

NORTH CURRY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 8th November 2023 at 7:30pm in the Village Hall Meeting Room.

Present or comments received: Mrs Tina Stodgell (Chairman), Mrs Jeanne Leader (Vice-Chairman), Mr Paul Deacon, Mr Tony Turner, Mr Graham Cable, Mr Phil Stone, Mrs Helen Griffiths, Mr Adam Hardwick, Mr Brian Jeanes, Mr Mike Dennis. Unitary Cllr Norman Cavill was also present. Five members of the public were present.

1. Preliminaries:

To receive and approve apologies for absence: Apologies were received from Ms Smith, Mr Fugett, Mr Wilkins, and Unitary Cllr David Fothergill.

Approve and sign minutes for the previous meeting dated 11th October 2023: Mr Hardwick proposed the minutes were a true record, Mr Deacon seconded, all were in favour.

Declarations of interest (*Members to declare any interests, including Disclosable Pecuniary interests they have in agenda items that accord with the requirements of the Parish Council's Code of Conduct*): Mrs Griffiths declared an interest in item 15b, with her name on the payment list, so will refrain from voting.

2. Matters arising: *See project tracker.*

Platinum Jubilee Plaque: The Plaque, a gift from Lady Mary Stewart-Wilson, is now in place on the Stable building. A photo session was had with Colin Trimm (with our thanks), including Lady Mary, Duncan Varley, the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman, Mr Jeanes, and his brother Mr Tom Jeanes. They are hoping to get this published in the Gazette.

Windmill Hill obstruction: Correspondence received from the owner explaining that his sign had been stolen.

Defibrillator training session: The Chairman thanked Mr Jeanes for organising the very successful training session.

Tug of War: Initial meeting was held last night; lots of interest, lots to still plan but very much under control. The event will be Saturday 29th June 2024, and teams need to be formed and entered (at £20 per team). The next meeting is in February.

3. County Cllr. Report: *Weekly update being forwarded by email.*

The report includes details on the dire financial situation, and the possibility of having to issue a Section 114 notice is being discussed. The updated 'New and Expectant Parents Policy' has received a lot of attention by deleting any reference to mothers to make it more inclusive. The Highways contract has been signed with Kier Transportation Ltd. Demolition is underway at Taunton recycling centre following the fire; the site will remain closed until this is complete. Nearly half of the contents of the average Somerset bin could be recycled, but this figure is 11% lower than last years. Gritter teams are ready to be mobilised when temperatures drop below zero.

Cllr Cavill also explained that boundaries are currently being reviewed, so there is an opportunity for parishes to review their boundaries and submit alterations if desired. This will be finalised in 2025. Somerset Council are also looking at selling off some commercial investment assets, and other community assets. Some Parish Councils may want to take over some assets, but North Curry doesn't have any assets owned by Somerset Council.

4. Planning applications for comment by North Curry Parish Council:

24/23/0042: *Widening of access with laying of hardstanding, siting of shipping container as welfare unit and installation of 35 No. solar photovoltaic panels with shed for battery storage at One Tree Farm, Knapp Lane, Knapp (retention of part works already undertaken).*

Mr Turner, the planning Chairman, explained the application and summarised the site visit. The applicants were present to discuss their plan and goals, and answer questions. They plan to open a Farm Shop in the future, so traffic concerns were discussed. The applicant apologised for his lack of communication, and stated that the next retrospective planning application will be submitted early 2024. After a discussion, Mr Cable proposed the following statement "North Curry Parish Council supports the application but would like to be assured that traffic to the Farm Shop will be taken into account"; Mr Deacon seconded, and most were in favour bar one abstention.

5. To consider a request from North Curry Sport Ltd to agree the setting up of a drainage resolving project, and support any applications made for public funding: A report from North Curry Sport Ltd was circulated prior to the meeting explaining the problems and plan for solutions. The project will be very expensive, so sources

of funding were discussed. The importance of renewing the lease was also discussed, as a short lease term limits access to grants and support; the Parish Council have now found a solicitor to review the lease when ready. The Chairman proposed to support the setting up of a drainage resolving project; Mr Cable seconded, and all were in favour. The Parish Council would be willing to look at donating funds towards actual works, but not the designing process. North Curry Sport will bring a timeline and initial funding request to a future meeting.

