

EXMOOR PARISH COUNCIL DRAFT MEETING MINUTES
Thursday 25th January 2024 7.30pm at The Old School, Simonsbath

Present: Parish Councillors – F Schott (Chair), T Gowlland TG, A Chapman AC, J Wright JW, County Cllr S Pugsley SP (for part of meeting), Clerk R Tomalin. **Members of the Public:** none

The meeting started at 7.37pm.

1/24 Questions from the public: None

2/24 Apologies for Absence: Cllr C O'Connor, County Cllr F Nicholson

3/24 Declarations of notifiable interest: None

4/24 Approval of the Minutes of the last meeting held on 30/11/2023: These were proposed by JW and seconded by AC as a true and correct record of what took place and all agreed; the Chair signed the minutes.

5/24 Matters arising from the minutes of 30/11/2023: none

6/24 Somerset Councillors Report: (i) Recycling & Rubbish Collection Changes – new routes will be starting w/c 12th February with some one-off rubbish collections taking place on Saturday 10th February (ii) Dulverton Recycling Centre – this may be closed as Somerset Council try to bridge the funding gap. Dulverton residents and those from nearby villages have requested a public meeting to discuss how the site can be saved (iii) Budget Gap/Devolution of Services – the government has recently announced extra funding for local councils to cover the rising costs of children's services and adult social care but Somerset Council is unlikely to receive a substantial amount. The Executive are due to meet on 7 February to discuss the proposed cost savings.

11/24 Budget/Precept 2024-25: The Cllrs discussed Somerset Council's funding gap and agreed to raise the precept from £3,328 to £4,500 in anticipation that the PC may need to pay for salt bags, trim the verges and jet the drains and gullies in the coming financial year. A letter will be sent to all parishioners explaining why the precept has been increased. If services are not devolved the PC will reduce the precept in 2025-26 and use the surplus from 2024-25 for the benefit of parishioners - for example the surplus from 2022-23 has been spent on a defibrillator for the village.

SP left the meeting at 8.08pm.

7/24 Village parking Updates on parking in the village/Small Improvements Scheme – As Somerset Council is short of money no further progress is anticipated with the Small Improvements Scheme. The entrance to the meadow is now being parked in, Chair to ask RWN if a No Parking sign can be put up. The proposed parking at the sawmill is being progressed via consultants who are dealing with the Environment Agency.

8/24 Highways: The broken bollard cannot be replaced by Three Atop, a request needs to come from Highways – Clerk to report on Highways website. A parishioner has requested the Slow Down for Horses signs are replaced – there were at least two approaching the bend but these have disappeared. Trees along the Challacombe road are in need of maintenance before they come down and block the road.

9/24 Planning: (i) 6/19/24/001 Land at Line of Trees of Wellshead Lane, Wellshead Lane, Luccombe, Exmoor, TA24 7NU Proposed installation of 20m mast supporting 3 no. antennas and 2 No. 0.6m dishes, 2 no. equipment cabinets., 1 no meter cabinet and development including a generator and 1.2m drystone wall – The Cllrs discussed the application and whilst they understand the need for mobile connectivity they did not really understand the benefit of erecting a mast in the

middle of open moorland. The area is sparsely populated and is already well served by EE if the emergency services are needed. These days some modern phones even offer satellite connectivity for emergency and SOS communications. The Cllrs agreed to object to the application as the detrimental visual impact on the landscape far outweighs the benefits a few users may receive as they pass through the area walking/cycling/riding.

(ii) Appeal GDO 23/07 B3223, Nr Simonsbath, Somerset, TA24 7JX Prior notification for 20m high telecommunications installation and associated development – no further updates have been received on the appeal. The PC submitted their representation as agreed at the previous meeting.

(iii) 6/14/23/003 BLACKPITS, SIMONSBATH, Minehead, Somerset, TA24 7LB Application under Regulation 3 of The Town & Country Planning General Regulations 1992 lawful development certificate for the proposed recladding of building and works to existing walling and roof – the PC decided they did not need to attend the Planning Committee to discuss the proposed repairs at Blackpits as these seemed necessary and appropriate.

10/24 Finance Report: (i) Bank Reconciliation – current balance £9,316.72 - cheques cleared since last meeting: Chq 309 £40.17 SALC (Affiliation Fee), Chq 314 £104 HMRC (PAYE) and Chq 313 £184.10 R Tomalin (salary Oct-Dec 23). Chq 312 £41.85 remains uncleared (ii) Invoices for January meeting – none (iii) Internal Audit – with the end of financial year fast approaching all Cllrs agreed LF should be asked if she is prepared to perform the internal audit again.

12/24 Parish Maintenance – (i) Defib Installation – Chair has contacted Ed Greenall regarding installing the defib at the Exmoor Forest Inn. Several possible sites have been proposed, the Cllrs preferred location is to the right of the bar door if this is acceptable to EG. All Cllrs wished to extended their gratitude to EG for allowing the defib to be housed at the Inn – Chair will convey the PC’s thanks. TG to ask electrician to provide a quote for installation (ii) Noticeboard – Clerk thanked AC for the recent repairs to the noticeboard.

13/24 Correspondence – all correspondence has been circulated

14/24 Report from Simonsbath & Exmoor Heritage Trust – discussions continue regarding The Exmoor Society’s proposed sharing of White Rock Cottage.

15/24 Report from other groups including Exmoor LCN, Exmoor Consultative Forum, Henry Leigh Trust: The January LCN discussed the proposed devolution of services from Somerset Council and how the LCN could facilitate the purchasing of these. An update on the remedial work at Roundwaters (between Exford & Luckwell Bridge) to fix the landslip was given. The Police & Crime Commissioner made his annual visit. Two consultative forums will be held in 2024, questions and topics for discussion are welcomed. 18 applications were received for the last round of the Henry Leigh Trust.

16/24 Chairman’s Notices – FS reported an attempted break-in at the sawmill and possibly some other properties in the village. Cllrs discussed posting this on the community Facebook page to see if anyone saw anything and to encourage those affected to report to 101.

17/24 Items for next Agenda – none

18/24 Date and time of next meeting: Thursday 21st March 2024 at 7.30pm. This is one week earlier than usual due to the Easter weekend.

There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 8.51pm

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