

# Full Council

## MILBORNE PORT PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Full Council meeting

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

**Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024 @ 7:00pm**

**Present:**

Parish Councillors: Tim Carty (Chairman)  
Glenn Coombs  
Robert Lockey  
John Price  
David Grant  
Chris Phillips  
Robert Tizzard

**In Attendance:**

The Parish Clerk: Simon Pritchard  
The Deputy Parish Clerk: Nathalie Hetherington  
2 members of the public

❖ **Reports from Somerset Council:**

- Cllr. Nicola Clark would have liked to attend but had 2 other appointments tonight. Cllr. Carty reported that Somerset Council have indicated a wish to raise Council Tax by 10% rather than the 5% maximum normally allowed, but they will need to seek special permission to do so; similarly, they would like to use income from land sales as revenue rather than for capital projects.

❖ **Public Statements and Comments:**

- Cllr. Carty reported that a member of the public has commented on the demise of the tree line at Springfield to the south; the Clerk explained that the electricity board has cut back the trees in order to prevent interference with overhead cables.
- A member of the public enquired as to whether there has been a change of policy regarding making the Community Room available for meetings if those with mobility challenges would like to attend, as information about this option has stopped appearing on agenda. Cllr. Carty gave an assurance that the policy has not changed.

Agenda Number:	Agenda Item:
97	<b><u>Apologies for Absence:</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cllr. Tom Campbell – health reasons</li><li>• Cllr. Margaret Capon – on holiday</li><li>• Cllr. Richard Warren &amp; Cllr. Ted Watts – unwell</li><li>• Cllr Nicola Clark (Somerset Council) – clash of meetings</li></ul>
98	<b><u>Declarations of Interest &amp; Applications for Dispensations to Participate:</u></b> <b>A: Declarations of Interests from Members:</b> None.  <b>B: Applications submitted to the Proper Officer for a dispensation to participate:</b> None.

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Parish Clerk: Simon Pritchard PSLCC

Website: [www.milborneportpc.org.uk](http://www.milborneportpc.org.uk)

Signed:.....Date:.....

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<p>99</p>	<p><b><u>Adoption of Full Council Minutes:</u></b>  <b>Cllr. Carty proposed that the minutes of the Full Council meetings of 5<sup>th</sup> December be adopted; seconded by Cllr. Phillips and resolved unanimously.</b></p>
<p>100</p>	<p><b><u>Delivery of the Community Hub by Redcliffe Homes:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cllr. Carty reported that a meeting with Somerset Council’s legal team has been arranged for next week; Cllrs. Carty, Grant and Tizzard will be attending online.</li> <li>- There has to date been no response from Redcliffe re. residents’ meeting that the Parish Council understood was being arranged, nor a website set up for queries, even though the drains work along Wheathill Lane and Wheathill Way is due to start on 15<sup>th</sup> January.</li> </ul>
<p>101</p>	<p><b><u>Somerset Council – Asset and Service Devolution:</u></b>  Cllr. Carty has confirmed with Somerset Council that the Parish Council is willing to enter into a dialogue about this and is waiting to hear back from Somerset Council about the next steps.</p>
<p>102</p>	<p><b><u>Community Review Project:</u></b>  Cllr. Carty reported that there is no new information; the Parish has been chosen to be one of the parishes involved with the second wave of community reviews across somerset, we are waiting to hear about the next steps. Most costs will be paid for centrally by the Community Council for Somerset, but some stationery and printing costs will fall upon the Parish Council.</p>
<p>103</p>	<p><b><u>Village Hall Management Update:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The first meeting of the new Village Hall Management Committee was called for Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> of December, but it wasn’t quorum. Looking to hold future meetings on the same night as the current management committee meetings to improve attendance. The next meeting is Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2024</li> <li>- An advertisement for a Manager has been published in the Village Magazine and on a recruiting website but this one was not appropriate and will be withdrawn in favour of the Blackmore Vale Magazine.</li> </ul> <p>Cllr. Lockey gave an update on the CCTV project and will be liaising with Martin Lancaster regarding timings for the contractor to start work, possibly as soon as the week of 22<sup>nd</sup> January; the contractor is waiting for a formal works order from the Parish Council.  Cllr. Phillips asked that it is checked that the contractor has public liability insurance.</p>
<p>104</p>	<p><b><u>Gainsborough Playpark:</u></b>  Cllr. Carty reported that contractors invited to quote for the fencing down the co-op side of the playpark have suggested that fence line be moved a metre inwards and that a native mixed species hedge be planted all the way down on the actual border. Two quotations were tabled; the Clerk &amp; Cllr Phillips explained the details of the quotations further and a discussion followed.</p>

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Cllr. Carty proposed that Option 1 be accepted at a cost of £7,953.23; seconded by Cllr. Lockey and resolved unanimously.

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**PARISH COUNCIL ACCOUNTS:**

**A. Monthly Payments:**

Payment numbers 244 to 268 for January 2024 had been circulated totaling £23,903.00. and are attached to the minutes as well as being on the council’s website.

**Cllr. Carty proposed that the payments for January 2024 be approved; seconded by Cllr. Lockey and resolved unanimously.**

**B. Full Council Accounts and Bank Reconciliation:**

The full council accounts and bank reconciliation for November 2023 had been circulated and were received.

