

Winsham Parish Council

Draft Minutes of The Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held at The Jubilee Hall on Wednesday 11th September 2013 at 7:30pm

Present: Cllrs. S Abbey, T Baxter, J Chance (Chairman), B Goodman, M Haggard, R Miller, N Mode and J Sullivan

In attendance: Mrs Teresa Pinder, Clerk to The Council, District Councillor Sue Osborne and 1 resident

Apologies: Linda Vjeh, County Councillor

PUBLIC FORUM

(a) Questions from Residents

Mr Murgin said that he had heard rumours that there were to be further cuts in the bus service and he had hoped to ask the County Councillor about the matter. In the absence of the County Councillor, the Chairman said that there was no mention of the subject in her report.

(b) District Councillor's Report

Progress on the Local Plan is currently on hold.

The Council tax reduction scheme is being monitored and a document is to be put together to give residents the various options, and suggesting they get in touch with the council to sort out any difficulties paying.

Business rates are changing; of £50M only £2.5M is currently retained locally. This will be amended so that local councils can keep up to 40% in the future, which should promote growth, although the downside is that more tax will have to be paid.

We won't know if there will be a Council Tax Review until around Christmas.

A report has been written up for the SSDC regarding the Show jumping ground, for consideration in October.

(c) County Councillor's Report

The County Councillor had submitted a written report to the meeting which the chairman summarised, and a copy is attached.

2572 Apologies for Absence

There were none.

2573 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

2574 The minutes of the meeting held on 3rd July 2013

Resolved: To approve the minutes as a correct and accurate record

2575 Planning Matters

- a) Application 13/03147/FUL: Installation of 2 No microwave dishes on existing telecommunication mast (GR 338416/109613). Police Radio Tower Windwhistle, Cricket St Thomas.

The Planning Committee recommended approval.

- b) Planning Determinations from SSDC were read out at the meeting.

2576 The Band Hut and Allotment Site

The Chairman summarised the situation as follows.

1. The transfer of the site to WPC was approved by the SSDC in July 2012.
2. Early negotiations were encouraging, but conditions were imposed on the transfer which made it less attractive and caused us concerns regarding how much control and freedom of use of the site we would have in the future. For example, SSDC would retain control over what buildings we could erect, events we could hold, and control direct access to the upper recreation ground.
3. Of particular concern to WPC was the intention of SSDC to retain a ransom strip between the site and the upper recreation ground, without which we were told they would not conclude the transfer. Our early understanding of this is that it would be a virtual ransom strip, i.e. an imaginary line over which they would have control.
4. Following further meetings with SSDC officials we prepared heads of terms on which to conclude the transfer.
5. Regrettably the SSDC solicitors have come back to us again with conditions which are even more onerous. They propose that a 1 m strip of land along the boundary with the upper recreation ground is retained by SSDC and that we should have to apply to them annually for a licence for pedestrian access across it.
6. The 1m strip is an imposition too far and together with the other restrictions the SSDC is seeking to place on the transfer, it throws into question the benefits of taking on the site. Further investigations and discussions are therefore taking place.
7. There have been a few expressions of impatience about how long it is taking to sort this matter out. It has to be realised that nothing is spoiling whilst these negotiations are going on, and if we complete them in haste without getting the best deal and fully understanding the conditions being placed upon us, future generations may rue the day we took over the site.
8. During the course of recent negotiations some matters have been successfully concluded; we have been informed that planning consent is deemed to exist for the access and parking area, and the site will not be put under the Allotments Act prior to transfer.

2577 Parish Plan

It is hoped that homes will use the internet for submitting their responses but hard copies will be delivered to each home commencing around 7th October and to be completed by the 22nd October. Non internet enabled households will be able to complete the survey and hand in at the shop, where a suitable box will be provided. The Parish Plan will be promoted in the parish magazine and e-letter and on the parish website so everyone should become aware of it. The surveys will be confidential. There are 70 questions in total and 1 questionnaire per household to be completed. It is expected that the level of response will be good – 50/60% which will provide a reasonable view from the householders which will be used for future policies. The envelopes will have the name of the distributor and a phone number. Non responders will be encouraged to complete.

Financing to help with the parish plan may be available and Cllr John Sullivan will complete the grant application and will contact Paul Philpot in this respect.

Proposed and unanimously agreed.

The Chairman thanked the sub-committee for the hard work put in on this project.

2578 Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Council Policies

It was agreed that discussion should be deferred for one month to give the new Clerk time to settle into the role.

2579 Finance

The Chairman reported that he was extremely concerned because the WPC accounts had started appearing on his own personal banking webpage and that his name was appearing on one of the accounts. He had contacted the bank concerned as a matter of urgency and received reassurances that this was because he was a signatory on the accounts and his name only appeared on the Internet statements and no changes had been made on the account. He has been promised a written response to his complaint forthwith.

2580 Items for Report

(a) Amenities, Rights of Way and Highways reports

Sports Facilities – nothing to report.

Hall – It is hoped that the overhead projector will be operating by the end of the month. The application for the grant for the windows is now to be completed.

Somerset Playing Fields Association – The lower recreation ground and play area has been entered into the Somerset Playing Fields Association competition. A prize has been awarded to us and will be announced at the Association's AGM. There are monetary awards for 1st, 2nd and 3rd and a cup for 1st place.

(b) Correspondence

Somerset Skills and Learning Adult Education – advertising for courses to be put up at the Village Hall and distributed.

Local Choices Events – if anyone wants to attend to contact the Clerk.

Cllr Osborne commented regarding the request from Mr P Frecknall to extend the speed limit at the southern south end of the village. It has been investigated by the highways department and no action is deemed necessary.

The Council has made further complaints about the low standard of maintenance of the road gullies within the parish but no response has yet received. Mike Fear was given a list of the worst affected earlier in the year and this will also now be given to Sue and Linda.

2581 Establishment

The Chairman suggested that a filing cabinet be held at the Village Hall to keep correspondence and planning applications etc. so that all councillors had a central point for this information.

This was approved in principle.

The Chairman also said that it would make sense that the Council should have its own laptop computer for the use of the clerk. Cllr John Sullivan has looked at possible options which will cost approximately £445 plus case, but including setting up costs.

It was proposed to buy a laptop for the council for use by the Clerk. Nathan Mode proposed, Trish Baxter seconded.

Tatworth & Forton PC have asked for a meeting with us to discuss the possibility of us sharing their office facilities as our clerk is also employed by them. It was agreed that our Chairman and Deputy would discuss the matter with them.

If the Clerk has to use her personal printer for council work it was agreed that the costs would be covered.

If the Clerk has to use her own home telephone to make calls for the council it was proposed and agreed in principle to cover part payment of the home phone bill. The Clerk will look at costs and agree with the council a way forward in due course.

Date of the next Meeting: Wednesday 2nd October 2013