

68/23-24

**Present:** Sue Isherwood (Chair), Penny Colwill, Maggie Beebee, Buffy Fletcher, Ros Wyke.

**In attendance:** Mrs D Boulton, Locum Clerk.

1. **Welcome by the Chairman**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the Locum Clerk.

1. **Apologies for Absence.**

Guy Timson, Adamos Euripidou. Reasons accepted.

1. **Absent**

As in item 2.

1. **Declaration of Interest and Dispensations**
2. **To receive declaration of interests from Councillors on items on the agenda.**

None received.

1. **To receive written requests for dispensations for disclosable pecuniary interests**

Cllr Sue Isherwood has a written request for dispensation in relation to the Village Hall matters for four years (expires May 2027).

1. **To grant any requests for dispensation as appropriate.**

None requested

1. **Public Session.**

Three members of the public present. No comments or questions.

1. **Somerset Councillor Reports**

SCllr Ros Wyke spoke of the Creating Places for People Consultation and asked that individuals and collective responses be made. Topics include urban areas, some are relevant to this parish, size and shapes of road and alternatives to cars, sizes of new houses and no garages. There is no uniform approach to street lighting, is this appropriate for Westbury-sub-Mendip? Climate emergency, transport and whether our road can sustain them. https://somersetcouncil.citizenspace.com/planning/creating-places-for-people/

The cap of 5% on Somerset Council Tax increasing challenge to the Council as Somerset has low tax base. The Parish Council to consider whether it can pick up any services.

Several good awards have been received by the new authority including planning. Only one school in Somerset is affected by the concrete crisis.

1. **Report from Mark Smith the Webmaster Administrator.**

Report circulated and it was noted that the numbers of automatic updates are low and this is to be checked.

1. **The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 12th September, previously circulated and agreed as a true record, signed and dated.**
2. **Matters arising from the minutes but not on the agenda**

None

1. **Planning Applications**

None

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None

1. **It was agreed**
2. For Mark Smith to contact Tickbox Marketing and create .gov email for all Councillors. Tickbox Marketing have confirmed the cost is covered within the annual hosting fees once the new Clerk is in place. Mark was asked to check whether the additional fee (£45) is to be charged for the software upgrade for the website.
3. to arrange a date in the village hall for community organisations to meet and encourage people to sign up to risk assessment training.
4. Proposal to purchase a new litter bin to be located in the vicinity of the shop will be looked at further. Need to check if Highways dept need to give approval and if there is a licence fee, and whether a specific design is required. Design costs to be looked into and approved in principle. Costs to be included in budget for 2024-2025. 2 dog waste bins are now installed with the remaining one to be installed at Stoneleigh by Councillor Euripidou. Clerk to provide laminated Dog Fouling posters to be posted around the parish.
5. **Clerk’s / Councillors Report**
6. Letter to be written Somerset Council in regard to the request that special planning specifications are considered such as the Parish Council Dark Skies Policy when accepting planning applications.
7. Letter to be written Somerset Council in regard to the letter sent to the Planning Department regarding the change in policy regarding tree applications.
8. Update from Cllr Guy Timson on Health and Wellbeing within the area unavailable.
9. Neighbourhood Plan. Currently looking at responding to needs and looking at green and brown field sites in the parish. Village questionnaires available on website and in the village shop. Road safety issues including speeding and lack of safe crossing points. It was agreed to look into temporary use of Speed indicator device to gather data. Availability and cost to be checked.
10. Wells & Rural LCN Meeting held on 14th September minutes received and will be circulated before next meeting. Main items to be looked at by Parish Council are existing rights of way and cycle paths and where new paths and links could be made. Suggested items for future agendas are:- what community groups do, what transport needed, and access to services. What networks are there?
11. The dog waste bin at Station Road requires relocation and this will be looked into.
12. Tickbox Marketing are able to carry out website training, but date deferred until new Clerk in place.
13. Tickbox Marketing upgrade of the SQL software - regarding the charge Mark Smith will check.
14. The volunteer Litter Picker would like further training and be covered under the Parish Council Insurance. Clerk will source suitable training course. Approved in principle.
15. **Finance**
    1. Draft budget/precept for 2024-2025 will be provided at next meeting. Request required by 19th January from Somerset. Councillor Wyke will prepare draft.

**Bank Balances as at** 28th September 2023

Current Account £6528.40

Reserve Account £20,272.60

**Receipts**

1. Bank Interest - £23.59 – received 11.09.2023
2. **Correspondence**
3. **Verbal Updates from Community Groups.**
   1. Village Hall – film nights starting again and a puppet show to take place in March 2024.
   2. Tree Group – work progressing with trees and hedging. More volunteers needed.
4. **Matters to report / items for next agenda**
   1. Budget/precept 2024-2025
   2. Tickbox Marketing costs
   3. Letter to be sent to Somerset re Planning change of policy on tree applications.
   4. Letter to be sent to Somerset to request that special planning specifications are considered such as the Parish Council Dark Skies Policy when accepting planning applications.
   5. Village Community Groups Risk Assessment Training
   6. Litter bins
   7. Dog bins
   8. Volunteer Litter Picker – Insurance, PPE & Training
   9. Timetable for applications for annual community grants
5. **Date and time of Next meeting –** Wednesday 1st November 2023 to be held in the Village Hall, starting at 7.30pm.