

NORTH CURRY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 1st May 2024 at 7:30pm in the main Village Hall.

Present: Mrs Tina Stodgell (Chairman), 10 members of the Parish Council, Revd Simon Bale, Unitary Councillor David Fothergill, Marc Hole (Police & Crime Commissioner's Office), Tina Talbot (Village Agent), North Curry Toddler Group, Stuart Todd (Neighbourhood Plan consultant), Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, Greg Phillips (Village Hall Chairman), North Curry Sport Ltd, Kathryn Jeanes (North Curry Community Coffee Shop), and 40 residents.

1. **Welcome to the Annual Parish Meeting:** The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, and the portrait of King Charles III was unveiled as a gift to the Village Hall.
2. **Apologies for absence:** Apologies were received from the PCSOs, David Walker, Paul Deacon, Adam Hardwick, Mike Dennis, David Akerman, Helen Morely, North Curry Pavilion and Playing Fields, Cllr Norman Cavill.
3. **To receive and approve the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of 3rd May 2023:** Brian Jeanes proposed the minutes were a true record, Colin Trimm seconded, and most were in favour.
4. **Matters arising:** None.
5. **Chairman's report:** The Parish Council Chairman presented her report, highlighting what has been achieved by the Parish Council over the last year. This included installing SIDs, EV chargers, maintenance and improvement of the footpaths, plans to remedy flooding, tree maintenance and planting, a produce box for Greenway allotments, the Remembrance Service, and providing grants to local groups and organisations.
6. **To receive and note:**
 - a. **Parish Council Accounts:** Mr Jeanes presented the accounts. These will soon be available on the website.
 - b. **Parochial Church Charities Accounts & report:** Revd. Simon Bale resented the PCC accounts and explained the great work that the PCC does, giving vouchers to those in need within the Parish. The PCC wish to be able to find more people within the Parish who they can help and would like to do more than give vouchers at Christmas. They are looking into ways to do this and increase their £7,000 funds. They want to form a working group to organise a Reeves Feast. People looking to be involved should contact the PCC.
7. **Talk by Marc Hole from the Police & Crime Commissioner:** Marc Hole is from the Police & Crime Commissioner's (PCC) office; as the election is tomorrow, Mark Shelford (the PCC) couldn't attend. Marc Hole explained the role of the PCC which includes bringing together the community and the police, setting budgets, strategizing to keep young people out of gangs and away from knife crime, providing grants, amongst many other important aspects. Mark Shelford is national lead for economical and cyber-crime; Marc Hole explained how common these types of crime are and shared some tips on how to keep safe and encouraged everyone to report any incidents. New services are coming soon to support people who are victims of this kind of fraud. The PCC is the voice of local people in policing; all are encouraged to speak to the PCC to share concerns and get involved.
8. **Talk by Tina Talbot- Village Agent:** Tina Talbot has been coming to North Curry for over a year and works for Community Council for Somerset (CCS) which is a charity. She talked about the history of CCS, and what her role as Village Agent involved. The services are available to adults over 18 who need support. Emergency services and Doctors regularly refer to Village Agents to support patients, and people can also refer others they are concerned about, who can then be helped if they consent. Village Agents can offer grants in times of hardship; they have even found funding for someone in need to get a new boiler. A Talking Café is run by Tina every 3rd Friday of the month at North Curry Village Hall from 2-4pm where people can drop in for a chat or ask for advice. Visit the website at <https://somersetagents.org/>. People can help CCS by sharing what they do, and giving feedback on what they want support with.
9. **North Curry C of E School report:** Unfortunately, Helen Morley was unable to attend.
10. **North Curry Toddler Group report:** Tiffany from the Toddler Group thanked the Parish Council and committee for the financial assistance and advice to get the Toddler Group back on track following COVID. They now have

much better attendance and can cover running costs as well as buy more toys and equipment for the children to play with. They have done two successful wreath-making fundraisers making over £150 and are hoping to do the same again this year. The group is now thriving but is always looking for more volunteers, especially when September comes. They meet at the Village Hall on Mondays from 9-11am and drink coffee, eat cake, chat, and entertain toddlers!

11. Neighbourhood Plan launch: Jeanne Leader (Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group) explained that a Parish Plan was made several years ago which is a modest version of a Neighbourhood Plan, and the building of Loscombe Meadows and Lockyers Field was to fulfil the quota under the current Local Plan. As more Councils nearby are making Neighbourhood Plans, it was decided it was time to go ahead otherwise it leaves North Curry vulnerable. Stuart Todd, a Neighbourhood Plan consultant, was present to explain the process of creating a Neighbourhood Plan and what it can and can't do. Stuart explained that once approved, the Neighbourhood Plan becomes a legal document and part of the planning process. There were then a few questions for Stuart, about what would happen if Government planning policies changed, and examples of how Neighbourhood Plans have helped areas that have them.

12. SPECIAL PRESENTATION: Jeanne Leader made a presentation to Tina Stodgell congratulating and thanking her for her 41 years and counting on the Parish Council, and her 13 years as Chairman, as she is standing down as Chairman at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council next week. Tina was then presented with gifts from the Parish Council.

