

MINUTES of the MEETING of NETTLECOMBE PARISH COUNCIL
held on MONDAY 10th August via Zoom video conferencing – 8.00 pm

During these extraordinary times of a global pandemic, the meeting was conducted remotely via video conferencing.

PRESENT: Cllrs Marilyn Crothers (Chair), Ben Lintott (Vice-Chair) Oliver Reynolds, Iain Mackie, Robin Wichard and Carol Juffs – Clerk.

IN ATTENDANCE: No residents had requested to join the meeting remotely.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Cllrs Martin Dewdney and Liz Scott.

2. MINUTES of the Meeting on February 10th 2020

These were signed as a true record of the meeting.

3. OPEN FORUM – no residents present.

4. POLICE REPORT – none received

5. SOMERSET AND SOMERSET WEST & TAUNTON COUNCILLOR'S REPORTS – none received

6. CORRESPONDENCE – none received

7. MATTERS OF REPORT

Unable to meet as a Parish Council since February meeting, due to the pandemic and lockdown. The Parish Church is now holding services again, following COVID-19 guidance, but with no singing permitted..

8. REPORTS

Chairman's Report

There had been no activity of Dunster Panel nor Exmoor National Park for the Chairman to report on. The Chairman thanked the Clerk for co-ordinating the use of Zoom software.

Highways

No updates to report.

Footpaths

Nothing to report other than all local footpaths seemed to be in good condition at the moment.

Planning

The Blade Mill has been refused, yet again. It is anticipated there will be an Appeal as it was very similar to an original application that had been granted. It was noted that in the Inspector's report on the Historic value and integrity of the property, he could see no reason why it was not of a habitable size at its present condition. The Inspector felt it was perfectly habitable, and therefore it was not surprising that the Application to increase the accommodation was turned down. It was noted that the current site was looking run-down and not assisting any support for future applications.

The Leaky Dams planning application has not yet been confirmed. Ben Lintott reported that a few weeks ago there was a further inspection and recommendations made - the gates had to be changed from metal to wood, and the check dam nearest the road had to be dug out and re-faced with sandstone. The work has been committed to.

The Brewers' application was withdrawn a while ago and the land is now up for sale.

There have been no new planning applications in recent weeks.

EMN Hall

No report but the Hall will be re-opening from the end of September. Our next meeting has been booked for November and are awaiting the COVID-19 guidance that will have to be adhered to.

West Somerset Flood Group

Cllr Reynolds had not heard anything to update.

Other Parish Matters

It is doubtful whether the annual Parish Supper will go ahead early in the new year under the current circumstances of social distancing during the pandemic.

Cllr Mackie asked about the request to support the refurbishment of the historic cross at the Church. At the previous meeting the Councillors had agreed there were insufficient funds to support this restoration, that had already been carried out. We wrote to Lucy Devitt to advise that regrettably there were insufficient funds to support the work.

The Clerk explored the possibility of a grant from the county but Councillor Lawrence had advised there were no further monies available. However, she did refer to the Community Foundation at the Bath and West Show grounds, and the Chief executive Justin Sargent, as an opportunity for a grant. These details were forwarded to the Parochial Church Council to pursue as they had instructed the works, and could apply direct.

Finance

8.1 Internal Audit Debbie Dennis and Approval of Annual Governance Statement

The annual accounts for 2019/20 were audited on June 29th 2020 during the lockdown, by Debbie Dennis in Roadwater, as in previous years. Page 4 of the AGAR and the signed Accounts were shared to the meeting. There had been no payment for Audit services in the prior year and it was agreed to submit two fees this financial year, which was approved for payment.

Pages 3, 5 and 6 were shared to the meeting and formally approved to be signed by the Chairman and Finance Officer.

8.2 Adoption of the Accounts 2019/20 – to be sent to PKF Littlejohn LLP

The timelines for submission of the annual Accounts were moved by the Government to 31st July 2020 due to the global pandemic. Due to the lack of a venue to hold a Parish Council meeting, and the need for Social distancing an extension was applied for and granted to August 31st, to allow the video conference to go ahead for adoption of the Accounts. The Councillors agreed to adopt the 2019-20 Accounts and the Chairman and Finance Officer signed the completed documents at the meeting. Proposed by Ben Lintott and seconded by Oliver Reynolds.

8.3 Payments to date to be agreed – as per shared Excel spreadsheet during meeting

The Clerk had prepared a spreadsheet which was shared to the meeting listing the payments that had been made since the start of the financial year. These included a prior year charge of £100 from SWAT for the uncontested election of 2018, and regular annual payments including Zurich Insurance and SALC membership.

The list of payments had to be agreed retrospectively, under the circumstances of no meeting being held in May due to COVID-19.

The reconciliation to Bank Statement 161 was noted, approved and signed by the Chairman.

In addition, the Clerk's salary payment for 2 hours per week, over 13 weeks at the agreed rate of £9.77 per hour, £254.02 for July, August and September inclusive, was agreed.

Agreement of all the payments was proposed by Oliver Reynolds and seconded by Ben Lintott and signed by the Chairman.

9. FUTURE BUSINESS/MATTERS FOR MEMBERS' INFORMATION

There will be an open air meeting at Lang's Farm yard on Saturday August 15th at 4.00 pm when Mr Alex Ashworth, a relative of the Wyndham family, is holding an informative meeting for residents. The Chairman will deliver notices to households locally to invite them all to come along and listen to plans in relation to the history of the locality and a potential field study centre.

Councillors were advised to wait for the planning application before passing comment, when the opportunity to respond as the Parish Council will arise.

Alex Ashworth's contact details will be circulated after the meeting.

The dates for future meetings were agreed for the year:

Monday February 1st 2021

Monday May 10th 2021 AGM and meeting

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 9th November 2020 – 8pm at the EMN Hall, social distancing regulations permitting.

In the event of no venue option the meeting will be held via Zoom video conferencing again. (Details of this Zoom meeting were circulated immediately after the meeting, when another 'limitless minutes' offer was received.)