

ALLER PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 9th January 2023
at 7.30pm, Aller Village Hall

Present:

Cllrs Tucker, Brown, Vernoit, Geary and Dunton

Cllr R Wilkins

3 Members of the public.

Mrs K Larsson (Clerk)

The meeting commenced after an Open Session for Aller residents. No items were raised.

1. **Apologies for absence:** Apologies were received from Cllrs Peppard and 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 duly signed by the Chair.
4. **Parish Council Vacancy:** There was 1 vacancy on the Parish Council and an interest in joining the council has been expressed by Mr Jon Perkins. Cllr Tucker proposed co-opting Mr Perkins to the vacant position, seconded by Cllr Brown and councillors voted unanimously in favour. Mr Perkins read out and signed the declaration of acceptance of office, witnessed by the Clerk, and was duly co-opted onto the council and joined the meeting.
5. **District and County Councillors reports:**

Cllr Tucker advised that the District Council is winding down. He advised there has been work on looking at the Section 106 and CIL funding that has been accrued to try and ensure this is transferred to the new authority. The Audit Committee has been struggling to complete its review and has needed to invest more time which has resulted in additional audit fees.

Cllr Wilkins advised the new Somerset Council branding has been launched, which was completed in-house to be as cost effective as possible. An update on the proposals for Local Community Networks is due on 10th January.
6. **Planning Applications:** 22/03339/S73A - Aller Court Solar Park Limited, Aller Court Farm Church Path Aller Langport Somerset. PROPOSAL: S73A application to vary condition 2 (approved plans) of 14/04300/FUL (as amended by 19/01587/S73A (condition 1)) for Proposed solar park comprising the erection of solar arrays, inverters, transformers, equipment housing, security fencing, internal tracks, ancillary equipment and ecological mitigation measure. S73A application to enable installation of alternative inverters at slightly increased height.

BSR Energy attended the meeting to explain the variation and answer any questions from the council or public. Councillors voted unanimously in favour of the variation to the approved planning application.
7. **Finance**
 - 7.1 **Finance statement [Clerk]:** An up-to-date income and expenditure spreadsheet was presented to councillors. As requested, this now includes a summary of the position against the budget.
 - 7.2 **The following cheques were raised:** Clerks Salary, HMRC. – All payments were all unanimously agreed by councillors.
 - 7.3 **2023/24 Budget and Precept:** Taking into account previously agreed ring-fenced values for village works, budget and precept calculations were presented by the Clerk. It was noted that the Parish Council have healthy reserves but need to ensure that income from the precept and other sources will cover future costs. After discussions, two proposals were made, and a vote was taken to decide majority support as follows:

Cllr Vernoit proposed £11,470, seconded by Cllr Brown – 4 in favour
Cllr Perkins proposed £10,750, seconded by Cllr Dunton – 2 in favour

It was resolved to set the precept for 2023/24 at £11,470.

8. King Charles III Coronation

Parties who organised the Jubilee celebrations last year would like to undertake arrangements for the coronation. Cllr Tucker proposed an amount of £500 is allocated to put towards the costs of the celebrations, seconded by Cllr Perkins. Councillors voted unanimously in favour of the proposal.

9. Community Engagement

9.1 Parish Survey Summary – A draft summary was circulated to councillors and it was agreed to distribute a hard copy to all households, ensuring those who are not online are informed of the results.

10. Village Maintenance – Cllr Tucker reported that the recreation field fence has been repaired.

10.1 The area to be used for the Queen Elizabeth Memorial Walk is being cleared and a weed suppression membrane laid. After making enquiries as to a suitable variety, Cllr Tucker proposed planting of Hornbeam hedge to create the walk, of which approximately 100m would be required at a maximum cost of £500. Ongoing maintenance of the hedge is expected to be undertaken by the existing methods of upkeep on the recreation ground, and the cost would not be expected to increase. Councillors voted unanimously in favour of the proposal. Cllr Tucker will investigate the need for collars and advise.

10.2 Footpath Improvements: River Parrett Walk – Cllr Tucker reported that during winter months, it isn't possible to walk the footpath as it is too muddy and uneven underfoot and has an idea to create a walkway along the edge of the fence. The whole programme is estimated to cost c.£1,500. Cllr Tucker is liaising with Ann Diment at SALC as part of the health and well-being programme and will be presenting the idea to Langport Town Council in March with a view to gaining financial support from them.

11. Highways – Works to Aller Drove to repair potholes is complete. A sunken manhole cover at Belmont House has been repaired for a second time.

12. Aller recreation area – No updates at this time.

13. Aller Village Hall – The village hall has been quiet due to the Christmas and new year period.

14. Aller burial board – There has been an updated memorial, new plot reserved and an interment. A request has been raised for a handrail from the church to the cemetery.

15. Previous actions not covered by other agenda items

- a. Phone boxes for produce facility – use in under review by Glastonbury TC. Cllr Tucker will update when there is further news.
- b. Bristol gates installation – Cllr Tucker will collect and instal these in springtime when drier.
- c. Noticeboard renovation – In progress.

16. Correspondence

- a. Cllr Tucker was pleased to advise that Mary Lockyer is being recognised in the SCC Chairs Awards for Community Service following nomination by the parish council last year. The awards ceremony is being held in February.
- b. A new code of conduct is due to be extended to town and parish councils which will include the Police and Fire services as well as national parks.

17. Any other urgent matters –

A tree has fallen on one of the footpaths which may need a tree surgeon to remove. Cllr Tucker will look into it and advise.

18. Summary of Actions

- a. Thank you letter to be sent to Mrs P's for the village Christmas tree - Clerk
- b. Engage with organisers for Coronation event – JV
- c. Hard copy survey to be arranged with progress updates – Clerk
- d. Hedging for QEII memorial walk to be ordered & quote for collars (if necessary) – GT
- e. Costs for installation of handrail from church to cemetery – GT
- f. Removal of fallen tree on footpath - GT

19. Date and time of next meeting – 13th March 2023, 7:30pm.