

# **ANNUAL MEETING OF EXMOOR PARISH COUNCIL DRAFT MINUTES**

**Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> June 2023 7.30pm at The Old School, Simonsbath**

**Present: Parish Councillors – F Schott (Chair) FS, T Gowlland TG, A Chapman AC, J Wright JW, C O'Connor CO, County Cllr F Nicholson FN, County Cllr S Pugsley SP, Clerk R Tomalin, Members of the public: None**

The Annual Meeting of the Parish Council started at 7.42pm.

**41/23 Election of Chair:** TG proposed and AC 2<sup>nd</sup> the appointment of Mr Francis Schott as Chair and all unanimously agreed. He was duly elected and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

**42/23 Election of Vice Chair and appointment of representatives:**

Vice Chair – FS proposed and AC 2<sup>nd</sup> Tegan Gowlland and all agreed

Exmoor LCN – FS/JW with CO as back up

Consultative Forum – Cllrs will take turns

Highways Warden – AC

SP joined the meeting at 7.48pm

**43/23 Apologies for Absence:** None

**44/23 Declarations of notifiable interest:** None

**45/23 Approval of the Minutes of the last meeting held on 30/03/2023** These were proposed by FS and seconded by TG as a true and correct record of what took place and all agreed and the Chair signed.

**46/23 Matters arising from the minutes of 30/03/2023** - none

**47/23 County Councillor reports:** (i) the first meeting of the Exmoor LCN will be on 8<sup>th</sup> June where the priorities for the coming year will be decided (ii) ENPA Rights of Way changes – due to budgetary constraints ENPA will no longer be going above & beyond e.g repairing gates/stiles – this will be split between ENPA & the landowner (iii) Partnership Plan Review survey is available online (iv) ENPA is proposing to change its schedule of meetings to save costs, including reducing the planning committee membership. PCs should be consulted soon (v) Henry Leigh Trust – FN has been appointed again as a Trustee, young people in the catchment area are encouraged to apply for grants.

**48/23 Planning:** (i) GDO 23/07 Prior notification for 20m high telecommunications installation and associated development B3223, Nr Simonsbath, Somerset, TA24 7JX – The Cllrs reviewed the application and noted that none of their previous comments had been taken onboard and the new site was just as prominent and imposing as the last. The Cllrs agreed to object to the proposal, and strongly agreed with all the comments already submitted by The Exmoor Society. The PC will reiterate in its response the sharing of existing sites, particularly the Airband site already located along Winstitchen Lane (ii) Proposal to extend Birchcleave Wood – the Cllrs noted ENPA's proposal but commented on the management of the existing wood which has been neglected for some time, they also noted the proposed new wood may obscure existing views of the landscape.

**49/23 ENPA Parish Representatives:** The Cllrs discussed the nominations and all agreed on five candidates. Clerk completed the ballot paper.

**50/23 Finance Report:** (i) Invoices for Approval at May meeting – Website hosting & domain name **Spanglefish £103 Chq 303**, Clerks Pay & Expenses Apr – June 23 **R Tomalin £161.60 Chq 304** dated 5 July, PAYE due to **HMRC £96.00 Chq 305** dated 5<sup>th</sup> July; Insurance renewal **BHIB Ltd £210.89 Chq 306** – all APPROVED. Clerk explained the insurance had increased since last year due to the underwriter reviewing the costs but the cheapest alternative was £214, Cllrs agreed to renew with existing insurer.

(ii) Councillor Training – Clerk noted that there were many SALC training sessions available if any Cllr required a refresh (iii) Bank mandate - Clerk explained that as the March minutes had been signed she would be able to process the request to remove Alan Vigars & Trudie Hawkins and try again to add TG (iv) Online Banking with Natwest – no new applications are being taken due to high demand (iv) Report from Internal Auditor - Lyn Fisher (LF) has audited the 2022/23 accounts and completed the Annual Internal Audit Report for the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR). LF's report reads as follows: "Thank you for inviting me to look over the accounts and minutes of Exmoor Parish Council. The minutes, accounts and record keeping are extremely thorough, transparent and well organised. I am very happy to sign off against the control objectives in the internal audit." (v) Clerk explained that LF would like a donation to be made to the British Red Cross again – all Cllrs agreed to donate **£40** to the **British Red Cross Chq 307**.

(vi) Presentation of 2022/23 accounts - the Clerk presented the accounts for 2022/23 (previously circulated) and noted these are available for inspection (vi) Bank Reconciliation – the closing bank balance at the end of the financial year (31 Mar 2023) was £8,712.48 – as reported at the March meeting. The balance as at 1 June 2023 is £11,782.88 which includes receipt of precept £3,328 less cheques cleared Chq 301 £209.60 Clerks Pay & Expenses Jan–Mar 23 & Chq 302 £48.00 HMRC PAYE Jan-Mar 23. Chq 300 £41.85 remains uncleared.

(vii) Approval and Signature of 2022/23 accounts and bank reconciliation – FS proposed and AC 2<sup>nd</sup> and all Cllrs agreed that the accounts and bank reconciliation were a true and correct record and should be adopted. EPC authorised the Chair and the Clerk to sign.

**51/23 Audit - Certificate of Exemption:** EPC authorised the Chair and the Clerk to sign the document

- Total annual gross income for the authority 2022/23 £4025;
- Total annual gross expenditure for the authority 2022/23 £1869

**52/23 Section 1 of Audit:** Annual governance statement 2022/23 – EPC authorised the Chair and the Clerk to sign the document

**53/23 Section 2 of Audit:** Accounting statements 2022/23 – EPC authorised the Chair and the Clerk to sign the document

**54/23 Code of Conduct, Standing Orders, GDPR, Financial Regulations & Aims and Objectives:** (Previously circulated) The Cllrs reviewed the policies and agreed minor amendments to the Aims & Objectives and Financial Regulations. A Risk Management Policy and Freedom of Information Policy and Schedule of Charges are to be discussed at the July meeting.

**55/23 Highways:** Clerk to report various highways issues. AC attended the West Somerset Flood Group meeting which was well represented by the local parishes. The next meeting will be held in Dulverton later in the year where (hopefully) the Environment Agency & ENPA will attend.

**56/23 Village parking** Updates on parking in the village – no further updates on the sawmill parking, FS to ask RWN.

**57/23 Parish Maintenance** – Clerk presented the options for the defib and cabinet. Cllrs approved the purchase of an iPad SP1 Fully Automatic Defibrillator from The British Heart Foundation for £1,170 including VAT. The Cllrs also agreed to purchase a green heated lockable cabinet for £600 including VAT. Clerk to confirm with BHIB (insurer) whether the defib needs to be stored in a lockable cabinet and then arrange purchase of both.

**58/23 Correspondence** – all correspondence has been forwarded to Cllrs.

- 59/23 Report from Simonsbath & Exmoor Heritage Trust** – RWN will attend the next meeting to discuss the successful National Lottery bid
- 60/23 Report from other groups including Exmoor LCN, Exmoor Consultative Forum, Henry Leigh Trust, Bus Forum** – first Exmoor LCN meeting 8<sup>th</sup> June, Consultative Forum 22<sup>nd</sup> June 7pm – JW & FS to attend
- 61/23 Chairman’s Notices** – none
- 62/23 Items for next Agenda** - Risk Management Policy, Freedom of Information Policy & Schedule of Charges
- 63/22 Date and time of next meeting:** 27<sup>th</sup> July 2023 – TG apologises in advance, CO may be in Scotland

There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 9.20pm

Signed.....Date.....