Interval- refreshments served

13. Village Hall report: Greg Phillips has now been Chairman of the Village Hall for a year. His goal is to get more people using the Village Hall and enhance the feeling of community spirit. He has started a quarterly Big Breakfast on Sunday mornings, over 100 residents attend this at a cost of just £6.50 each. They also play a game of Human Fruit Machine for the children. The Big Breakfast also advertises other groups such as the Film Club by doing a quiz to win free film tickets, and Bowles trials to support the Bowles group. He has also set up social groups to create more community events such as pop bingo, and an 80s disco night. There was also a very well attended Easter Egg Hunt for children. Greg also wants to change the Pink Paper editorial policy as currently you can only talk about future events, not past events or how successful they were.

14. Greenway Playing Field's report: Tony Turner presented the report. Since COVID they have picked up well with regular and new bookings. The committee has suffered a few losses, and as a charitable organisation they rely on volunteers. They are currently looking for people to join the committee, so if you have financial or managerial skills please get in touch!

15. North Curry Sport Ltd (White Street Sports Ground) reports:

a. Chairman's report: Laurence Leader, the Chairman of NC Sport, shared that this year has seen two big items; the purchase of a new tractor to maintain the site to a higher standard with a significant donation from the Parish Council, and a new rain recovery system funded by England Cricket Board which collects rainwater from the roof for irrigation and to reduce run-off on to the cricket pitch. They have faced two major issues; repair of a hot water leak in the Visitor's Changing Room which caused significant damage, and cutting back of problematic trees. Future projects include replacing the kitchen under the Howden's Game Changer Programme, replacing fencing around the cricket pitch if funding is available, and a major project to improve the drainage on the football and cricket fields which the Parish Council have financed the preliminary work for. NC Sport is currently renegotiating their lease with the Parish Council and will be merging the organisations within NC Sport to create a Community Amateur Sports Club, to improve funding eligibility. Finally, Laurence expressed special thanks to the volunteers who help run and maintain the grounds to a high standard, and the parishioners who support the Big Bash which pays for ongoing costs of running the grounds.

b. Football: The football clubs have been very busy, particularly with the girls team which is rapidly expanding. There aren't enough members to formulate a men's team this year, so they have reviewed the set up of the club and are hoping to merge groups together soon to make just one football club. They currently have over 200 club members, with lots of people joining from Taunton and surrounding areas. Space is a limiting factor as the team expands rapidly; the fields have been saturated over

winter, so the teams have been playing at Fivehead instead, and are in discussions with Stoke St Gregory and Greenway Pavilion and Playing Field to use their fields as well. This lack of space could be looked at in the Neighbourhood Plan!

- c. **Cricket:** The highlights included the under 11s winning the TDYCL East Division Championships, the under 13s and under 15s both performed well in their respective leagues, and the Senior Cricket Club also doing very well. Lots of people come to watch the cricket in the summer. Laurence thanked everyone for supporting the club, and the volunteers who keep it all going. New volunteers are always appreciated, especially to maintain the grounds.

- 16. North Curry Coffee Shop report:** The Coffee Shop is doing well, they have recently had equipment upgrades; cafetières have been replaced with more robust metal ones, a sandwich press now replaces the toaster, there is a new ceiling fan, a new panel on the patio, and a new water heater for hot drinks. The late Pat Buck very kindly left a legacy of £1,000 which went towards these helpful upgrades. The Coffee Shop have a new online rota system which makes it much easier to volunteer for shifts and keep up to date. They have kept up with food safety and allergen training. They are still making profits and giving back to the community and charities; since the Coffee Shop started they have now surpassed a total of £250,000 given away to charities and good causes as nominated by volunteers! They always have art, cards, crafts, and jewellery on sale, so keep an eye out for what's on offer!
- 17. Community Speedwatch report:** Maurice Wilkins took over from Andrew Meehan as co-ordinator. They haven't been out much recently as they aren't allowed to operate in the rain! They have 21 members, some of which are active, some not so much. Spots for Speedwatch must be approved by police; there needs to be somewhere safe to jump out of the way as there have been cases where motorists have tried to run them over! The fastest speed recorded by the SIDs was a ridiculous 72mph recorded at 1am at Canterbury Drive. Unfortunately, the CSW team is subjected to some abuse, and some drivers even speed up when they see them. If people receive three letters from the Community Speedwatch Team they can be taken to court, so this work is valued by the police
- 18. North Curry Environment Group report:** The group has evolved from North Curry Wildlife Group and Climate Action Athelney merging. They are still finding their feet as a new group, but over the last 6 months have planted 1,500 trees throughout the Parish. They have also started a scheme for people to plant fruit trees in their garden, offering advice on planting and pruning. The group will be at the May Fair giving more information and sign-up opportunities, as well as launching their scheme to install solar panels on roofs with discount. They plan to revitalise the Smoothie Bike, which makes smoothies by pedal power, and will be selling locally made apple juice.
- 19. Parish affairs- open forum:** No comments were made.
- 20. Closing:** The Chairman thanked all for coming and encouraged everyone to keep an eye out for the Neighbourhood Plan consultation to get involved. The Chairman extended special thanks to Parish Councillors Brian Jeanes and Tony Turner, and the Clerk Lisa Williams, for their support. She also thanked the Parish Councillors for her gifts.

The meeting concluded at 9:58.