

DRAFT MINUTES of the MEETING of NETTLECOMBE PARISH COUNCIL
held on MONDAY 10th February 2020 at THE EMN HALL – 8.00 pm

Correspondence and other documents were available from 7.45 pm for Councillors to read prior to the meeting.

PRESENT: Cllrs Marilyn Crothers (Chair), Ben Lintott, Liz Scott, Iain Mackie, Martin Dewdney, and Carol Juffs (Clerk).

IN ATTENDANCE: No residents present

Speaker: Emma Giffard, Community Engagement Officer, Somerset Rivers Authority

Emma gave a talk on the current work liaising with both WWT and EA in local projects across the whole county. Liaising with local floodgroups, and a community Flood Alert project. Funding to install a localised rain gauge with flood alerts, in the Washford catchment if this would be of interest. Equipment to be gifted to the local parish councils, but then a requirement to maintain it going forward. Many bodies involved/liasing with Somerset Rivers Authority, separate from the Two Valleys project. It was agreed the properties in Yarde are the most at risk of flooding in the parish, but generally from drain blockages.

A SRA reverse auction scheme is about to be launched for funding local projects – Ben Lintott at Huish Barton Farm would benefit from this, and Emma will liaise with him direct. Farmers bid to carry out work on their land, and the latest scheme will run mid-February for farmers to bid on-line.

The Chairman thanked Emma for attending the meeting.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Somerset Councillor Christine Lawrence
SW&T Councillors Peter Pilkington and Marcus Kravis
PSCOs Sue Thompson and Sue Marks
Cllrs Robin Wichard and Oliver Reynolds

2. MINUTES of the Meeting on 11th November 2019; Minutes of Precept Meeting January 6th 2020; Minutes of Planning Meeting February 3rd 2020

These were all signed as a true record of the meetings.

3. POLICE REPORT

A comprehensive report was received earlier in the day from PSCO Sue Thompson of Avon and Somerset Police, as she was unable to join the meeting.

There has been a further spate of rural break-ins to outbuildings and many repeat victims. The Police gave Crime prevention advice recently to farmers at Cutcombe market.

There have been ugly incidents with youth groups and anti-social behaviour in the Watchet and Williton area. Enlisted support of their Special Constables to conduct high visibility patrols to target locations at specific times to try and disrupt behaviour and identify those involved.

Recently several cases of fraud, generally targeting elderly and vulnerable people. Recent publication by Avon and Somerset Police called The Little Book of Big Scams, has been distributed locally to raise awareness.

At the end of the month an event called 'Route 60+' will be held at Carhampton village hall targeting the over sixties to address how both vehicles and driving skills have changed over the years.

4. OPEN FORUM

There were no residents attending the meeting for discussion.

5. SOMERSET AND SOMERSET WEST & TAUNTON COUNCILLOR'S REPORTS

There were no reports received prior to the meeting.

6. MATTERS OF REPORT – from 11th November meeting

The installation of check dams on Huish Barton farm was the subject of discussion at the previous week's Planning meeting, when it was agreed to unanimously support the retrospective planning application.

7. CORRESPONDENCE

An email was received from Lucy Devitt, Church Warden, to confirm that the Parochial Church Council is happy to pay 50% of the monthly charge to maintain the Parish Website. This was based on the first quotation for £25/month maintenance charge. Will need to refer back to the PCC with revised quotations.

Correspondence encouraging Exmoor Society membership, for individuals to apply.

An email was received relating to the re-instatement of the Yarde Finger post at a cost of approximately £700. ECJ to contact Christine Lawrence and establish if the Council can cover this cost, through a grant for small local projects, as considered to be SCC and Highways responsibility, and not a parish matter

Lucy Devitt, warden of Nettlecombe PCC, also forwarded a quote to repair an historic monument cross in the closed church yard. Quotation of £1200 by local stonemason, Jeremy Lyle. It was agreed to respond that this year the precept is bespoke, and we had no prior knowledge, so unable to afford it. We would need to know more detail about other monuments too, and check if there are other sources for grants.

8. REPORTS

Chairman's Report

Dunster Panel meeting was attended by the Chairman, with excuses offered re organisation, following the amalgamation. Discussion about the coastal erosion issues was open ended. More housing needed in Williton and concern for the carbon footprint. Housing project more than required for the area.

Exmoor National Park Parish forum re-scheduled after the snow disrupted first meeting. Very interesting talk on bovine tuberculosis and transfer to wild deer on the moors. Deer show little evidence of carrying TB until actually dead. Drinking water is greater risk for TB transfer.

Parish supper was a successful event with about 45 people attending – marginally less than in previous years, possibly due to advertising.

Highways

Completed drainage work at Vempletts Cross has proved very successful and taking water away across local fields. Gully blockages have been cleared several times recently. Pothole on lane from Egypt to Beggearn Huish needs repair. Also Slade Lane and Colton Lane (Nettlecombe Park lane) to be reported.

