

ALLER PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council
held on Monday 11th September at 7.30pm, Aller Village Hall

Present:

Cllrs Tucker, Brown, Dunton, Vernoit, Peppard
Somerset Council Cllr Wilkins
Mrs Larsson (Clerk), 8 members of the public

Prior to the meeting commencing, Cllr Tucker wished to take an opportunity to remember Derek Yeomans and Keith Mitchell, who sadly passed away recently. Derek Yeomans served as a County Councillor from 1999 to 2017, and Keith Mitchell as previous chair for Aller Parish Council, both of whom gave much of their time to supporting their communities.

In attendance to provide an update and answer any questions, was a representative from Keir, who are undertaking works at Southmoor Lake Reservoir on behalf of the Environment Agency. Assurances were given that the works will not adversely affect the capacity of the reservoir and that all works will be carried out in ways to minimise the impact on bird life and maintain the ecology of the area.

- 1. Apologies for absence:** Cllr Geary and Somerset Council Cllr Stanton.
- 2. Declarations of interest:** None declared.
- 3. Minutes of last Parish Council Meeting:** The minutes of the last meeting were unanimously agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.
- 4. Somerset Councillor Report**

A full report was circulated to councillors and will be made available on the parish council website. Cllr Wilkins commented on the challenges of the financial position of Somerset Council, highlighting that cost savings need to be made to improve the situation and avoid further future difficulties.
- 5. Finance:**
 - 5.1 The council approved the financial statement to 31/08/23.
 - 5.2 The schedule of payments was approved by councillors. A list of payments is annexed at the end of the minutes.
- 6. Planning Applications:**
 - 6.1 23/00543/HOU: The Croft Wickmoor Stathe Langport Somerset TA7 0JW
Proposal: Conversion of outbuilding to Annex and erection of a single story link between outbuilding and main dwelling
Councillors discussed the application and voted unanimously in support of the application on the basis that it would improve the appearance of the property.
The response will be submitted to the Somerset Council Planning and will be available on the planning portal against the respective application.
- 7. Cemetery Management Software:** Councillors discussed the need to hold future-proof, backed up cemetery files and modernise the record keeping process for the cemetery. Costs were received from two suppliers who provide cemetery specific management software, with an option for an accounting package to work alongside it. After discussing the costs and benefits of the options available, Councillors agreed in majority to go ahead with introducing both the cemetery management and accounting package with Scribe Accounts. The cost for the first year and all set-up will be £801+ vat, which includes a one-off set up and inclusive training fee of £249 + vat.

- 8. Dog and waste bin locations:** Having considered possibilities and approved 2 of 3 locations for co-mingle bins at the last council meeting, councillors discussed placement of the 3rd. It was agreed, pending approval from Highways, to locate on the High Street, opposite the footpath entrance. If this location was not approved by Highways, councillors agreed for the bin to be located at the end of the village hall where further permission from Highways was not required.
- 9. Traffic / Speeding Report:** Cllr Dunton presented information from the report which she had compiled in conjunction with other residents over recent months. Having discussed the contents of the report, which also includes ideas for traffic calming measures, the following actions were agreed: 1. Add the full report to the Parish Council website so it is available to all residents. 2. Arrange an open morning at the village hall for parishioners to attend and give their feedback. 3. Obtain costings for implementation of SIDs. 4. Based on feedback from the open morning, consider whether a more targeted survey should be conducted to gain views on implementation of traffic calming measures.
- 10. Aller to Langport Footpath Improvements:** Cllr Tucker shared proposals to improve the drainage of the footpath by the recreation ground. Following a successful grant application with the Somerset Community Foundation, Cllr Tucker advised that the cost of the proposed works is expected to be within the amount received and it was agreed to proceed with the proposed works on this basis.
- 11. Recreation Ground Car Park Improvements:** Following the annual playground inspection report, proposal was put forward by the Recreation Ground Committee to undertake improvements in safety of car parking at the recreation ground. Currently vehicles can access the recreation ground as previous measures to separate the areas have deteriorated over time. This lack of separation poses a danger to users and equipment and surfaces vulnerable to damage by unauthorised vehicles. Costs are expected to be £2855 for materials and may also require hire of a digger to carry out the works if one can not be sourced free of charge. It has been requested that this be paid for from the £10,000 reserve allocated to the recreation ground at the beginning of the financial year. Councillor voted unanimously to proceed with the proposed works, using the earmarked reserves.
- 12. Bench Refurbishment / Replacement:** Benches at Orchard Place and Church path are in poor states of disrepair. A member of the public has offered to refurbish the Orchard Place bench and it was felt the bench at Church Path could also be refurbished. Councillors agreed with this proposal, and Cllr Tucker will arrange a location that works can be carried out. It was also agreed to look at relocating the bench from Church Path, possibly to a position along the Parrett Trail. Cllr Tucker will investigate this and update at a future meeting.
- 13. Oath Defibrillator and Rights of Way discussions with Environment Agency:** Cllr Tucker reported that he needs to liaise with M&E Services at the EA to see if a defibrillator could be powered from the pumping station. He suggested approaching BSR Global, who are project managers for the solar farm development to see if they would be willing to sponsor the defibrillator. To be updated at the next meeting.
- 14. Village Hall Website:** The clerk had provided information to Cllr Vernoit regarding possibilities for inclusion of the Village Hall on the Parish Council website. It was suggested that the Village Hall Committee should put forward a proposal to the Parish Council as to how they wish to progress the matter.
- 15. Village Troughs Upkeep:** Cllr Brown advised that the troughs will require ongoing upkeep, including replenishment of some plants and compost which would cost no more than £150 for the remainder of the financial year. Councillors agreed to continue replenishing the
- 16. Updates**
 - 16.1 Moors and Levels Local Community Network: The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 20th September.
 - 16.2 Active Travel: As reported under minute 10. No further updates.

