

BAWDRIP PARISH COUNCIL

A Meeting of Bawdrip Parish Council was held in the Parish Hall, Eastside Lane, Bawdrip on Tuesday, 5th December 2023 at 7.30pm.

Present: Parish Councillors: Mr R Culverhouse (Chairman), Mrs K Bradley, Mr E Crane and Mr D Rayner; **Clerk,** Graham Jarvis together with four members of the public.

Public Speaking Time: No topics raised.

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- 76. Apologies for Absence, Disclosures of Interest and Dispensations.**
An apology for absence was received and accepted from Parish Councillor Mr P Clarke (family commitment). Mr Culverhouse held a dispensation from the Code of Conduct for matters associated with the village website.
- 77. Minutes of Previous Meeting.** The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 7th November 2023 were presented, approved and signed as a complete and correct record.
- 78. Matters Arising:**
- a) **66a - Climate Change Local Initiatives** – Mrs Earnshaw reported that progress continued to be made on tree planting also referring to a meeting arranged for Parish Councils on 21st March – also refer to Minute 85e below. A meeting of the Polden Environment Network scheduled for the previous day was postponed due to flooding.
 - b) **67 – Defibrillator** – The Clerk reported that he had been in contact with Mrs Burfitt who, since the last meeting, had become aware that South Western Ambulance Service had a back log of orders. The British Heart Foundation had a scheme where an application could be made for a unit to be supplied free of charge provided certain conditions were met – similar to the existing unit. Mrs Burfitt had suggested that an application be made by the Parish Council under the BHF Scheme. The suggestion was agreed and the Clerk would lodge an application. Appreciation was expressed for Mrs Burfitt's involvement.
 - c) **70a v – Grant to Citizens Advice Somerset** – The Clerk reported that a message of thanks for the grant awarded had been received.
 - d) **71d – Christmas Tree** – The Chairman reported that the switch-on of the lights was scheduled after a short church service on Saturday, 16th December.
 - e) **72 – Parish Council Meetings 2024** - The Clerk reported that the booking of the Parish Hall had been confirmed.
 - f) **74 – Action Areas on Footpaths and Public Rights of Way** – After a discussion the Council fully endorsed the actions point that were suggested at the previous meeting. To assist in attempting to achieve the objectives funding would be considered when setting the 2024/25 Precept. (A copy of the action points are appended to these minutes).
- 79. Out Door Gym Area Potential Access Improvements** - Deferred.
- 80. SALC AGM – Report on Somerset Council's Financial State.**
The Clerk gave a summary of the Annual General Meeting of Somerset Association of Local Councils held on 2nd December in Somerton. One of the guest speakers

was Mr Bill Revans, Leader of Somerset Council who gave details of the Council's assets and services devolution plan which was going to be submitted to The Executive on 5th December. Mr Revans said that the Council's financial position was severe. In an attempt to avoid the issue of a Section 114 Notice and associated appointment of commissioners to authorise only essential spending; the devolution of non-statutory services to Town and Parish Council was being encouraged together with asset sales. The devolvement was not compulsory but continuation of non-statutory services could not be guaranteed. A copy of the text of the talk would be circulated Parish Councillors. There was agreement that the situation be noted and would be reviewed when the Precept for 2024/25 set.

81. Somerset Councillors' Report – None.

82. Planning Matters.

a) Application 04/23/00010

Proposal: Application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed erection of an 18.29m X 6.10m steel portal framed building to be used as a hay/straw building.

Location: Agricultural Building at, Temple Farm. Chedzoy Lane, Bridgwater TA7 E:333295.88 N 138447.20.

Applicant: Temple Farm (Chedzoy) Limited.

Resolved that the Parish Council had no observations on the matter.

b) Notification of decisions by Local Planning Authority – None.

83. Financial Matters.

a) NALC Circular E01-23 2022/23 Local Government Services Pay Agreement 2023 – Noted.

b) Payment of Creditors.

