

MUDFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Petra Galloway. The Old Forge, 3 West Street, Ilchester, BA22 8NN.

Tel: 07552 509707 E-mail: clerk@mudfordpc.co.uk

Minutes of the Annual Mudford Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 30th May 2024 at 19:00hrs

Present - Councillors (Cllrs): Jo Dalton-Leggett (Chair), Phil Edgeworth, Stephen Bartlett, Peter Blackwood, Robin Bowring, John Snell.

In attendance: Petra Galloway - Parish Clerk, SClr Kevin Messenger 14 members of public.

PUBLIC COMMENTS (15 minutes)

The following topics were raised:

- Playing field being cut not frequently enough and the grass cuttings left behind. Cllr Edgeworth explained that having the cuttings picked up adds to the cost, thus it was voted against in the past.
- Trees near children's play area are in need of pruning. Cllr Bartlett and the clerk will investigate. **ACTION: Cllr Bartlett and Clerk**
- Ranger's visits too infrequent to keep the weeds down.
- A question was raised about a new footpath around the field. The councillors explained that the cost would be in a region of £40-60,000. Too costly for the council to consider in the near future.

OUTSIDE REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES

- Somerset Councillors

SClr Messenger spoke about the difficulties of addressing public concerns regarding heavy goods vehicles (police are short of funds and staff to enforce) and speeding. He spoke to Sarah Dyke about speeding on A359 and residents' ongoing frustration with traffic. SClr Messenger has also mentioned LCN (Local Community Networks) that has been set up and councils have been encouraged to join.

- Outside bodies/groups

The Village Hall is prepared to host the general election voting on the 4th July in the main hall, the café morning may be held in the courtyard and the committee room.

19:24 Meeting started

24/1 To elect a Chair – Sign Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

The Chair, Cllr Edgeworth, proposed Cllr Dalton-Leggett as the new Chair, seconded by Cllr Blackwood. All Cllrs present voted in agreement.

RESOLVED: Cllr Dalton-Leggett **ACCEPTED** the role and **SIGNED** Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

24/2 To receive apologies for absence and approve the reasons (LGA 1972 s85(1)).

RESOLVED: The reasons for absence from Cllr Brown were **APPROVED** (prior commitments).

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24/3 Declarations of interests. Council members to declare any interests, including any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests they may have in agenda items that accord with the requirements of the Parish Council's Code of Conduct and to consider any prior requests from members for Dispensations that accord with Localism Act 2011 s33 (b-e). (NB this does not preclude any later declarations).

None.

24/4 To elect a Vice Chair – Sign Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

The Chair, Cllr Dalton-Leggett proposed Cllr Edgeworth for the role, seconded by Cllr Blackwood.

Two councillors abstained (Cllr Bartlett and Bowring), Cllr Snell voted in agreement.

RESOLVED: Cllr Edgeworth **ACCEPTED** the role and **SIGNED** Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

24/5 To approve and sign as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting

(LGA 1972 sch 12, para 41(1)).

RESOLVED: The minutes from the meeting held on 25th April 2024 were **APPROVED** and

SIGNED as a true and accurate record of the meeting held.

24/6 Matters to report from a previous meeting.

a. New noticeboard delivery and installation. (Cllr Brown)

Cllr Brown has sent his apologies, therefore could not provide an update. Item for the next meeting's matters to report from a previous meeting.

ACTION: Clerk

b. All Cllrs to attend Code of Conduct Training. (All Cllrs)

Councillors agreed on the date for their training (Cllr Snell will attend training elsewhere).

ACTION: Clerk (booking), Cllrs (attending)

24/7 Planning decisions report.

No update on planning decisions but a meeting has been scheduled between Mudford Cllrs and S. Fox (Somerset County Council) regarding agreement S.106 for the Primrose Lane development. Agreement S.106 refers to what would the parish council want their community to receive if the proposed development went ahead (this could include e.g. a larger cemetery or changing room facilities for the sports field). This is a **preliminary** meeting set up to find out what would the process involve, and the councillors stressed to the public present that the Primrose Lane development is not at this moment decided on by the relevant authorities. The councillors also stressed the need of consulting the community on their needs and wants (a survey) for the future.

24/8 Planning applications.

None.

24/9 Finance – To NOTE April 24 Receipts, to include the annual PRECEPT payment:

PAYEE	PARTICULARS	AMOUNT
Somerset Council	Precept	£58,100.00
Stuart Foster Funerals	Interment fee	£400.00

RESOLVED: The receipts were **NOTED**.

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24/10 Finance – To **APPROVE** the payment schedule for May 2024.

