime announced by Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP) would not be implemented until the autumn (see Agenda item 10 below)

In answer to a question from a member of the public ML undertook to find out when Yeovil Public Library would re-open.

**Clerk's note:** ML subsequently confirmed it had reopened.

**03 [0117] Outstanding actions:**

**1. Old school site (OSS):**

- i. In reference to the *Feasibility Study* commissioned by the CLT Working Group (CLTWG) and circulated to councillors, JB explained that although at present the CLTWG wanted the financial details kept confidential for commercial reasons CLTWG Chairman Rosemary Heath-Coleman (RHC) had no objection to the Council discussing its broader concepts.
- ii. JB considered it likely that SCC would put the OSS on the market shortly after 17<sup>th</sup> February (when its protection as an *Asset of Community Value* expires) unless the community came up with a credible offer and he therefore favoured further discussions with Charlie Field (SCC's Corporate Property Estates Manager) in order to keep options open.
- iii. JB had drafted a short explanation of why the Council might wish to acquire the OSS and this could be used in any application to the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) for authority to borrow money from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB).
- iv. JB estimated that apart from the (capital) cost of developing the OSS its running costs including maintenance, insurance and financing (if a loan had to be serviced) might be in the range £15k - £30k p.a. It was agreed that more information including the possible availability of grants was required in order to judge the viability of any scheme, and that given the possible or likely impact on the parish precept it would be necessary to hold a Parish meeting so that residents would have the opportunity to express their views about any proposals.
- v. JB pointed out that if the Council did not put in some kind of bid at this stage residents would lose the chance of exercising any kind of control over what happens to the site.

vi. **RESOLVED 7-0-0:**

- ① To open negotiations with SCC to see if the OSS can be acquired in whole or in part, possibly under a Community Asset Transfer.
- ② To press forward with an application to the DCLG for authority to borrow from the PWLB in the event of the Council deciding to do so.
- ③ To proceed to have a parish meeting so as to gauge opinion on where we are and whether the village is in favour of acquiring the OSS or not.

Councillors also discussed how best to elicit the views of residents unable to attend a parish meeting or without access to the internet.

2. **Neighbourhood Plan (NP)** – A Planning professional is reviewing the NP policies to ensure that they comply with the latest legislative provisions. In response to an enquiry from Richard Edge, a planning consultant representing a local landowner, councillors confirmed that he is very welcome to attend any Council meeting and address the Council if he wishes.

3. **Fields in Trust** – PPC confirmed that our application is being processed.

**04 [0117] Highways:** nothing to report.

**05 [0117] Planning Applications** - None.

**06 [0117] Councillors' reports and motions** – None.

**07 [0117] Other reports and motions** – None.

**08 [0117] Clerk's report** - None

**09 [0117] Finance:**

1. **Precept and Budget for 2017-18:**

Because of a substantial reduction in the central government grant and a change in the Council Tax base the parish precept needs to rise if the Council is to maintain its 2016-17 level of income. In addition the Council decided to increase its grants for the Churchyard and Playing Field and to pay a one-off grant to the Tennis Club. After some discussion it was agreed to increase the precept by 7% which means that in 2017-18 a resident occupying a Band D property will be paying an extra £2.27 to the parish, an increase of c.5% on last year's figure.

**RESOLVED 7-0-0 that the parish precept for 2017-18 be set at £16,228, increasing the expected Band D charge from £44.40 to £46.67.**

2. **Expenditure to be approved (2016-17):**

**RESOLVED 7-0-0 that expenditure of c.£1010 on fingerposts and of £340 on stile and gate repairs be formally authorized.**

3. **Payments agreed:**

**RESOLVED 7-0-0 that the following payments be made:**

£114.00	JLS Heating	Phone box electrical repair & certification
£50.00	John Calvert	Honorarium for Internal audit
£362.70	P.Pender-Cudlip	December salary
£100.00	P.Pender-Cudlip	Work on parish questionnaire, final payment

4. **Accounts** for the first half year 2016-17. It was explained that the accounts were now being prepared on a receipts and payments basis.

**RESOLVED 7-0-0 that the accounts for the first half year 2016-17 be approved.**

5. **The Asset Register** would be reviewed at the February meeting.
6. **VAT** – the returns for 2014-15 and 2015-16 would shortly be submitted to HMRC.
7. **Banking arrangements** – It was hoped that arrangements for the new signatories would soon be in place and then it should be possible to set up online banking if the Council decides to do so.

**10 [0117] Incoming correspondence:**

- David Warburton MP has accepted an invitation to attend our Annual Village Meeting and his Constituency Secretary is making arrangements for him to conduct surgeries in the Marples Room in the second half of 2017.
- SWP announced that from later in the year plastic waste would be included in kerbside collections while non-recyclable waste (rubbish) would be collected on a three week rota.
- The Somerset Association of Local Councils (SALC) has confirmed that the Government will not be capping the precepts of smaller parish councils in the coming year but will be playing close attention to the precept levels set.
- Sam Winter, SALC's County Information Officer, is moving to a new job. PPC has thanked her for all the help she has given to successive Clerks.
- Highways England are sending out naturalists to check for rare and endangered species of flora and fauna whose habitats might be compromised by the planned upgrading (dualling) of the Sparkford – Podimore section of the A303..

**11 [0117] Advance Notices:**

SSDC Area East Annual Meeting with Parish Councils at Churchfield, Wincanton, at 6.30pm on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2017

**12 [0117] Items for next month's Agenda:**

- adoption of revised Standing Orders
- review of Financial Regulations
- review of RHC's internal audit of May 2016
- self-assessment of the Council's performance
- arrangements for the annual village meeting

**13 [0117] Matters arising post-Agenda - none**

**14 [0117] Next meeting - 7.30pm on 13<sup>th</sup> February, 2017 in The Marples Room**

The meeting concluded at 9.31pm

**Signed:**

**John Brendon  
Chairman**

**Date: 13<sup>th</sup> February, 2017**