

Full Council

MILBORNE PORT PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Full Council meeting

held in The Council Chamber, The Town Hall, Milborne Port.

Tuesday 7th November 2023 @ 7:00pm

Present:

Parish Councillors: Tim Carty (Chairman)
David Grant Robert Lockey
Chris Phillips Robert Tizzard
Richard Warren Ted Watts

In Attendance:

Cllr. Nicola Clark, Somerset Council
The Parish Clerk: Simon Pritchard
The Deputy Parish Clerk: Nathalie Hetherington
3 members of the public (one of whom left at 7.45pm and one at 8.20pm)

❖ Reports from Somerset Council:

Cllr. Nicola Clark reported -

- Somerset Council are due to declare a financial emergency at a meeting on Wednesday 8th November as there is a £100 million budget gap and there is a possibility of Somerset Council declaring itself bankrupt (a section 114 notice); the funding of social care has put particular pressure on the budget. All councils will be formally informed after the meeting tomorrow by letter. All options are on the table including cutting services, increasing tax and selling assets.
Cllr. Lockey asked about the Crackmore crossing project in relation to this budget crisis; the response was that all projects are paused at the moment and so there will be no new crossing in the foreseeable future.
- Somerset Cllrs. Clarke & Dyke are aware of the threatened bus route 58/58A and will be writing to First Bus and asking the Parish Council to countersign.
- Cllr. Clark will be contacting Avon and Somerset Police in connection with the recent incidents of arson in the Village to see how these cases are being addressed, as the Parish Council has had no feedback following its reporting of these crimes other than that no action can be taken in the absence of evidence, although the suspects will be spoken to.
- There has been no response yet from Somerset Council re. a meeting about the Community Hub (due to covered under Item 79); it is generally difficult to get traction from the planning department on this issue, which is causing frustration, noted that Cllr Carty has now escalated to the brief holder and the CEO. Cllr. Clark is pushing for engagement from the appropriate Officers and advises the Parish Council to approach Sarah Dyke as an MP rather than as a Councillor.

19:16 Cllr Nicola Clark left the meeting.

❖ Public Statements and Comments:

- One member of the public asked what local residents can do to support re. the building of the Community Hub. Cllr. Carty responded that writing to Sarah Dyke MP is one way, the ultimate aim being for Somerset Council to put the pressure on Redcliffe to commit to deliver. There might be scope for public appearances in the future and going to the press but this would not make an very edifying story compared to other issues that are

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currently problematic – ecology, flood management, etc. Cllr. Tizzard commented that adverse publicity can indeed be a problem for development companies trying to sell houses.

- There was some discussion re. the attenuation pond on the Redcliffe site and the recent surface water problems on Wheathill Lane and in nearby fields; Redcliffe have been pumping water collecting on the ponds off site and into the Wheathill Lane storm drain. This is not consistent with their Construction Environmental Management Plan, which requires them to apply mud filters to discharge from the site and is resulting in flooding further down the lane. The Office had some feedback today from a Redcliffe contractor, saying that Redcliffe has been ordered to cease this pumping by Somerset Council and so pumping the water off site has now ceased. Cllr. Tizzard suggested that all of these issues be summarised in a document to be presented to Somerset Council planners at the same time as the Community Hub issue is addressed. Cllr Watts expressed serious concern over the potential flooding of Wheathill Lane as the attenuation ponds on the Redcliffe site were now full and there is nowhere now for the water to go. He further noted that it seems extraordinary that the attenuation pond has been fully constructed before the outflow drainage piping work had been laid in the road.

19:39

Agenda Number:	Agenda Item:
71	<p><u>Apologies for Absence:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr. Tom Campbell – Health reasons • Cllr. Margaret Capon - Away • Cllr. Glenn Coombs - Holiday
72	<p><u>Declarations of Interest & Applications for Dispensations to Participate:</u></p> <p>A: Declarations of Interests from Members: None.</p> <p>B: Applications submitted to the Proper Officer for a dispensation to participate: None.</p>
73	<p><u>Adoption of Full Council Minutes:</u> Cllr. Carty proposed that the minutes of the Full Council meetings of 3rd October 2023 be adopted; seconded by Cllr. Lockey and resolved 6 votes in favour with 1 abstention.</p>
74	<p><u>Trusteeship of the Village Hall</u> Cllr. Carty explained the proposed transference of responsibility from the current Trustees to the corporate body of the Parish Council as a sole trustee. Two informal meetings have already been held to look at the details of this, the last on Tuesday 31st October, this was attended by six members of the Parish Council. The transfer of responsibility would probably be on 1st April 2024.</p> <p>Cllr. Carty proposed that the Parish Council formally except the transfer of trusteeship with a target date of 1st April 2024; seconded by Cllr. Phillips and resolved unanimously.</p>

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Funding Shortfall:

At the meeting on 31st October, it was explained that the funding issues need to be addressed. The Village Hall has moved onto a new much higher electricity tariff, increasing costs by £3,000 per year, the Village Hall only makes a few hundred pounds per year and cannot cover this extra cost; it has been informally agreed that the Parish Council would cover the shortfall.

