

FITZHEAD PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Council Meeting held on 16th February 2022 in the Tithe Barn
commencing at 7.15pm.

MINUTES

Present: Ian Coombes (Chairman), Alison Kent, Chris Summers, Wendy Jonas & Martin Irish

In Attendance: Jill Loader (Clerk), Dave Mansell (SW&T Cllr), 1 member of the public

Public Speaking Time: None.

1. **Apologies for Absence:** None
2. **Declaration of Interest/Dispensations:** None
3. **Minutes of previous meeting:** The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 18th November 2021 were approved and signed as a correct record. The Chair signed each page.
4. **Matters Arising from the Minutes:** a) Post Code Map of Village – the map now had road names and landmarks added. This would be placed on the noticeboards and copied for the next Parish Magazine for residents' use. b) Sue Bellamy's bench had now been delivered and would be positioned after 12th March, once the concrete base had been set.

5. Highways Issues:

- 5.1 **Flooding in West Fitzhead – Christmas Time.** An email with videos and photographs of the flooding over Christmas in West Fitzhead had been received on 27th January from a resident. It was circulated to the Councillors and it was agreed to discuss the matter at the February PC meeting.

All issues of flooding must be reported to Somerset County Highways immediately who will carry out the necessary action at the time. This reporting gives the county a history of issues which can be helpful when deciding the best course of action.

The Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group South West can get involved with flooding issues and work with farms to help reduce flooding on country roads. This group becomes involved through County Highways.

After discussion, it was agreed to write to Highways regarding the flood at Christmas and to see if the FWAG would get involved. Clerk to write to Highways and the Residents regarding this decision.

- 5.2 **White Lines** – agreed to report to Highways the need to repaint the white lines around the village.
- 5.3 **Pot Holes** – anyone could report a pot hole by going on line to 'Report a Pot Hole Somerset' where you are directed to the County Website to report the details. This was a better option than waiting to report defects at PC meetings which are quarterly.

5.4 **Blocked Drains** – there were areas where drains and ditches required attention, in particular along Donkeys Knapp and several drains in West Fitzhead. Action: Ian to report issues online.

6. Tithe Barn Refurbishment Project – update

- 6.1 Following the recent TB/PC meeting on 11th February, Roger Mitchinson had received confirmation from SW&T Planning that Condition 3 (windows and doors) and the ramp (condition 4) have been discharged. Therefore, works could be commenced before the planning application expires. It was agreed to dig a sod on 12th March 2022 and record the fact works had now commenced.
- 6.2 Diocese/ Faculty Decision – this would not be known until after 28th February. It was agreed to send a letter of support for the Tithe Barn works from the parish council before 23 February.
- 6.3 Lease Extension – Ian Coombes was waiting for an update from the Diocese on the number of years to be added to the lease or for a new lease to be drawn up. It was agreed that the existing lease should have years added, due to the difference in fees being charged.
- 6.4 Finances - current a/c £32,507. Saving a/c £22,547.

7. Queens Platinum Jubilee Celebrations

- 7.1 It was agreed to carry out an afternoon of celebration on Friday 3rd June from 12 noon to 6pm outside the Tithe Barn and in the Play Park. A working party would be put together and would be run by the Tithe Barn Committee and covered by the Barn's insurance. Action: Ian to get a working party together.
- 7.2 Clerk to contact Highways and the Police for the necessary permissions and information.

8. Finances

- 8.1 It was proposed, second and unanimously agreed to pay the following invoices: Tithe Barn Hire £8.00, Clerks Salary £224.92, HMRC PAYE £56.20 Wivey Area Partnership £150.
- 8.2 Receipts received - £693.94 (credit on play area equipment)
- 8.3 Bank balance as at 13/02/22: Current a/c £4,604.27 Deposit a/c £3,030.56. Plus unrepresented receipts credit £693.94, unrepresented cheque £16.00 Total £8,312.77.
- 8.4 A budget vs precept sheet had been previously circulated to the Councillors for review.
- 8.5 The Risk Assessment and Internal Controls Document had been previously circulated. They were both approved and signed.
- 8.6 Asset Register – this had been circulated. The new Sue Bellamy Bench would be added once installed and the insurance company advised. It was discussed that the pump house valued at £1 should be reassessed for its true value in case of damage and repair. **Action: Clerk**
- 8.7 Parish Council Elections on 5th May 2022. The PC would be invoiced for £100 should there be an uncontested election.
- 8.8 Invoices paid prior to February meeting – as agreed by Councillors:

