

NORTH CURRY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 13th March 2024 at 7:30pm in the Village Hall Meeting Room.

Present or comments received: Mrs Tina Stodgell (Chairman), Mrs Jeanne Leader (Vice-Chairman), Mr Graham Cable, Mr Paul Deacon, Mr Ian Fugett, Mr Brian Jeanes, Mr Phil Stone, Mr Tony Turner, Mr Maurice Wilkins. No County Councillors or members of the public were present.

1. Preliminaries:

To receive and approve apologies for absence: Apologies were received from Ms Smith, Mr Dennis, Mr Hardwick, and Mrs Griffiths. Mr Deacon will be slightly late. Apologies were also received from County Councillors Cllr Fothergill and Cllr Cavill.

Approve and sign minutes for the previous meeting dated 14th February 2024: One amendment was proposed; on page 36 the road closure would cover two May Fairs, not a Christmas in the Square. With this amendment, Mr Jeanes proposed the minutes were a true record; Mr Turner seconded, and all were in favour apart from Mr Fugett who abstained as he wasn't present for that meeting.

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*): None.

2. Matters arising: see project tracker.

The Village car park behind Cricket Cottages will be removed from the project tracker for now as it will be tied in with the Neighbourhood Plan if required.

The sign and cone appear to have been removed from outside the property on Windmill Hill; Mr Stone believes the work may have been completed on the drain. The Clerk had received another complaint about the obstruction during the week.

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

4. To approve the North Curry Sport Ltd draft renewal lease, following the meeting of the working group: [Mr Deacon arrived 7:45pm] Unfortunately there has been no contact from the solicitor. As North Curry Sport are on a tight deadline to resolve this, Mr Jeanes will speak to the previous solicitor and see if he can help.

5. To discuss the possible implementation of a Highways Warden scheme and associated concerns: Mr Dennis has sent a report but was unable to attend this evening's meeting. All were in agreement that Mr Dennis should be the representative for this issue if he is happy to be. There was a discussion about how this Highway Warden scheme may look when implemented.

6. To decide whether to proceed with setting up councillor email addresses: This will be postponed until Mr Hardwick is back.

7. To discuss ideas and plans for the APM, and confirm invitees: The clerk shared the current list of invitees and a discussion was had on who would be asked to speak at the meeting. The chairman proposed a budget of £100 for refreshments, with wine to be bought on a sale or return agreement from the village shop; Mrs Leader seconded, and all were in favour. It was also agreed that a longer break will be needed for people to look at Neighbourhood Plan stands. The clerk will make a draft APM agenda with rough timings and send out invitations. The APM will be advertised on Facebook and the website.

8. To discuss the effective use of online communications: Mrs Leader has been on an online communications training recently. Originally it was agreed that Facebook would be used for notifications of important news in the parish and not much else. It can be used much more to engage with community. It would be good to announce forthcoming events instead of posting about them afterwards. Everyone will need to think of more ideas to put on the Facebook page. Mrs Leader proposed that the PC will use Facebook in a more proactive and engaging way; Mr Wilkins seconded, all were in favour.

9. To discuss alternatives to the Village Volunteer Taxi service: The Chairman has found out that Hatch Beauchamp Village Taxi scheme offers services to people outside of Hatch; they already have service users in North Curry. The fee is discounted for those with a bus pass. They are also looking for more volunteer drivers- it is an official scheme supported by Somerset Council. As they are happy for North Curry to use the service, it was agreed it doesn't seem necessary to start another one. The Chairman will find out more about

how it works with volunteer car insurance before we ask for volunteers from the parish, so it can be advertised with all the facts.

