



Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held at the Village Hall

Wednesday 8th January 2020

Present Sue Isherwood, Chair
Ros Wyke, Councillor
Jo Tucker, Councillor
Sue Reece, Councillor
Peter Bright, Councillor
Guy Timson, Councillor

In attendance Chris Harris, Clerk
Two members of the public

Before the meeting proper commenced, two members of the public presented further details and information regarding planning application 2019/2963/HSE, extension and alterations, Mole Hill Cottage, Perch Hill. Councillors thanked them for their input.

1. Apologies for absence

Cllr Graham Noel, Somerset County Councillor.

2. Declarations of Interests and Dispensations

Cllr Wyke, as a Member involved in the consideration and determination of planning applications by Mendip District Council, declares that the views expressed by her at Parish Council meetings on any particular proposal are based on the evidence available to her at the time, and is provisional only. Cllr Wyke will not be bound by any recommendation made by the Parish Council on any proposal, and will consider any matter afresh in connection with any application which comes before her in her capacity as a Member of Mendip District Council, taking all further evidence into account.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 13th November 2019

The minutes of the meeting were reviewed, agreed and signed as a correct record.

4. Reports from the Somerset County Councillor and Mendip District Councillor

4a A written report was received from the Somerset County Councillor, main points as follows:

- Reminder concerning deadline for applications of school places (15/01/20);
- Climate Emergency Strategy Events outlined (MDC offices event on 15/02/20);
- SCC's Support Services for Education awarded the ICSA Service Provider of the Year award
- Four new grassroots dementia care projects: @ Age UK's CST project; Take Art's creative activities; Ark at Egwood's land-based activities and Find Your Voice music and movement groups;
- Shepton Mallet's library to be developed into a community hub;
- Investment in 50 AVI robots to support children who cannot attend school;
- Call for more volunteers in the county.

4b The Mendip District Councillor updated members on various developments currently in progress.

- Concerns have been raised by what is seen as a hostile and undemocratic grab on assets by the County Council on the District Council's budget through the suggested disbanding of the four District Councils and the formation of a unitary 'supercouncil' as a cost-saving exercise.

The District Councillor noted that this is a national issue but needs to be addressed locally as a matter of urgency.

- In contrast to these developments, discussions regarding increased devolution of decision-making processes to towns and parishes continues.
- In consequence of this, the £10 million cost of refurbishments to the County Council offices in Taunton has not been viewed favourably at District level.
- On local matters, it has been agreed with the Wells Recreation Ground Trust that the Bishop's barn and recreation ground in Silver Street are to be returned to the people of Wells. This will be an ongoing process which will take some time.
- MDC has contributed to the new screen around the Saxonvale site in Frome which currently houses a photographic exhibition by Frome based photographer Tim Gander. This is the first time since 2011 that MDC has contributed to an arts project.
- Wells Christmas market was bigger and busier than previous years with a number of new stall-holders showing enthusiastic support.
- MDC are in the process of reviewing the filming income of the Mendip area and its legacy through tourism with a view to developing both to increase potential revenue streams.

Councillors thanked the District Councillor for her report.

5. Clerk's Report

5a Actions from previous meetings

- 2019/0544/FUL Lodge Lane appeal against refusal: responded (online portal), awaiting decision date;
- WSM phone box library, letter to Mr & Mrs Dolby – pending **Update:** letter has now been written;
- Playing Field/Rail Canopy Interpretation Panels – agenda item;
- Dog waste bins – agenda item;
- Footpath review – letters to SCC ROW and Church Commissioners pending.

5b Other ongoing matters

- Report on condition of Westbury Cross: needs refreshing, further email will be sent to SW Heritage **Update:** further email has been sent;
- AutoSpeedWatch update: no further progress;
- Road safety issues around Westbury Cross: Cllr Bright monitoring; Cllrs Bright & Reece to start leaflet campaign;
- Speed restrictions/SIDS: no further progress;
- Road flooding at the top of Slowland Lane reported to SCC Highways who will investigate;
- Organisation of files and documents – paper and online – continues.

5c Other matters arising

- Grit bin for Stoneleigh – agenda item.

6. Planning

6a Neighbourhood Plan Update

The Chair is still negotiating a mutually convenient date for Phil Harvey of Burnham District Council to present to the Neighbourhood Plan working group.

Action: Chair

6b Planning Applications

Cllr Wyke's declaration of interests regarding planning application considerations is recorded. Council considered the following applications:

1	2019/2836/HSE	Re-configuration of front garden, Christmas Steps, Old Ditch
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It was noted that there is a discrepancy in some of the detail provided, namely that in the 'Design and Access Statement', the finish of the final wall is described as being in decorative aggregate to

match the property opposite, yet in the ‘Heritage Statement’ the replacement walls are described as being faced with stone. Clarity on this point is urgently required.

While the Parish Council supported the application in principle, it considered that it would be entirely inappropriate to face the wall with decorative aggregate, as all the other stonework on the existing property and adjacent properties on that side of the road is in local stone. Thus it would not support the application if decorative aggregate is to be used, but would support an application if the supporting wall is faced with local stone.

2	2019/2963/HSE	Extension and alterations, Molehill Cottage, Perch Hill
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Council noted the addition of a Velux roof light rather than a window is suggested in the plans; given that both Mendip District Council and the AONB respectively encourage dark skies which the Council fully supports, the strong preference would be for a standard window over a roof light, or to ensure that the roof light is adequately screened when internal lighting is on. Otherwise, the Council had no objection to this application.

