

Date of Meeting:	14 th Jan 2021	Time:	7:30
Location of Meeting:			
Present:	Cllr. John Vassalli, Cllr. N. Myers, Cllr. A. Leighton, Cllr. M. Mead, Cllr. N. Smith, Cllr. J. Johnstone		
In Attendance:	Tammy Weeks (Clerk), Cllr. M. Caswell, Cllr. B. Bolt		
Apologies:	Cllr. A. Bown, Cllr. G. Slocombe, Cllr. R. Lilley, Cllr. I. Dyer		

Ref:	Topic of Discussion
42-20/21	Public Question Time
	<p>Cllr. Caswell gave an update on connecting Devon & Somerset, which has effect on rural parts of Durleigh. The contract has now been signed, with the objective of delivering 1Gb internet to the door. It will be announced in a couple of weeks on who the winning contractor is, but they have done a fantastic job previously.</p> <p>Cllr. Caswell also gave an update on the effect of Covid on County Council staff. The County Council have drawn away staff from their normal jobs and redeployed them to helping with the vaccination program etc. This means that there will be some difficulty contacting staff, and they do also have a number of staff of sick or isolating. Business is focusing on doing just what they can, i.e., if you contact Highways they cannot do a walkthrough of the area, but if serious potholes and defects require attention, this will be done.</p> <p>Cllr. Caswell also reported that Ash dieback is having a devastating effect up by Broomfield and down towards Bagborough - 60% of trees on the Quantock Hills are dying, due to both Ash Die Back and diseases killing other trees. They cannot immediately replant because of fungal growth, but are planting some saplings where they can. If you drive up over the hills, you will see a huge difference.</p> <p>Cllr. Bolt reported that the Grants Committee has one more meeting this financial year and money is still available, so please pass on the message and let people know that they can still apply.</p>
43-20/21	Declarations of Interest
	No Declarations of Interest were declared.
44-20/21	Minutes of Last Meeting
	<p>Minutes were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting.</p> <p>All agreed.</p>
45-20/21	Matters Arising
Interment Fees	<p>The Chair and Cllr. Smith recapped on the reason that interment fees has been brought to the attention of the Council and discussed at the last meeting. Fees for the interment of Durleigh residents are doubled when interned at Bridgwater Cemeteries. Standard fee for the burial of an adult or child is £357, and £160 to put cremated remains in garden of rest (double for Durleigh residents).</p> <p>This was subsequently discussed at the Finance Subcommittee on 1st December, with the proposal to put away grant monies to cover double fees for parishioners regardless of income.</p> <p>Cllr Smith proposing that should someone from the parish need to be interned, then we should pay the 'double cost'. The difference in rates between Bridgwater Town and Durleigh is only approximately £10 per year, so it seems very unfair that there is such a steep difference in</p>

