

FITZHEAD PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Council Meeting held on 15 November 2023 at the church of St James the Great, Fitzhead commencing at 7.15pm.

MINUTES

Present: Cllr. Chris Summers (Chair), Cllr. Alison Kent, Cllr. Ian Coombes, Cllr. Wendy Jonas, Andrea Johnson (Clerk), Cllr. Dave Mansell (Somerset Council).

Public Speaking Time: No members of the public were present.

23/036 To note apologies for absence and approve reason, where appropriate

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

23/037 Declarations of Interest/Dispensations.

None

23/038 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 August 2023 were approved and signed as a correct record by the Chairman. Proposed Cllr Jonas, seconded Cllr Kent.

23/039 Clerk's Report

23/039.1 The Clerk's Report was noted. Cllr Mansell was asked if the original Tithe Meadow road sign could be returned, and Councillors would arrange for it to be reinstated.

23/039.2 Cllr Jonas and Mandy Bools have yet to obtain a quote for framing the Coronation banner and it was not possible to estimate what it might cost.

23/039.3 The postcode map of the village has been updated with the missing postcode. Cllr Coombes to collect, so that Cllr Jonas can update the copies on the noticeboards.

23/039.4 The additional premium for adding the Pump House to the insurance policy was noted, and it was unanimously **resolved** to add the Pump House to the Parish Council's insurance policy. **Action:** Clerk to arrange.

23/039.5 It was noted that the fixed fee arrangement with the Community HeartBeat Charity for the defibrillator had expired. It was unanimously **resolved** to pay the outstanding difference to The Community HeartBeat Charity. **Action:** Clerk to arrange.

23/039.6 It was noted that the National Joint Council for Local Government Services has reached agreement on rates of pay applicable from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 and it was unanimously **resolved** to implement the pay award.

23/040 Tithe Barn Refurbishment Project

The minutes of the October meeting and the accompanying finances were noted. Cllr Coombes gave an update on the maintenance and improvement works taking place. It was noted that a new administrator had been appointed.

23/041 Play Area

There were no matters to note from the weekly inspection reports, but it was noted that the apple tree would need pruning in the future and the play equipment would benefit from cleaning in the Spring.

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23/0242 Somerset Councillor(s) Report

Cllr Mansell gave an update on the financial situation at Somerset Council. The Council needs to be able to set a balanced budget by February 2024. Cllr Mansell was making enquiries to understand if the Maintenance Grant would still be awarded in the 2024/25 financial year.

23/043 Finance.

23/043.1 The Maintenance Grant for 2023/24 from Somerset Council had been received. The Bank Reconciliation of 10 November 2023 was noted.

23/043.2 It was noted that the ICO Data Protection fee of £40 would be taken by direct debit on 13 December 2023.

23/043.3 It was unanimously **resolved** to pay the following payments totaling £3069.27:

Heartbeat	Annual Support Defibrillator	£36.00
Richard Branfield	Annual Play area maintenance	£792.00
Croft Surveyors	Pump House valuation	£397.68
Tithe Barn - hire	May Meetings	£15.00
SALC membership		£75.06
Fitzhead PCC	Maintenance Grant	£470.00
Fitzhead Cricket Club	Maintenance Grant	£825.00
Clerk expenses		£30.50
Clerk Salary		£256.83
HMRC	PAYE	£171.20

23/043.3 The expenditure against budget for year to date was noted.

23/043.4 The letter from Somerset Council dated 8 November 2023 was discussed.

23/043.5 The draft budget for 2024/2025 was reviewed. It was unanimously resolved to include sums in respect of hedge cutting and ditch clearance, and to replace the Maintenance Grant if it was withdrawn. **Action:** Clerk to ascertain costs of ditch clearance.

23/044 Environmental matters

The Biodiversity Policy was reviewed, and it was unanimously **resolved** to adopt it.

23/045 Highways

23/045.1 The correspondence from a parishioner in relation to blocked gullies was discussed. It was recognised that flooding and blocked drains are matters of concern to villagers. The Councillors discussed the various parties responsible for the maintenance and clearance of drains, ditches and gullies in Fitzhead. **Action:** Clerk to circulate the information sheets provided by Cllr Mansell.

23/045.2 It was noted that Somerset Council was carrying out work in response to the recent flooding and it was agreed to await the outcome of this before considering any further steps.

23//046 It was noted that the precept would need to be agreed at the next meeting.

23/047 Next quarterly meeting

It was agreed to hold the next Parish Council Meeting once the precept information had been received from Somerset Council. **Action:** Clerk to advise once received.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 20.58 pm.