

EXTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Council Meeting held on Monday 6th November 2023 in Bridgetown Village Hall at 7.30pm.

Present:

Mr Guy Thomas-Everard (Chairman), Mr Robert Takle, Mr Colin Rawle, Ms Tonia Matthews, Ms Janette Webber and Mrs Jennifer Yates (Clerk). Councillors Steven Pugsley and Frances Nicholson were also in attendance.

The meeting was opened at 19.33.

1. Apologies:

None

2. Declaration of Interests:

None

3. Questions from the Public

No members of the public attended the meeting.

4. Approval of the Minutes of 11th September 2023

The Minutes had been previously circulated, were approved and signed by the Chair.

5. Matters Arising:

Due to illness the clerk has not been able to put in motion the co-opting of a new member of the Council. Action – JY to communicate with SALC and agree process.

6. Finance Report:

The Clerk reported a balance of £1,630.21 in the Reserve Account and £2,960.52 in the Current Account. It was agreed that the clerk would produce a draft budget at for circulation by the end of December. It was further agreed that as the clerk is not claiming the work from home benefit from the Council this money would be ringfenced this year and next year and used towards the purchase of a new laptop.

7. Planning:

Since the publication of the agenda an email was received re

Planning Application 6/15/23/004 – Church Cottage, Exton, Dulverton, TA22 9JT – lawful development certificate for the existing conservatory.

This was discussed and the plan viewed. It was agreed that there was no reason to question this as the conservatory has been in place for more than ten years, and that this is a legal matter. No objections were raised.

8. Reports from Somerset Councillors: Councillor Pugsley reported that Somerset Council is facing some financial challenges, largely for factors out of their control, for example Adult Social Care is very costly in this County due to the unusually large number of older people. Planned savings from the unification re reductions in staffing are taking time to complete with some staff still to be made redundant. If the Council should be declared bankrupt some services will be discontinued which may have an impact on the Parish and the Council, for example if winter highways maintenance (including salt) are affected.

The new LCN is starting to get to work effectively, with the new groups having met productively. It has been recognised that there is an issue with communication re the Highways Pilot.

Both Somerset Councillors have been working with the Highways team re finalising the priorities for green route winter maintenance. These will then be published on the Somerset Council website. It was reported that the contract for highways will be moving from Milestone to Kier from April 2024.

Councillor Rawle reported that the signage at Healthpoult Cross has been improved and the hedges cut back improving safety at the junction.

Several Councillors mentioned the good work which has been completed by the volunteer who is repainting the local signposts.

Action- JY will write and thank him.

9. Code of Conduct: Councillors were in favour of this, however Councillor Nicholson mentioned that there may be an amendment shortly re the level of declaration of gifting to councillors. It was also felt that without the full council in attendance this should be deferred.

Action – JY to follow up on the potential amendment and place this item onto the next agenda

10. Complete Somerset Prepared document: Somerset Council's Civil Contingencies Unit have requested details of the Parish preparedness in the event of an emergency, what resilience plans are in place and what support would be likely to be needed. The Council worked through the report and JY will submit the response electronically following the meeting.

11. Discuss proposed signage for the Bomber Crash Site: Proposed wording for a sign was approved (Memorial to RAF Stirling Bomb Crash Site 1944 400m). It was agreed that ideally the sign would be placed by the B&B annexe, permission will be sought by the organiser. It was suggested that there is already a sign in that area so it may be possible to use the same post. Action – JY to liaise with Mr Lungley

12. Eight Parishes Affordable Housing Group: This group has recently been reconvened. It was agreed that Councillor Matthews will represent Exton at the meetings.

13. Reports from on Meetings Attended:

Councillor Webber attended the recent LCN meeting. She reported that the working groups are now in place. Highways and salting were discussed, along with the upcoming closure of Exford Road (between Wheddon Cross and Exford) which will impact local traffic due to the diversion. Also Dean Kinsella mentioned that planning consultation procedures will be changing in relation to permitted development rights.

Councillor Matthews is in communication with the Somerset Bus Partnership and will feed back to the Council as and when necessary.

14. Correspondence and Emails received: None

15. Any other business: It was noted that there are ongoing sewage works taking place in Bridgetown with work taking place day and night on a daily basis.

It was also noted that the culvert in Week Lane is still in need of repair. JY to liaise with Councillor Rowe.

16. Date of Next Meeting: 8th January 2024 at 7.30 in Bridgetown Village Hall

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 8.50pm

The Minutes can be viewed at:

www.extonparishcouncil.co.uk