

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

Present - Councillors John Brendon (JB), Bryan Norman (BN), Angus Davidson (AD), Phil Jones (PJ), John Carnegie (JC), Philip Hall (PH), David Lowe (DL) Dan Hewlett (DH), Roy Lawrenson (RL)

Somerset Cllr Henry Hobhouse (HH) joined at 11/07

4 of the public were in attendance including Kathy Grainger (KG) and Martin Lilley (ML)

Open session – no matters not on the agenda were raised

11/01 No **apologies** for absence were received however JB confirmed HH would be late

11/02 There were no **Interests** to declare in any items on the agenda

11/03 Following deletion of a duplicated word at 09/06 2. the **minutes** of the Parish Council Meeting held on 16/09/2024 were **APPROVED** and signed by the chairman

11/04 It was **RESOLVED** that the press and public shall be excluded from the meeting for 11/23 -7. by reason of the Staff-in-Confidence nature of the item in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 s 1(2)

11/05 Somerset Councillor HH reported

- meetings with National Highways to discuss the flooding on the A303 were requested at the official opening on 14/11/2024
- Rights of Way Footpaths on both sides of the A303 are to be dedicated on 20/11/2024
- the Chairman of Hazlegrove School has agreed for the footpath to be upgraded to bridleway if it is fenced off
- the bridleway from Limekiln to Sparkford Woods needs to go to appeal. It was **NOTED** that landowners are concerned about security of animals straying onto the road if gates are left open

11/06 There were no items arising from the **Clerk's Report** to discuss

11/07 Highways and Traffic updates

1. **A303 works update:** JB reported he attended the official opening. Concern was raised about GPS still directing traffic through the village. The Blackwell Road repairs remain unaddressed from damage during A303 works
2. **Drains and Gutters:** The drains in Church Path remain blocked and are awaiting South Western Heritage advice to Highways. Generally in the village, drains are full of detritus and there is concern they will collapse if not properly maintained. Kerb gutters also need regular clearing. Home owners or volunteers are needed to clear them. JB will post another request for this in The Camels magazine. All problems need to be recorded and reported to Somerset Council for attention. It was **NOTED** that to ensure the drains and kerbs are not obstructed by parked cars, the parish council needs to be advised of the date for planned maintenance by Somerset Council
3. **Road conditions in and around the village:** No update has been received on the repair of Wales and Packhorse bridges. It was **NOTED** that Camel Bridge still needs resurfacing

11/08 Planning

1. Planning application **24/02370/LBC at Wales Farm Barn Church Path Wales** was **DISCUSSED**. It was **RESOLVED** to make no comment
2. JB gave an update of the recent meeting with Principal Planning Officer, Nikki White, regarding application **19/01830/OUT - West Camel Road, Queen Camel**. The main points were
 - consideration of clustering rather than pepper potting for affordable housing properties

- the affordable housing will be offered to the Community Land Trust in the first instance
- provision to be made for suitable access from other potential nearby developments

It was **NOTED** that the size of the units raises affordability concerns. Also, that parish councils are not notified about Pre-Apps made to the planning team

There is a need for rationalisation of the speed limit throughout the village – HH will raise this with Somerset Council

11/09 Flood Committee

ML reported there will be no second draft of the **S19 report**. It was **RESOLVED** to amend the response that ML has prepared with JB's comments for submission by the Clerk to Somerset Council by 22/11/2024. It was **NOTED** the Report has missed the fundamental issue of what happened in May 2023 with the tidal wave not being explained. A positive outcome is that the responsibility of landowners to clear drains and culverts has been highlighted

11/10 Playing Field

1. KG reported steady progress for the **PFWG**. Although people are using the field there are no football bookings after the end of the cricket season.
2. It was **RESOLVED** to keep the **budget** at £4200 for 2025/2026 with the asset purchase fund being used, if needed, for replacement of larger equipment items. It was also noted that consideration be given to the replacement of the gang mowers and tractor with modern equipment.
3. Dog fouling is a problem and this will not be resolved by fencing the play area. Incidents of fouling need to be reported to the police as antisocial behaviour to assist the PFWG in attempting to get dogs banned. Trees need to be pollarded by the pavilion and trimmed in play area.
4. The need for **Community Storage** was **DISCUSSED**. JC reported the Old School is a possibility but it has not been approached. Concerns were raised about the suitability of the location due to flood risk and cost as the Old School is not owned by the parish council. A longer term option is the new pavilion. It was **NOTED** that individuals are responsible for storage of items they own.

JC said he was resigning as parish councillor and left the meeting

11/11 Finance, Personnel & Risk Committee (FPRC)

1. JB gave an update from the **FPRC meeting** on 04/11/2024 which was held as a working group one due to being inquorate
2. Approval of the minutes of the meeting on 15/04/2024 was **DEFERRED** to the next FPRC meeting
3. The financial statements for Q1 and Q2 were **DISCUSSED** and the **RESERVES** statement was **APPROVED**
4. It was **RESOLVED** to build in an increase of 5% to take account of inflation and advice from Somerset Council (see 11/12 below). The precept and budget will be finalised at the January meeting. The main items are maintenance of the Playing field

11/12 The letter from Somerset Council's Leader Bill Reavens was **CONSIDERED**. It was **NOTED** a reserve will need to be built into the budget for next year to offset services likely to be devolved from Somerset Council

