



Minutes of the Meeting of Dulverton Town Council

Held on Monday 8th April 2024 at 7.15pm, in the Town Hall,
Fore Street, Dulverton TA22.

Present: Chairman/Mayor: Mrs Christine Dubery. Councillors: Mr Nick Thwaites; Mr Alan Ottey; Mr John Preston; Mrs Margaret Rawle; Mrs Allison Crisp; Mrs Ann Van Praag and Mr Steven Pugsley, Somerset County Council (S.C.C.) who left at 7.45pm. One member of the public attended.

Deferment of Business for Comment by the Public:

Mr Geoff Lee – Millham Lane sewerage work: Mr Lee expressed the following enquiries and comment:

- (a) When will the land at the Millham Lane end be reinstated from its current mess to its original idyllic state?
- (b) When is the work scheduled to end?
- (c) That the quality of public communication from South West Water has been poor and that there had been a lack of information on the DTC website, regarding the project.

Members responded by informing Mr Lee that obtaining information from South West Water has been particularly difficult since the commencement of the project. The Council has stressed to South West Water the need for regular and effective public communication.

The work involves the refurbishment and upgrading of the sewerage facilities, improving them for public use and reducing the overspill of sewerage into the river. A new storm tank has been installed and the reed beds will be replenished. Members have been informed that the works have been held up by bad weather but is hoped that they will be completed by the end of April. South West Water are contracted to reinstate all the land effected. This may however take several months to achieve.

Apologies for absence and acceptance of any reasons offered if agreed:

Cllrs. Mrs Louise Parrish who is ill and Mrs Frances Nicholson (S.C.).

Declarations of Interest:

None not already declared.

Chairman's Comments & Meeting Management:

None

Questions for County Councillors:

Cllrs. Mr Steven Pugsley S.C.

Mounsey Hill Gate - Fly Tipping Report: The landing area is being used as a storage area for what appears to be gravel sweepings.

A similar incident happened last year and the material was left to break down. No-one however, including Somerset Highways, will take responsibility. Further enquiries are to be made to ascertain who is responsible.

The Gardens – Land adjacent to the Footpath: There exists a resident's dispute over the land opposite the houses, which is unused, but currently leased from Somerset County by the Caravan Club who has fenced it off. Somerset County ideally would like to transfer the land to DTC. Members' were informed that it is an issue which has been problematic for many years.

After discussion members agreed that it would be a financial burden and DTC would gain nothing by accepting responsibility for the strip of land. It was suggested that it is divided up and offered to the owners of the properties opposite.

Road Signage – It was reported that signage is failing to be removed after roadworks have been undertaken. Members were advised to report the problem to Somerset Highways via the website.

Dulverton Recycling Centre Proposed Closure – No further developments.

Amory Road Street Lighting – It was anticipated that although the lights, having been inspected, were to be mended by 14th March 2024, they remain broken.

Devolution of Highways Services – No further updates were available. Cllr. Pugsley informed members that Somerset County were proposing that the Exmoor LCN act as the commissioning body in the event that services are successfully devolved.

Minutes of the meetings held on 11th March 2024 as circulated: were approved and signed. Proposed by Mrs Crisp, seconded by Mrs Rawle and carried.

7051 Update of action points resulting from the last meeting:

7039: Barnclose – South West Water Proposals

A site meeting was undertaken by several members of DTC accompanied by Ms Megan Irish-Edwards, Estates Surveyor, South West Water, on 19th March 2024.

Various proposals were discussed concerning the construction of a permanent track; some would involve planning permission, all would require the replacement of any of the original play equipment, which has been removed, including the zip wire and football pitch.

Any access created would be used by emergency vehicles and vehicles used with regards to maintenance and testing. DTC stressed the importance of ensuring that access was only available to authorised vehicles and it should be closed at night.

It was confirmed that any reasonable legal costs involved will be met by South West Water.

Once a proposal has been agreed, approval will be sought from South West Water and a budget agreed. Public consultation will be undertaken.

7050 Vicarage Hill and Union Street Priority Signage

It is anticipated that the contractor will erect the signs before the end of April; a road closure will be necessary.

7052 Accounts:

Financial Statement – March 2024: See Appendix A

RESOLVED: That the Financial Statement as per Appendix A is approved. Proposed by Mrs Rawle, seconded by Mr Preston and carried.

Payments for approval – March 2024: See Appendix B

RESOLVED: That the payments as per Appendix B are approved. Proposed by Mrs Crisp, seconded Mrs Rawle and carried.