The following payments were approved: -

- i) Somerset Council – Dog waste bin collections - £501.70 (£418.08 + £83.62 VAT) – Cheque No. 725.
- ii) Clerk's Salary, expenses /re-imburements etc - £913.57 - Cheque No. 726.
- iii) HM Revenue and Customs – Employment Related - £270.80 - Cheque No. 727.
- iv) Stepping-Out in Somerset CIC – Grounds maintenance - £210.00 – Cheque No. 730.

84. Roads and Footpaths.

a) Former Railway Bridge.

Further to Minute 71a – 7th November 2023; The Clerk reported on an exchange of correspondence with Highways England. The inspection undertaken in February 2023 was classed as a detailed inspection which, for structures of this type were undertaken every seven years, unless the annual visual inspection prompted a more frequent review. The plan was for the vegetation to be removed over the winter prior to the annual inspection in the spring. However, the timescale for that work could change. The Chairman mentioned that when weather and ground conditions allowed Stepping-out in Somerset CIC would be trimming the growth on the Parish Council's side of the bridge.(Also refer to Minute 84c below). There was agreement that the situation be noted.

b) Flooding/Impeded Watercourses.

Further to Minutes 71b&c – 7th November 2023 and Minute 85a iv of this meeting; Parish Councillor Mrs Bradley had kindly agreed to act as the co-ordinator to gather information and respond to the appropriate authorities. Some photographs taken of flooding in September had already been received. Details would be sought via various means including social media. An update would be given at a future meeting.

c) Services Undertaken Stepping-out in Somerset CIC

The Chairman reported that notification had been received that the hourly rate charged would rise by £1 to £13 from January 2024. The charity had provided ground maintenance services on an ad hoc basis since July 2021 and was seeking a more formal arrangement with a schedule of works or an understanding of the number of hours that their services would be required. After a discussion it was agreed that the services provided were of good value and that the Chairman would investigate the notion of a more formal arrangement.

85. Correspondence.

The Clerk reported that since the previous meeting the following items had been circulated to members by email: -

a) Somerset Council: -

- i) Asset and Service Devolution – Desire to devolve many services to Town and Parish Councils due to severe financial problems.
- ii) Notice of Severe Weather Emergency Provision (SWEP) in some areas of Somerset – 30th November – 1st December.
- iii) Waste Services – Advance notice that changes will be made to waste collection dates next year,
- iv) Civil Contingency Unit – Request (prompted by many incidents in recent months) for details of property and land prone to flooding to be sent to two email addresses. (Also refer to 84b Minute above).
- v) Avalon and Oldens LCN – Note of Health Working Group meeting on 17th November.
- vi) Consultation on Puriton Neighbourhood Plan,

b) Environment Agency – Updates on the Somerset Levels and Moors flooding.

c) Homes in Sedgemoor – Invitation to a drop-in Open Evening on 28th November.

d) Somerset Association of Local Councils:-

- i) Details of Training events.
- ii) Questionnaire on services provided by SALC.

e) The Polden Environment Network (PEN) – Details of Parish Council seminar on 21st March 2024 at Cossington.

f) Publication available for viewing: Clerks & Councils Direct – November Edition.

86. Topics for future Meetings: The Knowle Inn.

87. Date of next Meeting – Tuesday, 9th January 2024 at 7.30 pm.

Meeting Closed 8.53 pm.

Actions

- PC support needed to make sure that the existing Veg Cut budget is retained and that the narrow section of BW 2/24 opposite the garage is added to the Veg Cut plan and budget.
- PC support needed to help encourage more landowners to keep paths clear of vegetation and to leave margins at the edge of fields and/or across fields to allow for footpaths.
- Village walks so that people are more aware of the network of footpaths. If we organise walks can these be done under the umbrella of the PC and therefore your insurance?
- Walking the paths helps to keep the vegetation down. Catch 22 there is a heavy reliance on the routes that are well maintained, and they are frequently walked, those that can't be relied upon, because they are often overgrown, are not walked.
- Consider formalising unofficial paths - Skylark to Eastside Lane and access from Sustrans to BW 2/25.