PAYEE	PARTICULARS	AMOUNT
B. Appleby	Internal Audit and Report	£242.63
AJG	Insurance	£921.28
Pinnacle Accountancy	Payroll Services	£102

RESOLVED: The May 2024 Payment schedule was **APPROVED**, and 2 councillors will authorise the payments.

ACTION: Cllr Blackwood and Bartlett

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24/11 Finance – To APPROVE the 2023-24 year end Cashbook/Bank Reconciliation and NOTE budget summary and Earmarked Reserves.

MUDFORD PARISH COUNCIL 2023-24					
Receipts and Payments Summary for the year ending 31st March 2024					
	Last Year	This Year	Budget	Remaining	Remaining %
	2022-23	2023-24	2023-24	2023-24	2023-24
RECEIPTS					
Precept	£ 42,000.00	£ 46,705.00			
Deposit Interest	£ 108.98	£ 1,396.98			
Cemetery Fees	£ 3,305.00	£ 7,710.00			
Grants	£ -	£ -			
Grants - Other	£ 273.32	£ 900.00			
VAT repayment	£ 1,178.67	£ 4,481.18			
TOTAL RECEIPTS	£ 46,865.97	£ 61,193.16			
PAYMENTS					
Salaries	£ 9,481.76	£ 10,370.64	£ 9,500.00	-£ 870.64	-9%
Administration	£ 1,959.55	£ 1,557.33	£ 2,000.00	£ 442.67	22%
Rec Gnd Maint	£ 1,637.60	£ 4,689.46	£ 2,500.00	-£ 2,189.46	-88%
Cemetery	£ 2,769.40	£ 1,405.40	£ 3,800.00	£ 2,394.60	63%
Computer & Website	£ 386.88	£ -	£ 500.00	£ 500.00	100%
Subscriptions	£ 255.19	£ 285.93	£ 220.00	-£ 65.93	-30%
Insurances	£ 809.13	£ 831.83	£ 1,500.00	£ 668.17	45%
Training	£ 385.00	£ 65.00	£ 300.00	£ 235.00	78%
Audit Charges	£ 501.50	£ 444.50	£ 700.00	£ 255.50	37%
Grants-S137	£ 330.00	£ 5,586.89	£ 1,000.00	-£ 4,586.89	-459%
Publications & Data Protection	£ 35.00	£ -	£ 35.00	£ 35.00	100%
Councillors Expenses	£ -	£ -	£ 100.00	£ 100.00	100%
Play Area	£ 312.00	£ 472.82	£ 2,000.00	£ 1,527.18	76%
Parish Projects	£ 2,106.11	£ 16,811.53	£ 5,000.00	-£ 11,811.53	-236%
Legal Challenge	£ -	£ 3,000.00	£ 10,000.00	£ 7,000.00	70%
VAT incurred	£ 1,541.90	£ 4,734.26			
Budget additions (To reserves)		£ -	£ 7,550.00	£ 7,550.00	
TOTAL PAYMENTS	£ 22,511.02	£ 50,255.59	£ 46,705.00	£ 1,183.67	
Exc of Recpt over Paymts	£ 24,354.95	£ 10,937.57			
plus balances b/fwd	£ 64,775.49	£ 89,130.44			
Balances c/fwd	£ 89,130.44	£ 100,068.01			
Reconciliation with bank accounts as at 31 MAR 24					
Unity Trust Current Account	£ 12,965.59				
Unity Trust Savings Account	£ 87,102.42				
Less Outstanding payments	£ -				
Add Outstanding lodgements	£ -				
Total balances at bank	£ 100,068.01				

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RESERVES (inc. ring-fenced funds)	Reserves at 31/3/2023	Additions/spend from current year	Reserves at 31/3/2024	Notes
General maintenance around parish	£ 7,904.58	£ 2,400.00	£ 10,304.58	
Long term chapel maintenance (period?)	£ 4,767.00	£ 2,000.00	£ 6,767.00	
Long term cemetery maintenance (period ?)	£ 5,513.15	£ 1,000.00	£ 6,513.15	
Computer/printer replacement fund (5yr)	£ 446.00	£ 150.00	£ 596.00	
Parish Projects (identify & period?)	£ 4,000.00	-£ 4,000.00	£ -	Finger posts/Bus shelter/ noticeboard/bridge
Play area equipment long term replacement fund	£ 7,000.00	£ 1,000.00	£ 8,000.00	
Cemetery land/consecration starter fund (Ring fenced)	£ 12,170.00	£ -	£ 12,170.00	
Up Mudford Challenge	£ 10,000.00	£ 7,000.00	£ 17,000.00	
Highways & speed control fund	£ 2,095.14	£ 500.00	£ 2,595.14	
Defibrillator fund	£ 2,703.51	-£ 786.00	£ 1,917.51	
Election (Ring fenced)	£ 1,295.53	£ -	£ 1,295.53	
Admin reserve - 12 Months running costs buffer	£ 31,235.53		£ 32,909.10	
Total Reserves	£ 89,130.44		£ 100,068.01	

24/12 RESOLVED: The 2023-24 year end Cashbook/Bank Reconciliation was **APPROVED** and budget summary and Earmarked Reserves were **NOTED**.

