

Draft minutes of meeting of Queen Camel Parish Council on Monday 18th March 2024 at 7:30pm, Marples Room, Queen Camel Memorial Hall

Present: Cllrs John Brendon (JB), Bryan Norman (BN), Phil Jones (PJ), Roy Lawrenson (RL), John Carnegie (JC), Philip Hall (PH), Dan Hewlett (DH)

Also present Clerk, Cherry Toop, and Somerset Councillor, Henry Hobhouse (HH) who joined during the open session

Eight members of the public were in attendance

JB welcomed everyone and advised Rosemary Heath-Coleman, a former chair of the Council, is unwell in Bristol Royal Infirmary. The Council sent its good wishes for a speedy recovery. Anyone wanting to send a card to Rosemary should contact the Clerk

Open Session

The condition of Blackwell Road, Green Lane and the nearby car park area were raised by members of the public and it was agreed to discuss these concerns under Highways on the agenda

03/01 The **apologies** for absence received from Cllr David Lowe and Somerset Councillor Kevin Messenger were noted and approved

03/02 BN declared an **interest** in item 03/07 Planning

03/03 The **minutes** of the Parish Council Meeting held on 15th January 2024 were APPROVED and signed as an accurate record by the Chairman. JB reminded the grant for The Camels Magazine needs to be paid. PJ advised the current bus service is ending but there will be a new service with a revised schedule from 15/04/2024

03/04 Somerset Councillor report

1. HH reported that Somerset Council had passed its budget for 2024/2025 taking into account using capital receipts (capitalisation)
2. Somerset Council has borrowed £150 million for training of staff for the new Agratas battery plant outside of Bridgwater which will employ 4000 staff. Income from business rates will be received in 3 years
3. A river water depth gauge will be installed by Camel bridge in April that connects to other warning systems. BN advised that attenuation ponds are needed between Sparkford and North/South Cadbury to prevent flooding.

03/05 The following items were noted from the **Clerk's report**

- a tree safety report is now needed. BN will arrange this at no cost
- a volunteer policy needs to be drafted. It was RESOLVED that PJ will action and bring to the next FPRC meeting

03/06 Highways and Traffic

1. A303 works – three attempts have been made to have a discussion with National Highways. BN will keep chasing

2. Drains and gutters – it was noted that nothing gets done by Somerset Council. HH reported he is not getting a response from planning or highways and has complained to portfolio holder Ros Wyke. He will ask her to get John Hammond (Planning) and John Nicholson (Highways) to talk to us (post meeting note - HH and John Nicholson visited Queen Camel on 19/03/2024)

3. Road conditions in and around the village

1. The condition of Blackwell Road which is crumbling and dangerous with no passing places was discussed. It was **RESOLVED** the parish council will write a letter to John Nicholson requesting an inspection of Blackwell Road to request passing places surfaced in tarmac or chippings are made available. There was a discussion about road closure signs and weight restrictions being needed when Wales bridge reopens

2. It was reported there are large potholes in Green Lane and its car park and a vehicle recently got stuck and had to be pushed out. It was reported that the lane is a restricted byway

4. HGV traffic on the Sutton Road

The situation continues to worsen and has been exacerbated by the temporary road closure on the Sutton Montis Road resulting in traffic being diverted along Sparkford Hill Lane which has no passing places. An HGV lorry overturned in the ditch at the weekend blocking the road. It was suggested to write a letter to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up , Housing and Communities requesting intervention or a high court injunction to stop the activity at Sutton Farm. It was **RESOLVED** the parish council, in conjunction with other parishes involved, should send a letter to the Secretary of State

03/07 Planning

[24/00090/HOU](#) The residents of Church Cottage in Church Path sought support from the parish council for their application to dismantle part of their front boundary wall and erect a new one. The planning officers have expressed informal concern that this change will spoil the vista to the Church. The residents explained cars do not fit into the existing garage and visitors use the car park at the west end by the pub. It was **RESOLVED** to send an urgent response to the planning team (and copy in HH) in support of the application as that will relieve parking in the village

[15/03942/FUL](#) Land North Of Primrose Lane (Combe Bottom) Mudford Yeovil Engineering works comprising the installation of two attenuation ponds and a landscape buffer, and associated development (GR 356975/118488). The application was discussed and it was **RESOLVED** to submit a comment indicating that the parish council fully endorsed the Mudford Parish Council's objections. The key issues are drainage concerns in the Cam and Yeo river area and the likely increase in traffic through Queen Camel, if the main development proceeds

03/08 Playing Field

1. Update and minutes received from the **PFMC meeting** on 05/02/2024 - The committee is to become a working group

A shortage of storage for equipment was reported and the recently sharpened gang mowers are again rusting in the field. PJ advised this had previously been discussed. There was no need apart from the gang mowers as there is currently sufficient space. There may be a need for space from other community users but a case with supporting evidence is required. It was **RESOLVED** this needs discussing by playing field committee at their next meeting.

