

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

Clerk to the Council: Neal Gossage c/o Cllr Clive Martin, Lovells, Mount Street, Taunton, TA4 3AN  
Phone: 01823 432911; Email: [clerk@bishopslydeard.org](mailto:clerk@bishopslydeard.org)  
Website: <http://www.bishopslydeard.org.uk>

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held in the Village Hall, Bishops Lydeard on Wednesday 8th November 2023 at 7pm (*taken by Cllr Jane Warmington*).

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

**Councillors absent:** Cllr Bletcher,

**In attendance:** 9 members of the public.

**172/23 Apologies:** Newly appointed Clerk Neal Gossage, Cllr Bletcher,

**173/23 Declarations of interest relating to matters on the agenda:** Cllr Hunt declared a personal interest in item 180/23 on Christmas lights.

### **174/23 Adoption of the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held 11th October 2023:**

On matters of accuracy -

- Under item 151/23 remove second part of sentence as this was not mentioned at meeting;
- Under item 153/23 comments, remove second half of first sentence attributed to Cllr Bainbridge;
- Under item 156/23 remove part of sentence in brackets;
- Under item 170/23 AOB adjust reference from 'Local Forum' to 'Local Community Network';
- Under item 156/23 correct spelling of Neil to Neal.

**It was proposed, seconded and agreed that these minutes be adopted with the changes noted above.**

**175/23 Matters Arising** (not appearing elsewhere on the agenda): There were none.

**176/23 Clerk's report:** The Chairman presented the Clerk's report to the meeting.

- DARBY WAY TELEPHONE BOX - there are problems with plans to offer it "as is" to West Somerset Railway and they do not wish to take advantage of this offer. The telephone boxes are still connected to a power supply (it would take 16 weeks to disconnect) and they are very heavy to relocate. (A formal decision has not been made to remove this telephone box).
- PUBLIC ACCESS RIGHTS - no further contact from the external auditor during this month.
- PUBLIC TOILETS WATER LEAK - Wessex Water have instructed Chair to conduct a "stop tap test" which he will endeavour to do this week.
- REQUEST FROM STREAMSIDE RESIDENTS GROUP - the funding issue is on the agenda (item 185/23); The 'cyclists dismount' sign request for path - the path is not a public highway and was part of the open space belonging to the then district council. Somerset Council Open Spaces

Team has no budget to provide signs but indicate the Parish Council could pay for them. It would probably be cheaper for the Parish Council to undertake this (but there may be issues with sinking post holes and other underground services). **Chair to negotiate with County over costs, surveys and permissions.**

- ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING POINTS - this is an agenda item (188/23).
- Somerset Council is holding a consultation meeting on Active Transport on 5th December. This will include the cycle-path between Lydeard, Cotford and Taunton and the No 28 bus route. Cllr Rigby said 50k had been allocated to revisit the feasibility study in order to put a bid in to Active Travel England. This is a complex route but the only way to secure funding. A lot of work is needed to achieve the detailed information required. **Cllr Lewin-Harris will attend on behalf of the Parish Council.**
- SPEED INDICATOR DEVICE - This is still waiting for an electrician to inspect it. Clerk cannot add it to the insurance as requested until it is working. Clerk has located correspondence relating to the "memorandum of understanding" with Highways and the lighting columns issue needs to be resolved.
- GREENWAY/STATION ROADWORKS and the unacceptable diversion has been passed to Cllr Rigby to argue that this arrangement should not be repeated.
- PO BOX NUMBER - this has now been created for the new clerk and details will be circulated shortly.
- Approached by a resident of LYDEARD MEAD concerned about state of stream. **Chair will chase up planned work to keep free flowing.** There is a flood risk as low lying. Question about a flood officer but likely to be Open Spaces matter to be **followed up by Cllr Rigby with Somerset Council.** There were recollections of previous blockages and a question on whether it was a requirement of the landowner to keep the stream clear on adjacent land?
- PHARMACY is closing leaving only a dispensing chemist.
- Question about PO BOX rather than using a private address for Parish Council correspondence and whether this was the only option? The Chair responded that it seemed sensible at the time. **Note that the information on the website needs to be updated.**

