

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Exford Parish Council held on Tuesday 30 November 2021 at 7.30pm at Exford Memorial Hall

Attendance: Councillors Mike Ellicott (Chair) (ME), Simon Brown (SB), Serena Colwill (SC), Kathryn Tucker (KT), Joan Atkins (JA), Oliver Edwards (OE), Jeremy Hickman (JH), SCC Cllr Frances Nicholson (FN), and Parish Clerk Jennifer Yates (JY)

ME opened the meeting at 7.32pm, and advised all that the meeting was recorded for the benefit of the Clerk

15.1.1 Apologies for Absence – SWaT Cllr Steven Pugsley (SP) has advised he has another meeting to attend first

15.2 Declarations of Interest – none declared

15.3 To approve the Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held on 28th September 2021, and address any Outstanding Actions – minutes approved – proposed SB seconded KT.

Outstanding Actions;

1. Clerk to explore access to relevant training for SIDs and Chapter 8.

JY to continue to explore options

2. Clerk to proceed with ordering of materials for the play surface.

JY has identified several suitable suppliers but we don't want to lay the rubber in the winter months and will aim for a spring delivery. OE has offered to store the materials if we want to go ahead with the order.

3. SC and Clerk to submit application for Reconnecting Communities Fund.

This bid was successful. It has been decided the bike rack will go on the lower side of the bus shelter site where it would be more visible. SC has already met with a local contractor to explore options and costs. It was agreed the most secure option would be hardcore and tarmac rather than concrete for the base. SC to explore gaining quotes from other contractors to ensure the best quote and follow good practice. Her initial work shows the work is likely to be within the budget of the grant, or slightly above it.

4. Clerk to request weekly planning list for KT.

This has been done.

5. ME/KA/SB/JY to complete set up of new bank account for QE11.

Not yet done due to clerk sickness

6. Clerk to contact village hall committee to set up donation.

Completed

7. JH/SC to organise litter pick.

This was arranged but had to be cancelled due to an outbreak of Covid locally.

15.4 To receive update reports from County and District Councillors

FN advised that it now looks likely that local elections will be in May. A decision should be made by the end of the year. They are likely to be based on current boundaries, but with doubling of councillors. Parish Council elections are therefore likely to be held alongside SCC elections but it would be advisable to put aside £1,500 in the precept to cover election costs. The next term would then run to 5 years. Updates should follow from the County Council.

The main priority for Exford would be Highways as it is one of the Locality Pilot areas. Alyn Jones has already visited and attended the panel meeting, and a further visit is anticipated. It has been a very valuable experience for him and his team learning about the small roads and how the local economy is affected by/works with this situation. The challenge is now for the full team at all levels of highways to

understand which will be a big culture change for them, as FN sees the senior level of the team as well engaged already.

There is discussion re a local plan review, or a review of elements of it. If it goes ahead FN would welcome everyone's input to this.

SP arrived 19.55

SP – there will be the roll out of the new recycling arrangements in the New Year for West Somerset. Black 'residual waste' bins will move to being collected every 3 weeks, but more items will be able to be recycled. It appears to be working well in areas which have already been using this new system. Briefings will be made available.

The Glover review into the future of National Parks is no longer a national project due to lack of commitment by the Government with lack of parliamentary time available.

A statement is expected by the end of December, however this has already been delayed several times.

15.5 To consider Highways matters and any actions required,

JH reported that due to recent high winds there had been a huge amount of leaf debris. IDVerde had worked hard to clear this.

The traffic lights at Stone Cross have been going wrong on a regular basis. JH has had to call the company to reset them on numerous occasions and there has been local Facebook interaction. FN stated that she is aware and that the team are keen to complete the roadworks due to the cost of the lights. The road may have to be completely closed for a short time due to the need for a subsidence repair.

FN has passed on concerns about these works affecting market days, and the inconvenience to local people as it has been going on for so long.

A film crew has needed clear roads with no parked cars, ME has given support.

There are some vehicles abandoned in the Auction Field car park. JY to contact Sara Bryan to request ENPA involvement.

ME reported that the toilets in the flat area of the Auction Field car park had a large flooded area outside. SB/Chris North had called Wessex Water and they found the pipe had become detached from the meter on their side, they have now completed the works to repair this. ME had to pursue getting them to reset the water into the toilet block, however – fittings had been damaged due to the flood, but are now replaced. There will not be a cost to the PC as the damage was caused on the far side of the meter.