24/13 AUDIT – To **NOTE** the Annual Internal Audit Report and consider any recommendations. The councillors noted the 3 areas which require improvement:

- Insurance: The value of the street furniture exceeds the amount for which the furniture is insured for. The council agreed on revising the insurance policy. Clerk will contact the insurance company for a revised quote.
ACTION: Clerk
- Invoice to cashbook entries cross-referencing: A minor issue has arisen with the minutes entry being different from the payee details, plus the lack of invoice numbering made the audit trail difficult. The recommendation is to be more consistent.
ACTION: Clerk
- The authority failed to comply with financial regulations in the matter of a payment, authorised by the council and duly recorded in the minutes, which was considerably delayed by the unauthorised action of an individual councillor in breach of Standing Order 25 and disregard to Financial Regulations 1.7 and 2.1.

The Council considered this matter very seriously. In the discussion it was stressed that the council must act as a corporate body and therefore such individual action was unacceptable and must never happen again.

The council is clear that action must be taken to ensure that in future Standing Orders and Financial Regulations are complied with fully.

Some measures have already been put in place:

There are two more councillors who have a mandate to authorise payments (4 in total).

It is now routinely recorded in the minutes which two councillors have agreed to authorise each payment.

Going forward the clerk will provide a first draft of minutes to councillors within a week of the meeting, as a reminder of decisions taken, and actions required.

The clerk will also check the bank account regularly to ensure that pending payments have been authorised.

All councillors entrusted with the responsibility of authorising payments that have been agreed by the full council in a proper manner must agree to do so in a timely fashion and inform the clerk as RFO if for any reason they are unable to do so.

The Council will take steps to include this in the Financial Risk Assessment to be reviewed at the next meeting.

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Councillor Edgeworth raised a concern that the auditor's recommendation was not being followed. However, the Chair stated that SALC had advised the council was free to take its own actions to ensure that financial regulations are complied with in future. Other councillors agreed that it we should not at this stage seek to remove anyone from the bank mandate at this point. The Chair emphasised the need to move forward from the matter in a positive, collaborative way.

RESOLVED: The report was **NOTED**, recommendations **CONSIDERED**, and response **DISCUSSED** and **AGREED**.

24/14 FINANCE – To APPROVE AGAR Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement.

RESOLVED: The AGAR Section 1 was read out, **AGREED** and **SIGNED**.

24/15 FINANCE – To APPROVE AGAR Section 2 – Accounting Statements.

RESOLVED: The AGAR Section 2 was **AGREED** and **SIGNED**.

24/16 FINANCE – To ANNOUNCE and **NOTE** the period for the exercise of public rights – Monday 3 June 24 to Friday 12 July 24 and publication on MPC website on 31st May 24.

RESOLVED: The clerk has completed the note for the exercise of public rights and will post it on the website and noticeboard on 31st May 2024. The council has **NOTED** and **ANNOUNCED** the period for the exercise of public rights.

24/17 APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS, COUNCILLOR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- *Human Resources Committee:* Cllr Dalton-Leggett will stay on the committee but not as the chair. Cllr Brown has agreed to be the chair of the committee. Other members: Kay Mackenzie, Phil Sargent.
- *Flood Working Group:* Cllrs Bartlett and Bowring.
- *Planning:* Cllrs Blackwood and Snell.
- *Tree Warden:* Cllr Bartlett.
- *Footpaths & RoW:* Cllr Bartlett, need to check with Cllr Brown. **ACTION: CLERK**
- *Highways:* Cllr Edgeworth.
- *Cemetery Liaison:* Cllr Snell.
- *Playing field and equipment:* Cllrs Edgeworth and Blackwood.
- *Defibrillator:* Cllr Bowring.
- *Primrose Lane/FOMAG:* Cllr Bartlett, Bowring and Blackwood.
- *Speedwatch:* Cllr Blackwood and Bowring.

24/17 To agree exclusive rights to a burial plot in Mudford Cemetery.

RESOLVED: The exclusive rights to a burial plot were **AGREED**.

