

## **Fifehead Magdalen Parish Meeting**

**Minutes of the meeting held on**

**Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2015 at 7.00pm**

**Chair:** David Redwood (DR)

### **In attendance**

Chris Vallance (CV), Valerie Burnham, Jeannie Lakeman, Andrew Lakeman(AL), Pat Hopkinson (PH), Neil Hopkinson, Angela Stevens (AS), Roger Trevor (RT), Jo Trevor, Rosie Belsham (RB), Peter Custard, Rose Figgins, Pete Figgins, John Sturgess, Patsy Lidsey, Lee Sutton (LS), Alix Brooke, Sally Waters, Robin Longland, Rosemary Redwood (RR), Geoff Merrick, Patsy Merrick scribe

### **Agenda item 1: Election of Chairman**

DR asked if anyone wished to stand for the chairmanship. In the absence of nominations DR agree to continue in the post. PM proposed DR, AL seconded and all bar 2 who abstained, voted in favour.

### **Agenda item 2: Apologies**

Andrew and Jaqueline Duncan, Peter and Helen Mera, Karen Vallance, Mary Sturgess, Thomas and Dee Trevor

### **Agenda Item 3: Declaration of interests**

DR declared that he had no pecuniary interests.

### **Agenda Item 4: Minutes of the previous meeting of 24<sup>th</sup> February 2015**

The minutes have been available for inspection and are posted on the parish website. DR read a precis. The minutes were voted to be a true and accurate record by those in attendance; there were two abstentions. DR signed and dated the minutes.

### **Agenda Item 5: Matters arising**

DR informed the meeting that the Accounts and Audits Regulations 2015, although coming into force on 1 April 2015, do not in fact apply to small parishes until the subordinate Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations come into force. The upshot being that we continue with external audits until 2017 by which time one hopes that the Regulations will actually have been signed (they are still in draft form) and appear on the Statute Book.

### **Agenda Item 6: Annual Accounts for 2014-15**

DR asked those present to refer to their copy of the parish accounts whilst he explained the balance sheet and cash book. The full accounts including receipts, invoices and cheque book may be scrutinised at any time (with prior notice) throughout the year, and not just during the statutory period.

AL proposed that the accounts be accepted, seconded by LS and voted in favour by all apart from two abstentions.

### **Agenda Item 7: Governance Statement**

In view of the eventual auditing and transparency changes the chairman thought it wise to draft a "Governance Statement" and asked the meeting to consider and amend the bullet points should they so desire.

"In my roles as both Chairman of Fifehead Magdalen Parish Meeting and the Responsible Financial Officer I am required to ensure that there is a transparent and effective system of internal controls that meet the needs of the Parish whilst safeguarding public funds in accordance with the relevant statutory financial regulations.

The controls are:

- The Parish accounts are available for inspection, with prior notice, at any reasonable time throughout the year.
- All payments are endorsed by an authorised counter signatory.
- Accounts will be posted onto the Parish website.
- Estimated annual spending requirements (the Precept) will be agreed each year.
- The Annual Governance Statement required by the external auditors will be presented for approval at the annual Parish Meeting.

Signed and dated.....”

### **Agenda Item 8: Cheque signatories and internal auditor**

Subject to acceptance from them in their absence Peter Mera and Bill Bryson were again proposed as signatories by PH and seconded by AL. The vote was carried and there were two abstentions.

LS proposed and AL seconded that Geoff Merrick continue as the Internal Auditor. DR asked if GM was willing to stand again and expressed grateful thanks for GM’s diligence and thoroughness previously . The vote was carried. There were two abstentions.

### **Agenda Item 9: Village Matters**

#### **Road Drainage:**

Following an extended period of getting no worthwhile action on the village’s blocked drains and weeded gutters, DR again contacted Dorset Highways Dept and copied our local district councillor (Traci Handford) into the email. Within days a meeting had been arranged with one of Highways Dept engineers. DR was joined by Mr Custard as it is he who is potentially at risk from the icing of the road immediately outside his front gate. The engineer took detailed notes and photographs. He promised action within 28 days. True to his word a team came out and commenced photographing within the drains and found multiple blockages probably caused by tree roots. A further visit will take place shortly to cut through the offending vegetation.

The gutters will be mechanically cleansed and swept in due course.

#### **Village signage:**

Three new village name signs have been installed by DR and these have been appreciated by a number of parishioners.

RT suggested that the village needs road signs warning drivers to drive sensibly as there are no pavements in parts of the village. DR pointed out that the County Highways Department is responsible for this, which would incur considerable expense and would no doubt be low on the list of that Department’s priorities. DR will, however, write to the Highways Dept about the implicit safety dangers. CV spoke of the responsibility of the police to catch and prosecute speeding drivers.

AS suggested that depth measures should be put near Trill Bridge at the lowest point in the road, and along the road from Factory Farm, both of which are a flooding danger. This was discussed but it was decided that it was not practical to take action on this and drivers must exercise the utmost caution before driving through even moderately flooded areas.

#### **Henstridge Airfield:**

DR informed the meeting that the solicitors, working on our behalf, are in no position to act until SSDC has itself conducted surveys and considered the financial implications; therefore there is nothing new to report. However, he also told the meeting that a light plane had come down in a nearby field near the lower end of Fifehead Woods – it was damaged but quickly recovered and removed. DR has emailed Adrian Noon at SSDC about this but has received no response.

## **Agenda Item 10: Any other business**

**Dog problem:** DR informed the meeting that Col Andrew Duncan, by way of a letter, had requested that DR ask the meeting to let him (DR) know of any instances of threatening and aggressive behaviour from dogs, in the vicinity of the church, and in particular from a black and white Staffordshire bull terrier that apparently belongs to Mr Franco Fortino, who lives in a stable flat on Mrs Waters' estate. AD has written on several occasions to SW and copied his letters to the local dog warden and informed the local police force. DR also has been backed into a corner by the Staffie and two other dogs. Several villagers in the meeting expressed similar concerns and especially worrying is the possible outcome should a child or nervous person try to flee from the dog. It should also be noted that the dog wanders onto the roadway in the vicinity of the sharp bend in Trill lane.

SW complained to DR about his alleged threatening and intimidating letters to her on not only the dog problem but also a more recent letter dated May 12th 2015, about an entirely different subject. DR reminded SW that the letter of 12 May had been a personal letter written not as Chair of the Parish Meeting. SW told DR that she wished that the meeting could see the letters, which she was considering sending to her solicitor. DR had a copy of the letter and on SW's request read it to the meeting. The subject of this letter was RL's removal of the banner advertising the Village Garden Day, which had been put on the 'Village Green' by the PCC. The banner was recovered after the PPC learned of its likely whereabouts from witnesses of the incident. The banner was handed over to two PCC members who went to SW's house and politely requested that the banner be returned.

SW made it clear that the so called village green was in fact her land although she had allowed the village to accept it as a visual amenity. She said that the banner could have been erected had permission been sought. However, for as long as anyone can recall it has been taken as a village asset under stewardship of the parish and had the PCC known this, permission would indeed have been sought.

DR asked several times if SW would like DR to carry on mowing the piece of land in question but SW gave him no answer.

AL, at this point, brought the dog issue back on track as the agenda item initially under discussion. Many villagers are in agreement that the threatening nature of the dog is an accident waiting to happen. SW and RL stated that they have done all they can about the matter. This too remains an ongoing problem.

RT thanked DR for his excellent work as Chairman.

The Chairman records his thanks to Mrs Merrick for minuting the meeting.

## **Agenda Item 11: Date of next meeting**

This will be circulated in due course.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.10pm