- 16.3 Highways: Following feedback regarding spelling of Bere/Beer, which there seems to be no clear consensus Cllr Tucker will investigate signage to display both options. It was noted that along “Bere Drove” overhanging willow branches are causing high sided vehicles to position to the centre of the road. To be reported to Highways.
- 16.4 Aller Recreation Area: As reported at minute 11. No further updates.
- 16.5 Aller Village Hall: Cllr Vernoit advised she will be stepping away from her position on the hall committee and that they require additional committee members. Anyone interested should get in touch with the current members.
- 16.6 Burial Board: No significant updates to report.

17. Previous actions not covered by other agenda items:

- 17.1 Soldier silhouettes for Remembrance Sunday – Clerk is awaiting invoice details from supplier.
- 17.2 “Donated by” sign to be arranged for the Christmas tree.

18. Correspondence

- 18.1 Communication was received asking towns and parishes to start to consider ways they may be able to take part in D-Day 80 in June 2024.

19. Any other urgent matters:

- 19.1 Maintenance of the churchyard has been undertaken voluntarily by Cllr Tucker, but he advised he will be unable to continue next year. Suggested to contact existing grass cutting contractor for quotations.

20. Summary of Actions

- 20.1 Confirm alternative bin location – JB
- 20.2 Investigate Oath defibrillator power supply – GT
- 20.3 Arrange sign for Christmas Tree - Clerk/GT
- 20.4 Obtain grass cutting quote for churchyard – Clerk

21. Items for the next meeting

- 21.1 Cllr Brown gave details of a possible proposal for a “feature” parish map to be created for placement on the triangle, showing points of interest in the area. Cllrs indicated they would be interested in this and are happy for Cllr Brown to bring a full proposal to the next meeting.
- 21.2 2024/25 Budgeting

22. Date and time of next Parish Council meeting – Monday 13th November 2023, 7:30pm

The Chair closed the meeting.

Annex 1. Payments Authorised

Payments - September 2023			
Invoice date	Payee	Description	Amount
14/08/2023	Ilton Parish Council	Audit Training (split cost of Clerk training)	£ 8.75
19/07/2023	G Wagen James	Grass cutting (June)	£ 183.60
19/07/2023	G Wagen James	Grass cutting (July)	£ 183.60
01/09/2023	R Leitch	The Allotments	£ 257.50
05/09/2023	K Larsson	Clerk Salary (M5)	£ 342.38
05/09/2023	HMRC	PAYE	£ 12.60
05/09/2023	K Larsson	Admin expenses	£ 66.88
04/10/2023	K Larsson	Clerk Salary (M6)	£ 341.78
04/10/2023	K Larsson	PAYE	£ 13.20
Payments made since last meeting - NONE			