

<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	19 <sup>th</sup> May 2022	<b>Time:</b>	7:00 pm
<b>Location of Meeting:</b>			
<b>Present:</b>	Cllr. N. Smith, Cllr. John Vassalli, Cllr. N. Myers, Cllr. R. Leighton, Cllr. M. Mead, Cllr. J. Johnstone		
<b>In Attendance:</b>	Tammy Weeks (Clerk), Cllr. M. Caswell, Cllr. B. Bolt		
<b>Apologies:</b>	Cllr. G. Slocombe, Cllr. R. Lilley, Cllr. L. Duddridge		

Ref:	Topic of Discussion
AA-1-9/5/22	<b>Apologies</b>
	As above
AA-2-19/5/22	<b>Acceptance of Office / Register of Interest Forms</b>
	<p>All councillors accepted their positions and duly completed their Acceptance of Office in the presence of the Clerk. All were countersigned by the Clerk and a full working council was announced.</p> <p>Councillors all completed their Declarations of Interests.</p>
AA-3-19/5/22	<b>Chairman's Report 2021-22</b>
	<p>This statement refers to the 2021/2022 period. It was another year impacted by Covid restrictions but despite this we still managed to hold 5 out of our 6 planned meetings with just the January session having to be cancelled due to the work from home directive and no ability to legally hold the meeting via Zoom. Pleasingly we were also able to hold our meetings in person but with limited opportunity for public participation. I know some of us were rightly nervous about attending the meetings in person but the procedures put in place by the Clerk have ensure that all have felt safe to attend. So, thank you all for attending and to the Clerk for her work in making it possible.</p> <p>It's been my first year as Chair of the council and I would like to thank you all for your support and the fact that you have all actively taken on specific areas of the workload to be either lead or support. This has made the role manageable from my point of view. I would like to specifically thank Cllr. Vassalli for his advice and guidance and sharing his extensive knowledge of being chair. I would also like to thank the Clerk for her day-to-day management of the council without whom we would not be able to operate. She has continued to work tirelessly in her role as Clerk both ensuring the smooth running of the council but also continuing to address and ensure our legal policies and financial procedures are correct and up to date.</p> <p>It's been a year of mixed fortunes with some great progress made in the key areas but also continued frustrations in others.</p> <p>We have continued to address our financial situation to work towards a breakeven P&amp;L for the council. Coming into the year we were running at a deficit of -£1,391, we made the decision to increase our Precept by 23% to help close the gap. Despite this our budget still had us at a deficit of -£1,750. We have actually finished the year at -£987 driven by some planned underspending due to the impact of Covid. Going into 2022/2023 we continue to look to reduce the budgeted deficit further through a combination of Precept increase and cost savings. Our reporting procedures are much improved and our auditors report was strong. Additionally, we have had success this year in securing two grants for the council. The first was an opening up safely after Covid grant for £895 which we spent on the projector for use in our meetings, cutting down the need for paper and passing items around. Secondly,</p>

we have just secured a further grant for £1,280 which we plan to spend on some commemorative benches.

Our interment fee support program has been up and running for its first full year and we have been able to help two families from within the Parish with a contribution to the double burial fees. This was within budget and the scheme will continue into this next year. Despite a few small teething problems this process has worked well and I would like to thank both Amanda Young at Bridgwater Town Council and our Clerk for their day-to-day management of this program.

I mentioned councillors taking lead roles for specific areas of work, this has led to a pleasing increase in the amount of councillor training that has taken place in the year. In total 8 courses have been attended and a specific mentioned should go to Cllr. Mead who has attended the most with 4 courses this year. With changing policies and likely changes to the expectations of Parish Councils from the move to the Unitary Council, attending future training will continue to be encouraged.

This last year we have finally entered the age of social media with the establishment of our own Parish Council face-book page. Whilst very much in its early days and whilst we still have much to learn on how to best use this medium, I am confident it will be a major asset for us in terms of getting closer to our parishioners and understanding the issues that matter most to them. I would like to thank Cllr. Myers and Cllr. Mead for their work in getting this up and running and I look forward to seeing how this develops over the coming year. To accompany our entry into Facebook we also developed a new Parish Council logo for use on all communications. While this may appear a small thing, I believe it has made all our communications look more professional and much more recognisable.

We have made really good progress in developing our policies to improve our surroundings with regards footpaths, trees and hedges. A big thank you to Cllr. Leighton who has done a great job in bringing footpath issues to light and then helping to get them fixed. He can regularly be seen litter collecting within the Parish and has helped with tree maintenance. He has also been working with Wessex Water on their on-going tree planting scheme at Durleigh Brook, ensuring we have a voice on their plans. Hedge and ditch maintenance has been a growing issue for the Parish this last year and it was clear that there was much confusion on how best to tackle this issue. We purchased "Parish Online" which has enabled the Clerk to map ownership of all fields, hedges and ditches within our Parish boundary. With this information we can now send out maintenance enforcement letters to owners when needed which should improve the situation. Thanks must go to the Clerk as this was a time consuming and complicated task.

With Wessex Water making good progress on the renovation of Durleigh Reservoir Water Treatment Plant, we will soon be in a position to have our defibrillator up and running. The defibrillator has been purchased and appropriate connections have been put in place. Indications are installation could take place by the end of this month. As their works on the Plant start to come to an end, I would like to thank Cllr. Vassalli for the close relationship he developed with the project managers as this has ensured the works have been undertaken with minimal disruption to and no complaints from our Parishioners.

Progress has also been made on improving road safety within the Parish and more specifically on Spaxton Road. We have a commitment from our County Councillors to submit an improvement scheme to improve both pedestrian and traffic access through the narrow part of Spaxton Road. We had hoped that this would have been submitted by now as commitment was secured over a year ago but Covid has impacted the ability to submit new schemes. We ask our County Councillors to continue to support this commitment going forward. Cllr. Vassalli has worked passionately on trying to secure additional improvements and has with Highways secured a combination of new and replacement road signs and road

	<p>markings. The implementation of these has proved frustrating but it does look like progress is being made, with the road markings in place and indications that the new road signs will be shortly installed. I would also like to thank Cllr. Vassalli for his continued work in this area and particularly the amount of time and effort put into looking at the feasibility of Speed Indicator Devices. Road safety will continue to be the key focus for us in this new year.</p> <p>Finally, I would like to thank our District and County councillors for their continued support and meeting attendance. We currently enjoy a full complement of councillors and I look forward to working with you and our District and County councillors over the coming year.</p>
<b>AA-4-19/5/22</b>	<b>Attendance of Members</b>
	As above.
<b>AA-5-19/5/22</b>	<b>Matters Arising</b>
	There were none.
<b>AA-6-19/5/22</b>	<b>Parishioners' Questions, Issues and Concerns</b>
	There were none.

<b>Meeting Closed at:</b>	7:25 pm
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Minutes Signed by: ..... Date: .....  
 (Chairman)