**177/23 Chairman's report:** since the last meeting the Chairman has:

- Written an article for Fiveways;
- Attended an on-line bus partnership meeting as there is a threat to a number of bus routes (in particular to No 28). The 'solution' is for more people to use the bus. Somerset Council are having a poster campaign to try to increase usage. The No 28 either seems full (so doesn't stop) or nearly empty. Timetable for number 23 bus route is not readily available but they are a quite well used alternative.
- Met Streamside Residents Group; one positive outcome was meeting the Chair of Local Community Network (LCN). The Chairman will attend future meetings as these are potentially useful eg applying pressure regarding the proposed cycle-path to Taunton.
- Will attend the Remembrance Day Service to lay wreath on behalf of the Parish Council. Question arose concerning blocking of the road through the village during the service but Churchwarden David Smart has organised this brief, unofficial road closure this year with volunteers (they were lacking in 2021 hence the problems then).

**178/23 The Somerset Councillor Report from Cllr Rigby was moved up the agenda:** Somerset Council had declared a COUNCIL EMERGENCY with the looming cost of statutory social care (placements and services). The budget will fall short and use up 85% of Council revenue budget

next year. The result will be to freeze non-essential spending. They are going through budgets now in order to to balance the budget by the end of the year (10% of other Councils already cannot achieve this). Local Authorities now have additional responsibilities but with no funding attached from Central Government (locally raised funds only now support local authorities). Today a letter went out to parish councils to explain what this means in terms of services. In order to meet the statutory minimum Council tax may well go up. Some functions Somerset Council won't provide may be offered to parish councils to take on (as there is no cap on a Parish Precept).

Other issues reported on included: - GAS MAIN REPLACEMENT and diversion (lengthy or single track). Road closure needed as the main is in the middle of the road. As soon as this changes (over to one side) there will be traffic signals to manage traffic.

- NORTON MANOR FLOOD It was assumed there was a drain under the road running into the Royal Marine camp. If found it will be repaired and if not one will be put in. A complication is that it would need to link into the MOD system so may take more time. Traffic lights are in use as this is a fast road.

- TAUNTON ROAD FOOTWAY - This was not started before LiveWest houses were completed and subsequent drainage issues has meant these aren't yet occupied. There are dates in the legal agreement so enforcement action can be started if the footway is not completed.
- **Cllr Rigby to get onto West Hatch bus company to put up timetables.** Four other bus company routes are under threat. Budget has already been allocated to keep these running until March 2024. This then stops. Nos 28 and 25 affect the village. They need to be used more in order to keep them running. Duplicate services on 28 when full are due to start in the new year.
- BANK REPAIRS opposite Delta Rise: the only way to do these safely is with a ten week full road closure. A conversation is needed about what the Parish Council wants to do about this (minor roads would be deluged with traffic and cause problems). Does the Parish Council want this to go ahead as the thoughts were that this work was required for road safety following small rock falls but perhaps not? (NOTE the Somerset Council Capital Programme is okay. Paying for Social Care has to come out of the Revenue Budget). **It is proposed to hold a Parish Council Traffic sub-committee meeting** to discuss this.
- COOP MOVE - It was thought that the agreement was about to be completed but unsure as there has not been much movement in last twelve months. Mention was made of the Coop contract now signed to stay put for another two to nine years.
- ROUNDABOUT UNDERPASS has been adopted. A safety audit had remedial actions which have not yet been undertaken. The audit is being pursued.
- OTTERS POCKET - **this property is the subject of a live enforcement case.**

### **179/23 Comments from members of the public:**

QUESTION - are we aware that the industrial estate by the railway has had travellers camped there for three weeks, lighting fires and cutting trees? **County Highways have been asked to deal with this already.**

### **180/23 Planning applications for comment:**

**13/23/0009** Planning consent for the erection of a single storey dwelling at Middlebrooks, Kingston St Mary Road, Cothelstone. (Response required by 12th November 2023). This is the third application at this location and the Parish Council has not commented so far (from class Q conversion to full planning for house (planning gain)). There was some confusion due to all the

documentation on the planning website. This was explained as a full planning application to build a new two storey house, then revised for a one storey building (in place of the class Q farm building conversion). Cllr Bletcher suggests that this revision is better. **The Parish Council agreed to make no comment.**

**181/23 Report from the village on 'Christmas Lights and to consider funding application':** aA verbal report was given from the resident who arranges the lighting asking to increase the spread and replace substandard lights with an application for £1000 this year (and four subsequent years) or £5000 now. Permission and donations are sought from property owners. The electrical supply requirement is only 12volts (at an estimated cost of 90p and some residents pay for a whole string). The Church star and light strands will go up again. The resident who paid for the Christmas tree is now leaving so the Church has agreed more will be made of the churchyard tree. The School is having a lantern parade at the planned 1ST DECEMBER SWITCH-ON with the Church choir. They are looking at future self-funding and will ask for wider contributions. The Coop just-giving scheme might hopefully include Christmas lights (but maybe restricted to only charities?) The display (and uniformity) of lights is really appreciated.

