

Minutes

Minutes of the Meeting of Rodney Stoke Parish Council held in the Draycott Memorial Hall, Latches Lane, Draycott on Thursday 16th November 2023 at 7pm

Present: Cllr Sealey (Chairman) and Cllrs Bullen, Daynes, Dearden, Dollins, Dudden, McGovarin and Ward. Also present were Somerset Cllr R Wyke, Senior Licencing & Business Support Officer J Godley and the Parish Clerk. No members of the public were present.

260.1 Apologies for absence: Cllr Gladman, ill health; Cllr Haskins, family commitment.

Resolution: The apologies were unanimously approved.

Somerset Cllr Shearer also sent apologies.

260.2 Declarations of Interest: None

260.3 Public Participation: None

260.4 The Presentation by the Senior Licensing & Business Support Officer on the Licensing Policy Consultation: the Councils responses were reviewed and discussed. The Clerk is to disseminate applications to neighbouring Parishes and bodies such as the AONB and CPRE. Residents were urged to report issues such as noise, it was confirmed that complaints are kept confidential.

260.5 Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on **21st September 2023**, having been previously circulated, were taken as read.

Resolution: The Minutes were unanimously approved.

260.6 Matters arising from the Minutes: **The new rodneystoke-pc.gov.uk website** is active and all traffic from the old website has been redirected. **Land adjoining Cross Farm Road and Sealey Close: Somerset Council** officers are still in discussion. Once there is an agreement as to who owns this strip of land, clearance work will be scheduled. The Clerk is to continue to monitor the issue. **Scooter access on footpath at Baggs Lane:** correspondence had been received thanking the Council for facilitating the improvements. **A request to add lights to the path joining Court Farm Road** to the playing field was raised. Members discussed cost, precedent and impacts on neighbouring properties, bats and the wildlife zone. The request was not supported.

260.7 Co-option to fill the vacancy for a Parish Councillor. No applications had been received. The vacancy will be readvertised.

260.8 Roads Report: **The ditch by the zebra crossing/Harps House** will be reinstated properly in due course; **A Temporary Road Closure on The Street, Draycott** commencing **27th November 2023** was noted; **Two potholes at the top of Bay Lane** Draycott and the missing **30mph sign** opposite the top of Wet Lane, Draycott will be reported.

260.9 The Planning Report was reviewed. It was noted that **planning application 2023/1876** had been granted permission. The Clerk is to ask enforcement to investigate the **static caravan** sited on Honeyhurst Lane, Rodney Stoke; Cllr Wyke noted that the AONB are being encouraged to look at key planning applications; Light pollution will be a more material consideration in the new Local Plan.

260.10 Somerset Council Report: **Somerset Cllr Wyke** gave a report including the following matters: **Social Care** and impact on budget; **the cap** on raising funds through Council tax; reducing **numbers of smaller homes** built; **savings in running costs** in buildings over winter; **demographics** of Somerset; physical and mental health **problems for young people**; growing **training in social care** at the old hospital in Bridgwater and improving **importance and status of care staffing**; **Biodiversity consultation** will impact new housing initially and will require net gain at sites. A working party will submit a response to the consultation. **Asset and Service devolution:** No matters were raised for discussion at this stage.

260.11 Local Community Network: Cllr Bullen reviewed the meeting including: parishes have differing issues; splitting into smaller groups; lack of finance; low attendance; sharing of good practices.

260.12 The Rev Cobley Playing Fields: the Multi User Games Area (MUGA): Cllr Daynes raised the popularity of **pump tracks** in the responses to the survey. This will be added to the next agenda for further discussion. **Memorial benches:** Cllr Sealey is to speak to the Committee about including plaques on the benches. **to consider upgrading the cctv camera covering the playing field,** a quote is still awaited; The **wildflower plan:** Cllrs Sealey and Gladman will discuss removing a panel of the fence to prepare the ground. The **Yellow Cap** on the rocker has been replaced, and the **epicormic growth** on the trees has been cut back by Cllr Gladman. The **Hedges** have been cut back at the burial ground and are mostly finished at the playing field.

Action: Cllrs Sealey and Gladman

260.13 New Memorial Hall Report Cllr Dollins' report had been circulated; a copy is available in the Minute Book.

260.14 Burial Ground Report: There were no interments this period. The **Annual Inspection** had been conducted. It was noted that the gate has been rehung and opens into the burial ground so **the end space of the last row will** only be used after every other space is used. It was also noted that the **electricity poles** have been replaced.

260.15 Somerset Association Local Councils: It was noted that the **Chief Executive Officer** is to leave the post in the new year. The Clerk is to send thanks on behalf of the Council. Cllr Ward is to attend the AGM. The Council had no matters to report in response to the Chairmans letter. The Clerk is to find out who will replace the health and wellbeing officer.

