

NORTH CURRY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 13th December 2023 at 7:30pm in the Village Hall Meeting Room.

Present or comments received: Mrs Tina Stodgell (Chairman), Mrs Jeanne Leader (Vice-Chairman), Mr Tony Turner, Mr Graham Cable, Mr Phil Stone, Mr Ian Fugett, Mr Adam Hardwick, Mr Brian Jeanes, Mr Mike Dennis, Ms Cecilia Smith, Mr Maurice Wilkins. Unitary Cllr David Fothergill was also present. Five members of the public were present.

1. Preliminaries:

To receive and approve apologies for absence: Apologies were received from Mrs Griffiths and Mr Deacon. Mr Wilkins needs to leave the meeting at 9:30pm.

Approve and sign minutes for the previous meeting dated 8th November 2023: Mr Hardwick proposed the minutes were a true record, Mr Jeanes seconded, and 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*): The Chairman and Mr Cable declared an interest in item 9, and Mrs Leader declared an interest in item 5.

2. Matters arising: see project tracker.

Cricket Cottages car park update: Mr Jeanes has had informal communication with Highways, with no clear answers. Would need to pay for pre-application advice. Difficulties include the one-way access. The Chairman reported that several people have expressed concerns that the proposed entrance would be dangerous. Mr Turner proposed to decide on a draft concept at January's meeting to take forward for pre-planning advice; Mr Stone seconded, and all were in favour.

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

Still a large financial gap; could reduce gap to £40-50 million, by saving £70 million; next year's budget based on making those savings. Hoping to avoid a section 114. Might have to raise council tax- not sure yet. Section of the building closed to save heating. Worries that bus service will suffer. Waste collection days changing from January as routes redefined. Green collection days won't change. Three weeks' notice will be given, and a new chart will be sent out. The M5 Willow Man may be remade out of something more sustainable/ longer term. He also might be moved as he is currently privately owned and on private land. £20million received for Wellington Toneworks restoration; highly recommend visiting! Recycling callout- cardboard increase by 44% over Christmas, please be sensible, maybe put it out in batches. Twelve new films on non-violent domestic abuse have been made and will be broadcast.

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

24/23/0014: *Demolition of buildings and erection of 1 No. dwelling with associated works and change of use of land to residential at Moredon Farm, North Curry.*

Mr Turner explained the application and highlighted the differences between this and the previous design. Mr Turner proposed the following statement: "North Curry Parish Council supports the application on the grounds that it would prefer to see a purpose-built energy efficient property rather than using the existing class Q approval to convert the existing agricultural structures into dwellings. The Parish Council would like to see additional habitats provided for wildlife, including a natural un-mowed section. The Parish Council would also like to see a heat pump system being used for heating". Mr Fugett seconded, and all were in favour bar two abstentions.

5. To consider a request from North Curry Sport Ltd for CIL funds to begin initial feasibility study and design work for their drainage project:

The Clerk has spoken to the Somerset Council CIL team (correspondence A7506) for advice on this; they confirmed that CIL money can be spent on the design process however an agreement should be put in place for what is to happen with the CIL money should the project then not go ahead. North Curry Sport Ltd agreed they would be happy to repay the money in that circumstance. The Chairman proposed to support the project with £10,000 from CIL for the initial feasibility and design process, with the complete scheme to be delivered within 5 years, or the money to be repaid; Mr Jeanes seconded, all were in favour bar Mrs Leader who abstained.

6. To discuss recent flooding at Newport, with a report from the Flood Warden:

Mrs Caroline Vaughan, the Flood Warden, was present with two residents from Newport who she has recently had a meeting with. An annotated map was shown which highlighted potential problem areas contributing to the flooding. Mrs Vaughan would like Highways to clear the gulleys along the western side of Newport Road, and the ditch down

Newport Drove. Mr Dennis might know the owner of these areas. Cllr Fothergill will speak to Highways about getting this sorted. Mrs Vaughan then mentioned a dangerous drain cover on The Pavement that is flicking up when people drive over it; Cllr Fothergill was given the exact location and will get this sorted immediately. The ditch and pipe by the Methodist Church also need looking at as are possibly blocked; Mr Jeanes is investigating and will share findings with Highways.

