

MINUTES
WITHAM FRIARY PARISH COUNCIL/JOINT VILLAGE MEETING
HELD ON THURSDAY 12 OCTOBER 2017 AT 7.30 P.M. IN THE VILLAGE HALL

Present	Roy Featherstone (Chairman)	RF
	Colin Horstmann	CH
	Greg Stevens	GS
	Will Sheppard	WS
In attendance	Anthea Brooks, Clerk	AB
	16 members of the public	
	Mr R Carnell, Distgen	RC

ACTIONS

1 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES

- 1.1 Emergency exits and procedures were explained

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- 2.1 Apologies were received from Fred Nicholls (FN).

3 PUBLIC ACCESS

3.1 Broadband

- 3.1.1 CH gave the latest update on the Broadband situation. It was noted that several properties are still marked as exploring solutions when according to Connecting Devon and Somerset there should be no reason why these properties should not be able to order.
- 3.1.2 In answer to a question CH stated that the way to enrol for a service is to firstly place an order which will start a chain of events. CH stated that if he receives information such as name, post code, address, telephone number, order number he can see if he can assist with problems around ordering.
- 3.1.3 It was noted that some parishioners have had their orders cancelled and it was understood that this is usually because there is a time limit after which compensation is payable. One member of the public reported having his order cancelled seven times. He had approached the Ombudsman but apparently Open Reach do not have a facility with the Ombudsman service.
- 3.1.4 CH stated that he had involved the local MP and pointed out that whilst BT are ISO9001 Quality Management accredited the service currently being provided does not meet the criteria and should be of a much higher standard.

- 3.1.5 A member of public present stated that he had email contact information for Gavin Atland, the CEO of BT, and also his Customer Relations CEO, Libby Barr, and would pass these onto CH.
- 3.1.6 CH reiterated that those having problems should provide him with as much information as possible so that he can take up the issues with his contacts. His telephone number is 01749 850266 and he would welcome calls on this subject.

CH

3.2 Presentation from Distgen regarding the wind turbine

- 3.2.1 Mr R Carnell from Distgen attended the meeting to give an update on the current situation with the wind turbine and stated that the company was appreciative of the support provided by the Parish Councils of both Wanstrow and Witham Friary.
- 3.2.2 He stated that a similar turbine near Bath is providing 20/25% more output than the local turbine. On investigation it has been agreed that this is because of turbulence caused lower to the ground and to overcome this a planning application will be made to MDC to increase the height of the turbine by at least 20 metres in order to get out of the turbulent air. It was noted that planning for renewable energy is much more stringent than it was before and the onus is on the planning authority to have designated areas. The application will come to the Parish Council for discussion and the company are preparing some pictures to illustrate the difference when viewing the local landscape.
- 3.2.4 Mr Carnell stated that the time frame would probably mean that the planning application would be made before the end of the year or the early part of 2018.
- 3.2.5 It was suggested by a member of the public that the turbine would be more efficient if it turned on a regular basis and that this should be investigated before making it bigger. Mr Carnell stated that a problem with the electronics should resolve this matter and a further 20/25 metres on the tower should give an additional 30% more generation which would in turn give a larger contribution to the village
- 3.2.6 Mr Carnell was thanked for his attendance at the meeting.

3.3 Refurbishment of the Church Organ

- 3.3.1 Margaret Pritchard gave a presentation to the meeting on the subject of the proposed refurbishment of the church organ.
- 3.3.2 It was noted that this is an historic instrument which is worthy of preservation. The last overhaul was carried out in 1997 and there are now quite a lot of problems which need to be tackled

- 3.3.3 It was noted that the church is of community value with full attendance at village events, family weddings, Christmas, Harvest etc. and the organ is a great asset. Thanks were extended to the History Society for the information they had found out about it.
- 3.3.4 The total cost of the work could be as much as £20,000 but a sum of up to £10,000 would mean that work could be carried out to overhaul and clean it, refurbish the pipes and other parts and rebuild it.
- 3.3.5 CH stated that this seemed a very worthy cause for the Parish Council to support and relevant to the village. He wondered however if any attempt had been made to look for funding elsewhere either locally or nationally. It was agreed that this is something which should be considered.
- 3.3.6 The Parish Council were all in favour of a donation to the fund and this will be discussed further at the next meeting.

Agenda

3.4 Village Hall

- 3.4.1 Jim Rosser (JR) gave an update on the work which has taken place on the Village Hall during the past year for which the Parish Council had helped by providing a proportion of the funding.
- 3.4.2 JR stated that the bulk of the outside work had been done and attention was now passing to the internal fabric. The walls will be repainted and new curtains hung – the colours to be used were described. It is intended to replace the green chairs with some that will match the new colour scheme.

3.5 Cricket Club

- 3.5.1 Tom Hyde (TH) gave thanks to the Parish Council for the grass cutting contractor who was employed this year and who had kept the field looking fantastic.
- 3.5.2 TH said there were a couple of points to be considered, one of which is the clearance of the ditches of silt which prevent adequate drainage and leave the far left corner of the field in particular extremely wet. He asked if the Parish Council intended to get the ditches cleared.
- 3.5.3 WS stated that the current contractor is preparing a quote to clear the ditches and the Council is aware that this work needs to be done as soon as possible.