- 6. To agree on initial funding of possibly £5,000 from CIL funds for the Neighbourhood Development Plan, confirm the consult to be used, and agree the Terms of Reference for the Steering Group:** The Chairman thanked Mrs Leader and the Steering Group for their hard work so far. Mrs Leader shared that an area designation application letter has been sent to Somerset Council, which will take a couple of weeks for a response.

The matter of getting three quotes for a consultant was then discussed; Mrs Leader shared that the majority of local Parish Councils have used Stuart Todd and given excellent reviews. Not many local Parish Councils got three quotes for a consultant, as Mr Todd is well known and respected locally for his work, is recommended by Somerset Council, and his hourly rate is in line with what grant providers expect. The Chairman proposed to proceed with using Mr Todd as he has been extensively researched and proven to be the best locally; Mr Deacon seconded, and all were in favour.

The Steering Group were going to apply for a grant, but the process would involve a lot of rushing with very little time to spend any money granted, so decided not to go ahead with it this financial year. The Clerk has spoken to Somerset Council and confirmed that CIL can be used to fund the NDP. The Chairman proposed to use up to £5,000 of CIL money to get the NDP going; Mr Turner seconded, and all were in favour.

The draft Terms of Reference have been circulated prior to the meeting. Mr Jeanes proposed to agree and sign the document; Mrs Griffiths seconded, and all were in favour. The Chairman and Clerk signed the document.

Mrs Leader shared that some initial information on the NDP will be circulated with the December Pink Sheet to encourage residents to participate.

- 7. To decide on a replacement tree for the Prunus tree being removed at Queen Square Gardens:** Mr Stone shared the five options he had found, and a discussion was had. The Chairman proposed the white Bird Cherry; Mr Hardwick seconded, and 5 were in favour. Mrs Leader proposed the Foxglove; Mr Jeanes seconded, and 5 were in favour. As a tie was had, the Chairman used her casting vote and decided on the white Bird Cherry tree.
- 8. To review an initial quote for fingerpost maintenance, and decide whether to proceed with the project at this time:** Mr Deacon shared that £500 was quoted for a new post for White Street, £710 for Rock Hill to be restored, and £1,135 for Borough Post including a replacement finger. These prices are before VAT. Queen Square post can be cleaned and painted; materials would be around £200 including a scaffolding tower. A rolling programme of one post per year was discussed. Mr Deacon proposed to go ahead with restoration of the Borough Post sign for £1,135 + VAT, and clean the Queen Square post; the Chairman seconded, and all were in favour.
- 9. To agree a budget for the Greenway allotment produce box:** Mr Deacon shared a possible design, which would sit inside the allotment fencing, but accessible from the car park side of the fence. Exterior quality ply would be around £200, Mr Deacon will construct it, and Mr Jeanes has roofing felt that can be used. The box will need a back and sides, and the front will be open; using exterior ply would be £50-60, or plastic sheeting could be cheaper. The Chairman proposed a £300 budget and to leave Mr Deacon and Mr Jeanes to decide on appropriate materials; Mr Turner seconded, and all were in favour.
- 10. To consider a request from the North Curry Music Festival to use Queen Square Garden for residents to perform during the festival on Saturday and Sunday:** Two members of the NC Music Festival Committee were present to share that the festival will be on the 14th – 16th July 2024, and that they wish to use Queen Square Garden for residents to perform. The Chairman proposed to approve the use of the Gardens with a reminder that the gardens must be open to all the public and must not be charged for use of it; Mr Hardwick seconded, and all were in favour.
- 11. To decide whether to support the Climate and Ecology Bill:** The Clerk has circulated the email containing details of the Bill. The Chairman asked to clarify whether it was political; the Green Party is the sponsor of the Bill, but it doesn't seem to be politically motivated. Mr Jeanes proposed to support the group who are campaigning for this by adding the weight of the Parish Council; Mr Stone seconded, seven were in favour and 3 abstained. The motion was carried.

