



QUEEN CAMEL PARISH COUNCIL

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**Minutes of the Full Parish Council Meeting held via Zoom Conference Call
Facilities on Monday 27th April 2021 at 7:30pm**

Public Question Time

There were 10 members of the public virtually in attendance during the Zoom meeting.

Immediately prior to the meeting members of the public were provided with the opportunity to speak. Members of the public were asked speak for up to the prescribed 15 minutes in total.

A member of the public reported that sewage has been discharged into River Cam by Wessex Water. This item was discussed under Item 10/04.

A comment about the Playing Field was agreed to be discussed under the item 08/04.

Present: Chairman Sue Gettings, together with Councillors Brian Hewlett, Dan Hewlett, Kathy Grainger, John Brendon, Michael Baker and Bryan Norman.

Phil Jones and Rachael Malton joined at item 07/04.

Also present:

County and District councillor Mike Lewis. Parish Clerk and RFO Stephen Hill and Incoming Parish Clerk and RFO Elaine Owen

01/04 Apologies for absence

none

02/04 Declarations of interest

Councillor Gettings declared a personal interest with respect to the Playing Field Committee.

03/04 Minutes of the previous meetings to be confirmed as correct

Council approved as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 9th March 2021 to be signed by the Chair at a later date.

**It was RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meetings held on
Monday 9th March 2021, as an accurate record of the meetings.**

For 6, Against 0, Abstained 0

<http://queencamelpc.org.uk/meetings/agendas-minutes-2021/>

04/04 Action Points from Previous Meeting (all other matters are on the Agenda)

Feedback was received from SSDC regarding the Climate Change Emergency Fund. This will be posted on the website. (See also 07/04)

05/04 To receive County and District Councillor reports.

County and District Councillor Lewis reported that the consultation for the future structure of Somerset local authorities has now closed. The result is expected in June/July.

It was asked why council tax bills show an increase of 2.6% for Queen Camel Parish Council even though the precept was not raised at all. It was explained that the rise is because there are fewer households contributing in full in the area, more people using the benefit system (and an increase in single householders) so individual houses have to pay more.

County and District Councillor Lewis also advised that QCPC should write to both SSDC, SCC and the MP's to ask for pressure to be put on Wessex Water about phosphates and river discharges. Chairman agreed QCPC would do so.

06/04 Co-option of Councillors to two casual vacancies

Five applications were received. Two arrived after the deadline so were not eligible to be progressed. Council agreed that a secret ballot would be fairest.

It was RESOLVED to elect the two councillors via a secret ballot
For 6, Against 0, Abstained 1

The Chairman invited the three candidates to make a short presentation and then answer questions from Councillors. Members of the public remained in the meeting, but each applicant was placed in the waiting room until it was their turn to speak.

All members of the public were then placed in the waiting room while the council held the secret ballot.

Council ELECTED Phil Jones and Rachel Malton to the Council.

In giving the results the Chairman thanked the three and said they were all strong candidates who each had a lot to offer the Council. The two successful candidates were congratulated and the remaining candidate encouraged to stay in touch with parish matters.

County and District Councillor Mike Lewis also congratulated the candidates.

Then Phil Jones and Rachel Malton were informed that they will need to sign a Declaration remotely after the meeting and return a scanned copy to the clerk. They both agreed and were then invited to join and to participate in the meeting.

07/04 Applications for bids to SCC Climate Emergency Community Fund

Bids were submitted by 12 January 2020 and Council provided further information by 17 February 2021. Unfortunately, Queen Camel were not successful in their bid.
<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/waste-planning-and-land/climate-emergency/somerset-climate-emergency-community-fund-2020-2021/>.

Councillor Gettings reported that feedback on the three Applications for funds had been received from SCC and would be up-loaded onto the PC Website.

08/04 Update on lease to Playing Field Committee (PFC) and Working Group

The QCPC Playing Field Working Group and the Playing Fields Committee Working Group now need to prepare to make their final recommendations to the Parish Council.