WS

- 3.5.4 TH then mentioned the length of the grass. The contractor is contracted to make a cut every two weeks but this year has been challenging because of the weather and the rate of grass growth. During the summer the primary user of the field is the Cricket Club and there have some issues around the length of the grass which became apparent during the final match of the summer six aside tournament where the outfield grass was too long for the tournament to proceed. Members of the Cricket Club spent several hours cutting the outfield.
- 3.5.5 TH stated that the Cricket Club has a set of three gang mowers which produce a very good standard of cut and which are currently with the contractor who does not use them. It was suggested that consideration should be given to using them next year to reduce the length of grass in the cricket playing area.
- 3.5.6 It was noted that the normal contract is for a cut every two weeks which is usually done on a Friday afternoon. An additional cut on the alternate weeks would cost an extra £100 plus VAT per month. The season lasts for four months so the additional cost would be £400 plus VAT. The proposal is that the Cricket Club would pay half of the additional costs during the course of those four months, i.e. £200. This cost may be reduced if the gang mowers are fit for purpose and can be used by the Cricket Club.
- 3.5.7 The health and safety aspects of the mowers being left in situ were mentioned as the current shed does not have sufficient capacity for storage. It was agreed that firstly the use of the gang mowers should be considered and the Parish Council will then discuss further at their next meeting.

Agenda

3.6 Public Space Protection Orders

- 3.6.1 The Clerk gave an update on the recent MDC proposed district wide public spaces protection order. When the order comes into effect dog fouling will be prohibited on the land to which the order relates and dogs will be required to be put on leads in the restricted area at the direction of an authorised person. The direction by an authorised person in relation to the consumption of intoxicating substances and in relation to the surrender of intoxicating substances must also be complied with.
- 3.6.2 This order will include public spaces in villages and not just the towns as previously intended. The proposed order therefore covers all 'land to which the public or any section of the public has access, on payment or otherwise, as of right or by virtue of express or implied permission' across the whole of Mendip District.

3.7 Conker Committee

- 3.7.1 TH stated that the Conker Championships would take place on the following Sunday, 15 October, at 1.00 p.m. outside the Seymour Arms. There will be a modest entrance fee and any money raised will go to local charities. The money raised from the Six Aside Football tournament was given to the Village Hall. On 4 November there will be a bonfire in the field opposite the pub, no fireworks but refreshments will be provided.

3.8 History Society

- 3.8.1 RF stated that on 19 October there would be a talk in the Village Hall on Heritage Pubs by Geoff Brandwood who has declared that the Seymour Arms is his favourite. The talk will commence at 7.45 p.m. and will be followed by refreshments in the pub.

3.9 Churchyard Grass Cutting

- 3.9.1 George Pritchard (GP) stated that Witham Friary Church Committee were aware of comments made recently at PC meetings by a member of the public about the state of the churchyard.
- 3.9.2 GP stated that the contractor works to an agreed mowing schedule and some open areas of grass are left clear for wildflowers which are then cut annually. Strimming is carried out a couple of times a year along the path edges, external walls and around the church and village hall and some of the more prominent graves near the entrance. Selective weed killing is also carried out as required.
- 3.9.3 Historically maintenance around the headstones is usually the responsibility of the family and if areas close to a tended grave are felt to be untidy then of course individuals are welcome to tidy up around those too. Regular strimming around every grave would be very expensive and potentially disruptive to the well-tended headstones.
- 3.9.4 GP stated that he would like the PC to be aware that the church has benefited from the voluntary efforts of a local parishioner who has carried out extensive work in the churchyard. There is still plenty to do and therefore any additional voluntary assistance would be welcomed. Priority for additional expenditure would be on continued clearance of overgrown areas, tree work and repairs to boundary walls, unsafe headstones, etc. The cost of maintaining all graves to the highest of standards would be prohibitive and retaining wild flower beds is part of the church commitment and contribution to national environmental policies and keeps the annual maintenance cost down.

3.9.5 The cost of major work such as tree pruning and replacement planting has been spread across several years and in addition the church has had a considerable outlay over the last few years in the reshaping of the yew trees, rebuilding of the lych gate and repointing the wall at the entrance to the churchyard/village hall.

3.9.6 GP stated that the Church committee is grateful for the continued financial support of the Council which helps to keep the churchyard welcoming to visitors.

3.9.7 RF responded on behalf of the Parish Council and stated that the Council are happy with the ongoing maintenance of the churchyard.

3.10 *The public access section of the meeting closed at this point and the majority of the public present left the meeting.*

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS AND REQUESTS FOR RECORDING

4.1 There were no declarations of interest. It was noted that the meeting could be recorded if requested.

5 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14 SEPTEMBER 2017

5.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2017 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

6 RESIGNATION OF COUNCILLOR

6.1 It was noted that Richard Nickless (RN) has resigned from the Council and there is now a vacancy. RF stated that he would meet with RN to discuss any actions which he was working on. The Clerk will advertise the vacancy in the magazine and on the village Facebook page.

