

Minutes of the Ordinary Cutcombe Parish Council Meeting held at 7.30pm on Tuesday 19 April 2022 at the Moorland Hall

The meeting took place during the 'pre-election' period.

Present: Councillors Vivian White (*Chair*), John Anson, John Davis, Roger Foxwell, Eric Norman, Claire Rooke, Roger Webber (*Vice Chair*), Frances Nicholson (County), Steven Pugsley (District), Clerk Jeanna Grenville. One member of the public was present.

Public Question Time. No items were raised.

22/1 Apologies for absence. None received.

22/2 Declarations of Interest. Cllr Norman for agenda item 11iv, Cllr Foxwell item 4 (grass cutting).

22/3 Minutes of previous meeting 2022 and report on actions. The minutes of the previous meeting of 15 March were approved, following corrections that: 21/132 Cllr Anson was not present and 21/236 the Parish Steward pilot would commence in 2022/23. Cllr Norman confirmed the calculation of 6,000 Snowdrop Valley visitors in response to a query by Cllr Webber, noting that some car owners refused to pay for parking. **Actions:** i) Queen's Platinum Jubilee - the member of the public reported on plans for the Queen's Jubilee, including processions, a community meal for Parishioners and a concert. Recalling the previous agreement to utilise S.137 (Local Government Act) funding for parish events, Cllrs confirmed that £300 would be made available, the Clerk noting that the limit for S.137 was currently £3,210. [The member of the public left the meeting.] ii) Bench - Cllr Webber said the matter of the replacement bench should be dropped as it was not clear that the PC owns the site on which it stands. Further discussion was deferred given the pre-election 'purdah'. iii) Grass Cutting - the informal working party fed back a new quote from Greenslade which would amount to £2,008 for the maintenance of the recreation ground for fortnightly cuts during the season. Cllrs resolved to accept the quote, noting that they should be consulted year on year with respect to contributing to grass cutting costs.

22/4 To receive the Chairman's Report. Cllrs agreed with the Chair removing item 8 from the agenda (Bus Shelter renovations) as this involved significant expenditure which should fall to the new Cllrs after the election.

22/5 Reports from District and County Councillors. Cllr Nicholson noted that she and Cllr Pugsley had been asked to consider the national speed limit of 60 mph at Luckwell bridge which has caused long-term concerns about safety. Cllrs agreed to review this in tandem with the 20 mph request in Wheddon Cross. Cllr Pugsley reported that the Local Community Network pilot is progressing slowly due to current pre-election constraints. The Parish Steward's appointment is imminent. Cllr Foxwell suggested that the Exmoor Local Plan required a significant update to ensure that the needs of agricultural businesses are encompassed. Cllr Pugsley confirmed the importance of a sustainable housing supply. Cllr Foxwell noted his frustration that little improvement had been seen regarding blocked drains.

22/6 Recruitment of New Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer. The Clerk reported advertising the post in the West Somerset and Wellington Free Post, village website and noticeboards. One application has been received in advance of the closing date of 25 April. The Clerk suggested that the Chair and Vice Chair conduct interview shortly thereafter. Her last day of duty was anticipated as Friday 3 June following leave of two weeks, after which she offered 6 hours of paid time to train/mentor her replacement if required.

22/7 Highways. 20 mile per hour request - The County Council have estimated £5k will be required for the Traffic Order to amend the speed limit and road markings or signage with advice that achieving the outcome with residents' support. Reservations were voiced about enforcement of the speed limit. It was agreed that public consultation would be organised, starting with the annual meeting of

Electors.

- 22/8 Planning.** Concerns were raised regarding the approval given for the development at Lower Cleeve by the ENPA Planning Committee, particularly as the application was for two different options. Cllr Pugsley noted that the PC's objection had been taken into account, however Officers' views were that there were no grounds for refusal.
- 22/9 Finance.** i) Banking Update – Nat West had awarded a consolatory payment of £250 for their recent mandate error plus £100 expenses. However, concerns remain about the quality of service. [Cllr Rooke left the meeting.] ii) Feedback from Finance and Risk Working Group (FRWG) 13 April – The Clerk had reclaimed VAT for 2020/21 of £1,861.56 with a further submission of approximately £1,200 pending for 2021/22. The recharge of utility costs to the Business Unit tenant remained outstanding, FWRG had offered to assist in developing a methodology. Cllr Anson advised that a separate electricity meter had been installed for the purpose of recharging. The FWRG had confirmed the accuracy of the restated 2020/21 financial statement, now prepared on a proper receipts and payments basis, plus the quarter 4 and Year End financial statements for 2022-3, including Snowdrop Valley. All statements had been reconciled with the balances shown at the bank. The Audit Action Plan had been updated along with a review of the Asset Register. The Clerk will circulate the latter asking for further information regarding historic dates of acquisition which had, largely, to be estimated. The draft Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) had been reviewed. Cllr Webber had suggested an uplift to the proposed payment to Exmoor Farmers of £50 for use of the car park for Snowdrop Valley, given the surplus from the event – this would be referred to the new Cllrs to decide. As Chair of the FRWG, Cllr Webber noted the good progress in developing financial management procedures with thanks to the Clerk for her hard work and diligence. iii) Audit Action Plan – Cllrs noted progress against the plan, with just three outstanding items to complete – renewal of toilet cleaning contract carried forward pending finalisation of the specification, and timing of public period of inspection of accounts which is not yet due. iv) Quarter Four/Year End Financial Statements – Cllrs resolved to approve the Year End financial statements for the General Account and Snowdrop Valley, noting the transfers between accounts which were the only movements on the General Account this year: +£30,000 for treasury management purposes and -£2,000 Covid grant for public toilets (leaving £6,000 grant carried forward to 2022/23). Year end balances of £52,603.01 were reported comprising: £10,162.86 Snowdrop Valley, £1,757.46 Current Account and £40,682.69 General Account. Cllr Anson's vote of thanks to the clerk was echoed by other members. v) Schedule of Payments – Cllrs resolved to approve the Schedule of Payments, noting the receipts for the period.
- 22/10 AGAR 2021/22.** i) Certificate of Exemption – Noting total receipts of £21,447 and payments of £18,729 for 2121/22, Cllrs resolved to approve the Certificate of Exemption from the limited assurance review. ii) Sections 1 and 2 - Cllrs considered that all assertions in section 1 could be affirmed, subject to the Clerk advising further on assertion 4 (public period of inspection) and any findings from the internal auditor. The draft figures for Section 2 were agreed as correct.
- 22/11 Correspondence and Meetings.** Moorland Hall had written to say that the rates would increase by £1 per hour for each of the rooms.
- 21/12 Annual Meeting of Electors.** Cllrs agreed with Cllr Webber's proposal to hold the annual meeting of Electors a week after the new Cllrs meet for the Annual Parish Council Meeting. Proposed agenda items were: Joyce Charity, West Charity, report from First School, Police update and Parish speed limits.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 9.30 pm.

Signed:

Dated:

Appendix - Payments and Receipts

Payments		
Rest and Be Thankful £240	Rest and Be Thankful consumables £184.02	Valda Energy £9.66
Moorland Hall £12	Grenville (Clerk advert) £240	SALC Election Training £20
Receipts		
Tessera Business Unit £416.66	Bank interest 33p	Toilet donations £59.60
Nat West compensation £350		