

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF NETTLECOMBE PARISH COUNCIL  
HELD AT THE EMN HALL, MONKSILVER  
MONDAY 6<sup>th</sup> February 2023 at 8.00 pm**

**Present:** Cllrs Robin Wichard (Chair), Iain Mackie, Marilyn Crothers, Martin Dewdney, Oliver Reynolds, Caroline Moore and Carol Juffs - Clerk.

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Somerset Cllr Christine Lawrence

**2. MINUTES of the Meeting Held on November 7<sup>th</sup> 2022**

The Minutes were reviewed and signed as an accurate record of the meeting.

**3. OPEN FORUM – FOR ALL RESIDENTS**

There were no residents present.

**4. POLICE REPORT**

(Newsletter circulated recently)

Concerns were raised that local incidents had not been fully reported recently. It would be useful as a Parish Council to know of local occurrences and to be made more aware of incidents affecting the Parish.

There is a programme currently set-up to deal with cyber crime which is more widespread and affects vulnerable people in the community. We need to be aware and remain vigilant as scams get more sophisticated, and help and support those affected.

**5. SOMERSET and SOMERSET WEST & TAUNTON DEANE COUNCILLORS' REPORTS**

There were no County and Area Councillors present

**6. MATTERS of REPORT from 7<sup>th</sup> November meeting**

Update on Flood matters given under Reports below

**7. CORRESPONDENCE**

There were no items of correspondence received during the previous quarter.

**8. REPORTS**

**Chairman's Report**

As the cost of living crisis begins to bite across the nation it is important that we – as a parish council – do what we can with the Village Agents and other relevant agencies to support vulnerable parishioners. Everyone in the parish is urged to keep an eye on potentially vulnerable neighbours and anyone can approach our Village Agent, Izzy Sylvester on 07931 018045, should they need support.

Policing in the parish continues to be a concern with fewer police officers and PCSOs across the area generally. Although crime remains comparatively low in the parish (with the exception of crimes from unsecured barns and sheds) we cannot be complacent and hope that Sue Thompson's successor will come along to parish meetings to keep us abreast of current issues.

The other pressing issue within the parish remains poor internet speed and connectivity. This was discussed at the November Exmoor Consultative and Parish Forum (details of which appear elsewhere in these minutes) and further information may be found in the notes from that meeting.

**Dunster Panel** – it was noted to continue to seek the reinstatement of the Dunster Panel which is a vital link for communication in the area.

The meeting was held on November 17<sup>th</sup> 2022 at Dulverton.

The main focus of the meeting was the poor internet service across the area and this was highlighted in a question from the floor referring to Bury but equally relevant within our parish. A presentation by Matt Barrow (Stakeholder Engagement Officer) from Connecting Devon and Somerset (whose presentation can be seen at [https://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0031/453919/ECPF-17th-Nov-22.pdf](https://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0031/453919/ECPF-17th-Nov-22.pdf)) outlined what had been achieved but offered little information about areas not covered by the immediate roll-out. Nothing appears to be happening in our parish although Monksilver does appear to be an area due for upgrade imminently.

Nothing else was relevant to our parish.

**ENPA****RW**

There was very little in the topics covered that relate to the needs of a rural parish like Nettlecombe

**Highways****MC**

The reported pothole was repaired very quickly, unlike the gap near the Old Rectory which took 2 months' response time. The mud caused by surface run-off onto Clitsome Lane has also been raised today with an incident number. There are two further potholes to be reported – one between Vemplett's Cross and Eqypt and the other between Vemplett's Cross and Wood Advent – which is of a serious concern.

