

### **Minutes of a meeting of Durleigh Parish Council on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> MARCH at 7.30 pm in the Hembry Room, Westfield Church.**

**Present:** Cllr. John Vassalli, Cllr. J. Johnstone, Cllr. N. Myers, Cllr. R. Leighton, Cllr. J. Day

**In attendance:** Tammy Weeks (Clerk), Cllr. I. Dyer, Cllr. A. Bown, Cllr. G. Slocombe, plus 4 members of the public

**Apologies for absence:** Cllr. N. Smith, Cllr. M. Caswell, Cllr. R. Lilley

#### **136/19 Public Question-time**

A family attended to request a grant/donation towards the cost of supporting the child with ongoing training & competitions at National level for Trampolining. Jamie has made significant progress, only starting two years ago, but is now competing at National levels and is hoping to qualify for the British Internationals in April. Jamie trains four times per week, which on top of the entry cost of each competition, the cost of the outfits and the overnight accommodation (a lot of competitions are over two days) and the travel, means that the overall cost is significant.

The Councillors were all in favour of supporting the request, as it supports the Healthier Lifestyle vision and is inspirational to other children within the parish. A donation of £150 was proposed and agreed. All in agreement.

Proposed: Cllr. J. Day      Seconded: Cllr. R. Leighton

#### **137/19 Declarations of Interest**

Cllr. J. Day declared that the family attending were neighbours, living on the same road.

No other Declarations of Interest were declared.

#### **138/19 Minutes of the Last Meeting**

Minutes were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

**All agreed.**

#### **139/19 Matters Arising**

There were none.

#### **140/19 Chairman's Comments**

The Chairman apologised for not being fully onboard with Parish Council business in the last few weeks, but this was unavoidable due to a bereavement in the family. He thanked the other Councillors & Clerk for maintaining business as usual over that period.

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The Chairman stated that with the Coronavirus COVID 19 epidemic, we need to consider how we can help parishioners through this difficult period.

Cllr. Dyer explained that other Parish Councils (i.e. Wembdon & Cannington), are putting in place measures to help, including emergency funds if they are required. It was proposed and agreed that £2000 is set aside in an emergency fund. A notice with contact details are also to be put on the website and shared in the community.

Proposed: Cllr. J. Day                      Seconded: Cllr. N. Myers

The Chairman reported that Norman Lewis, the former Caretaker at Wessex Water has sadly died. A condolence card has been sent on behalf of the Parish Council.

### 141/19 Financial Matters

1. The Clerk reported that the Bank balance at 30 Jan was £12,908.56 and tabled the monthly income/expenditure balance sheet for Members' information.

2. The following payments were presented for discussion/approval.

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|----|---|---------------|
| a. | Clerk's overtime Dec/Jan & expenses for Jan | £251.18       |
| b. | Clerk's overtime & expenses for Feb         | £ 86.99       |
| c. | Zurich Municipal                            | £305.35       |
| d. | Approval for laptop in advance              | circa £400.00 |

**All agreed.**

3. The Clerk explained that there are issues with the laptop; the charging port is broken, the power lead has a loose connection and needs replacing and numerous keys on the keyboard do not work properly. A couple of replacement model ideas were sent to the Chair a few weeks ago, but these were no longer available and therefore would need to be looked at again. The Clerk is confident that a laptop can be purchased for CIRCA £400, but needs to be replaced quickly as the laptop is getting more & more difficult to charge. The Chair supported, saying that the Clerk needs a laptop to do the work and comply with GDPR. All in agreement that the laptop should be replaced and the Clerk can find and buy one circa £400 without further approval being required.

4. The Clerk explained that within the Financial Regulations it allows for a Schedule of Known payments to be drawn up for the year and approved in advance. This will mean that scheduled payments do not need to be taken to the Parish Council meetings for payment and frees up the time for other matters. The Schedule of Payments for 2020/21 was presented to the Councillors; all payments are in line with the approved budget.

Proposed: Cllr. J. Day                      Seconded: Cllr. R. Leighton

**All in agreement.**

### 142/19 New Policies & Procedures

The Clerk explained that a number of policies have been updated/written to ensure that we are working to the latest national guidance and current legislation, and working to best practice.

All councillors were sent electronic copies of the documents for review prior to the meeting.