- 12. To discuss complaints about speeding on Greenway:** The Clerk has received many complaints from residents about speeding on Greenway, especially around the school. There currently isn't a suitable location for Speedwatch, after being assessed by Highways. There are already several factors that should reduce speeding (lots of parked cars, 20mph speed limit etc.) that aren't slowing traffic; possible solutions were discussed, and it was agreed it is very difficult to attempt to control speed, especially excessive speeders. Mr Deacon suggested getting a new SID post installed on Greenway so a current SID could be moved there to see if it is effective. Mr Deacon will speak to Highways about possibly installing a new post on Greenway.
- 13. To discuss feasibility of providing a village taxi service:** Some local Parish Councils have done this, and there are also other schemes available locally. There is a Council run scheme currently looking for more volunteers, but mainly for journeys to medical appointments. It was agreed the Clerk wouldn't be able to run this sort of service. Mrs Griffiths will get more details ready to discuss next month.
- 14. To discuss feasibility of creating a footpath from the Village Hall to the Pavilion and Playing Fields:** The Pavilion and Playing Field Committee have several concerns about this including dogs running onto the playing field, losing trees and hedges, and child safeguarding. Possible ideas and issues were discussed. The Parish Council won't enforce any ideas if the P&PF Committee have reservations. The Chairman proposed that it's not practical at the moment especially as the P&PF don't allow dogs; Mr Dennis seconded, and all were in favour.
- 15. Finance:**
- Monthly accounts:** The Clerk presented the accounts. Mr Turner proposed, the Chairman seconded, and all were in favour.
 - Payment list:** The Clerk presented the payment list. Mr Hardwick proposed, Mrs Leader seconded, and all were in favour bar Mrs Griffiths who abstained.

Monthly Payment List - November 2023	Cheque/ BACS/DD	Net	VAT	Due Date
SALC membership fee (Inv 2520)	BACS	£488.78		25-Nov
Clerk salary (November)	BACS	£681.18		30-Nov
Josh Williams- grass cutting (Inv 66)	BACS	£75.00		
NCVH EV electricity recharge (Inv 3034)	BACS	£164.40		
Royal British Legion Donation (Poppy wreaths)	BACS	£200.00		
Organist Donation	BACS	£50.00		
Bugler Donation	BACS	£40.00		
John Marchant Electrical- PAT testing in office	BACS	£46.00	£9.20	24-Nov
NCVH room hire (Inv 4123)	BACS	£23.27		
Centrewire Ltd- 4x kissing gates	BACS	£1,667.00	£333.40	
NC PCC Burial Ground Grant	BACS	£630.00		
Greenway Playing Field grant	BACS	£840.00		
Methodist Burial Ground Grant	Cheque	£140.00		
Baptist Burial Ground Grant	Cheque	£150.00		
BT EV phone line (Inv M014 6R)	DD	£29.27	£5.85	
IONOS HiDrive (Inv 203038627717)	DD	£3.00	£0.60	
IONOS Website (Inv 203038730397)	DD	£4.00	£0.80	

- Precept proposal draft:** Mr Jeanes presented the draft precept proposal, explaining each category and asking for any suggested amendments. The draft budget leaves a deficit of £3,958 so Mr Jeanes suggested increasing the precept to cover the Neighbourhood Development Plan up to £5,000 a year. After a discussion the Chairman proposed £24,000 as the draft precept figure for now, to be confirmed in December or January; Mr Jeanes seconded, and all were in favour.
- Finance panel meeting report:** Mr Jeanes explained that the external audit was passed, but with comments to be improved on next year, one regarding the asset register not being up to date which the Clerk has now rectified. The correct figures will be sent in with the next AGAR.
- Reaffirm Standing Orders:** There being no suggestions for alteration or updates from NALC or SALC, Mr Jeanes proposed to reaffirm the Standing Orders; the Chairman seconded, and all were in favour.

16. Correspondence:

A7497: A resident is waiting for Somerset Council to clear a ditch behind Chapel Close- it is usually done slightly later in the year so should be soon.