It was RESOLVED that the Parish Council Playing Fields Working Group should meet at 5pm on Tuesday 18th May at Councillor Baker's premises
For 9, Against 0, Abstained 0

It was RESOLVED that the Playing Fields Committee Working Group should be invited to join the above meeting at 6.30pm
For 9, Against 0, Abstained 0

It was RESOLVED that there would be an Extraordinary Full Council meeting at 7pm on Thursday 20/05/2021 in the Memorial Hall at which the council will make a decision on the lease.
For 9, Against 0, Abstained 0

09/04 Up-date on Neighbourhood Watch (NW) Scheme

Council received an update from Councillor Gettings. 32 volunteers are now active and most have contacted their neighbours to introduce the scheme to them.

Alerts received included vandalism to the Pavilion, to the Old School Site and the Tin Shed; sheds being broken into and a scam mimicking post office asking for unpaid postage to be paid.

A meeting date will be set for after 21st June 2021, once Covid-19 restrictions are lifted.

10/04 Flood Committee

Councillor Norman has completed the Road Closure Committee equipment stock take. A brief summary was given and the full list will be sent to the clerk.

Council RESOLVED to transfer equipment from Road Closure committee to the QCPC
For 8 Against 0, Abstained 1

Meeting closed to allow a member of the public to explain that there is also a quantity of high vis jackets in the Marples Room at the Memorial Hall.

A second member of the public explained they had received advice that only SCC Highways are allowed to close roads, but that QCPC are permitted to put signs out saying 'Flood'.

11/04 Council Response to the Secretary of State (SoS) Development Consent Order (DCO) for A303

This item was deferred. The Chairman and Councillors thanked Councillor Norman for his efforts to seek improvements to the proposed A303 junction design. Councillor Dan Hewlett is liaising with Councillor Lewis.

12/04 Highway Works

No update has yet been provided by SCC regarding:
a) **Wales Bridge**

OR

b) Blackwell Road, Gason Lane and Traits Lane

A letter has been received from a resident asking what is happening. QCPC will write a chasing letter to SCC.

It was noted that the road has been marked out that may indicate work is imminent

13/04 Footpaths and Environment

QCPC Environment Warden Councillor Grainger provided an update. Strimmer training took place on 16 April 2021 for Councillor Gettings and Councillor Grainger. A new strimmer will be delivered soon by Martin Cooper, Right of Way Volunteer and Trails Officer will be visiting on 10 May at 2.00pm.

A resident has complained that both dog bins and other bins have been overflowing. This has been reported and County and District Councillor Lewis was thanked for assisting with the issue.

Some residents have emptied home grass cuttings on to the public verge. This is not acceptable and will be mentioned in *The Camels* magazine.

A resident reported an issue with trees in Mildmay Drive. There is a backlog, but it is understood that this will be dealt with in time

An approach was made to the medical centre to see if they would be willing to be a recycling point for medicine pill foils. They were not able to help at this time. Superdrug stores will recycle these.

The Green Lane kissing gate keeps being damaged. It is understood that damage is caused by cyclists who are frustrated that they can't get through it easily.

14/04 SWP and Recycling

Councillor Grainger reported that a 'blue bag' scheme is being introduced in QC for plastics. Plenty of publicity and information for residents will be provided by SCC leading up to the introduction of the scheme around the end June 2021.

15/04 Planning Applications

a) 21/00056/S73A Abercomyn Solar Limited

PROPOSAL: Application to vary planning condition 7 of approval 13/01697/FUL to extend the life of the solar farm from 25 years to 40 years.

LOCATION: Land OS 4200 Sutton Montis Road Queen Camel Yeovil BA22 7HW.
Comments by 10 March 2021; extension of time to comment requested 16 March 2021.

Mr David Manly from Abercomyn had been expected to join the meeting to give a briefing but was not present.

Council RESOLVED to support this application in principle

For 7, Against 1, Abstained 1

16/04 Solar Farm Extension Impact on Community Benefit Fund

Council is asked to **NOTE** the Planning Application for extension of the solar farm from 25 to 40 years and **CONSIDER** any implications for the Community Benefit financial contribution, which is administered by the Council.

It was RESOLVED that QCPC negotiate with Abercomyn to seek some community benefit for the added years

For 9, Against 0, Abstained 0

17/04 Notification of Planning Applications

Council noted the Planning Applications about which the Council has received Notification but is not required to be consulted. These mainly relate to trees.