Payee	Amount
Darrens Dens – balance of play equipment	£3,469.94
The Play Area Inspection Company	£ 83.40
NNB Recycled Furniture – Sue Bellamy Bench	£ 420.00
Levitate Architecture West – Tithe Barn	£1,296.00
Jill Loader – Microsoft Office Subs	£ 79.99

9. Play Area

- 9.1 Weekly Inspection Reports – the new check list was working. Copies to be sent to the clerk for filing purposes. Action: Wendy Jonas to re-email check list.
- 9.2 Play Inspection Rota

May – June	Ian Coombes
July – August	Martin Irish
September – October	Chris Summers
November – December	Alison Kent
January – February 2023	Wendy Jonas

- 9.3 It was agreed to have a working party in June to carry out any necessary works in the play area.
- 9.4 The new play equipment had been completed and final payment made.

10. Noticeboard Repairs

- 10.1 Noticeboard by Pub. All in hand and would be actioned soon once weather conditions improved
- 10.2 The pump house noticeboard was due to be refurbished and was all in hand. **Action Ian.**

11. Planning –

- 11.1 Knights Farm planning application – no decision had been reached to date. It was understood a decision was due to be made later in the Summer.
- 11.2 17/21/0010/T Carry out management to walnut tree at 4 Tithe Meadow. Approved 7//12/21
- 11.3 17/21/0011/T – Fell one Leyland Cypress tree at Crosslands. Approved 10/12/21
- 11.4 17/22/0001/T – Fell Elm Trees – 1 Court Cottages – no decision to date.

12. Somerset West & Taunton Councilor’s Report – Cllr Dave Mansell -

DISTRICT COUNCILLORS UPDATE – as emailed by Cllr Mansell

Budget setting – SWT will set its budget for 2022/23 on 24 February. Given the Government settlement and inflation, the spending power of the council’s core funding will reduce by 6.9%. Reflecting this situation, the council’s share of council tax is proposed to increase by 2.95%, which is £5 on a band D property (the maximum allowed). Efficiency savings are sought and £6m of reserves are to be used to soften the budget gap (some repaying debt), with £596k contributing to service costs, which cannot be sustained in future years. Another £6.4m of earmarked reserves will cover a deficit in Covid-related business rates relief. Covid is expected to have a continuing impact on the council’s finances, including through a loss in car park income, which is expected to remain £1.5m below pre-Covid levels in 2022/23.

Local Government Re-organisation – The Structural Change Order to replace the county and district councils with a unitary Somerset Council is currently proceeding through parliament. Elections will be held in May 2022, with two councillors elected from county divisions this time – for our area, the wards will be Dulverton and Exmoor (includes Brendon Hills parishes) and Upper Tone (includes Wiveliscombe, Fitzhead and West Deane parishes).

For the first year, those elected will be county councillors, followed by a four-year term as unitary councillors, once the new Somerset Council is vested from April 2023. Current District Councillor terms continue until 2023. Re-organisation costs are currently estimated at £16.5m, with most to be funded by the County Council. SWT's share, included in the budget for 2022/23, is £1.4m. Pending the election of new councillors, current councils have set-up a joint committee, joint scrutiny committee and advisory board to progress reorganization plans, including for local community networks.

Local Community Networks – Pilots are being established, which includes a panel for highways covering Exmoor. Early lessons are said to include: some town and parish councils wish to do more locally, but not all; some community organisations see opportunities to engage; and the networks should remain flexible. There is to be consultation on boundaries and governance arrangements.

Recycle More – The third phase to roll-out new recycling and refuse collections went well in Taunton Deane in November. There was some increase in missed collections, which were soon addressed. Data so far indicates an increase by weight of about 20% in recycling with a corresponding decrease in refuse. The volume reduction for refuse is even greater. Recycle More starts in former West Somerset parishes from w/c 28 February. Leaflets and Blue Bags should now have been delivered to most households, with more following this week. Any problems or requests with waste collections are best reported using My Waste Services at: www.somersetwaste.gov.uk. You can also call SWT on 0300 304 8000.

Recycling on the Go – New segregated bins for litter and recycling (plastics and cans) are being rolled out across SWT.

Street Washing – At the request of ward councillors, Wiveliscombe was added to a programme in the autumn to clean paved areas and street furniture in town centres.

Litter – A litter strategy and 12-month enforcement trial, with fixed penalty notices, has been agreed from April. It covers all of SWT, but will be mostly applied in the larger towns.

Planning Guide – A new SWT Design Guide was adopted in December and a Quality Review Panel established to support quality design as a key consideration for planning applications.