Cllr. Carty proposed that the Parish Council cover the costs of the increased electricity tariff to the extent that it is necessary; seconded by Cllr. Phillips and resolved unanimously.

Cllr. Carty proposed a facility of up to £5,000 to cover additional operating costs to the extent that it is necessary; seconded by Cllr. Phillips and resolved unanimously.

Hire Charges:

The raising of rental charges to cover at least some of the additional costs arising from electricity increases were discussed and whether these should aim to cover known additional costs or be broadly similar to what other local Village Halls charge. The recommendation of the meeting of 31st October was to raise charges to be in line with others, for example £17 per hour for the Main Hall but staged to £14 for coming year, for the Main Hall. £10 for the Camelot Room and mezzanine, dependent on further research. Cllr. Tizzard observed that comparisons are problematic without knowing more about what others have on offer at their halls. Cllr. Phillips commented that it is necessary to measure the market when taking decisions about fees.

It was agreed that the Parish Council would recommend to the current trustees that they alter the fees to £14 for the Main Hall and £9 for the Camelot Room and mezzanine, to run until 1st April 2025.

Martin Lancaster and James Crow will write an article for the Village Magazine to let residents know about the changes that are taking place, in conjunction with the Office.

Village Hall Manager:

In the absence of volunteers, whose work has been relied on in the past, there is a need for a village hall booking clerk/manager, in principle this person will be employed by the Parish Council. Also, for the finances to be overseen by a future Village Hall Management Committee; this would be funded by the Parish Council rather than by village hall income; a figure mooted was around £13k a year for a notional contracted 10 hours per week with up to 10 hours a week flexible overtime. Various other issues were discussed, most of which will be for the new Management Committee to address, it will be for the new committee to work out the cover required.

Cllr. Tizzard would like to see an analysis of current parish office duties before deciding how many hours are required for this role.

It was proposed by Cllr Carty that the parish council look to take on an employee to cover the bookings and management aspects of the Village Hall, seconded by Cllr Lockey and resolved unanimously.

New Village Hall Management Committee:

The constitution of the new village hall management committee will need to be agreed. It was questioned whether any of the current Village Hall Management Committee

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	<p>Members/trustees wish to continue with their involvement? - Mr Lancaster indicated that it was highly likely that some of the existing members would seek to continue in the new structure. The current Trustees/Management Committee will convene a meeting before 5th December.</p> <p>Once the new management committee is formed it will concern itself with the advertising and appointment of a hall manager and be in place and ready to take over as the actual managing committee on the 1st of April 2024</p> <p>It was agreed that the council seek to establish a new committee at the next meeting in December.</p>
75	<p><u>Purchase of CCTV for Springfield (Village Hall):</u></p> <p>The Office has received two quotations from firms with different approaches. Cllrs. Carty and Lockey met someone from a third company but as this quotation is still awaited, it was decided to defer this item to December's meeting.</p>
76	<p><u>Youth Provision – Memorandum of Understanding:</u></p> <p>This document has been updated in preparation for the final sign-off by the 4 councils involved. The Parish Council is committing to £10k (plus inflation) for 3 years but in the event that there is dissatisfaction with the quality of provision which cannot be resolved, then the 4 councils involved have the right to give 3 months' notice to withdraw from the agreement via a collective break clause. Cllr. Carty commented that the councils will be operating on degree of trust. There was a detailed discussion around the wording of the MOU and whether/how the Parish Council could withdraw as an individual council, and around the risks of delaying. The Parish Council will have a representative on a working management group that monitors the quality of provision.</p> <p>Cllr. Carty proposed that the MOU be approved for youth provision in conjunction with Castle Cary, Bruton and Wincanton; seconded by Cllr. Warren and resolved by 6 votes in favour with 1 abstention.</p>
77	<p><u>PARISH COUNCIL POLICIES:</u></p> <p>a) Dignity at Work Policy</p> <p>Cllr. Tizzard had already suggested some amendments to the draft policy and circulated them. There was a debate over some of the wording and terminology of this policy.</p> <p>It was agreed to record in the minutes that the test of reasonableness applies to policies a, b and c</p> <p>Cllr. Carty proposed the re-adoption of the Dignity at Work Policy; seconded by Cllr. Phillips and resolved by 5 votes in favour and 2 abstentions.</p> <p>b) Health and Safety Policy</p> <p>Cllr. Carty proposed the re-adoption of this policy; seconded by Cllr. Lockey and resolved by 5 votes in favour and 2 abstentions.</p>