Action: Clerk

260.16 Environmental Issues: Cllr Dollins' report had been circulated; a copy is available in the Minute Book.

260.17 Neighbourhood Watch Cllr Dollins' report had been circulated; a copy is available in the Minute Book. It was noted that Cllr Dollins is in discussion about Neighbourhood Watch in Rodney Stoke.

260.18 Footpath Walkers Report: It was noted that the **Multi User Path** is a bridleway and the surface is considered fit for purpose by Somerset Council. The installation of a **kissing gate off Milking Lane,** the Clerk is to request an update. **Overgrown hedges:**

Resolution: To write to the landowners of hedges identified as a problem, requesting that the full width of paths and highways are reinstated.

Action: Cllr McGovarin and the Clerk

260.19 Emergency Planning Cllr Dollins is updating the Emergency Plan

Action: Cllr Dollins

260.20 Community Matters: Damage to The Pound wall: It was decided to recommend the cheapest repair quote to the insurance company and await their instructions; Cllr Dearden has completed the **Autumn seeding** in The Pound. **The second access to The Pound:**

Resolution: To purchase a chain and padlock to lock the entrance on the A371 for safety reasons.

Cllrs Bullen and Dearden left the meeting.

The annual asset safety inspection. It was noted that a small area of **wall in The Pound** needs repointing and may be carried out at the same time that the wall is repaired. Aster will be contacted to clear **the ivy growing over the wall at the top of Back Lane.** The Clerk is to discuss removal of the **graffiti on the Joy Wills bus shelter** with the street cleaner; Cllr Gladman is to check the **zip wire post;** **youth shelter** graffiti was not considered an urgent matter; the **vandal proof goal posts** will be referred to the supplier; **oak trees:** advice on the bushy oak will be sought as part of the tree report in September, the recently planted oak will be replaced if necessary next year; **rubbish** between pavilion and gates is **to be cleared** by football club; the **missing lock** on double gates and the chain barrier is to be repaired by the Playing Field Committee.

Action: Cllr Gladman and the Clerk.

260.21 Correspondence: All correspondence was brought to the attention of the Council.

Funding request received from Somerset citizens Advice service will be considered in

January. **Forestry operations at Stockhill woodland:** the clearance of larch trees was noted and has been publicised.

260.22 Newsletter: the following items were agreed for inclusion: Overgrown hedges; Councillor Vacancy; reminder to support local bus service; road closure on The Street, Draycott.

260.23 Statement of Accounts: The statement for November had been previously circulated. The bank reconciliations for September and October had been previously verified.

Resolution: To approve the statement. Unanimously agreed.

260.24 Financial Report:

i. The **payments schedule** was updated.

Resolution: To approve the schedule. Unanimously agreed.

St Andrews Press of Wells Ltd	I97	Newsletter Printing	£60.00
Probusiness	I98	Payroll	£46.50
GWB Services Ltd	I99	Grass Cutting	£247.80
H Marshall	I100	Salary & Expenses	£983.92
HMRC	I101	PAYE	£58.55
Somerset Assoc. Local Councils Ltd	I102	Affiliation Fees	£385.87
GWB Services Ltd	I103	Grass Cutting	£123.90
H Marshall	I104	Salary & Expenses	£40.29
A Chick	I105	Street Cleaning	£343.86
NEST	DD	Pension	£35.37
NEST	DD	Pension	£35.41

ii. The NJC pay scale review for 2023 24;

Resolution: To implement the new pay agreement and backdate the new pay scales to 1st April 2023. Unanimously agreed.

iii Budget and Precept 2024 25 The Councils accounts were reviewed, the rate of inflation, the improvements to the playing field, three alternative proposals and Somerset Council were discussed. The draft budget was adjusted to the option generating a 7.72% increase. The Chairman thanked Cllr Ward and the Clerk for their work preparing the draft budget.

Resolution: To approve the draft budget as amended. The precept request for 2024 25 will be £29,176.00 Unanimously agreed.

The Clerk is to submit the request.

iv The payroll and internal audit charges for 2024 were discussed.

Resolution: The charges were approved. Unanimously agreed

v The Request for support from Playing Field Committee was discussed

Resolution: Cllr Dollins proposed a grant of £1000. Unanimously agreed

vi The Request for support from Somerset Bus Partnership was discussed

Resolution: Cllr Sealey proposed a grant of £50. Cllr Dollins seconded. Unanimously agreed

vii A higher rate savings account was discussed. It was proposed that 50% of the working balance + reserves should be transferred to a 35 day notice account, providing additional security and increasing the return for the funds. Further funds could be transferred as appropriate.

Resolution: Cllr Dollins proposed that the 35 day notice account should be set up. Cllr Daynes seconded. Unanimously agreed.

The reserves policy is to be updated accordingly.

260.25 Dates of future meetings:

2024 January 18th; March 21st; May 16th; July 18th; September 19th; November 21st

Time of closing meeting: 9.50pm