7. **To consider adopting a Biodiversity Policy, following advice from SLCC on the Biodiversity Duty:** The Clerk has circulated an initial draft Policy based on the SLCC model. Mr Jeanes proposed that more investigation is done to tailor the policy to North Curry, and involve the North Curry Environmental Group in consultation, and it be considered again in February; the Chairman seconded, and all were in favour.
8. **To decide on a budget for the replacement tree for Queen Square Gardens:** Mr Stone proposed a budget of £100 including the tree guard, but hopes a good tree will not cost that much. Mr Cable seconded, and all were in favour.
9. **To confirm the three Parish Council trustees for the Parochial Church Charities:** The current trustees are the Chairman, Mr Cable, and Mrs Brown, all are happy to continue if desired. Mr Hardwick proposed the three continue, Mrs Leader seconded, and all were in favour bar the Chairman and Mr Cable who abstained.
10. **To discuss possible replacement of the Loscombe Meadow footpath fence and barrier:** Having ascertained it is indeed the Parish Councils responsibility; a large section of the fence will need replacing. To replace with the same timber railings it would be £750, but the same problem will likely re-occur. Recycled plastic railings could be used instead which would cost £1,100 and fixing costs on top of that. Mr Stone wants to research the plastic railings further before making a proposal. Mr Stone will also speak to the owner of the cattle to see if they are willing to meet halfway on the replacement cost due to the cattle having chewed and damaged the railings. This will be on January's agenda.
11. **To discuss feasibility of providing a village taxi service:** Mrs Griffiths was due to investigate but was unable to attend this meeting. Mr Fugett shared that he tried to do this 15 years ago, but the insurance would have been astronomical. Cllr Fothergill shared that there is financial assistance available for community transport services and gave details for some others that Mrs Griffiths can contact.
12. **Finance:**
 - a. **Monthly accounts:** The Clerk presented the monthly accounts and the Chairman proposed to accept the accounts, Mr Hardwick seconded, and all were in favour.
 - b. **Payment list:** The Clerk shared the payment list and explained that an additional invoice for £150 + VAT has since been received for the road closure support for the May Fair which the Parish Council resolved to pay. The Chairman proposed to proceed with the payments including the May Fair's road closure; Mr Hardwick seconded, and all were in favour.

Monthly Payment List - December 2023	Cheque/ BACS/DD	Net	VAT	Due Date
Town & Parish Council Websites	BACS	£330.00		
Somerset Council- 20mph Scheme and 3 x SID posts	BACS	£9,771.83		
Clerk Salary (December and back pay)	BACS	£1,119.56		15-Dec
NCVH EV recharge (Inv: 3035)	BACS	£194.38		
T&C Charge Points Ltd (EV chargers work balance)	BACS	£1,185.62	£237.12	
T&C Charge Points Ltd (EV chargers additional work)	BACS	£365.69	£73.14	
Josh Williams- grass cutting (Inv 7)	BACS	£75.00		
ICS EV chargers subscription (Inv 1014539)	BACS	£64.00	£12.80	
NCVH room hire (Inv 4150)	BACS	£23.27		
Stable utilities bill (Inv 18)	BACS	£169.68		
IONOS Website (Inv 203039215234)	DD	£4.00	£0.80	
IONOS HiDrive (Inv: 203039100067)	DD	£3.00	£0.60	
BT office broadband (M005 FL)	DD	£35.94	£7.19	

- c. **Precept proposal draft:** No further alterations have been suggested; it will be finalised in January.

13. Correspondence.

A7508: The Police & Crime Commissioner has agreed to send a representative to speak at our APM in May 2024, they also asked if we will be inviting the PCSOs, the Clerk will do this.

B7516: Acknowledgement of signing of the Climate and Ecology Bill; the Clerk will write to the local MP expressing our support for the Bill.

A7509 and A7510: Complaints about leaf litter on the roads making them slippery; the Clerk has already organised a visit from the road sweeper, just needs to confirm the date so residents can move cars.

A7511: Borough Post post-box was knocked over by a car and hasn't been replaced due to health and safety concerns; it would need to be moved further back and made safer with railings. A local resident suggested to put it at the end of the bus shelter as there is already a path and safe area. The Clerk will thank her for her feedback and the Chairman proposed the Clerk should write to the local Royal Mail manager expressing the Parish Council's support; Mr Hardwick seconded, and all were in favour.