Concerns to be taken by Chairman to Dunster Panel meeting, when David Peak attending, if not carried out beforehand.

Planning

Blade Mill – waiting for response to written representation.

Letter has been sent to support retrospective planning application to installation of check dams on Huish Barton farm.

The Brewers' barn proposal on Wood Advent Farm will be supported with notes relating to natural screening on the west but in full view from road and surrounding countryside. The Parish Council proposes planting to further screen the proposed barn from the north, to reduce visual impact at the closed back of the building. Also it will be

suggested to create a surfaced pull-in/passing place for vehicles in the narrow Harper's Lane, at the approach to the barn. Also a note to confirm that no site lighting is proposed, as it is in Exmoor National Park with the dark skies policy.

Proposed agricultural building near Combe barn which was considered by the Parish Council at last Monday's meeting. A draft response was circulated via email for all Councillors to agree and the response will read that the Parish Council considers this scheme wholly unacceptable for development within the National Park.

Confirmation should be obtained from the applicant – Mr Sam Cowling – that this is a personal application and not associated with a number of the other companies associated with the address and referred to on social media.

Factors affecting the Parish Council's opposition to the scheme

1. Prominent site adjacent to the B3190, visible from the surrounding open countryside. The proposed screening and cutting back into the hillside would not reduce the visual intrusion, especially when approached from the downhill side. The ridge height is stated as 9.7 metres, over 31 feet, with twin ridge design and the impact will not be reduced by cutting into the hillside.
2. Proposed to use existing access which is very close to the junction with the B3190. Traffic descending at speed down the B3190 will be at risk of collision with large agricultural vehicles entering or leaving the site.
3. The proposed development is not adjacent to or convenient for any existing farms, which would therefore represent open countryside development within the National Park.
4. The application is for a vehicle maintenance depot, which is a commercial use and would be more appropriate placed in an existing commercial development. The structure is of agricultural type but the proposed use would be unacceptable if a more conventional industrial building had been indicated. Proposing an agricultural building for industrial use does not make the application acceptable.
5. The proposed building is very large, approx. 18750 sq ft which is excessive for the area of land farmed. The application refers to surrounding farms using the service, but this reinforces the proposed change of use to an industrial development.
6. The location within the site is poor with a large area being lost to agriculture. Large space between proposed building and proposed plantings, with no indication of proposed use of land inbetween. The planting needs to be moved closer to minimise the loss of use of land to agriculture.
7. The application refers to possible employment of two mechanics but no indication of toilet or rest room facilities, and no detail of on-site draining. Site lighting, possible site security provisions and details of the proposed connection to the grid for the solar panels have been omitted.
8. The access track would require paving to cope with heavy traffic, but contrary to rural setting.

In summary the Parish Council is opposed to the proposed development which would lead to light and noise pollution as well as the loss of a rural landscape adjacent to a SSSI – Site of Specific Scientific Interest at Nettlecombe. Note to be made of the comment stating 'No wider environmental impact' by the Conservation Officer.

Footpaths

No report

EMN Hall

No report but the Chairman noted that the change to the keypad security number should be circulated to the Chair as well as the Clerk.

West Somerset Flood Group

No report

Finance

The Clerk presented a letter written to Natwest to change address from previous Clerk to current Clerk's address as bank statements are still going to Mary Coles, which was signed at the meeting.

Two payments were presented for approval – The maintenance of the church yard to December from Derek Quartly £300, (paid December) and the Clerk's salary payment 2 hours per week, over 13 weeks at the agreed rate of £9.77 per hour, £254.02.

Proposed by Marilyn Crothers and seconded by Martin Dewdney.

The Clerk presented a spreadsheet showing all transactions to date, with the reconciled Bank Balance of £3578.13.

It was noted that there would be two payments due before the year end relating to the website and a new arrangement for monthly maintenance going forward now that Clive Thorne was stepping down from his voluntary role.

9. MAINTENANCE, UPDATING & REVISION OF NETTLECOMBE WEBSITE

Following last month's Precept meeting it was agreed to also approach Black Cat Computers for an additional quote to maintain the existing website, and with a view to re-build it in the near future.

Marilyn and John Crothers met with David to discuss outline ideas and the quotation was about £700 to build a new website, in combination with the Nettlecombe PCC. Monthly maintenance would depend on the volume of work required – if none then no charge, then on a scale between £20 to £40 monthly dependent on work load.

It was agreed to enlist Black Cat Computers to make the handover from Clive Thorne for the maintenance of the existing website. Ben Lintott agreed to give thought to the design/layout of the new website to circulate to Councillors first, before going back to Black Cat.

Clerk to liaise with Black Cat Computers and Clive Thorne to initiate handover of current website for maintenance.

10. FUTURE BUSINESS/MATTERS FOR MEMBERS' INFORMATION

Old Cleeve First School are looking for new Governors if anyone is interested.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING & AGM

Monday May 11th 2020 – 7pm at the EMN Hall