

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|--|--------------|-------|
| Date of Meeting: | 9 th July 2020 | Time: | 19:30 |
| Location of Meeting: | Virtual (via Zoom) | | |
| Present: | Cllr. John Vassalli, Cllr. N. Myers, Cllr. R. Leighton, Cllr. J. Day, Cllr. N. Smith | | |
| In Attendance: | Tammy Weeks (Clerk), Cllr. A. Bown, Cllr. G. Slocombe, Cllr. M. Caswell, Cllr. R. Lilley | | |
| Apologies: | Cllr. J. Johnstone | | |

| Minute Ref: | Topic of Discussion |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 1-20/21 | Public Question Time |
| <p>Cllr. Bown stated that Sedgemoor District Council have issued business grants to help those businesses affected by the impact of Covid-19. There is still lots of work going on to ensure that a full recovery plan is in place. Cllr. Bown is happy to share information on request.</p> <p>Cllr. Myers spoke from the point of view of a business that has been affected by the Covid-19 restrictions and said that the VAT cut was really useful to them, but still is not enough to recover actual loses.</p> <p>Cllr. Caswell stated that rural areas were due to have superfast broadband by this summer. However, the contract had to be terminated. The contract was retendered in February 2020 and now in the position for contracts to be let. Start dates for the works should be known by the autumn.</p> | |
| 2-20/21 | Declarations of Interest |
| <p>No Declarations of Interest were declared.</p> | |
| 3-20/21 | Minutes of Last Meeting |
| <p>Minutes were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting.</p> <p>All agreed.</p> | |
| 4-20/21 | Matters Arising |
| <p>There were none.</p> | |
| 5-20/21 | Chairman's Comments |
| <p>The Chairman explained that normally at the May 'Annual' parish council meeting, the Chairman would step down and then the Chairman would be elected. However, due to the Covid-19 restrictions, the Annual meeting was cancelled. Therefore, the Chairman asked all present whether anyone else would like the role of Chairman at this time, but there were no volunteers. Therefore, the Chairman will remain unchanged until the Annual meeting in May 2021.</p> <p>The Chairman explained that it is unfortunate that due to the Covid-19 restrictions we are unable to meet physically. We have been made to feel very welcome at the new venue at Westfield Church which is very comfortable. However, a Zoom subscription has been purchased by the parish council so that we can hold this meeting and any future meetings, come what may.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked all colleagues for carrying on during this time. Cllr. Johnson has effectively been temporarily furloughed as it is difficult to join 'virtual' meetings. The Chairman also thanked the District & County Councillors for their continued support and attendance to the parish council meetings. The Clerk was also thanked for the improvements that have been made, including introducing new policies and procedures.</p> <p>Cllr. Slocombe and Cllr. Caswell both thanked the Parish Councillors for making them feel welcome and keeping them up to date.</p> <p>The Chairman stated that himself and Cllr. Smith had discussed, as members of the Finance Sub Committee, the extra time being completed by the Clerk to get the parish council where they need to be, 'firefight' in the current situation and also keeping the website up to date. Cllr. Smith added that the Clerk submits a detailed breakdown each month of the work completed and the time taken, to support all overtime claims, and even when the</p> | |

'firefighting' element is taken out it is obvious there is still additional hours as a result of the website work. The Chair explained that they will continue to review monthly to see whether any additional increase to standard hours is required, but as an immediate action wanted to recognise the website work completed, and ongoing, by increasing the hours from 4.5 to 5 hours per week, with effect from 1st August 2020. This will not affect the Clerk putting in claims for any further overtime and it will continue to be reviewed. He also stated that a pay rise will be applied in line with the latest scales once released.

This was **proposed by Cllr. Smith, seconded by Cllr. Day, with unanimous approval.**

6-20/21 Financial Matters

The Clerk reported that the Bank balance at 30 June was £13,057.12. Expenditure since the last bank statement was detailed:

- 1/7/20 Zoom Subscription £ 122.29

The Clerk explained the new formal finance reports (appendix A) which details the expenditure to date, with a comparison to budget and also the latest bank reconciliation. This has been introduced formally following recommendations from the Internal Audit completed as part of the year end procedures. The Clerk asked if any of the Councillors would like further details included within the reports, but all agreed that they are satisfactory.

Expenditure yet to be paid was detailed (below). It was explained that these are either all pre-approved on the 'Schedule of Payments 2020-21' authorised at the March meeting, or are within the levels for delegated authority as detailed in the Financial Regulations and the new procedures. Therefore, these do not need further approval, but are just to note.

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------|--------------|
| Clerk Overtime | £ | 116.53 |
| Clerk Expenses | £ | 50.00 |
| BJ Bicknell - bench Maintenance | £ | 75.00 |
| Sedgemoor Citizen's Advice Bureau | £ | 150.00 |
| ICO Subscription | £ | 35.00 |

The Clerk explained that the parish council has registered with the ICO in relation to GDPR and the Direct Debit forms have been completed and sent back, so is waiting for the payment to be taken but this has not happened yet.

The clerk explained with the payments made, the bank balance will reduce to £12,658.30

The Clerk also explained that the appointed Internal Auditor has not submitted an invoice for their work, although a considerable amount of work was completed. The Clerk explained that there is £100 in the budget and proposed that if the Internal Auditor did not submit an invoice, that this amount is paid as an 'honorarium'. Cllr. Smith stated that a brilliantly detailed audit has been completed and that he would like the Clerk to contact the Internal Auditor to say that would like to contract with them for future audits and as part of that agree a fee and try to encourage them to submit an invoice for this year's work. All Councillors were in support of this and, if no invoice is submitted, are in support of making an honorarium payment of £100.

The Clerk detailed that a request for a donation has been received from Sedgemoor Citizens Advice, to help out with the cost of increase in use of their services as a result of the impact of Covid-19. The merits of this were discussed and a donation of £150 **proposed by Cllr. Vassalli, seconded by Cllr. Myers.**

7-20/21 Annual Accounts and Internal Audit

The Clerk detailed the Annual Account documents sent out to the Councillors with the Agenda, along with the AGAR and Internal Report. Signed copies of these will all be put on the website in line with the Transparency Code. All Councillors were happy with the detail and content of the documents and happy to approve/adopt.

Proposed by Cllr. Myers, seconded by Cllr. Leighton, all in agreement.

8-20/21 Risk Register & Asset Register

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>The Clerk detailed the updated Risk Register and Asset Register, and explained that although these have historically been completed at year end as part of the Annual Year End procedures, they should in fact be ‘live’ ongoing documents that should be reviewed during the year. All Councillors in agreement to adopt these documents and review during the year.</p> | |
| 9-20/21 | Planning Matters |
| Items for Discussion: | |
| - | No items for discussion. |
| 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. The Chairman stated the latest correspondence on the planning website details a delay in respect of Highways. Cllr. Bown stated that a letter had been sent to Sedgemoor District Council by County Highways which she will forward. |
| 51/19/00003/DD | Land at Cokerhurst Farm south of Wembdon Hill and north of Quantock Road - major development. Cllr. Slocombe said this discussed a Planning Performance meeting and that there were delays as a result of the Covid-19 restrictions. Cllr. Slocombe will inform the parish council if there is any progress. |
| 23/19/00011 | Queenswood Reservoir – amendments to plan - permission granted. No progress with works to date. Cllr Vassalli noted that material is still washing off the site into the drainage system. |
| - | The parish council were also invited to comment on a planning application for a neighbouring parish; Willstock Gardens, off Rhode Lane. The parish council submitted a ‘no observation’, but detailed that it hoped that it would be looked at whether it would have an effect reference the footway and vehicle numbers. The application has in fact been refused on these grounds. |
| 10-20/21 | Items from Previous Agendas for Update |
| Highways & traffic: | <p>Still need to follow up with Somerset Highways to request ‘oncoming vehicle’ for Durleigh Hill. Action: Chairman & Clerk to follow up.</p> <p>A video of Skimmerton Lane has been received from a parishioner, showing large vehicles unable to pass and reversing out onto the busy A39. Discussion commenced in relation to the ongoing problem and previous attempts taken to address it. All in agreement that this is a real and ongoing issue that is likely to result in a very bad accident. Possible solutions suggested included; one-way system, weight limit etc. Concerns raised that this has been raised with County Highways previously and nothing has changed so the thoughts of the District and County Councillors was requested as to how the parish council can move this forward. Cllr. Caswell suggested a letter from the parish council to Katherine Tyson at County Highways expressing their concerns, which he will follow up. Cllr. Slocombe and Cllr. Lilley will be fully in support of this. Action: Clerk & Chair to write letter.</p> |
| Footpaths: | <p>The damaged footbridges; on the footpath near Floodgate Farm and on the footpath from the reservoir to Roman Lane, have now been replaced. The Chair thanked Cllr. Leighton for ensuring that this was pursued. Cllr. Leighton reported that signs have also now been replaced and the gates unlocked. He understands that work will also be undertaken soon in filling in potholes at Durleigh Hill.</p> <p>Cllr. Smith referred to the Walking & Cycling Manifesto that has recently been circulated and said that he had observed during the lockdown a significant increase in the numbers using footpaths in the area. The access to these is not pleasant/safe. This was made easier during that period as traffic levels were significantly reduced, but now that traffic is coming back to normal</p> |