A7512: The Community Coffee Shop has very kindly donated £500 to the Parish Tree Planting Initiative, they have been thanked for this.

B7513: An email from a resident sharing that they believe some competitive Broadband rates might be coming due to the works going on around the Parish. It was asked if it could go in the Pink Sheet but Mr Hardwick proposed this wasn't appropriate for the Parish Council to do, Mr Cable seconded, and all were in favour.

14. Committee /Delegate reports:

Playing Field (AH): Christmas in the Square was very successful, total revenue of £2,390 but yet to work out costs.

Footpaths (PS + PD): People have been putting electric fencing for sheep across footpaths in various locations. Not everyone can step over it and footpaths need to be accessible to everyone. Mr Stone will investigate.

Environment Group (PS): Progress is being made putting the two groups together and welding their social media and websites into one. They will hopefully be able to help with the Biodiversity Policy.

Neighbourhood Plan (JL): Mr Hardwick has made the website which will be going live soon! The Neighbourhood Plan has also been given the entire back page of the Pink Sheet for the January edition.

15. Publicity Inputs: January's input will include information on tree discount scheme through Greenshutters, happy new year wishes, brief introduction to the Neighbourhood Plan information on the back page, a reminder to use the EV chargers, and a reminder to keep gulleys clear to help with the flooding.

16. Matters for Discussion:

Mrs Leader: Went on a very interesting course on how to engage effectively with young people; the Clerk will send out her notes to everyone.

Mr Stone: Interested in a piece of land that Somerset Council own, we could look into it as they are selling off assets. Everyone was happy for Mr Stone to investigate further.

Mr Fugett: Stoke Road 30mph roundels are showing again and need to be burnt out. He has also spotted percolation testing on the top of the field by White Street behind the footpath- one to keep an eye on.

Mr Hardwick: Has been looking into individual email addresses for the Parish Councillors, more and more councils are doing this. He now has more experience with creating these and can bring more information to January's meeting.

The meeting concluded at 9:55pm.

North Curry Parish Council - Project Tracker/ Matters Arising

Project	Latest progress	Still to do
Helland to Huntham drove Lime trees, Church Road		Liaise with involved parties to re-open. Phil to speak to residents concerned and share the management scheme.
D-Day 80th Anniversary Beacon		Adam speaking to local veterans to see if they'd like to organise something.
Wrantage and Moor Lane SIDS	<i>New Wrantage post has been installed in the wrong location- Paul is liaising with Highways to fix this.</i> Moor Lane post and SID are installed.	Need post from Highways to relocate Wrantage West SID.
Broad Lane flooding	<i>Letter has been sent to Wessex Water. Brian and Phil have visited and identified possible issues.</i> Response received from Wessex Water.	Brian consulting with landowners.
Queen Square line markings	Line markings have been done in Queen Square.	Waiting for roundels to be done, large back log.
Queen Square Gardens tree work	Replacement tree has been decided upon- white bird cherry tree.	Date for work to go ahead.
Neighbourhood Development Plan	Steering group terms of reference have been agreed, as has consultant. Initial funding of £5,000 from CIL agreed.	First mailshot to residents with January pink paper.
Welcome Leaflet	<i>Paul has been contacting groups and organisations listed in previous version to update contact info.</i> Paul has made final welcome letter.	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. Initial contact has been made with Highways to discuss feasibility.	Preliminary informal discussions are underway with Highways and the land owner.
Windmill Hill obstruction	<i>Another response from Highways; the obstruction has their permission.</i> After being stolen, the sign has now been replaced.	The drain will be covered by Highways.
Inter-Parish Tug of War summer 2024	Initial meeting was held, lots to plan but under control.	Next meeting in February. Event will be Saturday 29 th June 2024.
Fingerpost maintenance- Borough Post and Queen Square	Borough Post sign has now been removed for refurbishment.	Paul will clean and paint Queen Square fingerpost when the weather is more appropriate for painting.
Allotment produce box	Budget has been agreed- £300. Paul now has the materials.	Paul to construct before March.