**Suggestion Cothelstone is asked for donations as parishioners often drive through.**

**Another suggestion is to approach Fiveways for a grant.**

**It was proposed, seconded and formally agreed to donate £1000 to the Christmas Lights Group**

**182/23 Avon and Somerset Police Report:** This was noted. **Clerk to forward blog on when received.** The monthly Police report to the Parish Council still 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).

**183/23 Road and Traffic Issues update:** the Chairman has been contacted by County Highways and a meeting is being arranged.

**184/23 To consider actions on the Screwfix grants opportunity:** the information was passed on to Councillors but there was very little time to apply. (It was also considered by the Village Hall Committee but they decided they didn't qualify and the conditions were considered too hard).

**185/23 Arrangements relating to the councillor vacancy:** An election has been requested and date given is Thursday 21st December (there may not be one if it is not contested). Poll cards cost £2000 extra but it is likely this increases turnout. So it's a balance between democratic engagement and costs. Thoughts were that if an election is necessary then really ought to have poll cards especially in a larger parish. **Agreed to have polling cards if there is to be a contested election.**

**186/23 To consider a request from the Streamside Group as to whether a footpath upgrade will be funded in principle:** request for repairs to footpath as its very well used and because it's so uneven. Two approaches: 1) arrange Highways to look at it and the Parish Council would pay for the work to be done through them; 2) work is deemed manageable so the Parish Council could

undertake organising this itself. Preference (quicker) would be for the **Parish Council to get two bids to do the work and authorise. Would need to ask for agreement from Open Spaces (Somerset Council) as owners** (although it might be included under the offer to parish councils from Somerset Council as their letter includes the offer of minor repairs to footpaths).

Residents Group also talked to Somerset Wildlife Trust (SWT) who suggested a management plan (SWT are particularly interested in the stream). **Streamside Residents Group will bring this back to the Parish Council.** Work would include some clearance in places of mud and debris. The Lengthsman has already been asked to add this section to his work programme. **This is not a formal approval but setting up a proposal for a later decision. This will only be possible if it can be funded from CIL. Cllr Lewin-Harris queried whether a “repair” to the existing path would count as capital expenditure and therefore within CIL. Chair to investigate.**

**187/23 To appoint a new councillor for CIL Working Party and to consider funding application from Bishops Lydeard School:** one councillor short. Cllr Bainbridge thinks CIL Working Party ought to be abolished and all applications come before the full Parish Council. The Chairman reiterated that the Working Party makes recommendations to the full Council. There were no volunteers so it remains at just three members.

The Working Party have received an application from the School to buy desks and classroom equipment which it feels uncomfortable about. The School used to have seven classes of 30 children but numbers are still very low (140 in total). The equipment would be to refurbish an unused classroom but pupil numbers not really increasing yet. **The Working Party are reporting their concerns to the Parish Council here and are to meet the Head and then bring a recommendation back.**

**188/23 Climate Change update:** no update as no current climate change lead on the Council.

**189/23 Electric vehicle charging points and to establish a working party to progress the issue across our parishes:** The new Clerk is knowledgeable as is Cllr Bletcher, Cllr Ball and an interested resident Mr Durban would like to join a working party. **It was agreed to form an EVCP Working Party with the above as members.**

**190/23 Parish Lengthsman -**

**a) To consider monthly report:** No monthly report received for last month.

**b) To decide on weed action:** There is a cost concern (extra £15/hour) to use the machine and replace blades but a decision to stop using herbicides means this maybe the only option. Concern that the MUGA also has weeds in cracks which this machine unlikely to be able to deal with. Where do we need/want to weed? Sites include the War Memorial, MUGA, road gutters (areas sprayed in the past). Suggestion to consider an 'organic mix' such as white vinegar, soap and salt. Weeds damage structures. **Invite Lengthsman Jack to come to meeting and answer some of the questions posed and associated costs.** This machine is an expensive option as it needs to be done more often (and has an additional hourly expense).

c) **To review lengthsman's schedule further:** see above.