2. **Ilchester Youth Football Club** had no fixtures last weekend. One payment is expected for previous matches

3. 8 submissions have been received for the **new play area**. A first discussion has taken place with the consultant. A further discussion is planned for later this week to make a decision. PJ has gained social media feedback on options. The car park and fencing was discussed. No fence work is incorporated in play area at this time as the only requirement is to prevent children running into traffic. DH – suggested fencing off the play field eastern edge from north to south. It was **RESOLVED** this will need to be considered separately

4. Terms of Reference for the Playing Field Committee (Pfc) (working group) - JB advised the Parish council needs to confirm what will it be called. Also, the Pfc needs a finance person (treasurer) and the position cannot be filled without Parish Council approval.

PJ recommended the following drafting changes in italics

3.1.1 'representatives from the *village sports clubs or other village organisations* using the PF or facilities adjacent to it'

3.1.5 'Members *will* act in good faith in the interests of the parish and whole community'

3.2.6 'Where the Pfc *or any member of it* considers that

3.3.2 'a page on the PC website. *WhatsApp Queen Camel Community Noticeboard*, and through the ...'

The Terms of Reference were **APPROVED** subject to the above changes being made

03/09 Local Community Network

1. JB reported on the last LCN meeting. It was **RESOLVED** JB will attend the next meeting in Queen Camel on 18/04/2024. HH reported that a youth group had been set up in Queen Camel and Emergency and Contingency planning workshops in Castle Cary

2. It was **RESOLVED** to defer buying back Highways Devolution Services as the Parish Council is not currently equipped to take them on

03/10 Neighbourhood Plan NP)

PH reported on the last NPWG meeting

- It is hoped that footpaths north of A303 will still be accessible when A303 works are complete

- Need to contact National Highways to get signage to mark footpaths

- No issues found North of A303, although some stiles are broken access is not obstructed

- The path up from Camel Hill Farm to the slip road should be checked to ensure accessibility after the A303 works.

- A list of projects on NP is being compiled for next meeting in May

Other possible projects/ issues were noted:

1. Playing Field storage, cycle paths and the old Medical Centre will be added to items on watch by the Clerk
2. The response to the Queen Camel Traffic and Highways email from Somerset Council Highways was very disappointing. A community speedwatch is needed to evidence there is a speed problem for a SID to be considered. There is funding for SIDs but only on evidence based approach
3. It was **RESOLVED** to have a register of tradesmen to undertake small local maintenance jobs. Everyone to let the Clerk know details of people who might be interested in helping

It was noted there are 8 bus stops in the village and each should have a timetable. However as signage is contrary to the NP and only 4 stops are regularly used, the posting of timetables will be delayed.

03/11 It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk will check other parish council websites for ideas for a simple Biodiversity policy and report back at the FPRC meeting in April. The need for a village environmental group was **NOTED**

03/12 The **Hedgehog Highway Project** was **CONSIDERED** but agreed not necessary to support

03/13 Invitations for the **Annual Village Meeting** have been sent out with responses to the Clerk. It was **CONFIRMED** that Sarah Dyke MP had been invited, subject to general election not being called

- 03/14** It was **RESOLVED** to review the **Village Maintenance Contract for mowing** at the end of the summer
- 03/15** The move to a **gov.uk domain** was **CONSIDERED** but agreed unnecessary
- 03/16** The email from **Victim Support** was **CONSIDERED**. PJ advised if they are applying for funding they will need to go through the grant process and evidence the support locally. It was **RESOLVED** the Clerk will respond and advise of the grant application process
- 03/17** PJ reported that a **Youth Group** for children aged 11-14 was set up in Queen Camel via the LCN due to the lack of youth activity locally. It has been suggested that a grant application is made to the Parish Council if needed when the 12 week funding ceases
- 03/18** The **Noticeboards** were discussed. It was **RESOLVED** to get quotes for replacement of the perspex or for a new noticeboard by the village stores. The Church Path noticeboard has recently been repaired
- 03/19** The **Budget** proposal for 2024-2025 was **APPROVED** subject to final review by FPRC in April. Precept is £24000 and, with additional receipts totals approximately £26500 with similar expenditure.
- 03/20 Finance**
1. the **RESERVES** statement was **DISCUSSED** with approval for the consultant fee and legal fees to be allocated as a cost settled by the Community Benefit Fund
 2. The following payments were **NOTED**
 - 1) SLR Outdoor Maintenance invoice for Village Maintenance Contract £3108
 - 2) Battens solicitors legal fees £2624.40
 - 3) Play area inspection £127.20
 3. The Lee Holmes invoice for gang mower repairs £1024.87 was **APPROVED**
 4. The bank balances of £92917 on 14/03/2024 were **NOTED**

JB thanked PJ for all his hard work with the social media channels which now has 123 Whats App Community members though this is a small percentage of the total adult population of 700. Feedback on a play area path is welcomed

The Clerk will enquire about a police report for future meetings

Meeting closed 21.20 pm

Date of next meetings

Parish Council meeting 20/05/2024

Finance, Personnel and Risk Committee 15/04/2024

Playing Field Committee (working group) 22/04/2024

Neighbourhood Plan Working Group 08/05/2024 (now deferred)

Annual Village Meeting 17/05/2024

Flood Committee (working group) to be confirmed