

## **BISHOPS LYDEARD & COTHELSTONE PARISH COUNCIL**

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Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held in the Village Hall, Bishops Lydeard on Wednesday 13 September 2023 at 7pm (*taken by Cllr Jane Warmington*).

**Present:** Cllrs Allen, Ball, Bletcher, Lewin-Harris, Hunt, Martin (Chair), Pattemore, Rigby and Warmington.

**Councillors absent:** Cllr Bainbridge.

**In attendance:** nine members of the public.

**120/23 Apologies:** Cllr Bainbridge.

**121/23 Declarations of interest relating to matters on the agenda:** There were none.

**122/23 Somerset Council matters** (this item was moved up the agenda to allow Cllr Rigby to go onto another meeting):

ROAD AND TRAFFIC ISSUES - essentially how to implement the proposed changes. The Parish Council can subcontract Somerset Council to do the work on our behalf (this would be the first arrangement of its kind for Somerset Council). **The R&T Sub-committee needs to meet to agree the way forward.**

WOODLAND WALK COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER (Somerset Council were offering a lease but the PC wishes to buy and offers to pay the legal costs) - no update/ progress on this.

BUSES - the issue is capacity. The No 28 bus is often full (success of £2 fare and Butlins' visitors in summer fill the bus up before it reaches the village). Despite this, apparently the frequency of the service is under threat. Similarly the service to Richard Huish is often full. Possible solution could be larger 'low deckers' (which would fit under three bridges between the village and Minehead). Cllr Rigby to follow this up with the bus company. Buses are particularly busy on Mondays and Fridays during the holiday season. Somerset Council have agreed to subsidise the No 28 half hourly throughout day until March. The service may then end up dropping to hourly during middle of day.

A MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC asked to be part of meetings with the bus company and for communications to improve if these were already happening.

A MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC referred to a serious local accident involving her son and a possible reduction in speed limit on A358 from the village through to Norton Manor Camp (there have been other accidents). Would the Parish Council consider supporting traffic calming? Cllr Rigby said a recent study monitoring traffic speeds along the A358 from Williton to Taunton has just been completed and they are awaiting findings to discuss speed limit reductions.

CYCLE PATH NEW FEASIBILITY STUDY - is now complete with public consultation on the various options coming up soon.

BUDGET - an increasing proportion of the Somerset Council's budget has to be spent on statutory adult social care and children's services (currently 63%). Demand on these services has risen as well as costs and it is likely that an increase in Council tax will be needed to pay for these statutory responsibilities. The cost of care will continue to use up an increasing proportion of the Council's budget and this will apply to every Council at some point.

A MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC asked about previous Council investments in Iceland (the country).

STREAM SIDE RESIDENTS GROUP - a member of the public reported on this area of the Hithermead Estate after holding an on site meeting. This concerned trees growing alongside the stream. The meeting was well attended (about 40 people) including Somerset Cllr and PflH Dixie Darch. Several members of the Parish Council were able to go along. Issues included cleaning leaves off path on South side of stream. The Parish Council Chair (who was there) said this might be a possible additional job for the Lengthsman. **The Parish Council agreed to ask the Lengthsman to monitor this as to how often the path may need clearing.** The Clerk may be contacted if serious problems arise which may need the Lengthsman's attention.

Other issues included planting additional trees which may be eligible for funding through CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy from new market housing in the village). The Residents Group propose to meet in October in the small hall to discuss a woodland management agreement.

**123/23 Adoption of the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 9th August 2023:** On matters of accuracy under item 119/23, the amount of grant applied for should be £2,500 (not £2000). **It was proposed, seconded and agreed that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 9th August 2023 be adopted with the change noted above.**

**124/23 Matters arising:** Cllr Pattemore said there was a sign to village from WSR Station but the cost of any additional finger post would need to be met by the Parish Council.