**191/23 Finance:** The new Clerk has a lot of work to do revisiting the first quarter onwards of finances. This will result in inflated salary costs for a short time.

**To approve annual schedule of payments.** This item will be deferred until the next meeting when the new Clerk will be in attendance.

**To review the quarterly financial statement.** This item will be deferred until the next meeting when the new Clerk will be in attendance.

**To note income received:**

PSDF Dividend/Interest	£1,568.79
Unity Trust	£5.60

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

Somerset Web Services (email account)	£5.52
EDF Energy (Library electricity)	£107.03
British Gas (public conveniences electricity)	£81.90
HSBC Bank charges	£13.27
Unity Bank charges	£20.10
Unity ICO	£35.00

**To note payments made by cheque/BACS:**

RYAL media group (Clerk job advert)	£234.00
Bishops Lydeard VH (MUGA/Carpark)	£175.00
SC (Council by-election)	£4,994.74
SC (Hanging baskets - late payment - not including watering)	£787.20
SALC (SALC affiliation fee/NALC)	£881.85
SC (Bin emptying/grass cutting)	£1,401.29
Coomber Security Systems (Fire extinguisher maintenance)	£48.84
SC (Library salaries)	£2,555.48
SC (Preventative/reactive maintenance – library)	£1,550.10
AIS Cleaning Contractors Ltd (toilets cleaning)	£759.65
SLCC (Job advert)	£253.20
Charity Hunt (fruit for On Your Bike event)	£39.15

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

AIS Cleaning Contractors Ltd (loos and Library cleaning August)	£718.08
AIS Cleaning Contractors Ltd (loos and Library cleaning October)	£718.08
Bishops Lydeard VH (Meetings)	£90.45
Somerset Council (Legionella risk assessment)	£240.00
Somerset Council (Library salaries)	£2,858.82
NALC (Clerk/RFO advert)	£120.00
Abacus Construction (new garden area, Station View)	£20,445.60
Water 2 Business (toilet water/sewerage) DISPUTED	£425.38
Neal Gossage (re PO Box account)	£396.00

Neal Gossage (Salary Oct-Nov 2023)

c£1,348.00

The Chairman and Clerk have agreed that the Clerk as finance officer will draw up schedules of payments to be made by BACS or cheque but the payments will be made by the signatory/signatories as appropriate (Cllrs Martin, Allen or Pattermore) so that the Clerk does not make payments himself.

**Concern was expressed that the BACS payment of £787.20 to SC for the provision of hanging baskets (not the watering) had not been explicitly authorised. Clerk to investigate.**

Arrangement with the Library is that the Parish Council pays rent, and repair works are done by Somerset Council which the Parish Council then repays (eg electrics and roof). It maybe possible to negotiate a new arrangement under Somerset Council's devolved proposals.

Reimbursement to purchase of fruit for the On Your Bike event will be funded from the grant awarded.

New Clerk keen to have a PO Box (so that his home address will remain private).

**Proposed by Cllr Lewin-Harris, seconded by Cllr Ball to authorise payments above agreed**  
(with query about hanging baskets invoice).

**192/23 To note planning permissions granted:** 06/23/0028 Erection of a single storey extension to the rear of 9 Hamber Lea, Bishops Lydeard - Conditional approval granted on 31.10.2023.

**193/23 To note planning applications refused/withdrawn -** None (outstanding).

**194/23 Any other business - for report only:**

- Cllr Pattermore to include report on Library meeting for next month's agenda.
- Cllr Hunt to provide an email update on On Your Bike to all councillors and attempt to get coverage in Fiveways.
- Cllr Allen concerned that road closure sign 'Greindon' Road is incorrect and actually refers to (old) Minehead Road (past Dunkirk House).
- Cllr Bainbridge reported that the first Community Speedwatch took place today. Volunteers have to complete a form, undergo training and checks. Volunteers can also apply through Avon and Somerset Police Community Speedwatch page on their website.

**195/23 Date of next meeting: Wednesday 13th December 2023, 7pm at Bishops Lydeard Village Hall**

Meeting closed at 9.17 pm.

***Please note these remain DRAFT minutes until ratified at the next Parish Council meeting.***