11/13 DL reported on the **NPWG meeting** on 30/09/2024 which discussed

- The planning matters on the West Camel Road and field by the GPs' surgery (see 11/08.2)
- The need for a Speedwatch campaign to gather views on speed, volume of traffic and HGVs
- Condition of footpaths and aim to get Somerset Council to maintain those they have responsibility for cutting twice a year (Laurel Lane, Dark Lane, Grace Martins Lane and off Gason Lane). Volunteers are needed for basic maintenance of other footpaths a few times a year
- A **Playing Field Development Working Group** meeting will be arranged for new year

- 11/14** PJ discussed the report prepared following the **Road Safety Meeting** on 02/10/2024.
- **Speed Indicator Devices (SIDS) and 20 mph limit.** Volunteers have come forward for both Community Speed Watch and Lorry Watch groups; however as there is no coordinator the groups cannot be progressed. It was **NOTED** there are 2 pinch points in the village that aim to support speed reduction along with the many parked cars. It was noted that the right turn out of Church Path lacked good visibility and Somerset Council could be approached to put a “slow” or “20” roundel on the southbound A359. There is currently no funding available from Somerset Council for dropped kerbs. There are specific requirements on the positioning of SIDs including how far they are from a change of speed limit sign. As opinion was divided on the speeding concerns it was **RESOLVED** to form a working group to include DL and BN with PJ as consultant. The need to consider impact versus cost was **NOTED** to ensure any financial support commitment, if any, is justified
 - **HGV activity from Sutton Farm.** The recent email from Somerset Council was **DISCUSSED**. It appears Somerset Council may be reviewing a different plan of the soil levels. **HH** will ask the Planning Service Manager, Dawn de Vries if there is another drawing which forms part of the planning approval Heavy Goods Vehicles breaching the weight restriction should be reported to the police as Anti-Social Behaviour; however it was **NOTED** the report needs to evidence the vehicle’s registration number entering, travelling through and exiting the restricted distance on the A359 without stopping
- 11/15** BN was unable to attend the last **Local Community Network meeting**. It was **RESOLVED** that JB and BN will virtually attend the next one on 22/01/2025
- 11/16** It was **RESOLVED** the field next to the GPs’ surgery should be registered as an **Asset of Community Value** in connection with the Localism Act 2011
- 11/17** The need for an **additional Emergency and Contingency Plan** beyond the Flood Emergency Plan was **DISCUSSED** but not supported. It was **RESOLVED** that the Memorial Hall will be registered as a **Community Place of Safety** with Somerset Council in the event of an emergency and AD will advise the Hall Committee at its next meeting
- 11/18** The **Local Plan Early Engagement** exercise was **DISCUSSED**. It was **RESOLVED** that JB will share views with the Clerk for feedback to Somerset Council referring to the Neighbourhood Plan
- 11/19** The Clerk will liaise with the Memorial Hall bookings secretary regarding meetings in April as there appears to be no meeting on 14th April and next FPRC meeting to be confirmed
- 11/20** It was **RESOLVED** no response was needed to the correspondence regarding dissatisfaction with Wessex Internet’s decision to withdraw broadband installation in certain properties in the village as more installations have now been offered
- 11/21** The email request for the parish council to purchase a plaque for the War Memorial in Taunton was **CONSIDERED** but not supported
- 11/22** It was **RESOLVED** to readopt the following policies
1. Equality and Diversity policy
 2. Dignity at Work policy
 3. Grievance policy
 4. Safeguarding policy
 5. FPRC Terms of Reference

11/23 Finance

1. The **bank balances** as at 31/10/2024 were Deposit account £50120.47 and £1567.87
2. The **bank reconciliations for Q1 and Q2** were **APPROVED** for signing by the chairman and clerk
3. **VAT reclaims** have been submitted together for 2022-2023 (£1702.23) 2023-2024 (£2657.77) and 2024-30/09/2024 (£16099.98). So far only £1702.23 has been received
4. The renewal electricity tariff options for the Pavilion was **DISCUSSED**. It was **APPROVED** for British Gas Lite on a 3 year contract to be the new provider
5. The appointment of an **internal auditor** for 2024/2025 was **DISCUSSED**. It was **APPROVED** that Simon Pritchard should be appointed subject to a fee within 15% of this year's fee and the Clerk will contact Simon for a quote
6. The Clerk advised the printer no longer works and suggested replacement with an Eco-tank A4 printer for savings to be made on replacement ink cartridges. It was **APPROVED** to purchase an Eco-tank printer at a cost no more than £400.00 and to dispose of the existing printer at a recycling centre
7. The **NALC National Salary Pay Scales for 2024/2025** was **APPROVED** with back payment of clerk salary from 01/04/2024
8. The PATA Payroll payment of £15 for calculation of back payment of salary increase from 01/04/2024 including incremental spine point from 09/06/2024 was **APPROVED**
9. The increase in monthly PATA Payroll fees from £12.45 to £15.82 with effect from January 2025 was **APPROVED**
10. There were no payments to note since the last council meeting
11. The WesternWeb Ltd invoice 24665 for renewal of domain of £30.00 was **APPROVED**
12. It was **APPROVED** to purchase replacement defibrillator pads at a cost of no more than £100

Meeting closed 9.40 pm

Date of next meetings:

- **Parish Council meeting** - 20th January 2025 at 7.30pm in the Marples Room, Memorial Hall
- **Neighbourhood Plan Working Group meeting** - 27th January at 6.00 pm (venue tbc)
- **Playing Field Working Group meeting** - 4th March 2025 at 7.30pm in the Marples Room, Memorial Hall
- **Finance, Personnel and Risk Committee meeting** - tbc