

ALLER PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 13th March 2023
at 7.30pm, Aller Village Hall

Present:

Cllrs Tucker, Brown, Vernoit, Geary, Perkins and Dunton

County Cllrs Wilkins and Stanton

7 Members of the public

Mrs Larsson (Clerk)

The meeting commenced after an Open Session for Aller residents. Those in attendance were interested in agenda item 10.2, which Cllr Tucker agreed to move to an earlier point in the meeting for discussion and members of the public could make comments at that time. No further items were raised.

1. **Apologies for absence:** Apologies were received from Cllr Peppard.
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. **District and County Councillor Reports:** The district council has mostly wound down and is now in the process of transferring services to the Somerset Council. Cllr Tucker commented that having been involved with the district council since 1983, he is finding it a very sad time, being an end of an era with the district council having achieved many great things over the years.
5. **Ridley Hill Traffic Concerns:** Members of the public commented on concerns of the speed of vehicles as well as the narrow section of road where HGV's have caused damage to properties trying to pass each other. It was commented that vehicles are regularly mounting the pavement where the road is narrow. Cllr Tucker gave information on previous measures which have been put in place including a footpath being created away from the road, reduction of the camber at Ridley Hill when re-surfaced and additional road markings to warn drivers. Initial contact has been made with County Highways and Traffic Management, who have agreed to assess the signage and road markings to ensure they are sufficient and in good order. After extensive discussion of the issues, it was agreed that Cllr Dunton would work to compile further information and evidence of the issues, including specific locations of issues, Speed Watch data and any video evidence that is available from residents. This will be used to gain further advice from Highways and Traffic Management so next actions can be considered.
6. **Finance**
 - 6.1 **Finance statement [Clerk]:** An up-to-date income and expenditure spreadsheet was presented to councillors. No queries were raised.
 - 6.2 **Payments for authorisation:** The schedule of payments was approved by councillors. A list of payments is annexed at the end of the minutes.
7. **Planning Applications:**
 - 7.1 22/03274/FUL – Hill Farm, Wood Drove Huish Episcopi TA10 0DD.
Proposal: Retention of a small cabin for private and holiday use and of associated vehicular access (retrospective application)
Councillors discussed the application in detail, and voted unanimously to object to the application on the basis that the site is located within a site of special scientific interest (SSSI), and the effect of the development on the visual amenity of the area with a prominent position overlooking the village.
 - 7.2 22/03275/FUL - Hill Farm, Wood Drove Huish Episcopi TA10 0DD
Proposal: Use of land for the siting of 5 canvas lodges / tents for holiday use & associated farm shop and the retention of associated vehicular access (retrospective application)
Councillors discussed the application and had no objections.

8. Code of Conduct: The proposed code of conduct was circulated to councillors in advance of the meeting for review. This version of the code of conduct was produced by the Local Government Association in association with district councils and SALC with the purpose of being up to date with current matters such as social media and to align the standards which all councils are working to. Councillors voted unanimously to adopt the Code of Conduct.

9. Statement of Community Involvement

It was agreed that a consolidated response would be submitted to the public consultation, which relates to the draft statement regarding planning policy. Councillors agreed on the following comments:

- Consideration needs to be given to the impact of flooding surrounding areas as a result of large developments.
- Parish council comments should be considered with more weight as they have important local knowledge and are representing the local community, many of whom will attend parish council meetings to give their views register comments about applications.
- Deadlines for comments are usually 21 days, but small councils can struggle to meet these deadlines as meetings are held infrequently and are often difficult to organise at short notice and often incur additional costs of venue hire on already stretched budgets.

10. Traffic Calming - Wheelie Bin Stickers: Councillors discussed the possible provision of stickers for the bins and recycling boxes on the high street to remind drivers of the 30mph limit. It was noted that the Speed Watch group have provided stickers in the past, and suggested that they be consulted for their feedback on this prior to agreeing purchasing further stickers. ACTION: The Clerk to contact Speed Watch group for feedback.