Cllr Hunt received a complaint about timing of the daily delivery lorry to the Coop. The ideal time to avoid congestion would be around 7am. Would the Parish Council write a letter of support to push for this earlier regular delivery? **The Parish Council agreed to email the local manager supporting an earlier delivery.**

A MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC asked about land alongside new housing development and the likelihood of the Coop moving there? **The Chair will check this again with the land agents.**

**125/23 Adoption of the minutes of the Extraordinary Parish Council meeting held on 31st July 2023:** **It was proposed, seconded and agreed that the minutes of the above meeting be adopted with no changes.**

**126/23 Matters arising:** There were none.

**127/23 Clerk's Report:** The Chair presented the Clerk's (his) report to the meeting.

- Future use of the DARBY WAY TELEPHONE BOX which was deferred at the last meeting. No further responses have been received by Clerk. Cllr Lewin-Harris said WSR don't want it at Bishops Lydeard station but said Blue Anchor Station might. **Parish Council to offer to donate this telephone box, as is, to Blue Anchor and negotiate with WSR.**
- THE PUBLIC ACCESS RIGHTS - the external auditor confirmed that most of the complaints raised by two members of the public meet the criteria for detailed consideration. Should the objectors wish to proceed to formal consideration the cost of this process will be £2,485 per day plus VAT for which the Council will be liable. The objectors can withdraw their objections or may wish to have their complaints considered by a cheaper and less formal process. **The Chair suggests that we do not challenge this as it would be very expensive and it may well be that some of the complaints are well founded, as the Parish Council has operated more informally than it should have done, particularly with regard to expenditure. The matter isn't errors in accounting but an inadequate process. The Parish Council agreed not to contest.**
- The code of conduct complaint made against Cllr Bainbridge was dismissed. The County Monitoring Officer found there was no breach of the code of conduct (rather than 'inadequate grounds found for this to progress' stated in the draft minutes). The Chairman apologised for getting this wrong.
- Numerous road closures have been received but all relate to areas outside the two parishes.
- The library has had a leak by the front window and a defective light. These have both been fixed by Somerset Council.
- Clerk was contacted by Wessex Water about high water consumption in the village loos suggestive of constant flushing or similar problem. The Clerk checked but could find nothing amiss and the garage confirmed all seemed to be fine. Wessex Water contacted Clerk to say there no longer seemed to be a problem.
- Residents' issues raised with the Clerk include:
  - Concerns about speed limits on the A358 following an accident involving a family member (see item 122/23 above under Somerset Council matters).
  - The temporary appearance of some form of noise monitoring equipment in The Bartons not arranged by the Parish Council nor Somerset Council remains unsolved.
  - The state of the dog bin on Hither Mead by the stream has been reported to the Somerset Council officer who oversees dog and litter bin collections and will be dealt with.
  - Following a request for help with a pigeon with a broken wing, the resident was advised to contact the RSPCA.

**The Clerk will endeavour to chase up ongoing issues awaiting responses.**

**128/23 Chair's Report:** Chair reported that since the last meeting he has been busy being the Clerk.

**129/23 Comments from members of the public:**

Question about odd road markings on South Drive and what they refer to (photograph was shown to members). Chair thought they looked like markings made by Airband (fast broadband provider not known for their communication skills). **Chair will pass on email address for Airband to resident.**

Request for no cycling signs on footpath by stream asking cyclists to dismount. A Future consideration could be to widen the footpath for dual use (SSResidents Group might like to discuss this?). **Clerk to contact Highways about no cycling/ please dismount signs.**

A member of the public said she had been asked to provide witness statement to the Somerset Monitoring Officer about Cllr Morency (who resigned so no further action was taken) which concerned 'disrespectful' conduct towards Cllr Bainbridge. She asked that any disrespectful conduct towards this Councillor stops.

**130/23 Planning Applications for comment:**

**06/23/0023/LB Erection of sun room to 3 The Courtyard, South Drive, Sandhill Park, Bishops Lydeard:** The Parish Council made no comment.

**06/23/0025/T Application to fell one sweet chestnut tree and to carry out management works to four oaks and one willow (and to fell two dead trees) included in Taunton Deane Borough (Bishops Lydeard No.2) Tree Preservation Order 1997 at Lethbridge Park, Bishops Lydeard (TD705):** The Parish Council made no comment but defers to the Tree Officer. (Note - decision already made on 11th September).