18/04 Previous Planning Applications

Council noted the Planning Applications which have been Decided (Permitted, Permitted with Conditions, Refused, Permission not Required) or Pending Decision.

19/04 Correspondence (not included elsewhere in the Agenda)

Already commented above under 12/04

20/04 Annual Parish Council and Annual Village (Parish) Meeting

The Annual Parish Council will be merged with the next Full Council meeting and the Agenda will be issued tomorrow (Weds).

Councillor Gettings explained that it was impossible to hold a Village meeting before 21st June as numbers in the Memorial Hall are limited to 30 persons in total until Covid-19 restrictions are lifted.

Council RESOLVED to hold the Annual Village meeting on Friday 17th September 2021.

For 7, Against 1, Abstained 1

21/04 Community Benefit Fund (CBF)

The last meeting of the Parish Council agreed Councillors for the Community Benefit Fund Panel and has advertised for 5 members of the public to join the Panel. Chairman will write and thank the four candidates who have already applied, but as this is not enough there will need to be a re-advertisement.

Council RESOLVED to re-advertise the vacancies for the Community Benefit Panel

For 8, Against 0, Abstained 1

23/04 SCC Land at Playing Field

County and District Councillor Mike Lewis wrote to Oliver Woodhams, Head of Corporate property at SCC to see if QCPC might negotiate the transfer of the land from SCC to QCPC.

In response Oliver Woodhams has explained that, as a former school playing field, there is a statutory requirement to obtain the consent of the Secretary of State for Education to any transfer of this land within 10 years of it ceasing to be used as school playing field – a process governed by Section 77 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. Obtaining such consent would be extremely onerous and expensive and is not something they have the resources to do and there is by no surety of success. This being the case, they will need to wait until September 2026 (when that 10 year expires) before considering whether the land can be transferred or sold to the Parish Council.

SCC are able to offer the Parish Council a Licence to cover the period to 2026. The Parish Council would need to cover SCC's legal costs in preparing the licence agreement.

In order to replace the play equipment QCPC will need a longer lease as funding bodies will require at least 10 years remaining with no break clauses. It was also suggested that such a licence should make provision for the land transfer.

The question of who owned and maintained the play equipment was raised.

The Chairman closed the meeting temporarily to allow a parishioner to speak. It was revealed that the play equipment was transferred to the Playing Field Trust who insure it and inspect it regularly. A copy of their latest Health and Safety Assessment for the equipment was requested and refused by the PFC Chairman. Stating that it was confidential to the PF Committee.

It was noted that to facilitate negotiation with SCC the documentation regarding ownership and maintenance of the equipment and land need to be shared with QCPC.

County and District Councillor Lewis is happy to support site meeting with a member of staff from the SCC property team.

Council RESOLVED to request a site meeting with Cllr Lewis and SCC representative

For 9, Against 0, Abstained 0

Council RESOLVED to ask the Playing Field Committee for copies of all relevant documentation pertinent to the piece of land

For 8 Against 0, Abstained 1

24/04 To Authorise Accounts for Payment (February 2021)

A copy of Local Council Administration by Arnold-Baker the key reference text for councils is required by the clerk. A discount on the list price will be sought.

Council RESOLVED to AUTHORISE a payment for c£149 for the book

For 9, Against 0, Abstained 0

25/04 Confidential Business

Council RESOLVED to exclude the Press and public from this point on as the remaining item relates to a confidential employment matter.

For 9 Against 0, Abstained 0

All members of the public now left the meeting. Elaine Owen was placed in the waiting room.

26/04 Appointment of new Parish Clerk

Council interviewed Parish Clerk candidates 31 March 2021 and has taken up references.

Council RESOLVED to confirm the appointment of Elaine Owen as the new Parish Clerk and RFO
For 9 Against 0, Abstained 0

Elaine Owen was permitted to join the meeting and received the congratulations of the Chairman. Thanks were also extended to Stephen Hill for his hard work and support and expertise with good wishes in his new role as Honiton Town Clerk.

Meeting closed at 10pm

Signed.....*S. Hettings*.....
Date*04/05/21*.....

Recording deleted Elaine Owen 14/6/21