

## EXTON PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes** of a Council Meeting held on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2023 in Bridgetown Village Hall at 7.30pm.

### **Present:**

Mr Guy Thomas-Everard (Chairman), Mr Colin Rawle, Ms Janette Webber, Mr Steve Rowe and Mrs Jennifer Yates (Clerk).

Frances Williams and a member of the public were also in attendance.

The meeting was opened at 19.33.

1. **Apologies:** Councillors Robert Takle and Tonia Matthews
  
2. **To co-opt a new Councillor to the Parish Council:** Mrs Williams explained her position within the parish and it was agreed she fully met the criteria to become a councillor. Voting took place and it was unanimously agreed.  
Mrs Williams completed the declaration of acceptance form and joined the meeting as a councillor.
  
3. **Declaration of Interests:** None
  
4. **To discuss planning application 6/15/23/005:** Mr Thorne attended the meeting and was able to provide answers and share plans re this application. Following discussion it was agreed to support this application as it was recognised that the use was for family ponies which would support family activities and enjoyment of the area. The planning was deemed to be sympathetic to the landscape, with the plans being well prepared with reference to ENPA guidance.
  
5. **To discuss the financial situation at Somerset County Council, and the potential impact on Parish Council budgets, including discussion re use of the Lengthsman:** Jennifer has attended numerous meetings and gave a brief feedback on the situation re Somerset's financial position. A recent circulated letter from Bill Revans laid out the financial emergency Somerset are facing with a potential deficit of £100,000,000 on their budget in the next financial year. As a result they have to make many changes to the services and activities they provide and are planning to cut most, if not all, non-statutory services. This would include certain highways services relied on by the community. They are offering parishes the opportunity to purchase assets, and are devolving services to local councils to take on. Those which would most affect this parish would be verge cutting, salt bags/bins and clearance of gullies and drains. Therefore this parish council will need to consider raising their precept sufficiently to be able to purchase and provide these services locally.

It would appear the Lengthsman scheme is continuing and a request has been made re agreeing to continue. As a result of the above information regarding devolution of highway services, and the possibility that the Local Community Network (LCN) of which Exton is a part will be providing a similar Highway Steward scheme, it was agreed to defer agreement on the Lengthsman scheme until more information becomes available both from the County and the LCN.

**6. To agree payments to SALC £59.81 (Annual Fee) and FluidLabs £84.00 (Domain & Hosting Renewal):** Payments were agreed.

**7. Date of Next Meeting: 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2024 at 7.30 in Bridgetown Village Hall – subject to change re budget updates from Somerset County.**

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 8.25pm

**The Minutes can be viewed at:**

[www.extonparishcouncil.co.uk](http://www.extonparishcouncil.co.uk)