

Minutes of the Ordinary Cutcombe Parish Council Meeting held at 7.30pm on Tuesday 20 July 2021 at the Moorland Hall

- Present:** Councillors Vivian White (*Chair*), John Anson, John Davis, Eric Norman, Claire Rooke, Frances Nicholson (County), Steven Pugsley (District), Jeanna Grenville (Clerk). One member of the public was present.
- 21/40 Public Question Time:** The member of the public raised concerns about grass cutting at the recreation ground, noting that cutting should take place when the grass is dry and requesting the schedule for cuts. The Clerk will respond to this query after liaising with Cllr Foxwell and the contractor.
- 21/41 Apologies for Absence:** apologies were accepted from Cllr Webber due to illness and Cllr Foxwell who was required to attend to pressing business matters.
- 21/42 Declarations of Interest:** Cllr Norman for agenda item 10.iii as supplier of the service.
- 21/43 Minutes of previous meetings and report on actions:** The minutes of the previous meeting of 15 June 2021 and the extraordinary meeting of 8 July 2021 were approved as true and accurate records. Minute 21/26, the Chairman had written to thank the landowners opposite the market. [Councillor Pugsley joined the meeting.] Minute 21/28ii, the Chairman noted that flowers had not been bought as the Clerk had advised this falls outside of the powers of the Council. Minute 21/27, Councillor Webber had reflected that it would have been preferable to declare a personal interest regarding planning application 6/8/21/105 Lower Cleeve Barns as the site is adjacent to property owned by a relative. He had asked that this be recorded at this meeting. Minute 21/25, the Clerk had written to the parish of Selworthy and Minehead Without expressing support regarding their concerns about fatalities on local highways.
- 21/44 Chairman's Report:** No further matters were reported.
- 21/45 Reports from County and District Councillors:** Cllr Nicholson noted that the Secretary of State's decision regarding Somerset's unitary structure would be announced imminently. A single unitary authority would mean that Highways will not be disaggregated and that a new system which addresses the needs of local Parishes will be developed. Details of various services will be shaped through Local Community Network meetings in the near future and Cllr Nicholson emphasized the importance of attending these meetings. Cllr Pugsley added that the impact of the 2019 Glover Review on the unitary arrangements was unknown. Cllr Pugsley reported that the family in housing need referred to in minute 21/25 had eventually been able to secure local affordable housing though flexibility within the allocation process. Cllrs discussed concerns about local housing needs and supply, including under-occupation. Where section 106 Town and Country Planning Act (1990) arrangements are in place these mandate that local needs must be considered first, but older properties may not benefit from a s.106 condition of this nature. The Exmoor Panel was recommended for furthering this discussion. Cllr Pugsley confirmed he had been unable to locate contemporary SW&T dog fouling notices. The Clerk will arrange for the existing notices to be re-posted at strategic locations.
- 21/46 Highways and Transport Matters:** Cllr Nicholson noted that the extreme heat had melted damaging some highways with emergency repairs being effected as far as possible. [Cllr Nicholson left the meeting.] There have been two requests to borrow the Speed Indicator Device equipment which the Clerk will respond to, pointing out that the Council does not regrettably have the capacity to provide the trained individual required to install the equipment.

- 21/47 Planning:** i) 6/8/21/108 The Firs – Cllrs noted that this was a retrospective application where it appeared that the householder had limited options regarding re-positioning when the faulty oil tank needed replacing. Concerns were raised about the height of the wall enclosing the tank. The Council resolved to support the application with a request that the height of the wall is reduced for the sake of the visual amenity of the immediate neighbour. ii) 6/8/21/109 Putham Cleeve Barns – Cllrs noted the condition of the Linhay with the roof already removed. It appears that sympathetic materials are to be used, although it was unclear whether ‘slate tiles’ referred to natural slate or fabricated tiles. No impact on local traffic and the renovation was anticipated and it was noted that the original pillars which will be retained were harmonious with the natural environment. Cllrs resolved to support the application, approving of the ambition to restore this heritage agricultural building. iii) 6/8/21/110LB Hawkswell Farm – Cllrs were delighted at the proposal to restore the windows in this listed building to the original design using traditional materials and resolved to support the application.
- 21/48 Finance: Part One.** i) Internal Auditor’s Report. In the absence of Cllr Webber who had been unable to attend the FWG, the Chairman gave feedback from the meeting held on 16 July 2021. The internal auditor’s report had highlighted a few shortcomings which required remediation, in particular that a full risk register was required and that the accounts should be prepared on a Receipts and Payments basis with more regular scrutiny of financial out-turns by Cllrs. Free reserves also required reconsideration as they exceed recommendations in the Joint Practitioners’ Guide. Cllrs reviewed and passed a resolution to adopt the Clerk’s action plan to strengthen governance and financial control, noting that Receipts and Payments accounting had been established from 1 April 2021. The Finance Working Group will review the position regarding reserves during budget and Precept setting for 2022/23. ii) AGAR Section 1 – Cllrs resolved to approve the amended Annual Governance Statement. iii) AGAR Section 2 – Councillors resolved to approve the updated Financial Statements and the Reserves, Variances and Balance report. iv) Period of Public inspection of accounts - Cllrs resolved that this will be 23 July to 3 September.
- Finance Part Two.** i) Bank Mandate - A second visit to the bank had been required by the Clerk, with the support of Cllr Webber, to effect the changes requested in May to the bank mandate and correspondence address. The bank official had advised that all requested changes had been completed, with the Clerk and Cllrs Foxwell and Rooke now on the mandate. The RFO should now be able to receive statements and raise queries on the accounts. The effort required by this task had been a waste of public resources and the bank would take forward a complaint. ii) Quarter One Financial Report - Cllrs reviewed the Clerk’s quarter one financial report which projected a year end surplus of £2,939 against the budget. Free and earmarked reserves at the end of the quarter stood at £53,034. Cllrs resolved to agree the report. iii) The Schedule of Payments was agreed by resolution, noting that the payment to Countrywide was on hold whilst it was queried and that the SSE costs had been reduced as a result of a revised meter reading. The Countrywide and public toilet cleaning contracts ought to be re-tendered in 2022 and the contract for electricity supply was due for renewal. Councillors recorded a vote of thanks to the RFO for her professional handling of the AGAR and the enhanced governance framework she is putting in place.
- 21/49 20 mph Campaign:** The Clerk wrote to Highways on 23 June asking for a 20 mph speed limit to be established in Cutcombe, emphasizing the strength of local support. The Clerk has chased for a response as no substantive reply has yet been received.
- 21/50 Update Regarding Recreation Ground:** The Chairman advised that recent research had confirmed that the recreation ground has been in full ownership of the Moorland Hall and Recreation charity since 1969. The charity had met recently to consider the impact of charity law on its future governance arrangements.

- 21/51 Memorial Bench:** A parishioner had reported that the bench adjacent to the War Memorial was in need of repair. Cllr Rooke agreed to investigate and report back.
- 21/52 Correspondence and Meetings:** The Clerk reported that she had received a request for information from an individual whose planning application had been objected to by the Council. She advised that this was best handled under the Freedom Of Information Act (2000) and would prepare a response along with the Chair. The request had been circulated and Cllrs should forward to the Clerk any recorded information held that was relevant. Advice had been received about the celebrations to be held in 2022 for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee which would go onto the agenda for the next meeting on 14 September 2021.
- 21/53 Items for the Next Meeting:** Queen's Platinum Jubilee, Parish Council maintenance of hedgerows to contribute to road safety, road markings from the Crossroads towards the market, plans by Exmoor Farmers for Meadow Close.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 9.25 pm

Signed

Dated

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