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The policies that have been updated to the latest national guidelines published by NALC are; Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Code of Conduct. Where there was the freedom to decide locally on the content, the Clerk has reviewed what other Parish Councils locally are doing. For example, the national guidelines suggest the delegated authority level to be £500, but this is a large jump from the current £100 level. Therefore, after reviewing other councils, it is suggested that it should be £250. **All in agreement that these should be adopted and approved.**

A Data Protection Policy and Privacy Policy has been written as previously not in place. These are in line with ICO guidelines. **All in agreement that these should be adopted and approved.**

New procedures have been written; 'Online Payments' and 'Quarterly Review of Salary Payments' and Other Finances. The Clerk explained that these are to incorporate the new working practices following introduction of online banking, and will overall reduce costs for the Parish Council. The Clerk explained that these have been written to ensure that there is Division of Duties throughout the processes. **All in agreement that these should be adopted and approved.**

Proposals for New Working Practices is to ensure that the council is working efficiently and effectively, in line with best practice. The most important of these is changing to Councillors having their own email address to ensure that we are always complying with GDPR. From general discussion the consensus was that Councillors would prefer a '@durleighpc' email address. **All in agreement that these should be adopted and approved.**

Roles and Responsibilities are in place at most other Parish Councils. The Councilors were in general agreement that this would be beneficial and will come up with suggestions by the next meeting in May for this to be agreed and responsibilities assigned. **Action: to discuss and agree at May meeting**

Discussion/Agreed Responses between meetings; the Clerk explained that as the Parish Council meets every other month, there is an increasing need to discuss and agree responses, for example, in response to planning applications, before the next meeting. It is important that all Councillors respond to the emails, even if they have no strong views or objections, as this is as important to ensure that we are giving an agreed and balanced response. **All in agreement that these should be adopted and approved.**

Non Attendance to meetings; There will be times that Councillors are unable to attend meetings for legitimate and acceptable reasons. However, to ensure that everyone's views are taken into consideration, all councillors should ensure that they read all information prior to the meeting and provide their response so that it can be fed into the meeting and any agreed responses/decisions. **All in agreement that these should be adopted and approved.**

### 132/19 Planning Matters

#### Items for decision:

**51/19/00003/DD:** Land at Cokerhurst Farm south of Wembdon Hill and north of Quantock Road - major development - noted that there is still no provision on the plan to join up the cyclepaths along the A39 and still no provision for traffic management at Skimmerton Lane. The new plans make no effort to address any of the previous concerns/objections raised by residents. Fully in support of the comments made by Wembdon Parish Council. The comments we previously submitted still stand.

**All in agreement**

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**Action: Clerk to respond as above.**

**Items for Update:**

23/19/00002: Land to south of Quantock Road – major development by Persimmon – still under consideration, earliest decision date 21/01/2020.

23/19/00011 – Queenswood Reservoir – amendments to plan - permission granted

**133/19 Items from last Agenda and Meetings attended:**

1. **Highways and traffic:** Still need to follow up with Somerset Highways to request ‘oncoming vehicle’ for Durleigh Hill. **Action: Chairman & Clerk to follow up.**
2. **Footpaths:** No progress has been made re the damaged footbridges; on the footpath near Floodgate Farm and on the footpath from the reservoir to Roman Lane. This has been reported to the County Council, with photos attached.

**Action: Clerk to monitor for response and follow up if necessary..**

3. **Millennium Bench:** No update.
4. **Meetings Attended:** No update.

**134/19 Any other business**

The Chairman suggested that a new bin is purchased to go alongside the bench at Pyrland Walk.

**All in agreement.**

**Action: Clerk to enquire on costs.**

The Chairman advised that we may not be able to hold the May meeting if further actions are imposed to prevent the spread of COVID 19. All in agreement that if this happens we will keep in touch via email to keep on top of urgent council business but that priority will be given to emergency measures to help parishioners if required.

**135/19 Date and Venue of next Meeting**

The next Durleigh Parish Council Meeting will be held on:

**THURSDAY 14<sup>th</sup> May 2020 @ 7.30 p.m. in the Hembry Room, Westfield Church.**

(There being no further business the meeting closed at 21:15 hrs.)

Signed..... Date.....

(Chairman of Council)