11. Village Maintenance and Improvement Works

- 11.1 Annual Work Plan: Following publishing of the survey results and distribution to all households, Cllr Brown suggested production of an annual work plan to give visibility of works being undertaken to parishioners and track the works against previously agreed budgets. After discussion, it was agreed that Cllr Brown would draft a work plan and councillors will provide costs and progress updates for inclusion in the plan.
- 11.2 Re-positioning Dog Waste Bin: Cllr Brown requested councillors consider relocation of the bin from the 'triangle' to make this area more aesthetically pleasing, with the addition of a planter/display. The decision will be deferred until costs and feasibility of re-location of the bin are advised by Cllr Brown.
- 11.3 Flower Troughs: Cllr Brown proposed two new wooden flower troughs, one at each end of the village. The cost for each will be £60 and it was suggested to make a call for plants and see what can be sourced before purchasing any. Councillors voted unanimously in favour of the proposal. Cllr Tucker suggested also installing a cattle trough along the village hall wall. He will look for one and provide an update.

12. Soldier Silhouettes: Cllr Brown proposed purchase of two soldier silhouettes for use on Armistice Day at a cost of £40 each. Councillors voted in majority in favour of the proposal.

13. King Charles III Coronation Events: Cllr Vernoit has a meeting with organisers this week to discuss ideas. An amount of £500 was allocated in the 2023/24 budget for the events, and it was agreed that Cllr Vernoit should agree arrangements with organisers and report these back to the council.

In addition to other organised events, Cllr Vernoit suggested the woodland area at the recreation area could be tidied up as part of the volunteer day on 8th May, which councillors agreed to.

14. Clerks SLCC Membership & CiLCA Training: A breakdown of costs was presented to councillors, which has been included within the 2023/24 budget. Councillors voted unanimously for the Clerk to arrange the membership and training.

15. Clerk Mobile Phone: The Clerk is currently utilising a personal mobile phone for council business, but requested contribution towards a dedicated number and handset for use with two other councils for which she is Clerk. Councillors agreed unanimously for the council to contribute up to £25 for the purchase of a handset and £2.50 each month for line rental.

16. Updates on other areas:

- 16.1 Highways: No significant items for report. It was commented that there is a lot of litter along highways at the moment.
- 16.2 Recreation Area: A number of repairs have been undertaken of the equipment. A safety inspection is due to take place in April which may highlight some further improvement works that are required.
- 16.3 Village Hall: A second table tennis table is being purchased. Maintenance of the defibrillator is up to date. There will be defibrillator training on 18th April.
- 16.4 Burial Board: There will be a fee for a memorial plaque received.

17. 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.

18. Previous actions not covered by other agenda items

19. The fallen tree on one of the footpaths will hopefully be removed later this week. It will be carried out as soon as an accompanying person can assist due to risk assessment of the use of equipment.

20. Correspondence

- a. The Clerk received communication enquiring as to whether the council supported a vote of no confidence in MO, David Warburton from Frome Town Council. Councillors agreed that the current lack of representation from the MP was a concern and that it should be addressed. The Clerk will communicate this response to Frome Town Council.

21. Any other urgent matters: None raised.

22. Summary of Actions

- a. Follow up with Traffic Management/Highways regarding site visit – Clerk/ED
- b. Approval of dog waste bin location – Clerk
- c. Costs for proposed floral display on 'triangle' - JB
- d. SCI Response – Clerk
- e. Draft annual work plan - JB/Clerk
- f. Contact Speed Watch ref. wheelie bin stickers – Clerk
- g. Source cattle trough for village hall - GT

23. Date and time of next meeting – Annual Parish Meeting 17th May 2023, 7:00pm, followed immediately by the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council.

Annex 1. Payments Authorised

Payments authorised - March 2023				
Invoice date	Payee	Description	Amount	Chq #
26/01/2023	MACS Printing	Survey summary for all households	£ 29.44	1183
05/03/2023	K Larsson	Monthly Salary		1184
05/03/2023	HMRC	PAYE		1185
03/03/2023	SALC	Planning Training (JB, JV, JP, ED)	£ 75.00	1186
24/02/2023	Somerset Forge	Finger Post renovation	£ 1,026.00	1187
13/03/2023	K Larsson	Expenses - Stationery & mileage	£ 38.20	1188
09/03/2023	G Tucker	Village maintenance items	£ 374.49	1190
20/02/2023	O J Howley	Hedge cutting	£ 151.20	1189
Payments authorised since last meeting				
Invoice date	Payee	Description	Amount	
30/01/2023	G TUCKER	Hedging & associated items for Queen Elizabeth II walkwa	£ 631.35	1181
05/02/2023	K LARSSON	Salary (Jan)	£ 250.22	1179
05/02/2023	HMRC	PAYE (Jan)	£ 38.20	1182