- 10. To discuss a blocked water pipe by the Methodist Church:** Mr Jeanes has been investigating this and has found a blockage using a drain rod, but the rod wasn't long enough for the job. He is also trying to find out who is responsible for the pipe. More next month on this.
- 11. To discuss the possibility of using CIL to fund works to Broad Lane ditches to reduce flooding:** Mr Fugett is concerned that it doesn't seem that landowners are going to be willing to help, so wondered if CIL could be used to fund the necessary works. A discussion was had about whether this is an appropriate use of CIL; one resident has complained via email as they feel it is not what CIL is for. The clerk will contact Somerset Council to find out. It was also discussed that the attenuation pond at Loscombe Meadow has never worked; the developers may need to be contacted to investigate this. Mr Stone is talking to landowners and Highways regarding Broad Lane to identify the problem areas and form a plan; Wessex Water may be willing to help. It is hoped that Stoke St Gregory Parish Council may also join in with the project. It was agreed using CIL is a good idea in principle, but as a last resort.
- 12. To decide whether to renew the Clerks & Councils Direct magazine subscription at £15.50 per year:** The clerk shared that she doesn't find this magazine as informative as The Clerk magazine from SLCC and would be happy not to renew. The Chairman proposed not to renew; Mr Fugett seconded, and all were in favour.
- 13. To consider purchase of hedging and fruit trees for Greenway Allotments:** A budget of £350 was agreed at the meeting on 11th October 2023 to cover the purchase of fruit trees for Greenway Allotments; the fruit will be open to the community, possibly tying in with the allotment produce box. The hedge also needs filling out as it is dying quite significantly; it was agreed hedging could be purchased using leftovers from the £350 fruit tree budget.
- 14. To agree asking allotment holders to abstain from using herbicides and pesticides as far as possible:** This recommendation ties in with Biodiversity Duty. The allotment contracts are not due for renewal for another 4 years so it can't be added to contract yet. Mr Jeanes proposed that the clerk sends out a letter with allotment rent payment reminders requesting that allotment holders do not use herbicides and pesticides unless absolutely necessary; the Chairman seconded, all in favour. This will be done at the end of March.
- 15. To discuss possible replacement of the Loscombe Meadow footpath fence and barrier:** Mr Stone has been speaking to the owner of the cows who have eaten the fence to see if he may be willing to contribute towards the repair costs; the response wasn't overly positive. Recycled plastic seems a more robust option; it would cost around £1,000 to replace the section of damaged fencing with recycled plastic, or £700 to replace it with wood, which may then see the same problem occur. A discussion was had about the best way to proceed. The chairman proposed a budget of £100 to do a trial section of fence using recycled plastic rails, and to use barbed wire across the whole damaged section, and then decide whether to continue to replace the rest of the damaged rails with recycled plastic at a later date; Mr Cable seconded, all were in favour. Mr Jeanes is halfway through fixing the footpath barrier.
- 16. Finance:**
- Monthly accounts:** Mr Jeanes proposed to accept the accounts; the Chairman seconded, and all were in favour.
 - Payment list:** Mr Fugett proposed to proceed with the payments, Mrs Leader seconded, and all were in favour.

Monthly Payment List - March 2024	Cheque/ BACS/DD	Net	VAT	Due Date
Amazon- USB cable for hard drive (refund to Clerk)	BACS	£6.99		PAID
WeeTree Wholesale Nurseries- Cherry tree for QSG	BACS	£35.94		22-Mar
NCVH EV recharge (January usage) INV 3042	BACS	£164.28		
NCVH room hire (Inv 4238)	BACS	£9.05		
Clerk salary (March)	BACS	£735.90		29-Mar
Stable utilities bill (Inv 19)	BACS	223.99		
BT EV charger line (Inv M018 M8)	DD	£29.27	£5.85	
IONOS Website (Inv 203040695522)	DD	£4.00	£0.80	
IONOS HiDrive (Inv 203040577035)	DD	£3.00	£0.60	

BT office broadband (M008 RG)	DD	£35.94	£7.19	
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- c. **To approve the appointment of the internal auditor for 2023-24:** Mr Owen Cullwick has offered to do the internal audit again this year; he is well qualified for the job and produced a detailed report last year. Mr Jeanes proposed to accept Mr Cullwick's offer; the Chairman seconded, and all were in favour.
- d. **To approve the draft Accessibility Statement for northcurry.com website:** The Chairman proposed to approve the statement; Mrs Leader seconded, all were in favour.
- e. **To approve the draft Equality Legislation Policy:** The Chairman proposed to approve the policy; Mrs Leader seconded, all were in favour.
- f. **To approve the draft Recording of Council Meetings Policy:** The Chairman proposed to approve the policy; Mrs Leader seconded, all were in favour.
- g. **To approve the draft Safeguarding Policy:** Mr Jeanes proposed to approve the policy; Mr Wilkins seconded, and all were in favour.
- h. **To approve the draft Social Media and Electronic Communication Policy:** Mrs Leader proposed to approve the policy; Mr Deacon seconded, and all were in favour.
- i. **To approve the draft Grant Awarding Policy:** The clerk asked the council to consider the figures for upper limits for grants to registered charities, and groups outside of the Parish. It was agreed to continue with the figures in the policy (£100 and £50 respectively), as they can still be flexible if needed due to the wording of the policy. The Chairman proposed to approve the policy; Mr Wilkins seconded, and all were in favour.