**06/23/0026 Replacement of door and window, re-opening of window and erection of bicycle store at 5 West Street, Bishops Lydeard:** The Parish Council made no comment.

**13/23/0009 Erection of 1 No. dwelling, (as an alternative to the conversion of barn into a single dwelling under Class Q), garaging and associated works at Middlebrooks, Kingston St Mary Road, Bishops Lydeard (resubmission of 13/22/0009 and 13/23/0001):** a possible example of 'betterment' but the Parish Council made no comment.

**06/23/0027 Replacement of fence with alterations to vehicular access at Otters Pocket, Taunton Road, Bishops Lydeard (retention of part works already undertaken):** Cllr Bletcher proposed that the **Parish Council objects to this application.** The planning reasons for objecting are: that the entrance doesn't give access to the house but to land to the West; the entrance opens directly onto A358 with no visibility splays; a bund has been built around the field where the entrance is (the previous clerk reported these earthworks to the then Somerset West and Taunton District Council); all of the land required for access to the dwelling should be included within the red lined application site, and if any of the land lies outside the existing domestic curtilage, then an application for full planning permission, including a change of use, should be submitted, rather than a householder application. **The Parish Council agreed to object to this planning application on the grounds stated above.**

**131/23 To review publishing documents, including draft minutes, in advance of Parish Council meetings.** (Note that the Policies, Procedures and Complaints Working Party has met informally online, appointed Cllr Ball as Chair, and recommends that the Council does publish meeting papers in advance, including draft minutes, where possible and not inappropriate). **The Parish Council agreed with this.** *It is important to emphasise that these minutes are DRAFT. A draft watermark should be on every page and a statement at the end that these shouldn't be taken as a correct record as they haven't been formally agreed by the Parish Council yet.*

**132/23 To consider issues raised by the recent 'Stream Side Residents Group' meeting with Somerset Cllr Dixie Darch and Council staff:** this item was discussed under item 122/23 above (Somerset Council matters).

**133/23 Avon and Somerset Police Report:** This was noted. The monthly Police report to the Parish Council provides the most detailed information on reported crime for Bishops Lydeard and Cothelstone. All Police reports can be found on the Parish Council website (link at top).

**134/23 Road and Traffic Issues update:** included in Somerset Council matters item 122/23 above.

**135/23 Electric vehicle charging points. To review progress following last month's meeting:** The consensus was that the Parish Council ought to be doing something but the Clerk has not yet had the time to follow up the different options.

WSR were approached by Cllr Lewin-Harris incase they were interested in an EVCP. WSR had looked at the possibility but hadn't progressed it but will discuss this further.

Cllr Hunt suggested an approach to the dental surgery about this (with its car park). **Clerk to approach dentist, Lethbridge Arms and other possible sites in village for EVCPs.**

**136/23 To discuss Woodland Walk Community Asset Transfer:** this was mentioned under item 122/23 above (Somerset Council matters).

**137/23 On Your Bike (OYB) proposal update:** The grant Cllr Hunt applied for (£2500) for a three year plan linked to [new head at] the primary school alongside their cycling proficiency has been awarded in full. The banner is up, 500 leaflets delivered, school has put it in their newsletter. The Coop is presenting a big cheque for £150 on Saturday, as well as providing fruit for the 'smoothie bike'. The Coop has suggested this becomes one of their local community charities.

Future advertising to include logos of those supporting. Grant has to be spent by July 2025. Thoughts include setting up an occasional bike workshop. **This will be an agenda item for the next meeting.** The Parish Council thanked Cllr Hunt for all her hard work.