**Planning****IM**

An application was received from Guernsey Cottage in Woodford, opposite the turning to Nettlecombe Court. Three Councillors attended site to review the application for replacing a collapsed barn with a modern unit, and a 2.7 metre retaining wall halfway up the bank, with improvements to the access, which is currently very poor. There are no real objections to the building, but in a letter to the Council it was pointed out that the site was very steep and no mention has been made to the drainage, and potential build-up of water behind the wall. Also that no indication has been made for the building site drainage to avoid water running in from the retaining wall. There is no mention of rainwater drainage from the roof, and at the site meeting the applicant mentioned a soakaway will be made, but this could be difficult due to the steepness of the site. Also concern was raised for the floor of the new building, as there is an increased risk of run-off from a concrete floor, which would not be appropriate. Finally concern was raised for the asbestos content of the existing barn roof sheets and limited access to site for safe disposal. Concern was raised regarding the history of run-off and stoney debris onto the road below, as also raised by local residents previously. The drainage adjacent to the shared access requires upgrading to improve this situation. There was a retrospective request for site works already carried out. Tree and shrub plantings are essential on the steep slopes of the bank to counter water run-off and land slippage.

As no measurements were given of existing roof and eave heights it was not possible to draw a direct comparison between proposed and the existing building.

An application this week has come in from Exmoor National Park for the listed building at Huish Barton Farm. The alterations to remove some stud partitions in the farmhouse are entirely internal having no external impact, and therefore requires no involvement from the Parish.

Despite Planning Consent being given the Blade Mill remains untouched over the winter months.

**Footpaths****RW**

Nothing to report locally other than to follow up whether ENP had acted on the Nettlecombe park footpath that the Chairman had reported.

**EMN Hall**

There have been no recent updates from the Hall and the noticeboard suggests there has been very little activity since the pandemic. It was decided to just report as and when they notified us. The following dates have already been booked for the Hall for the next two years:

## 2023

May Tuesday 9th AGM Main hall from 19.00 - to set up for 19.30 start

August Tuesday 8th - Committee room from 19.00

November Tuesday 14th - Committee room from 19.00

## Then quarterly on 2nd Tuesday of the month for 2024

February 13th

May 14th AGM in Main hall

August 13th

November 12th - all from 7pm

## West Somerset Flood Group

CM

There was a television News item recently and an article in the Exmoor magazine regarding improving Porlock's flood management scheme on the Holnicote Estate. The concept is good but putting it into practice seems to not follow the seasons for successful planting and establishment to be achieved.

Marilyn reported the leaky dams on Huish Barton farm are very silted up and the volume of water this winter has gouged out a deep channel. Caroline will follow up with Justin Nichols, the new owner, for a follow-up report.

The Roadwater Flood scheme established a few years ago has been very successful but keeping it maintained is still a problem.

The Chairman confirmed that it was not necessary to adopt the role of Flood Warden but merely the liaison Councillor to report back to the Parish Council. Caroline will remain the point of contact for the Parish Council.

Caroline attended the last Flood Group Meeting in December, with an interesting talk from the Wessex Flood Resilience Engagement Advisor – Tiffany Tapper. There is a useful flood incident helpline - **0800 807060**

There is also a grant available for flood equipment in communities up to £5000, but it was not thought that the Parish required specific support. After the heavy winter rains even Yarde fared well.

## Clerk – Finance

ECJ

The reconciled accounts had been circulated prior to the meeting showing a current bank balance of £3190.55. The following payments were approved and the cheques signed at the meeting by the Chairman and Cllr Reynolds

EMN Hall hire for 2022 – 4 meetings £60

Clerk's salary – January to March 2023 £270.92 gross

SALC Budget Training attended by Finance Officer £30

The completed Precept application was returned to Somerset West and Taunton on January 3<sup>rd</sup> 2023.

## 9. Councillor Training and Induction

Councillor Mackie requested to be registered for the Planning course – Responding to Planning Applications February 23<sup>rd</sup> via Zoom.

## 10. FUTURE BUSINESS/MATTERS FOR MEMBERS' INFORMATION

Parish Supper will be held on February 24<sup>th</sup> at Nettlecombe Court.

KING'S CORONATION Saturday May 6<sup>th</sup>, Bank Holiday Monday 8<sup>th</sup>.

The Chairman wished to record his grateful thanks to the Parish Clerk for carrying out her role while still recovering from her operation in the autumn.

## 11. Date of Next Meeting AGM – Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2023 at 7.30 pm

The meeting closed at 20.46 pm