17. Correspondence.

A 7547- An email from a resident complaining about overhanging branches from the copse behind White Street. Mr Stone has looked at this before but will look again, as it didn't seem to be overhanging much. Mr Stone will speak to resident.

A 7548- A question was received about coppicing on Currymoor, Mr Stone has since handled question.

B 7549- A letter about a Hedgehog Highways project; this has been done in Stoke and seems to be being used. The project will be advertised on Facebook and the website.

18. Committee /Delegate reports:

Allotments (JL): The clerk and Mrs Leader are arranging a walk around to check.

Tree Warden (PS): Tree work in QSG should be going ahead tomorrow or the day after, Mr Jeanes is waiting for confirmation. Mr Stone is also looking to get permission to trim a few branches off the Church Road lyme trees.

Footpaths (PS + PD): Mr Stone has an agreement to install a kissing gate on Greenway going back up to Borough Post. He is currently trying to get permission for others too.

Environment Group (PS): Have been planting a lot of trees!

19. Publicity Inputs:

Will include information about the APM (which will also be advertised on Facebook and the website), a thank you to those who attended the litter pick, and a reminder to walkers and runners that they should be facing oncoming traffic for safety.

20. Matters for Discussion.

Mrs Leader: A reminder it was agreed that the poppy wreaths can come down the day before Good Friday. Mr Jeanes might do this during the litter pick.

Mr Stone: A man in Stoke is getting a tuktuk and intending to offer lifts with it- not sure on the arrangements currently.

Mr Cable: One Tree Farm- have they got permission for the camping they are offering? Mr Jeanes is checking with the planning enforcement offer.

Mr Deacon: It was grey water that was running off from One Tree Farm site, although it seems to have gone now.

The meeting concluded at 9:35pm.

North Curry Parish Council - Project Tracker/ Matters Arising

Project	Latest progress	Still to do
Helland to Huntham drove	Phil has written to Bridleways asking if the application has been withdrawn yet so the drove can be cleared- no response yet.	Liaise with involved parties to re-open.
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. Two new posts expected in May 2024.
Broad Lane flooding	Working group formed to tackle issues (Brian, Phil, Ian). Phil has sent a report out to residents on Broad Lane and affected parties. Has received 7 responses; mixed feedback.	Discuss actions to get the rest of the landowners to get agreement from as many as possible to work together to reduce the flooding.
Queen Square line markings	Line markings have been done in Queen Square.	Waiting for roundels to be done, large back log. 30mph roundels are showing again on Stoke Road- need to be burned out.
Queen Square Gardens tree work	Replacement tree has been purchased white bird cherry tree.	Date for work to go ahead. Plant new bird cherry tree when work complete.
Neighbourhood Plan	Steering group terms of reference have been agreed, as has consultant. Initial funding of £5,000 from CIL agreed. Official Designation has been received and can be seen on the SC website.	The website has been live for a couple of months - northcurryplan.org . Maps and questions have been identified for the launch events, and responses gathered at these events will be used to inform our written survey.
Windmill Hill obstruction	<i>Another response from Highways; the obstruction has their permission.</i>	The drain will be covered by Highways.
Inter-Parish Tug of War summer 2024	Initial meeting was held, lots to plan but under control.	Event will be Saturday 29 th June 2024.
Fingerpost maintenance- Borough Post and Queen Square	Borough Post sign has been restored and looks good.	Paul will clean and paint Queen Square fingerpost. Waiting for better weather.
Allotment produce box	Paul has finished building the box.	Paul to install on site by Spring.
Post Box at Borough Post	<i>A resident has suggested a new box could be put next to the bus shelter.</i> Clerk has emailed the Taunton Royal Mail manager to express the Parish Council's support.	Waiting for response from Royal Mail.
Large road ditches on Broad Lane and Huntham Lane	The Clerk has emailed Highways and included Cllr Fothergill. So far nothing seems to have been done...	Highways have said they will visit.
Piece of land owned by Somerset Council	Phil liaising with SC.	
Nine Acre Lane building site	The Clerk has asked for the damaged road to be filled with stone temporarily	Road will be properly repaired in April 2024.