The Drop-in Bike Repair Session planned for Saturday 16th Sept will be in the VH overflow car park - **Need to cordon off four spaces in overflow car park on Friday evening. Cllr Allen offered to provide cones and Cllr Bletcher offered to help Cllr Hunt set up.**

**138/23 Station View Public Open Space update:** Parish Council have received a bill for over £20,000 (which excludes planting, an additional £500, been too hot and dry). Concern over the amount which appears to be much more than the Parish Council agreed to spend. Previous minutes to be checked to find figure, query price and request breakdown of costs. Cllr Lewin-Harris found acceptance of quote at December meeting (mentioned in January 2022 minutes item 187/22). **Clerk to refer to December 2021 minutes.**

**139/23 Climate Change update:** nothing to report.

**140/23 Village Hanging Basket Review:** deferred until next month so as to include Cllr Bainbridge in the discussions.

The extent of Himalayan balsam in the stream is causing concern. It dominates to the exclusion of all else and is spreading. Cllr Lewin-Harris suggested we pull it early on in the growing season once identified (probably May). Several Councillors volunteered to help with this. **Clerk to ask Somerset Council to advise as well.**

**141/23 Parish Lengthsman report:**

**a) To consider monthly report**

Parish Council agreed to the repair spur on the rotten post; and to reporting several things of concern to the Somerset Tree Officer including the broken tree branch in Mill Lane, dead trees over Crawlic Lane, the many trees with ash dieback. A replacement dog bin has been ordered.

Village Hall electrician will look at SID (vandalised). Not currently covered on insurance. Suppliers may be able to repair if local electrician can't. **Clerk to add SID to Insurance Register and chase Somerset Council who agreed to put up two additional posts for SID (by football ground and in Taunton Road) where they are needed.**

Cllr Lewin-Harris noticed a lot of weed growth along MUGA edge which will creep inwards. **Clerk to ask Lengthsman the most effective, non-chemical way to deal with these (strimmer would probably help but leave to Lengthsman's judgement).**

**b) To review lengthsman's schedule further:** this was not discussed.

**142/23 Finance:**

**a) To note income received:**

HSBC	£31.99
CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund (monthly)	£1348.41

Library (fees and charges) £65.16

**To approve annual schedule of payments:** It was agreed that this item should be deferred until the appointment of a new Clerk/RFO.

**b) To approve payments:**

**To note payments made by direct debit:**

BT (telephone and broadband)	£83.06
Somerset Web Services (email account)	£5.52
British Gas (public conveniences electricity)	£81.80
EDF Energy (Library electricity)	£104.60

**To note payments made by cheque:**

Clive Martin (photocopying of clerk job advert)	£80.00
RYAL media group (clerk job advert)	£468.00
Claire James (delivery of job advert)	£60.00

**To authorise payments to be made by BACS:**

Jack Council (Parish Lengthsman work - July)	£1477.80
Jack Council (Parish Lengthsman work - August)	£1140.70
AIS Cleaning Contractors Ltd (loos and Library cleaning)	£tbc
Somerset Council (Library works on leak and lighting)	£tbc
Water2business (water and sewerage charge for toilets)	£425.38
Coombers Security (annual charge for library)	£345.24

To cover outgoings £20,000 has been transferred from savings account into current account.

**It was proposed by Cllr Lewin-Harris, seconded by Cllr Bletcher and unanimously agreed to approve all the payments itemised above.**

**143/23 To note planning permissions granted:** None received. **Clerk to look into whether previous clerk searched for these rather than waiting to hear from local planning authority.**

**144/23 To note planning applications refused/withdrawn:** None received.

**145/23 Any other business - for report only:**

- Cllr Ball noted problems with traffic leaving football ground after matches blocking roads. Would Football Club consider letting traffic go in smaller groups (not so much of a problem with arrivals which are more spread out)? **Chair to have a quiet word.**

- Cllr Allen reported that the VH was holding a MacMillan coffee morning on Friday 29th September between 10 -12 am.

- Cllr Pattermore had been approached about putting up notices for national ploughing event (taking place at East Combe). This was thought appropriate on village notice boards (but not on Parish boards). **Cllrs Hunt and Lewin-Harris volunteered to do this.**

- The Chair read out a letter sent by email from Colin Delderfield resigning from the Parish Council forthwith. Mr Delderfield was thanked for his short time on the Parish Council. **The procedure concerning the vacancy will be looked at by the Clerk.**

- There have been two promising applications for the role of Parish clerk. **The Staffing Committee will meet (in public) to set dates for this process.**

**146/23 Date of next meeting: Wednesday 11th October 2023, 7pm at Bishops Lydeard Village Hall, small hall.**

Meeting closed at 9.07 pm.