**RF
Clerk**

6.2 **Emergency Number list (including Witham Water)/Emergency Plan** – RF had distributed the draft emergency plan and it was agreed to review this at a future meeting (November).

Clerk

6.3 **Recreation Field – All Weather Service (11.1)** – RF will discuss this with RN to see what progress has been made.

RF

6.4 **Dog Bin (9.1)** – the Clerk reported that she had ordered an approved dog bin as replacement for the destroyed item and has also ordered a large waste bin for the Playpatch - complete

- 6.5 **Agricultural Traffic through the Village** - It was agreed to leave this item in abeyance and revisit it in the spring should the issue arise again.
- 6.5 **Contact with PCSO** - It was noted that a new PCSO has now taken over the area in which Witham Friary is located. Her name is Olga Hapova and the Clerk has contacted her with a view to arranging a meeting **Clerk**
- 6.6 **Witham Water (15.6)** – it was agreed that the Clerk should write to Dave Barnett to thank him for the work he does and for reconnecting the water supply during the recent failure - complete
- 6.7 **Playpatch – Slide – (19.2)** it was agreed that WS would sell the old slide which he still has in storage. **WS**
- 6.8 **Policy Review** - the Clerk reported that the Financial Regulations, Standing Orders and Code of Conduct will need to be approved at a future meeting. **Clerk**
- 6.9 **Walk Around the Village** – RF suggested a walk to identify areas which need attention. RF will try and arrange a date for this. **RF**
- 7 PLANNING**
- 7.1 There were no new applications to discuss
- 8 FINANCE**
- 8.1 **Financial Statement** - The financial statement at 12.10.17 was agreed and signed.
- 8.2 **Deposit Account** – the Clerk had obtained the necessary form from NS&I and would be sending this off to open an account. **Clerk**
- 8.3 **Bank Account/BACS** – the Clerk had visited the bank to discuss BACS but had discovered that the mandate was not up to date. The Clerk is in discussion with the bank on the best way to resolve this issue and it might mean that councillors will have to provide their identification to Nat West again and a new banking mandate issued. **Clerk**
- 8.4 **Purchase of new defibrillator** – the Clerk reported that she is completing an application form for funding for a replacement defibrillator. The Clerk will write to Witham Vale Farmers who purchased the original defibrillator before a replacement is bought. WS to let the Clerk have the address. **Clerk**

8.5 **Cheques for signature**

- AED Locator – defibrillator annual maintenance charge – £58.80
- MCT Bus Subsidy August - £69.54
- HMRC April to September 2017 PAYE - £217.02
- Mrs A Brooks – Clerk's Salary – September 2017 - £160.29

9 **USE OF PLAYING FIELD/CAR PARK**

- 9.1 The Clerk reported that she had received the insurance documents for the Football team via WS. However there has still be no formal response to the letter sent on 31 July and the issues are still outstanding and need to be resolved. The Clerk agreed to make contact with Frome Town FC. **Clerk**

10 **PROPOSAL BY NETWORK RAIL**

- 10.1 RF reported that Network Rail had done some work in the village including strimming around the outside of the field and had dug a flower bed and planted wild flowers. They had also reseeded the verge outside his house which the lorries had churned up.

11 **WITHAM WATER**

- 11.1 The ongoing work in the woods is very close to the water pipe and this needs to be kept under scrutiny. Further work may be required in the village.

12 **BROADBAND**

- 12.1 Discussed under 'Public Access'.

13 **VILLAGE HALL**

- 13.1 Nothing further to report

14 **BUS SERVICES**

- 14.1 The Clerk is looking into obtaining funding towards the cost of subsidising the bus service from the Somerset Community Fund. Trudoxhill have already been successful in obtaining funding. **Clerk**

15 **RECREATION FIELD AND PLAYPATCH**

15.1 **Playpatch**

- 15.1.2 Work to be done includes refurbishment of the chain link fencing and posts, the swings need rubbing down, rust removing and repainting, bolts and shackles and two seats need replacing. There are coping stones which are coming off the wall which need refixing. It was agreed that this can be discussed at the next meeting with a view to finding someone to undertake the work. **Agenda**
- 16 HIGHWAYS/ROW MAINTENANCE**
- 16.1 RF reported on the lack of footpath signs near the plantation – this issue will be passed to GS. **RF/GS**
- 16.2 **Woodcutting at West End** – this area includes a registered green lane and is currently impassable. This will need to be monitored and the lane will need to be reinstated when work is complete.
- 17 CORRESPONDENCE**
- 17.1 Parish Bulletin
- 18 MISCELLANEOUS AND FUTURE BUSINESS**
- 18.1 **Village signs** – refurbishment to be discussed at a future meeting. **Agenda**
- 19 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**
- 19.1 The next meeting will take place on Thursday 9 November at 7.30 p.m.