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	<p>c) Equal Opportunities Policy</p> <p>Cllr. Carty proposed the re-adoption of this policy; seconded by Cllr. Lockey and resolved by 6 votes in favour and 1 abstention.</p> <p>d) Investment Strategy Policy</p> <p>Cllr. Carty commented that there are various considerations, e.g. banking using blue-chip and well-established financial institutions; investing; spreading risks. He had already suggested some amendments to the draft policy and circulated them.</p> <p>Cllr. Warren encouraged the council to consider ethical investments and providers of financial services in light of the climate emergency; the Parish Council has itself passed a climate emergency resolution. The Parish Clerk commented that it might be hard for him to make those judgements so Cllr. Carty asked Cllr. Warren to carry out research that could be useful for informing decision-making and report back.</p> <p>Cllr. Carty proposed that the policy be adopted with the previously circulated amendments seconded by Cllr. Lockey and resolved by 6 votes in favour with 1 abstention.</p>
78	<p><u>PARISH COUNCIL ACCOUNTS:</u></p> <p>A. <u>Monthly Payments:</u></p> <p>Payment numbers 179 to 211 for November 2023 had been circulated totaling £36,442.75 and are attached to the minutes.</p> <p>Cllr. Carty proposed that the payments for November 2023 be approved; seconded by Cllr. Lockey and resolved unanimously.</p> <p>B. <u>Full Council Accounts and Bank Reconciliation:</u></p> <p>The full council accounts and bank reconciliation had been circulated and were received.</p>
79	<p><u>Delivery of the Community Hub by Redcliffe Homes:</u></p> <p>This item had been partly dealt with under Reports from Somerset Council at the start of meeting.</p> <p>Cllr. Carty reported that he is pursuing the issue with the CEO of Somerset Council and with the brief holder but that the officer concerned there is currently off sick; there has been no proper response from Somerset Council for over a month. The independent legal advice was clear that engagement is needed on the part of Somerset Council.</p> <p>Cllr. Carty was keen to point out that the Parish Council is not seeking to complain about Somerset Council but to see that the Community Hub is delivered.</p>
80	<p><u>Activities Planner: Current Full Council Projects incl. s106 Projects:</u></p> <p>This had not been sent to councillors in advance as it required updating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The tennis court refurbishment is now high priority.• Organising new bank signatories – medium priority.• Updating / re-drafting of Springfield legal agreements – has been put on hold as the Parish council are now taking over as the trustee to the Village Hall

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scheduling Schedule council policy reviews – this is almost complete with the three that have been re-adopted today. <p>Cllr. Grant reminded members of the scheduled litter pick on Saturday 25th November, Cllr. Warren has booked equipment with Somerset Council and will liaise further with Cllr. Grant.</p>
81	<p><u>Verbal Reports:</u></p> <p>a) Council Chairman’s report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Community Council for Somerset is asking for statements of interest from councils in its ‘Community Review Project: Phase 2’. A Community review/survey is guided by the Parish Council in terms of what information/feedback is sought. The Parish Council needs to state its interest by the end of November and Cllr. Carty recommends that MPPC puts itself forward. There would be a small cost to this for stationery and printing. Members expressed enthusiasm and so an expression of interest form will be submitted.• Somerset Council are consulting on its Bio-diversity net gain policy – please fill in the survey.• Feedback from the Gigaclear briefing that took place on Monday has been shared with members.• 2024/25 budget; the committees will resolve on their budget requirements in time for the next Full Council meeting on 5th December so that we start to have an idea of how things are looking. The budget and precept are then set at the 9th January meeting, but if the council required a further meeting this will be on 16th January 2024.• There are two large fields on Combe Hill owned by Somerset Council and leased to farmers, one of which in the past has been identified as a site for possible development but could also make an interesting dog-walking area. There might be scope if procuring one of these fields for the use of the Parish Council. <p>b) Parish Clerk’s report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tennis Courts re-fit (Springfield) – Work will start at the end of November.• SALC AGM 2nd December – there is a request that at least one member of the Parish Council attends; Cllr. Carty can attend, possibly Cllr. Capon. <p>c) Members’ Reports from outside organisations:</p> <p>None.</p>

End of formal meeting at 9.34 pm.