3	2019/3057/HSE	Erection of rear & front dormer windows, 21 Stoneleigh
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The Council noted that a number of other properties in Stoneleigh already had similar additions thus it unanimously resolved that there was no objection to this application.

6c Mendip District Council Decisions

Council noted the following MDC decisions:

2019/1940/VRC	East Lodge – amendment to previous application (Greenhouse/French windows)	Approved with conditions
2019/0888/HSE 2019/0889/LBC	Erection extension plus remodelling (and subsequent amendments), Ash Tree Farm	Approved with conditions
2019/2555/TCA	Tree works, West End Cottage	Approved
2019/2386/TCA	Tree works, West View, Station Road	Approved

6d The Council noted the following:

Land at Lynchcombe Lane, unauthorised occupancy

The latest update from MDC indicated that current legal action is ongoing, but no further information was provided/available.

7. Finance

7a Council approved the following direct debit:

- ICO Data protection fee (direct debit) £35.00

7b Council approved the following payments:

- SALC Clerk’s training £275.00
- Imagemakers (interpretation panels) £290.12
- Clerk’s expenses (stamps, postage & stationery) £15.95

7c Additional costs incurred to meet new website accessibility regulations 2020

The Clerk noted that the website is likely to be compliant already and had contacted Tickbox for further information/clarification, but had not received a reply by the time of the meeting. Clerk to follow up. **Update:** further email to Tickbox has been sent, still awaiting reply at time of writing.

Action: Clerk

7d 2020/21 Precept and Budget

The Clerk provided the latest financials to Council which are well within budget for this financial year. Formal notification of the 20/21 precept application had yet to be received from MDC. Council resolved to approve an increase in precept of 2% for 20/21. The Clerk and Chair to work on finalising the 20/21 budget.

Action: Chair, Clerk

7e Council noted the account balances at 31/12/19 (Treasurer's) and 20/12/19 (Business):

- Treasurer's Account £500.00
- Business Bank Account £20,705.60

8. Grant Request from Mendip Community Transport

The Clerk had received a request for a grant from Mendip Community Transport (MCT). Council agreed to support this amenity as members of the community use it on a regular basis. The Council unanimously agreed to award MCT a grant of £200.00.

9. Support for Local Electricity Bill

Council discussed a request by the Power For People organisation to officially support a Local Electricity Bill. Some concerns were raised about the detail provided in the various reports and it was agreed that further information would be beneficial before making any commitment. Cllr Tucker to forward the information provided to an environmental specialist for his opinion.

Action: Cllr Tucker

10. Dog Waste Bins

Licence costings had been received from SCC Highways; with the cost of the bins themselves and installation, the cost per bin would be in the region of £1200.00. It was agreed that community opinion should be sought on whether this was value for money and also for further suggestions regarding position. A notice to be drawn up and put in the shop (and Parish noticeboards if room) to encourage feedback.

Action: Clerk

11. Grit Bin for Stoneleigh

Residents of the Stoneleigh area have requested that the Parish Council provide a grit bin as the entry road is often icy and dangerous in winter. The cost of a 450KG bin is around £350 and SCC Highways have confirmed that no licence fees are payable for siting on the highway. SCC Highways have agreed to a bin being sited at the bottom of Stoneleigh near the barrier on the south side of the road, although this is less convenient than a position at the top of the road. An area on a narrow strip of pavement was considered a greater risk by SCC Highways and the Parish's insurers. Aster have been approached regarding siting a bin on the raised bin area but have yet to respond. Cllr Reece has agreed to discuss further with residents.

Action: Cllr Reece

12. Marquee Hire Proforma

The Council reviewed a new marquee hire proforma to ensure the PC is covered for any health and safety liability. Subject to a minor correction, Council unanimously approved its implementation going forward.

13. Completion of Village Hall Refurbishments

Cllr Reece gave a follow-up to the information provided by the hall committee and outlined the few minor tasks still in need of completion. The Council congratulated all concerned on their efforts in completing the works on time and on budget, and considered that the Parish grant towards it was very well spent.

14. Bristol Grand Tour Cycling Event 20/09/20

Council discussed the information currently available from the organisers of this event taking place in September. Concerns were raised that no consultation had been made with MDC and the local villages which will be affected, especially as WSM will be the only village that is completely surrounded by the course and will effectively be cut off for several hours on the day of the event. Safety to cyclists and other road users (including pedestrians and farm/livestock traffic) on what are very narrow and winding minor roads, many with poor surfaces, was a major concern. There is also the 'legacy effect' of numerous cyclists running the course in the months leading up to the event itself and quite possibly after. The Clerk to draft a response to Mr Pat Flaherty, the CEO of Somerset CC, highlighting these concerns.

Action: Clerk

15. Notices

CPRE Membership

The Clerk discovered that the Council's subscription to CPRE – agreed by Council several years ago – appeared to have lapsed early in 2019. Clerk to investigate and reinstate membership as necessary.

Action: Clerk

Shamrock Stables

Council noted that in view of the formal warning currently in place concerning loose animals, members of the community should remain vigilant and report any further instances to Ian Glover at MDC Environmental as soon as possible. (lan.glover@mendip.gov.uk)

16. Any Other Business/ Items for Next Agenda

Co-option of a new councillor to be discussed at the next meeting.

17. Date of next meeting

Due to Councillor availability, this has been changed from previously notified, and is now scheduled for Monday 17th February at 7.30p.m. in Stoneleigh Community Hall.

Signed.....Chair of the Parish Council Date.....