SC reported that the pavement/entrance outside the school has a pothole. It was decided that this paving is likely to belong to the school or the National Park and SC will follow this up with them as it is on private land.

15.6 Finance

1. To receive the financial report and agree to pay amounts due

Proposed JH, seconded SC

2. To discuss arrangements for budgeting for the clerk's benefit – JY and ME meet to discuss the new budget.

3. To discuss the successful bid for Reconnecting Communities funding and arrangements – already covered in 15.3/3

15.7 To receive update on QE11 Field and consider any actions - This has been used to successfully offer support for a large village funeral. The family had requested several marquees which potentially would have caused damage on the croquet area but ME liaised with a local landowner who allowed the use of a paddock instead. The pavilion was used to relay the service and provide facilities

for attendees which was greatly appreciated. SB thanked ME for providing a solution which protected the land.

- 15.8 Village Green update** – ME/SC have been trying to get the fencing completed. JY will get three quotes re the play area flooring with the aim of a Spring delivery. There have been requests to fence off the play area to keep dogs off. Following discussion it was agreed this was not a viable solution. SC and JH mentioned that Facebook has had some negative feedback from the request not to walk dogs on the Village Green. A comment had been made that a footpath crosses it therefore they can do so. ME asked if others had been contacted by villagers who are keen to extend the 20 mph zone. It was mentioned that if that happened but could not be policed it would not be successful. FN suggested that people concerned about speeding vehicles in the village could be invited to be part of the community speed watch scheme. SC also mentioned that Facebook comments had raised the issue of picking up the grass after cutting. ME pointed out that this would be likely to involve further cost, and that there would also be potential difficulties with disposal so it was agreed that as this happens rarely the current arrangement will stand for now. JH raised the issue of flooding by Exmoor Lodge during periods of heavy rain. Discussion was held re the necessity for drainage or repairs and the decision was made to take no action currently as it is a rare occurrence.
- 15.9 Planning Report** – Proposed OE, Seconded SB. A new application had been received and was briefly discussed. FN mentioned that communication with planning authorities could be affected by the new Unitary Authority arrangements.
- 15.10 To receive the Clerk's Report and consider any required actions** – accepted
- 15.11 To discuss the new Exford Parish Council Facebook page** – issues which had arisen have largely already been covered through previous discussions above. This had been done in response to the Exford page owner suggesting that the PC would benefit from their own page and SC has been posting things sent to the Council which would be of benefit/interest to the parishioners. SC and JH mentioned that it can be difficult to respond to the negative comments and would appreciate support from all councillors.
- 15.12 To discuss internet access for the Exford Parish** - SC had heard of a project carried out in Withypool and wondered if a similar thing could be done in Exford. ME/JH mentioned that there is very fast broadband in some parts of the village, however it is poor in others. SP had an involvement with the Withypool/Hawkridge Gigabit project which involves parishioners applying for a voucher to spend on upgrading their supply – but then pooling them together. Openreach would then work with them to provide an area upgrade. FN and SP said that they would be willing to contact Mr Barrow to find out if this opportunity is likely to be continued as it was thought the grant may have expired. SP mentioned that if it was to continue this would be something the whole community would need to be involved in. There was general support for becoming involved should the opportunity be available. A steering group would need to be arranged to carry out that work. SP pointed out a benefit for the parishioners would be that it improves the value of their property if on a good fibre network.
- 15.13 To discuss arrangements for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in June 22** – It was proposed that a party could be held on the Village Green as this was very

successful at the last Village Event. The Facebook page could be used to invite people to get involved so that the organising committee would not just be PC members. It was also suggested that the school could be invited to be involved.

15.14 Public Forum – no contributions

15.15 Items for Next Agenda – budget approval

15.16 Date and time of Next Meeting – Tuesday 25th January 2022 – 7.30pm in Exford Memorial Hall

There being no other business ME closed the meeting at 21.15

Action List:

- 1. Clerk to write to ENPA re abandoned vehicles.**
- 2. Clerk to continue to pursue SIDS – or other alternatives eg speed watch.**
- 3. SC to seek further quotes re the bike rack installation.**
- 4. Clerk/ME to finalise setting up bank account for the Trust.**
- 5. SC to follow up re the pothole outside the school.**
- 6. SC to invite interested parties and the school to become involved in arrangements for the Jubilee in June.**

Signed:
Chairman

Date: