

Minutes of the Ordinary Cutcombe Parish Council Meeting held at 7.30pm on Tuesday 26th March 2024 at the Moorland Hall

Present: Councillors Jon Levenson (Chair), Eric Norman (Vice Chair), Roger Foxwell, Andrew Forward, Sarah Cook, Oliver Yiend

In attendance: Liz Stitt – Clerk, Cllr Frances Nicholson

Also Present: Three members of the public

| Item | Minutes | Action |
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| | <p>Public Question Time A member of public made some comments regarding the planning application that is being discussed on the agenda. The broadband where the member of public lives is very unsatisfactory, and they were very interested to see whether the new mast would reach them to be able to make it better. The member of public said we shouldn't lose this opportunity of getting a modern network up here that reaches out to all parishioners and hopes whatever view the parish council takes that it makes it conditional upon effective coverage as the current plan doesn't and the chances are it will remain just as bad as it currently is. Possibly the mast could be higher or in a better place to help reach the areas that aren't currently covered and wanted to flag that up so that these issues are not lost. The chair said the comments were noted.</p> <p>A second member of the public asked for an agenda item to be added for the next meeting regarding the changes that are happening at Cutcombe School. The chair said that this would be considered. [One member of the public left the meeting]</p> | |
| 24/18 | <p>To receive Apologies for Absence Cllr Claire Rooke gave apologies to Cllr Norman. Cllr Steven Pugsley gave apologies to the Clerk.</p> | |
| 24/19 | <p>To receive declarations of Interest Cllr Norman item number 24/30 iv)</p> | |
| 24/20 | <p>To approve the minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting of the 20th of February 2024 These were approved and signed.</p> | |
| 24/21 | <p>To receive and discuss the clerk's report. This was received by councillors.</p> | |
| 24/22 | <p>To receive the Chair's Report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) The chair attended and chaired the affordable homes working group in Dulverton, disappointingly of the eight parishes involved only one parish was represented, which was Cutcombe, they are looking at different times to see if this will be better. It was still a worthwhile meeting as it means we are in tune with what is going on with planning. ii) With regards to the application of houses behind the Moorland Hall, they are talking to another operator called Homes England. Cllr Nicholson gave an update on this and as of the 20th of March, various financial appraisals have been submitted to Homes England and Somerset Council looking for financial support to enable the scheme to go ahead as designed, so it is still ongoing but moving slowly. iii) The chair finally noted that the parish has four defibrillators at Moorland Hall, The Rest and Be Thankful, the School and the Farmers Market which is pretty good coverage. | |
| 24/23 | <p>To receive reports from Somerset Councillors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Cllr Nicholson reported that there is a proposal by the administration to use West Somerset House in Williton in a different way and get rid of other buildings and not have a council chamber there. The local members have been arguing strongly that there is a democratic deficit in that no meetings or committees are held west of Taunton which means anybody here that wants to engage has to go there. | |

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| | <p>ii) There will be an extra LCN meeting coming up for a proper evaluation of the Highways Pilot Scheme. The highways people said they have learnt an enormous amount through it which they want to spread around the rest of the county. The Highways Steward scheme was hugely successful in its first year, it will only go forward in future if parishes come together and are prepared to pay for it, but it is a lot of money.</p> <p>iii) Cllr Nicholson was prepared tonight to answer any questions anybody had regarding Cutcombe and Exford schools. A letter has been sent to the Clerk from the school regarding the changes which have been forwarded to councilors. The school are keen to come to the next meeting to answer any questions on how the decisions have been made and what it means for families and the children. The purpose of the federation of schools is to make sure there is the best possible education for all the children on the Moor and where at all possible within their own communities.</p> | |
| 24/24 | <p>To consider Highways and Transport Matters Cllr Yiend said it was a shame the highways steward scheme has ended as it did do well. Cllr Nicholson said there is no intention to stop the Highways Subgroup which is the biggest thing to come out of the Highways Pilot. The B3224 roadworks are on schedule, and we have been kept well informed of the works. Cllr Levenson thanked the Highways Team at the last LCN meeting for the efforts they went to with putting out the Snowdrop Valley signage. Cllr Foxwell raised the issue of the grips needing clearing at the latest Public Consultation Meeting which he is hoping will be done once all the work has been completed. Cllr Nicholson agreed the grips do need to be done but pointed out the new design means that there won't be any further damage going forward.</p> | |
| 24/25 | <p>Update on Moorland Hall & Recreation Ground Cllr Yiend said there was nothing to update currently. Cllr Norman said thank you to the neighbour who cut the grass and they are going to roll the pitch when it gets a bit drier too. Cllr Norman also said thank you for putting the Gang Mowers away in a shed and hopes they have been oiled and greased before they were put away. Cllr Foxwell asked if there was a plan yet for the new pavilion, Cllr Yiend said this is still on track, but they have not yet had the plan.</p> | |
| 24/26 | <p>Update on advertising and sponsorship of the Bus Shelter and Public Toilets Cllr Levenson has spoken to one of the local larger businesses and is hoping to hear back from them any day now. Cllr Levenson will update further at the next meeting.</p> | Cllr Levenson |
| 24/27 | <p>Update on the Community Review Project. Cllr Yiend has got a group of eight names for the steering committee together. Cllr Foxwell put his name forward to be on the committee which was agreed. They will meet next week to kick it all off.</p> | |
| 24/28 | <p>To Consider any planning matters.</p> <p>i) Planning application GDO 24/04 Cllr Forward said residents of Meadow Close are not happy as it will be a blot on the landscape. Questions were raised regarding the coverage and whether it would be better placed elsewhere. Cllr Foxwell said we should vote to object on the grounds they should look at another site. Cllr Cook said we do need something like this, but it is going to be an eye sore. After further discussion it was proposed and seconded to vote No Objection with three councilors voting for this, three councilors not voting and the chair using their casting vote to carry it forward. [Cllr Nicholson left the meeting]</p> | |
| 24/29 | <p>Update on Snowdrop Valley Cllr Norman said this year's weather was not great and we took half of what we did last year because of this. An inventory has been done of the merchandise and there is still plenty left for next year. We still need volunteers to come forward but the ones that did volunteer did very well. The school raised somewhere in the region of £850 and the Market Café was open, and everything ran smoothly. It was a nice happy event. It closed two days early due to the weather. The current figures were shared with councilors. Cllr Levenson said thank you from the Parish Council to Cllr Norman and Jim Winzer who do all of the heavy lifting to make the event work. Cllr Norman also said thank you to Badgworthy Land Company who let him put some seats out on the paths for people to have a breather, also thank you to</p> | |