	<p>the interment fees for Durleigh residents, especially as we cannot offer an alternative place for interment within the parish. He does not believe our exposure would be very high.</p> <p>Cllr. Mead, shared her concerns that she is nervous about it being open ended as this may be a high death rate year and beyond what the council are able to financially support.</p> <p>Further conversations took place around restricting it to those on low income for which the double fee effect would have more impact. The Clerk explained the demographics data obtained from Sedgemoor District Council and this shows only 20 working age residents of Durleigh being classed low income.</p> <p>Cllr. Johnstone stated that she thinks it's a choice of living in Durleigh.</p> <p>Further discussion took place and agreed that the amount set aside in the draft budget to cover this should remain and further work undertaken to confirm whether it can be applied to all residents or has to be limited to those on low income.</p> <p>Discussion also took place on how this will be communicated. The Clerk explained that within our Grant policy we say that we will publish about any monies that are available. We would also contact cemeteries and deal with them directly so the extra fee is invoiced directly to us.</p> <p>Action: Cllr. Smith offered to explore further and make contact with Bridgwater Town Councils & Cemeteries.</p>
Communicating with the public	<p>On the back of the discussion about how we make it known that help towards interment fees is available, the Clerk explained how this also ties in with an email from NALC (forwarded to the councillors earlier this week) which detailed the importance of engaging with the public. The clerk had been having similar discussions with Cllr. Vassalli and Cllr. Smith. Ideas of how and when this is done is wanted.</p> <p>Cllr. Johnstone offered to do a leaflet drop.</p> <p>The Clerk explained that although leaflets are a good way of making initial contact, we also need to explore other modern communication lines such as social media. This is now being used by other parish councils. Although this would not reach all residents, the demographics show that the majority of the population of Durleigh is under the age of 65, so it is likely that the majority of those use the internet and some form of social media.</p> <p>Cllr. Mead asked whether the other Councillors were aware of the Facebook group 'Durleigh Now' which has over 1000 members. Cllr. Mead explained that it is a good active group sharing news about the Durleigh area.</p> <p>The Chair asked Cllr. Mead to find out more details and bring to the next meeting. Communication will be added as an agenda item for the next meeting.</p>
46-20/21	Chairman's Comments
	<p>The Chair thanked everyone for attending. He reiterated that it is difficult times, and some people are feeling flat. He hopes that good times are around the corner.</p>
47-20/21	Financial Matters
8.1	<p>The Clerk reported that the Bank balance at 7 Dec 2020 was £13,059.98</p>
8.2	<p>The Clerk commented that all councillors had been sent a copy of the finance report up to 31st Dec, which includes the cashbook showing expenditure, the actual expenditure against budget and the bank rec.</p> <p>Expenditure since the last bank statement was detailed:</p> <p>Total Expenditure since the last statement is £431.11 (detailed in the table below):</p>

<p>8.3</p>	<table border="1" data-bbox="391 201 1166 447"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="391 201 581 247">Date:</th> <th data-bbox="581 201 976 247">Description</th> <th data-bbox="976 201 1166 247">Amount</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="391 247 581 296">08/12/20</td> <td data-bbox="581 247 976 296">Clerk Overtime</td> <td data-bbox="976 247 1166 296">£36.21</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="391 296 581 344">08/12/20</td> <td data-bbox="581 296 976 344">Clerk Expenses - WFH Allowance</td> <td data-bbox="976 296 1166 344">£16.67</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="391 344 581 392">30/12/20</td> <td data-bbox="581 344 976 392">Clerk Salary</td> <td data-bbox="976 344 1166 392">£352.23</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="391 392 581 447"></td> <td data-bbox="581 392 976 447">Clerk Expenses - WFH Allowance</td> <td data-bbox="976 392 1166 447">£26.00</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p data-bbox="391 495 1187 520">This additional expenditure takes the bank balance down to £12,628.87</p> <p data-bbox="391 562 776 588">Expenditure to be approved: None</p>	Date:	Description	Amount	08/12/20	Clerk Overtime	£36.21	08/12/20	Clerk Expenses - WFH Allowance	£16.67	30/12/20	Clerk Salary	£352.23		Clerk Expenses - WFH Allowance	£26.00
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<p>48-20/21</p>	<p>Draft Budget</p>															
	<p data-bbox="391 632 1354 688">The Chair introduced the Draft Budget for 2021/22 and explained that the Finance Sub Committee met and went through it all in Zoom meeting on 1st December.</p> <p data-bbox="391 716 1419 806">The Clerk stated that all the councillors have been sent draft budget for 2021/22 and budget notes. As said by the Chair, The Finance Sub Committee met on 1st December to discuss and agree the proposed budget being brought to this meeting.</p> <p data-bbox="391 833 1442 1020">The Clerk explained that, as discussed and noted last year, the council had been running at a deficit budget for a number of years and are now playing catch up. It was agreed last year that the council would seek a 15% increase on precept, with a further 15% increase this year. However, figures agreed at the Finance Sub Committee meeting are for a 22% increase. This is to start bringing us back into line with other like sized parish councils in the area and to ensure that we have funds to spend/invest in the community.</p> <p data-bbox="391 1047 1377 1104">The proposed budget also includes a higher amount for grants, which is also to cover the interment fees (already discussed).</p> <p data-bbox="391 1131 1442 1520">Cllr. Smith explained the difference in percentages between other parishes, with Durleigh spending a much higher percentage of the budget on ‘running the council’ as opposed to investing in the community. He stated that this isn’t to say we are paying more than we should to the Clerk as salary, but because of the previous deficit budgets, we have not been spending the money on projects as other councils do. He explained that although there is an element of overtime for the Clerk that we do want to try and bring down, and although some of this is a direct result of work increase due to Covid, going forward we cannot decrease the amount of overtime unless we have commitment from the Councillors that they will help/support work on delivery of future projects, i.e. take the lead in research and communication. Cllr. Smith explained that we cannot go through another full year without delivering on projects and therefore sought agreement from councillors that they are happy to commit to helping on projects.</p> <p data-bbox="391 1547 1435 1801">The Clerk explained in detail the increase in the workload, including the work that has been taken to bring the Council up to the required current standard, and the ongoing work that needs to be continued such as regular finance reporting, regular updates to the website, reviewing all policies regularly to ensure that we are working to the latest standards and legislation, and complying with the Accessibility Code. The Clerk also explained that the volume of emails has increased by at least four times, and at times six times, since the COVID-19 outbreak. It is hoped that this volume will decrease, at least in part, as the situation improves.</p> <p data-bbox="391 1829 1403 1885">Cllr. Caswell stated that he attends 14 parish councils and all clerks working extremely hard and are putting in a lot more work.</p>															