The Clerk informed members that the internal audit is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 29th May 2024.

The Parish Lengthsman account is to be closed and surplus funds transferred to the General Account in lieu of administration costs.

7053 Committees:

Grounds Committee Meeting – 19th March 2024

RESOLVED: To adopt as part of this meeting the minutes of the Grounds Committee meeting held on 19th March 2024. Proposed by Mrs Crisp, seconded by Mr Ottey and carried.

The Clerk informed members that both groundsmen had received copies of the draft agreements and had agreed to sign and return them.

However, Mr Bryant has expressed concern that the time allocated to maintaining the cemetery and churchyard was not enough to meet the specification. He is unlikely to be able to cut all the grass in the cemetery within 7 hours and the churchyard in three hours.

Members responded by stating that there existed financial constraints with regards grounds work and suggested that he submits monthly time sheets providing details as to what has been managed to be done in the time allocated. Members will monitor the situation and review both the hours allocated and the specification as necessary.

RESOLVED: To adopt the Service Agreements and Job Specifications with regards the Grounds Manager and Grounds Man for the financial year 2024/25. Proposed by Mr Preston, seconded by Mrs Dubery and carried

Dulverton Partnership Meeting – 2nd April 2024

RESOLVED: To adopt as part of this meeting the minutes of the Dulverton Partnership Meeting – 2nd April 2024. Proposed by Mrs Crisp, seconded by Mr Thwaites and carried.

Cllr. Mrs Dubery thanked all the volunteers who helped make the Valuation Day a success.

Members were informed that the Town Management Committee meeting scheduled for Tuesday 9th April 2024 has been postponed until Tuesday 18th June 2024.

7054 Planning Applications:

RESOLVED: To adopt the comments as per Appendix C as part of this meeting. Proposed by Mrs Van Praag, seconded by Mrs Crisp and carried.

RESOLVED: To Invite Cllr. Mr Nick Thwaites to become a member of the Planning Committee. Proposed by Mrs Dubery, seconded by Mr Preston and carried.

7056 Councillor Co- Option:

Members were informed that the new vacancy has been advertised and members of the public invited to request that an election be held by 10th April 2024. In the event that less than ten do so, members will be given the opportunity to consider filling the vacancy by the co-option of a new Councillor at the meeting scheduled for 7th May 2024.

Members were reminded that there exist two vacancies at the current time.

7057 Somerset Council – Devolution Proposals:

No further details/information has been forthcoming from Somerset County concerning costs etc. despite repeated requests. Members therefore determined to defer the creation of a working group until such time as specific information is received concerning highway services in Dulverton.

7058 Dulverton Youth Club:

Members were informed that the Youth Club has closed.

It was no longer financially viable to keep it running as an average of only 8 children attended each session. 'Young Somerset' were no longer able to supply local youth workers and the fabric of the building is in dire need of maintenance.

The Trustees have determined that surplus funds are to be used for projects benefiting children in Dulverton. Cllr. Mr Preston enquired as to whether DTC would consider accepting the funds, and ring-fencing it, in anticipation of distributing it to projects fulfilling this specific criteria. DTC are happy to oblige.

7059 Staff Overtime Claim and Annual Leave Request:

Members were asked to consider a request from the Administrative Assistant regarding the payment of 10 hours overtime accrued during the Clerks absence in February 2024.

Additionally, members considered a request that 10 hours (1 week) of untaken annual leave is carried forward to year commencing 1st April 2024.

RESOLVED: To pay the Administrative Assistant 10 hours overtime, and to approve that 10 hours untaken annual leave is carried forward to year commencing 1st April 2024. Proposed by Mr Preston, seconded by Mrs Dubery and carried.

7060 Late Correspondence:

Correspondence noted by members.

PCSO Michelle Haines: Members considered a proposal to erect a Speed Indicator Device in Northmoor Road, following an allegation of a vehicle hitting the bag of a pedestrian.

Members agreed that this was an isolated incident of which the specific details are unknown. The situation will be monitored and the proposal revisited if considered necessary.

7061 Questions for Members who have attended additional meetings: None

7062 Issues to be raised with permission of the Chairman:

Members discussed the future regarding the administration of the DTC and Visit Dulverton websites.

It was agreed that the administration of the DTC website should be brought 'in house' and updated by the Administrative Assistant in the Town Council office. The Clerk suggested that professional support would be advantageous. Cllr. Mr Thwaites to pursue.

Chairman