

MINUTES of the MEETING of NETTLECOMBE PARISH COUNCIL
held on MONDAY 8th February 2021 via Zoom video conferencing – 8.00 pm

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

PRESENT: Cllrs Marilyn Crothers (Chair), Ben Lintott, Oliver Reynolds, Iain Mackie, Robin Wichard, Elizabeth Scott, Somerset Cllr Christine Lawrence and SW&T Cllr Marcus Kravis, and Carol Juffs – Clerk.

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

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Cllrs Martin Dewdney and Peter Pilkington, PC Sue Thompson

2. MINUTES of the Meeting on November 9th 2020

The Minutes were signed as a true record of the meeting, proposed by Cllr Lintott and seconded by Cllr Reynolds

3. MINUTES of the Precept Meeting January 18th 2021

These were signed as a true record of the meeting, proposed by Cllr Reynolds and seconded by Cllr Mackie.

4. Police Report – none received

5. Open Forum – no residents present

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

Somerset West & Taunton Cllr Kravis reported that it had been another busy period in the district, the Somerset Growth Plan has been passed – a combination of three other Councils and Somerset laying down the future for the growth of Somerset as a whole. Also an Innovation for a Science Park or similar innovative project to include Minehead districts as well as Taunton.

Grants still being administered during the national Covid lockdown – urge key suppliers to apply for grants.

Work has continued on virtual career fairs, employment hubs and redundancy support – eg Debenhams closing in Taunton employed 400 people both local and from further afield.

Employment gap – looking at sites for expanding businesses to encourage growing businesses not to move away, and retain job opportunities for the younger generation.

Somerset Cllr Lawrence reported on the slowing down of the Covid spread in the county. The R number is 0.7 to 0.9 which is below the critical 1 for spread of the virus.

Contact **help line 0300 790 6275** for any problems Covid related. Customer Care unit at County Hall has been extremely busy dealing with 12,000 registered calls with a check-up/return call to the person who made the call.

The vaccination procedures are going well and targets set by the Government will be met on 15th February, to include all the over 70s, Care home residents and care workers. Hopefully by mid-summer everyone will have received their vaccinations.

Cllr Lintott asked if Somerset West and Taunton has become a Covid 'Hot Spot' this year, where it wasn't last year, was due to Taunton skewing the figures for the area? It was agreed that the Taunton numbers were pushing up the average for the area as a whole. Also the Christmas period saw a spike as people lacked care for the restrictions.

Kilve Court at Christmas time cooked over 2000 Christmas dinners, frozen, and distributed to those on their own or unable to cook for themselves. They have continued to provide this service during the current lockdown, supporting the community.

Combe Florey road works will continue for another week or so, which has sent more traffic than usual through Nettlecombe unfortunately. Concern for the articulated lorries that appear to be using this route, whereas they should be using Bridgwater to Williton route. But Satnavs will offer different routes to the diversion signage, which may be the cause.

7. MATTERS OF REPORT

7.1 Road from Egypt to Vempletts Cross

In this wet weather the large forestry vehicles are damaging the banks and the mud gets washed down the lanes making walking and driving hazardous.

Similar problem to Nettlecombe Park road.

Cllr Lawrence recommended writing to David Peake at the Highways Department to state the problems being experienced - copied to Cllrs Lawrence and Lintott.

***Post-meeting Note** – the Forestry team are aware of further bank erosion this weekend the ferrying of timber will last another week, after which they have assured the Chairman, they will clear the lane from Egypt to Vempletts Cross.*

7.2 pdate on Lang Farm’s Barns development

Since the last meeting Rob Wilson-North and Thomas Furlough, from Exmoor National Park have been to the site. They are responsible for Ancient Buildings and old sites, as archaeologists and they spent an afternoon reviewing the site. Showed quite a bit of interest, and felt that the unevenness of the site showed that works had been carried out there over a very long period. They have assessed the site using maps taken from satellite as to what was below ground level, and they will compile a report to Alex Ashworth, who may feed back to residents.

8. CORRESPONDENCE

No items of Correspondence were received by the Chairman or Clerk

9. REPORTS

We are still unable to meet as a Parish Council since the February 2020 meeting, due to the pandemic and lockdown for the third time.

Chairman’s Report

The Chairman has not attended any meetings due to the pandemic.

We assume Dunster Panel has not met as there have been no reports.

The Chairman has just received the Agenda for a ENPA meeting on March 8th

Nobody had attended the Exmoor Consultative and Parish Forum meetings, held remotely on line.

Highways

No work has been reported apart from the mud on the roads as already discussed.

The Chairman noted the tarmac was also breaking up on the Egypt to Vempletts Cross road at the sides where heavy vehicles used the lane. Similarly on the road to Beggearn Huish the stones were now visible in places beneath the tarmac, so repairs would be needed.

Footpaths

All local footpaths seemed to be in good condition and nothing has been reported at the moment. The Chairman advised that the stone walling of the access to the footpath at Egypt had some slipped stones which needed repair. Cllr Wichard will assess the damage in due course.

Planning

It has been surprisingly quiet during this year of lockdowns, where we might have seen a surge of applications as people were confined to their homes.

The matter of the new garden terraces created at The Blade Mill did not require planning consent.

If anyone wants to check on the progress of any application please refer to the website:

somerwestandtaunton.gov.uk/planning/planning-weekly-list/

EMN Hall

The Bookings secretary Sonya Bethune is contactable via email on: emnhalldiary@gmail.com. Guidelines for the use of the Hall in regard to COVID 19 were circulated, but with the third and national lockdown the Hall is not in use. Understandably we have not received a report from the Hall committee.

West Somerset Flood Group

Cllr Reynolds reported that there had been a change in Chairman, but he had not received any information recently.

Finance

There has been no change to the bank balance, since reported at the last meeting. Bank statement 163 shows a balance of £3961.16. There are no unrepresented cheques.

It was agreed to pay the Clerk's salary of £261.04 for the period of January to March 2021

Proposed by Ben Lintott and seconded by Robin Wichard.

10. MAINTENANCE, UPDATING & REVISION OF NETTLECOMBE WEBSITE

It was noted that the work to the website is yet to be carried out, with the budget of £750 carried forward from last year and a similar provision in this year's. Once the Councillors can meet in person it will be discussed fully with a view to a re-vamp to be compliant with Disability access etc. along the lines of proposals laid out by Cllr Lintott last year.

11. FUTURE BUSINESS/MATTERS FOR MEMBERS' INFORMATION

There was nothing to report about forthcoming matters during this third and national lockdown, preventing groups from meeting through the first half of this year.

The Chairman advised that after many years she would be definitely stepping down at the AGM in May 2021. She found the constraints of looking after her husband and the skills of IT requirements were the deciding factors, but offered to remain on the Parish Council. Cllr Reynolds thanked the Chairman for her commitment and work over the years, which was unanimously echoed by those present.

Cllr Wichard reported that there was a Government initiative to support areas of poor internet connection, and he was looking in to whether this could assist Nettlecombe Parish where there were very poor hot spots of little or no connectivity. Cllr Kravis suggested approaching the County for possibilities of grants or funding to assist the development.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING - AGM

Monday May 10th 2021 at 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 will be circulated nearer the time)