

**Present:** Sue Isherwood (Chair), Ros Wyke (Vice Chair & Somerset), Penny Colwill, Maggie Beebee, Buffy Fletcher, Guy Timson, Adams Euripidou.

**In Attendance:** Mrs D Boulton, Locum Clerk,

**Public:** Mark Smith, 2 members of the public

**MINUTES OF**

**WESTBURY SUB MENDIP PARISH COUNCIL**

**Wednesday 1st November 2023**

1. **The Chairman** opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.
2. **Apologies for Absence** Heather Shearer Somerset Councillor
3. **Absent**
4. **Declaration of Interest and Dispensations** no new received. Cllr Sue Isherwood has a written request for dispensation in relation to the Village Hall matters for four years (expires May 2027).
5. **Public Session** No questions or comments from the public.
6. **Somerset Councillor Reports.** It has been reported across the Country that Councils are struggling with finances. Somerset is required to provide Social Care and Children Services which accounts for 63% of the budget. Increased charges for those in care homes has added another £70million to the budget. This significant pressure forces savings in non-statutory services. Somerset is not currently in the same position as Birmingham with the S114 where they had salary rises they could not meet.

**7.40pm** Adamos Euripidou joined the meeting.

There are many good things happening where funding has been secured such as upgrading High Streets and a new railway station at Wellington. Others include Glastonbury Town deal, Bridgwater Town Deal and Active Travel,. The 126 Bus Services will provide a service from Axbridge to Weston-Super-Mare now a short term provider has been found. Department for Transport are upgrading the road from Junction 22 of the M5 to Bristol Airport, Hinckley Point, the largest building site in Europe is increasing employment to 12,500 workers. Discussions are taking place around problems for housing and tourism.

1. **Report from Mark Smith the Webmaster Administrator.** A report was circulated. Training will be set up once the new clerk is in place. The website calendar is now being used to publicise notes and news items. Community Groups can now also publicise their events. The Chairman thanked Mark for his work.
2. **The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 4th October 2023, previously circulated** were agreed as a true record and signed.
3. **Planning Applications**
4. **2023/1925/TCA 10 Lodge Hill, Westbury-sub-Mendip, BA5 1ES.** Works/Felling Trees in a CA. No objections, recommended for approval.

**2023/1951/TCA The Old Vicarge, School Hill, Westbury-sub-Mendip** Work/Felling Trees in a CA. No objections, recommend for approval.

**Ros Wyke** requested that the Clerk copy both herself and Heather Shearer in with responses to applications.

1. **Planning Applications – Responses to be noted from Somerset Council** None received
2. **To Be Resolved / Discussed**
3. Proposal to contact Tickbox Marketing and create .gov email for all Councillors. Tickbox Marketing have confirmed the cost is covered within the annual hosting fees. This will be deferred until new Clerk in post.
4. Proposal to arrange a date in the village hall for community organisations to meet and encourage up to 2 people from each group to sign up to risk assessment training. This will be deferred until new Clerk in post. Locum Clerk to write to all community organisations to send volunteers. January 2024 suggested for the event. Andrew Buchanan to be contacted.
5. **Clerk’s / Councillors Report**
6. Response from 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. Letter now drafted by Chairman.
7. Response from Somerset Council in regard to the letter sent to the Planning Department regarding the change in policy regarding tree applications. Clerk to write to Tree Officer requesting ongoing consultation with the Parish Council.
8. Update from Cllr Guy Timson on Health and Wellbeing within the area. Meeting planned for 6th November, 2023,
9. Update from Cllr Sue Isherwood on the Neighbourhood Plan. A Zoom meeting is being held on 8th November followed by an in person meeting on 9th to bring people up to date on the village facilities survey, the village character assessment report and negotiations with the Church Commissioners. This will be an opportunity to ask questions. It was agreed that the Chairman and Clerk have delegated powers to pay for printing around £70.00 if necessary.
10. Update on whether the volunteer Litter Picker would like further training and covered under the Parish Council Insurance. Lone Worker & Home Worker policy to be looked at for the Litter Picker and Clerk.
11. Village/Community Groups Training. See item 11b.
12. Community Grants – Deadline end of November 2023. Community groups to be contacted. Request from Citizens Advice for December agenda decision
13. The Clerk reported that the defibrillator battery has been changed and now working.
14. Road closure Westbury Drove, 13th November 9.30 – 15.30.

**20.25pmMark Smith** left the meeting

1. **Finance**

**Budget/Precept for 2024/2025** to be discussed. The draft budget has not been completed yet but should be available before the next meeting. Ros Wyke gave a detailed explanation for new Councillors and the public on the Precept, Budget and Council Tax. Historically, Westbury-sub-Mendip has had a very low precept and has been successful in attracting funding and financial support. It is intended to look at a one off (one year) increase in the budget to fund a new car park at the Roughmoor Lane brownfield site. It is estimated that this would cost an extra 20p per week on the Council Tax. The matter may be discussed at the meetings on 8th and 9th November, 2023. It is critical to acquire the land now as a community project and show that the parish council is behind it.

The Clerk asked Councillor Guy Timson if he has a Pecuniary (Personal & Prejudicial Interest) as his land adjoins the proposed brownfield land at Roughmoor Lane. Councillor Timson stated he does not have a pecuniary interest and would not declare as such. The Clerk reminded him that failure to declare can be a criminal offence. Councillor Timpson will take further advice.

**Meeting closed for public comments at 21.27pm.** A question regarding whether there would be sufficient parking space for new houses and existing residents. The area being considered is 0.1hectare (1000m2).

Road safety is also an issue and the Mendip Local Plan stipulates the provision of a safe crossing of the A371 as a condition of a successful planning application for the allocated green field site on Roughmoor Lane.

**Meeting reopened at 2130pm.**

**Bank Balances as at** 28th September 2023. As the bank account has not been accessed no payment have yet been made and the position is the same as the last meeting.

Current Account £6528.40

Reserve Account £20,272.60

**Expenditure – approved.**

Village Hall invoice £60.00

Stoneleigh Rooms invoice £20.83

SALC invoice £229.41

**Receipts**

Bank Interest - £23.59 – received 11.09.2023

1. **Correspondence**
	1. **Email from Somerset safety warning for Storm Ciaran.**
	2. **Flood Warning newsletter**
	3. **Email from Somerset asking that gas cylinders are not placed in blue recycling bags as they are a hazard.**
	4. **Devon & Somerset Fire Brigade warnings for power cuts**
2. **Verbal Updates from Community Groups.** Clerk requested to write to thank those who helped with moving the dog bins.
3. **Matters to report.** No additional items.
4. **Items for next agenda.**

Budget update for discussion and approval.

Grants

Training

Litter picker

1. **Date and time of Next meeting –** Wednesday 6th December 2023 to be held in the Village Hall, starting at 7.30pm.