Phosphates Strategy – Progress in resolving this block to many planning applications has been moving forward. SWT has approved a strategy and £2m budget to support projects, such as wetland and woodland creation, which can offset the impact of new development in the water catchment areas (most of Somerset) for protected sites in the Somerset levels and moors. Phosphate credits will be sold to developers to recover the costs. Mark sits on a sub-committee to oversee delivery of the strategy, which should allow credits to start being allocated within the next few months.

Wellington Station – The Government has allocated £5m to develop plans for new railway stations at Wellington and Cullompton.

Best Climate Plan in the UK – SWT's climate action plan has been rated the best in the UK by Climate Emergency UK and the only one to score above 90%. Somerset's joint plan was rated the best for a county. Dave sat on SWT and Somerset working groups involved in producing the plans and is pleased with the recognition, although thinks there is room for improvement and good actions and delivery are the most important measures.

Climate Change Delivery Partnership – A joint officer team has been established to deliver climate and ecological emergency projects in SWT and Sedgemoor, supported by a small consultation panel, which includes Dave as one of three SWT representatives.

Ecological Emergency Vision and Action Plan – Led by a new officer, this plan is now being prepared by SWT, with input from councillors, including Dave. A commitment to be peat-free has already been made. SWT's work in this area is more advanced than other Somerset Councils and it is hoped will provide a lead for the new council.

Electric Vehicle Charging Points – Following the rapid chargers (50 kW) installed at five locations, including Exmoor House in Dulverton, new charging points (2x 22kW) are currently being installed in car parks across SWT, including North Street in Wiveliscombe and North Street in Wellington. Wiveliscombe already has a community charging point (2x 11kW) in Croft Way car park (behind the Community Centre) and public points (4x 7kW) at the Enterprise Centre.

Tree planting – 22 parish councils took up SWT's free tree offer towards the end of 2021. This included several in our ward. Dave was pleased to attend the planting event at Brompton Ralph. In addition, 450 trees were planted in SWT open spaces during the winter. For the Queen's Green Canopy Project in 2022, planting has started at three sites in Minehead (avenue of 105 trees), Taunton (85 trees and a fruit orchard) and Wellington (community initiative at Fox's Field). SWT are supporting a woodland creation project with Exmoor National Park at Bye Wood, where over 500 trees were planted in January, and has submitted a substantial bid to the Government's new Trees Call to Action fund.

Meadows and wild flowers – SWT has created several small meadows and is leaving grass to grow longer in parks and open spaces and has sown 60kg of wildflower seed. Somerset Wildlife Trust are advising on future work.

Zero Carbon Council Housing New Build – Construction has started for 54 new council homes in Seaward Way, Minehead, which are to be built to the LETI zero carbon guide.

Zero Carbon Council Housing Retrofit – During 2020, Dave chaired a working group on the zero carbon retrofit for insulation measures and heating of the Council's housing stock of 5,700 homes. The report identified standards to set and how the council could contribute funding from savings achieved, although a lot more support from Government will be needed too. The report was passed by Community Scrutiny Committee on 27 January and will now be considered by the Council's Executive. An officer report should follow with a costed plan on implementation and providing support for delivery with tenants.

Help with heating and household bills – For a quick guide to the Somerset Household Support Fund and other support with heating bills see: wiveygp.org/2021/12/05/help-with-heating-bills

Public building decarbonisation – Energy efficiency work has been undertaken or is in progress at the Brewhouse, the Crematorium, Deane House, Wellington Sports Centre and Westpark Depot.

Local Hospitality Support Grant – There was a good response to the latest rounds of business Covid support grants, which closed on 14 February. The Council informed businesses believed to be eligible.

Wiveliscombe – A local place-making project to produce a plan for Wiveliscombe town centre is nearing completion – see: www.wivey.co.uk. Well-attended consultation events on options were held at the end of January, with feedback collected online too. A report on the preferred proposal is being prepared and is expected to be published in March.

Clinical waste incinerator proposal – Wasteology are proposing to build an incinerator for low-level clinical waste in Stawley at Greenham. A scoping request has been submitted to SCC, who are the Waste Planning Authority, but not yet a full planning application. Further information at: wiveygp.org/2022/01/30/incinerator-proposed

13. Police Report – The monthly Police Report was on the website.

14. Date of Next Parish Council Meeting

It was agreed to hold the next Parish Council Meeting on 18th May 2022 following the Annual Parish Meeting which would commence at 7.15pm.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.45pm