	<p>Cllr. Bolt stated that he is agreement with the comments of Cllr. Caswell and has seen the increase in work required across the parish council he attends.</p> <p>No decision was made at this meeting about Councillors taking the lead on projects, but will be agreed at future meetings or project by project. The Chair stated that if necessary, reserves could be used for overtime.</p> <p>Cllr. Leighton proposed the draft budget be approved and adopted. Cllr. Mead seconded. All in agreement.</p>
49-20/21	Planning Matters
Items for Discussion:	
23/20/00011	<p>Danesborough, Spaxton Road - Erection of a detached ancillary building, on site of existing (to be demolished). Plans do not match what has already been built and this has been brought to the attention of the planning officer. The Planning Officer cannot say for certain, but from the photo provided thinks that it looks taller than would be allowed within permitted development. Extra time has been given for the parish council to respond.</p> <p>Discussion took place about the application submitted and the new building that has already been built. The consensus was that the council are not objecting to the plans as submitted, but the issue is that due process has not been followed and the new building bears no resemblance to that proposed on the plans.</p> <p>The council agreed that our response should state that we find it difficult commenting on the application for the reasons above, and we feel that the application should be withdrawn as it is not accurate. A new application should then be submitted for consideration. It is a matter for the Planning authority to decide whether the new garage falls within permitted development or whether a retrospective planning application should be submitted.</p> <p>All agreed. Clerk to respond on 15th January.</p>
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. Update from Cllr Bown (via email) that they are still looking at road system.
51/19/00003/DD	Land at Cokerhurst Farm south of Wembdon Hill and north of Quantock Road - major development. No update.
23/19/00011	Queenswood Reservoir – amendments to plan - permission granted. The Chair stated that there had been problems starting before Christmas, as they did not take enough soil away and then did not sufficiently compact what was left on site. This is now taking time to rectify.
23/20/00010	Rexworthy Farm, Spaxton Road, Durleigh – Change of Use of Agricultural Building (sui generis) to Additional Storage Space (Class B8)– granted permission.
50-20/21	Items from Previous Agendas for Update
Highways & traffic:	<p>Skimmerton Lane – The Clerk detailed that a response was received from Katherine Tyson on 16th Nov to say she had just received the data reports, which she hadn't had time to review, but would update us as soon as she had. Emailed again on 12/1/21 to ask if the reports had been reviewed. Still awaiting response.</p> <p>The Chair reported that a car crashed at the West Bower Lane junction with Spaxton Road and is concerned that it is has very limited visibility when approaching from the north on Spaxton Road. Cllr Myers reported equally poor visibility on exiting West Bower Lane looking north onto Spaxton Road.</p>

