

EXTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Council Meeting held on Monday July 8th 2024 in Bridgetown Village Hall at 7.30pm.

Present:

Guy Thomas-Everard (Chairman, GTE), Steve Rowe (SR), Colin Rawle (CR), Frances Williams (FW), Tonia Matthews (TM), Janette Allen (JA), Robert Takle (RT) and Jennifer Yates (Clerk, JY).

Somerset Councillors Frances Nicholson (FN) and Steven Pugsley (SP) also attended the meeting from 19.45.

The meeting was opened at 19.31.

1. **Apologies:** None
2. **Declaration of Interests:** Councillors J. Webber re 5b and R. Takle re 5a
3. **Public questions**
4. **Approval of the Minutes of the Council Meeting 20th May 2024 and matters arising:** Minutes approved. JY will contact FW re information request regarding flood contacts from Somerset Council. JY will report further damaged railings on A396 at the bottom of Stone Lane.
5. **Planning**

- a) **6/9/24/013: MARSHWOOD, EXTON, DULVERTON, TA22 9LD – renamed as 6/15/24/002**

Proposal: Certificate of lawfulness for dwellinghouse (use class c3) with unrestricted occupancy (dwellinghouse free from the encumbrance of the planning conditions attached to planning permission 6/15/08/102). Resubmission of refused application 6/15/23/001.

Whilst the Councillors acknowledged the property has been in place and occupied for more than ten years due to this being a legal matter not a planning application they are unable to comment.

- b) **6/15/24/001: Field gate along the A396 to the South of Copleham Cross, Copleham Cross, Winsford, TA24 7AF**

Proposal: Proposed removal of 4.26m of hedgerow to widen gateway to improve access and visibility.

It was considered that the proposed alterations will improve visibility for road users and provide better access for machinery needing to work in the river and fields.

6. **Reports from Somerset Councillors:** The position of salt bags (which should now have been removed) needs to be carefully mapped for JW to take to the LCN meeting in September where arrangements will be discussed for placement and filling with a representative of Somerset Highways.

Concerns were expressed by parish councillors that no hedge trimming has taken place as yet, as one cut had been proposed by the county team. FN and SP assured the Parish Council that this is still due, probably in late July or August.

There was discussion re the removal of mandatory highways services from April 2025 and there is not yet any news about how this will be organised. SP is continuing to propose that the LCN take a role in organising this, but the County Council are hesitant to change the arrangements regarding the LCN holding funds.

No news yet on the consultation re the reduction of services at the local recycling centres.

7. **Update on Highways matters:** The Week Lane culvert has not been repaired. This is causing damage as the water runs down the road damaging the tarmac, as well as affecting at least one property who rely on sandbags to divert the water from their property. Furthermore debris is washed down the lane blocking gullies and drains further down which then need to be jetted. FN and SP have noted this and SR will follow up with a photo and accurate location details.

CR reported that jetting is required at Quarme Lane, halfway down. The water runs down and onto the main road, which could freeze as sheet ice in the winter.

Concern was expressed that the high volume of lorries attending the sewage treatment works will cause damage to the roads. Discussion took place re the possible discharge into the river system due to the tanks always being full and potentially overflowing. The site is approaching 50 years old and it is felt that it is no longer fit for purpose. JY to follow up.

8. **Finance Report:** including current balances and approval of cheques and confirmation of signatories:

After CR proposed, TM seconded and approval by all JY and RT signed another form for NAT West to become signatories on the current account as soon as possible. JY to return the form and a copy of these minutes to Nat West.

Current balances: Current account - £7,714.82, Reserve Account £1,641.96

The following payments were approved – proposed JW and seconded FW, approved by all: SLCC £25 (membership), SALC £59.91 (membership), Fluid Labs £304 (website), Payroll services £120, Zurich insurance £169.18.

JY proposed moving surplus funds of £1,500 from the current account to the reserve account making the latter approximately half of the precept which is considered good practice. This was approved – proposed JW, seconded SR and approved by all.

9. **Approval of Annual Governance Financial Return papers 2023-24**

The papers were all approved and signed ready for publication and return. It was suggested that the asset register could be reviewed at a later meeting as it does not reflect depreciation and the noticeboards in Bridgetown and Exton could be added.

10. **Any other business:** Due to the loss of the Lengthsman service and the end of the Highway Steward pilot there is currently no provision for trimming areas such as the layby. Comments have been made that this is becoming unsightly and it was agreed to approach Mr Passmore for a quote for trimming this area. Any contractor would need to provide his own tools and insurance.

It is the double centenary of the A396 this year. GTE will prepare an article to put in the parish magazine, TM has useful information and they will liaise.

11. **Date of Next Meeting: 2nd September 2024 at 7:30pm subject to receipt of Planning Applications**