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| | Bob Parfitt, Jim Winzer and his son Nick who helped clear all the fallen timber who we thank immensely. Despite the weather the feedback from the public was fantastic. Cllr Levenson said we do need more volunteers so if any councilors could do just one or two shifts it would make a difference as it is a lot of work for the current volunteers. It was brought to our attention about the site not being cleared, but this is now in hand.[Two members of the public left the meeting] | |
| 24/30 | <p>Finance</p> <p>i) Resolve to purchase a trailer for Snowdrop Valley with Sponsors and pay for the signwriting. Cllr Norman has found a trailer that is for sale for £4,000 which is a very good bargain. Cllr Norman has got sponsors of local companies who are willing to pay £500 towards the trailer in exchange for their logo going on it and being advertised which will pay for most of the trailer, Cllr Norman proposes that we purchase the trailer with Snowdrop Valley funds, which the Snowdrop Valley Committee have also agreed to. Cllr Foxwell asked whether a trailer could be hired instead just for the month, Cllr Levenson said the trailer would also be used throughout the year to store everything for Snowdrop Valley so is needed all year round, also the trailer is fully adapted to accommodate everyone using it for the event so is purpose built. It also comes with a silent generator which is also worth a few hundred pounds. Cllr Foxwell asked for a recorded vote. Cllr Norman proposed that the council agrees to buy the trailer out of the Snowdrop Valley Account, Cllr Levenson seconded the proposal those in favour were Cllr Norman, Cllr Levenson, Cllr Cook and Cllr Yiend, those against were Cllr Foxwell and Cllr Forward, therefore it was carried to purchase the trailer.</p> <p>ii) Resolve to Purchase a Shipping Container for storage which has been budgeted for and agreed by the PC on 18th of April 2023, minute item 23/22 subject to certain conditions, and to pay for ground preparation works. Cllr Norman has not been able to speak to the neighbours yet. Cllr Norman also needs to get the quotes for the groundwork. These will be brought to the next meeting to be discussed further.</p> <p>iii) Resolve to agree the new monthly contract price for the rental unit from the 1st of April for the next three years. The FRWG discussed this at their latest meeting on 11th of March and proposed to increase the monthly rent to £225 per month. This was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed.</p> <p>iv) To receive and approve the schedule of payments and note receipts. These were received and approved. Cllr Foxwell raised concerns about money being spent on the trailer before getting Parish Council approval, the Clerk said it was time critical that needed doing ready for the Snowdrop Valley Event at the last minute.</p> | Cllr Norman |
| 24/31 | To receive and acknowledge the draft notes of the Finance and Risk Working Group Meeting dated 11/03/2024 These were received and noted by councillors. | |
| 24/32 | To note the correspondence which Councillors have received in the correspondence report. This was received by councillors. | |
| 24/33 | <p>Items for consideration on the next Agenda.</p> <p>i) Discuss the new arrangements at Cutcombe and Exford School and the impact this may have on the Parish. Cllr Yiend will ask Mrs Blackmore if they are able to attend the next meeting. The Clerk will ask for further information to be sent ready for the next meeting.</p> <p>ii) Update on advertising and sponsorship of the Bus Shelter and Public Toilets.</p> <p>iii) Resolve to purchase a shipping container for the rental unit.</p> | Cllr Yiend, Clerk |

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 9.06pm

Signed:

Dated:

Appendix

- i) Clerks Report**
- ii) Schedule of Payments**
- iii) Correspondence Report**