24/18 To receive a report from the Flood Working Group Meeting (Cllr Bowring)

Cllr Bowring spoke about the 1st Flood Action Group meeting held on 17th May. The minutes from the meeting will be available on the PC (Parish Council) website shortly.

In summary:

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The meeting further established the need for creation of a Flood Action Group (FAG), which would support the parishioners in times of flooding but also further investigate how flooding can be prevented and consider actions which would alleviate the problem.

FAG future actions are to create a committee so the group can apply for a grant from Somerset Council (£3,000). The PC has budgeted for a grant of £5,000. Ongoing action is the mapping of existing drains and ditches (started by Cllr Bartlett, now carried out by 2 volunteers). Further actions include considering signage (and its cost) to prevent people from becoming stuck in the flood, recruiting volunteers and committee members, look into clearing Coldbrook (September) and consider how to best communicate the latest progress to the public (e.g. a newsletter).

Next meeting to TBC.

26/19 To determine the next steps in response to the Sockhill (22/00695/OUT) and Primrose Lane (14/02554/OUT and 15/03942/FUL) Planning Applications.

- No new updates on either of the developments.
- **Parishioners are encouraged to comment on the application (Sockhill):**
<https://publicaccess.southsomerset.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=makeComment&keyVal=R8HHUQOWLNH00>
- **Parishioners are encouraged to comment on the application (Primrose Lane):**
<https://publicaccess.southsomerset.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=makeComment&keyVal=N6P02KOW07P00>
<https://publicaccess.southsomerset.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=makeComment&keyVal=NTR1WHOWIQH00>
- The developer and Somerset County Council have not yet responded to the landscape study (paid by FOMAG) on Sockhill development.
- Cllrs Bartlett and Bowring have identified a hydrologist who would advise on both developments. He has not agreed to take the job on (very busy), currently discussing with the PC's solicitor what needs to be looked at.
- Primrose Lane – no full application for the attenuation ponds yet.
- Sparkford - Highways have admitted that they did not expect the attenuation ponds they have built to fill with the water from the springs. They had to build two additional attenuation ponds but there was still severe flooding due to water run-off. This is another point to raise in objecting to the two developments (what can disturbing spring lines cause). The County Council has taken note of the photos of the flood people submitted. Parishioners are encouraged to continue submitting any flood related evidence (dated) to the County Council.

24/20 To consider what further measures could be taken to reduce speeding through the village.

- To consider and investigate what would an introduction of a 20mph speed limit involve.
ACTION: Clerk
- A local representative of the Speedwatch group mentioned that police would be willing to help when the council need to download data from the speed devices (health and safety risk). He also believes that the Primrose Lane developer have incorrect data so the need for the data from the devices is urgent. The Clerk will liaise with Speedwatch.

ACTION: Clerk

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24/21 To receive Councillor reports¹.

Cllr Edgeworth expressed concerned about the recent vehicle theft from the carpark opposite the village hall (and other vehicle thefts). The CCTV opposite the village hall and its ownership has been discussed. The council should find out who owns the CCTV and whether the data could be used in theft prevention. The Village Hall has plans to install CCTV.

ACTION: Cllr Edgeworth

24/22 To receive the Parish Clerk's report and any correspondence.

- Clerk presented a bank form to be signed by two councillors with signatory rights. This will enable the clerk to view the account and submit payments for sign off (clerk does not make the payments but prepares them).
- Clerk and Cllr Bowring mentioned an issue with the defibrillator opposite the village hall. The battery needs replacing, a form has been sent out to request a new battery (the problem seems to be a manufacturing issue).

24/23 Items for the next agenda.

- To agree PC meeting dates for the rest of the financial year.
- To review policies.
- To review Financial Risk Assessment (Financial Regulations).
- To discuss different community survey options. To look at the options prior to the meeting and present to the councillors.

ACTION: Clerk

24/24 Date of next meeting – 25 July 2024 tbc. (Cllrs to note – all agenda items to be notified to the Parish Clerk by Monday 15th July 2024).

24/25 Rangers

Cllr Edgeworth questioned whether the council could decide on the issue of general untidiness around the village (raised during public comments) without the point being specified on the agenda.

It was resolved to delegate to the clerk, who will contact the Rangers to check their schedule/availability and refer to the council. Item for the next agenda (frequency of visits).

ACTION: Clerk

21:00hrs Meeting closed.

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Chair

¹ *N.B Councils cannot lawfully decide items of business that is not specified in the summons/agenda (LGA1972 Sch 12, paras 10(2)(b) and Longfield Parish Council v Wright (1918) 88 LJ Ch 119).*