

# FITZHEAD PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Council Meeting held on 9 August 2023 in the Tithe Barn commencing at 7.15pm.

## MINUTES

**Present:** Cllr. Chris Summers (Chair), Cllr. Alison Kent, Cllr. Ian Coombes, Cllr. Wendy Jonas and Cllr. Martin Irish

**In Attendance:** Andrea Johnson (Clerk), 1 parishioner, Cllr. Dave Mansell (Somerset Council).

**Public Speaking Time:** A question was asked about a particular surface water flooding/drainage issue in the village, which had been raised with Somerset Council. It was acknowledged that these issues were complex, as responsibility lay with Somerset Council Highways department in some cases, but landowners are responsible for drainage on their land. It was noted that some years ago there had been a meeting between Parish and District Council representatives and the landowner had been provided with advice to address the flooding/drainage issue. Cllr. Dave Mansell will press Somerset Council for a response to the most recent correspondence.

**23/018 To note apologies for absence and approve reason, where appropriate**

Cllr. Gwil Davies (Somerset Council) gave his apologies.

**23/019 Declarations of Interest/Dispensations.**

None

**23/020 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 May 2023 were approved and signed as a correct record by the Chairman. Proposed Cllr. Coombes, seconded Cllr. Irish with one abstention due to absence.

**23/021 Matters arising from the May minutes**

23/021.1 It was noted that the Post Code Map of the Village is still to be amended to include postcode TA4 2RN. **Action:** Cllr. Coombes will arrange for the map to be updated and Cllr. Jonas will update the noticeboards.

23/021.2 The nomination for Chair's Awards for Service to the Community 2023 has been submitted, and Jill Loader had received an invitation to the presentation evening.

23/021.3 Additional keys for the Noticeboard have been acquired and distributed.

23/021.4 The police reports for 2018 – 2021 have been from the website.

**23/022 Tithe Barn Refurbishment Project**

23/022.1 The minutes of the AGM and the finances to 30 June 2023 were noted. The Management Committee is reviewing the current financial position, to understand if changes need to be made to charging structures. The forthcoming village newsletter would include an article outlining the work which had been undertaken from 2017 to date and explaining that the Tithe Barn Committee would like to attract new members to help with the Tithe Barn management, the ongoing maintenance and improvement project and fundraising events generally.

**23/023 Play Area**

23/023.1 The Councillors were pleased that the play area appeared to be well used. There were no matters to note from the weekly inspection reports, but it was suggested that the apple tree should be pruned later in the year. **Action:** Clerk to provide Cllr. Summers with a copy of the most up to date checklist.

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## 23/024 Correspondence

23/024.1 A parishioner had contacted the Council, suggesting the acquisition of a Coronation bench. The Parish Council discussed the request but concluded that the Coronation banner created by the village craft group was a sufficient and appropriate artefact to mark the occasion. The Parish Council would like to arrange for the banner to be framed to ensure that it is preserved for posterity. **Action:** Cllr. Jonas to obtain the agreement of the craft group and then to source quotes for the framing.

23/024.2 It was noted that the correspondence from a parishioner in relation to surface water flooding/drainage issues had been discussed during public speaking time.

23/024.3 A parishioner had contacted the Council in relation to recent cold calling in the village. It was noted that there are already some signs around the village designed to deter cold callers, but PCSO Louise Fyne had provided the Parish Council with a further sign, together with some stickers that parishioners can place in their windows. A note will be placed in the village newsletter explaining that the stickers are available. **Action:** Cllr. Irish to arrange for the sign to be erected in front of Tylers Lane.

## 23/025 Finance.

23/025.1 The bank reconciliation statement at 22 June 2023 was noted and it was unanimously **resolved** that the Chair should sign.

23/025.2 It was unanimously **resolved** to pay the following payments:

Heartbeat	Annual Support Defibrillator	126.00
Tithe Barn - hire	May Meetings	15.00
Clerk Salary		150.66
Clerk expenses		77.67
HMRC - PAYE		100.00
		<b>469.33</b>

23/025.3 The expenditure against budget for year to date was noted.

23/025.4 It was unanimously **resolved** to move to online banking. **Action:** Clerk to arrange.

23/025.5 The Health and Wellbeing grants available from Somerset Association of Local Councils (SALC) were discussed. It was unanimously **resolved** to apply for a grant to cover the cost of a feasibility report on making the play area and the toilets at the Tithe Barn more accessible. **Action:** Clerk to contact SALC to establish whether the Parish Council could make one application to cover locations and then to work with Cllr. Coombes to apply.

## 23/026 Review of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

23/026.1 It was unanimously **resolved** to adopt the updated Standing Orders.

23/026.2 It was unanimously **resolved** to adopt the updated Financial Regulations.

## 23/027 Highways Issues

23/027.1 Cllr Mansell apologised that the Council has been waiting for a new sign for Tithe Meadow for more than 12 months. The move to the Somerset Unitary Authority has led to delays.

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23/027.2 It was noted that some road markings need repainting.

23/027.3 Cllr. Kent asked to record her thanks to the parishioner(s) who had trimmed and cut the roadside hedges locally. Cllr. Mansell reminded Councillors that issues with verges and hedges need to be reported on the Somerset Council website. Somerset Council Highways team only carries out one annual cut of hedges and verges unless there is a safety issue.

It was noted that Somerset Council had previously agreed that the Parish Council could arrange to have the hedges and verges cut more frequently, provided they had the agreement of the landowner. It was unanimously **resolved** to budget for additional cuts in the 2024/25 budget.

Cllr Mansell suggested that the topic should also be added to the agenda for the next Local Community Network (LCN) meeting as other Parish Councils might also be considering paying for additional services and might be able to source them collectively.

## 23/028 Planning matters

23/028.1 The following planning applications and decisions were noted

Application	Description	PC Response	Outcome
17/21/0007	Knights Farm Planning Application	Supports the conversion of the buildings, but the safety aspect for parking and access onto the highway needs to be re-worked.	A decision has yet to be made.
17/23/0004	Notification to fell two sycamore trees within Fitzhead Conservation Area at Fitzhead Court Lodge, Church Road, Fitzhead	None	Decision of No Objection was made on 12 May 2023.

## 23/029 Somerset Councillor(s) Report

Cllr. Mansell reported that overall, the move to the Unitary Authority has been a success.

## 23/030 Environmental matters

23/030.1 The Councillors noted that under the Environment Act 2021 the duty to have regard to biodiversity has been reinforced so that parish councils must consider and agree what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity by 1 January 2024, with policies and objectives agreed as soon as possible after this. The Councillors referenced various actions that the Council was taking. **Action:** Clerk to draft a policy for consideration at the next meeting.

23/030.2 The Somerset Rivers Authority Annual Report 2022/2023 was noted.

## 23/031 Police Report

The latest police report was noted.

## 23/032 Update on LCN meeting

The minutes of the meeting which had previously been circulated were noted.

## 23/033 Matters for the next meeting.

Draft budget

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### 23/034 Next quarterly meeting

It was agreed to hold the next Parish Council Meeting on 22 November 2023 at 7.15pm. Cllr Jonas left the meeting,

23/035 It was unanimously **resolved** to exclude the Press and Public from the remainder of the meeting due to Commercial and Personnel Sensitivity.

23/035.1 Two quotes had been received to carry out a valuation of the Old Pump House. These were discussed and it was unanimously **resolved** to accept the quote from Croft Surveyors, Taunton to provide the Council with a reinstatement value for insurance purposes.

23/035.2 Following a proposal by Cllr Summers, it was unanimously **resolved** to move the Clerk to scale point 7 backdated to 8 February 2023.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.08pm.

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