| | |
|---|--|
| | levels it is now unsafe. Cllr. Smith wanted to know if there is anything we can do as a parish council to ensure that these areas remain accessible to all. Cllr. Caswell said the Bridgwater Cycling Campaign have some great ideas to get people more active, especially in respect of where routes are blocked by heavily used roads. Cllr. Caswell will add this to the agenda. |
| Millenium Bench: | Cllr. Lilley stated that she has been regularly walking by the bench area and has noted that a person / people sleeping rough in the barns at the end of the lane. Cllr. Slocombe asked if anyone knew whether this person(s) was in need of housing and support. Cllr. Meyers confirmed that his understanding is that they have nowhere to live. Also, a lot of fast cars going to the barns. There has also been a large number of youths (teens/early 20s) hanging around the Millenium Bench. This has been logged with the police and Cllr. Meyers will follow up (barns belong to Huntstile Farm). |
| Other: | None |
| 11-20/21 | Meetings Attended |
| The Clerk said that they had tried to book Cllr. Day and Cllr. Leighton onto a virtual course, 'Essentials for Councillors', but unfortunately this was fully booked. New dates will be released for the autumn. | |
| 12-20/21 | Items for Next Agenda |
| The Clerk stated that the following items needed to be included on the next agenda to ensure that they are progressed: | |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Roles & Responsibilities – discussed at March Meeting and originally planned to include May, but didn't think it was appropriate for this meeting due to everything going on. However, we need to move this forward and decide at the September meeting. Councillors to put ideas forward of the roles and who would best fit into them. 2. Grant & Donation Policy – need to put one in place. The Clerk will try to get one drafted before September 3. Defibrillator – not had time to progress this yet with the pandemic, but would like to start getting costs together and talk to Wessex Water more about possibly siting it on their boundary fence. Cllr. Slocombe stated that other areas are also looking at defibrillators so may be worthwhile consolidating and pursuing together. Action: Clerk to contact Cllr. Slocombe. | |
| 13-20/21 | Any Other Business |
| None. | |
| 14-20/21 | Date & Venue of Next Meeting |
| Date / Time: | Thursday 3rd September 2020 @ 7.30 p.m. |
| Venue: | Hembry Room, Westfield Church, if possible, under Covid Safe regulations. If not, another virtual meeting will be held. |

| | |
|---------------------------|-------|
| Meeting Closed at: | 21.10 |
|---------------------------|-------|

Minutes Signed by: Date:
 (Chairman)