	<p>Councillors agreed that in their opinion, it is a dangerous junction/bend and also that there have been a number of accidents in that location. Cllr. Leighton reported that there is no road junction sign coming into Durleigh from Spaxton. A discussion took place about possible action that could be taken to improve this, including improving signage.</p> <p>Cllr. Smith suggested that the 30 mph sign is moved to the Spaxton side of that junction so cars have already slowed before they get to that point. Cllr Johnstone reported that they had previously got the 30 sign moved to where it is, by the junction with Broadlands Lane, as it was previously much further in towards Bridgwater, near the Luxborough Road junction.</p> <p>All in agreement that this should be pursued, but understand the issue highlighted by Cllr. Caswell earlier in the meeting that it may be difficult to contact people and get action immediately, as the councils have more pressing issues at present. Cllr. Bolt offered to contact Lawrence Hackling and bring this to his attention.</p> <p>Cllr. Leighton commented that the layby on the road towards Enmore, where people can park to look over the reservoir, has a bin which is overflowing. The Chair explained that the parish council did not put the bin there (no idea who did) and we do not pay for emptying. Cllr. Bolt volunteered to do some research to determine who is responsible for the emptying.</p> <p>Cllr. Leighton also commented that the Durleigh sign is missing on the Enmore Road and perhaps a replacement could be considered in our future projects.</p>
<p>Footpaths:</p>	<p>The Chair referred to an email circulated by Cllr. Smith reporting a footpath blocked by a fallen tree and a bridge on the footpath that also has become dangerous due to the side rails falling away. Also, that the stream had risen about the level of the bridge in the recent bad weather and you could not see where the path edges were. Cllr. Smith stated that he has reported the issues on the online system yesterday. This just generates an automated response saying they will start to look at it.</p> <p>Cllr. Leighton commented that he has had success in reporting missing signs and getting them replaced.</p> <p>Action: Chair to message Wessex Water. Cllr. Myers to speak to current tenant of land to see about getting tree removed.</p> <p>Cllr. Leighton further commented that he had been thinking about Queenswood Lane and if we get it surfaced, could we get the County Council to adopt so that we are not responsible for ongoing maintenance. He noted that to pursue this we would need to get it finished to their standards.</p>
<p>Millenium Bench:</p>	<p>Nothing to report.</p>
<p>Other:</p>	<p>None.</p>
<p>51-20/21</p>	<p>Meetings Attended</p>
<p>Accessible documents training</p>	<p>The Clerk stated this was a very worthwhile training session. It was explaining how documents need to be prepared in order for them to meet the 'Accessibility Code' requirements. The main point coming out of this is that making documents accessible will take more time.</p> <p>The Clerk explained that the legislation means that all documents from Sept 2018 need to be accessible. The Clerk stated that all Policies, minutes & Agendas for the last year are now done. Year-end documents are still to be done. The Clerk explained that all older documents</p>

	have been taken off the website, as it is not an archive system, so these will not be updated unless a request is received for them in an accessible format.
Town Fund	Attended by Chair 16 th Nov 2020. Unfortunately, Queenswood Lane does not qualify for grant funding, as the criteria of the grant is that it has to lead to somewhere with employment opportunities. It was also looked at whether this could be considered under the local Cycling & Walking and infrastructure plans, but it does not meet their criteria either.
52-20/21	Items for Next Agenda
1.	Communication with Parishioners.
2.	Ideas for expenditure.
53-20/21	Any Other Business
	Cllr. Smith reported that he had received an email requesting a grant. This was for an individual who attends Exeter Academy, and has excessive kit and travel costs. Determined that the address did not fall within the parish and therefore no further consideration was given. Cllr. Smith to respond.
54-20/21	Date & Venue of Next Meeting
Date / Time:	11th March 2021.
Venue:	Hembry Room, Westfield Church, if possible, under Covid Safe regulations and subject to vaccinations being acquired. If not, another virtual meeting will be held.

Meeting Closed at:	9:30pm
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Minutes Signed by: Date:
 (Chairman)