A7498: Wellbeing working group for LCN; Mr Dennis has joined and there is a good group of employees, volunteers, and a member of SALC. They spoke about issues specifically affecting rural areas and are hoping to do great work.

17. Committee /Delegate reports:

Tree Warden (PS): £120 has been used from the tree planting initiative budget so far, and hopefully some funding from SLA can be secured too. The plaques for the King and Queen oaks have been installed, as the trees are now established well. Mr Stone noted that the Church Road lime trees will be easier to assess once the leaves have fallen.

Footpaths (PS + PD): The kissing gates have been delivered, and locations are being decided.

Flood Warden (CV): *(this report was sent in after the meeting so was added retrospectively)* Mrs Vaughan reports that the New Road flood gates were shut last week, Highways have locked the gates this year, but all interested parties have the combination. She has been busy clearing drain covers which have become blocked and has reported a drain that isn't flowing. She will also be having a meeting with residents of Newport soon to discuss flooding concerns.

Road Safety/ Speed Policy/ SIDs (PD): Currently waiting for two new posts to be installed; a quote from a private company outside of Highways to do this was £800. Highways quote £250, so it is sensible to wait for them to be able to do it. Mr Deacon has been chasing Highways to correct the post installed in the wrong location at the Fivehead end of Wrantage.

North Curry Sports Ltd (PS): The large water storage tank has now been installed.

Environment Group (PS): Apple Day was successful.

18. Publicity Inputs: The Clerk received a request to remind everyone that the defibrillator outside the Post Office is not locked, as many thought it still was. There will also be a bit about the Jubilee Plaque, Remembrance Sunday, a mention of the NDP insert, and Christmas wishes to parishioners.

19. Matters for Discussion:

Chairman: Has received a suggestion of parishioners getting together with other Parish Councils to discuss flooding within Somerset. The PCC Parish Council trustees need to be renewed next month; Mr Cable, Mrs Brown, and the Chairman are happy to continue if wanted.

Mr Stone: Has pointed out that cows are eating the fence along Loscombe Meadow footpath, and the rails will need replacing, possibly with a different material. He will try and speak to the owner of the cows about the damage and come back with costs and information next month. The barrier on the footpath also needs replacing.

The meeting concluded at 10:40pm.

Project	Latest progress	Still to do
Helland to Huntham drove		Liaise with involved parties to re-open.
Lime trees, Church Road		Phil to speak to residents concerned and share the management scheme.
D-Day 80 th Anniversary Beacon		Adam speaking to local veterans to see if they'd like to organise something.
Wrantage and Moor Lane SIDS	SIDs have been delivered to Paul. New Wrantage post has been installed in the wrong location- Paul is liaising with Highways to fix this.	Install SIDs- first one in late September on existing post in Wrantage. Waiting for Moor Lane post to be installed.
Broad Lane flooding	<i>Letter has been sent to Wessex Water. Brian and Phil have visited and identified possible issues. Response received from Wessex Water.</i>	Brian consulting with landowners.
Queen Square line markings	<i>Highways have acknowledge the request, as well as to repaint the roundels and provide more speed limit signs. Line markings have been done.</i>	Waiting for roundels to be done, large back log.
Queen Square Gardens tree work	<i>Brian, Tony, and Phil have spoken to SC tree officer who approves of proposed work. Winning quote has been chosen.</i>	Date for work to go ahead. Decide on replacement tree.
Neighbourhood Development Plan	Jeanne has consulted with contacts, and found some residents who would like to help. Jeanne has developed a steering group.	Keep investigating process. Create action plan. Look into hiring a consultant.
Welcome Leaflet	<i>Paul has been contacting groups and organisations listed in previous version to update contact info. Paul has made final welcome letter.</i>	Continue contacting organisations, groups, and businesses.
Cricket Cottages potential car park	Contact has been made with the landowner to begin establishing whether the land may be for sale.	On hold while preliminary discussions are had with Highways and the land owner to see if this is at all feasible.
Windmill Hill obstruction	Another response from Highways; the obstruction has their permission.	The drain will be covered by Highways.
Village Hall defibrillator		Done.