- Reserve Account £226,726.78
- Current Account £5,000.00

It was noted that the current end of year forecast is a £14,000 spend of reserves, this is £4,000 more than predicted at the start of the year. The RFO noted that the amount changes each time the accounts are updated, but things are now becoming clear as we approach the end of the financial year.

**C. Internal Interim Audit Report 2023/24:**

The Clerk summarised the items that had been reported on by the Internal Auditor, mainly around financial and VAT arrangements, and administration. Generally positive feedback, no urgent actions required.

<b>Control:</b>	<b>Action:</b>
Cheque stubs not being signed.	Noted
Annual precept resolution, minutes of meeting to record the total amount to be precepted.	Noted
Council’s funds are held in an account paying 1.4% with base rate is 5.25%	Already investigating higher interest savings accounts.
Assets do not appear to be transfusing onto the Scribe asset list	The council doesn’t use the Scribe assts list.
Bank balances are being correctly checked by members, but the amount not regularly minuted.	Noted
The council holds all it funds in a sweep account linked to the current account, this increases risk	Looking to move some reserves into unlinked, higher interest account.
<u>The Village Hall Charity:</u> Great care must be taken with VAT and the segregation of records once the Parish Council take over as sole trustee.	Noted
<u>The Playing Fields Charity:</u> Before any works commence on the clubhouse, a clear record of up to date lease payments (even peppercorn), land registry entries and building insurance policies should be approved by the council.	Not generally accepted.

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<b>106</b>	<p><b><u>Full Council Budget and Precept for 2024/25:</u></b></p> <p>The Responsible Finance Officer talked through a Powerpoint on the responsibilities, services and work of the Parish Council, the budgets requested by the Committees and the process that the Parish Council has been through in order to consider the options for the parish precept. The RFO informed the meeting that this year's budget sees an approximate 20% increase in planned expenditure for the next financial year, mostly due to the commitment to employ a Youth Worker for a few hours a week and a Facilities Manager (Village Hall). Many of the existing budget lines have been reworked to keep them as tight as possible or even cut.</p> <p>Cllr. Tizzard requested more information about the proposed HR budget for 2024/25; the RFO will produce a breakdown and send to Councillors for their information.</p> <p>The RFO presented 3 options for the parish precept: to use none of the councils' reserves or use £10,000 or use £20,000 towards the £176,411 required. The RFO's own recommendation would lean towards not to use any of the reserves due to the 'known unknowns' presented by the financial difficulties of Somerset Council. Parish/town councils might need to work more/differently together in the future in order to save services. Cllr. Carty commented that Somerset Council is likely to be charging more and providing less; also that the parish does not currently receive many non-essential services from Somerset Council without paying for them already so we are not as vulnerable as some other parishes/towns to the impact of suddenly having to pay for extra services.</p> <p>Councillors debated the relative pros and cons of using some of the reserves to offset some of the increase in the precept. A quick show of hands indicated that 2-members felt option A, no use of reserves was best, 4-members indicated option B, a use of £10,000 and 1-member option C, a use of £20,000.</p> <p><b>Cllr. Carty proposed that the council select option B and use £10,000 of reserves towards the precept. Setting the precept at £166,411; seconded by Cllr. Grant and resolved by 6 votes in favour and 1 against.</b></p> <p>Cllr. Carty thanked the Committees, the Responsible Finance Officer, and the Deputy Clerk for all the work that went into this process.</p>
<b>107</b>	<p><b><u>Activities Planner: Current Full Council Projects incl. s106 Projects</u></b></p> <p>The current priorities list had been circulated. It was decided that the Village Hall CCTV, the drainage trench project at Springfield and the tennis courts projects be made a high priority. It was noted that the football teams needed access to the tennis courts at the weekends.</p>
<b>108</b>	<p><b><u>Verbal Reports:</u></b></p> <p><b>a) Council Chairman's report:</b></p> <p>Cllr Carty attended a briefing by the Somerset Rivers Authority at Castle Cary on 8<sup>th</sup> January and has circulated the Powerpoint slides to councillors. Flooding is a concern shared locally and Cllr. Carty is keen that we should have an</p>

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Emergency Plan of about 3 pages; this could be created relatively quickly, and he will work with Cllr. Capon on this and with any other councillors who are keen to be involved.

Somerset Council and the Somerset Rivers Authority have done some river-based work in the parish in the past in terms of dredging and clearing. Going forward, given budgetary constraints, it is likely that such work will happen less. Formally, the Gascoigne is not classified as a river until it arrives south of Yeovil, so Somerset Council and SRA obligations are limited, and much of the responsibility (and rights) regarding waterways lies with the residents who have riparian obligations. Not all such residents are aware of this, and one project being considered by the SRA is to map which residents have what rights and responsibilities, and then look at how best to educate and assist them with these. The Parish Office has an information leaflet on riparian ownership and will forward this to councillors. Those affected by flooding should send photographs to: [flooding@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:flooding@somerset.gov.uk). Cllr. Carty will start to put together some suggestions regarding a flood-risk mitigation strategy.

**b) Parish Clerk's report:**

Town Hall exterior decorating traffic management will be in place 7<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> February, hope the job will be quicker than this but cannot guarantee the removal of the scaffold. Will try to persuade the contractor to remove it as soon as the work has finished. Also the plans show the bus stop is to be suspended, but no alternative shown, will make it a high priority to work with the contractor to address and publicize all the information once we have it.

**c) Members' Reports from outside organisations:**

None.

**End of formal meeting at 20:46 pm.**