

OVER STOWEY
PARISH COUNCIL

OVER STOWEY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

**Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held on
Wednesday 22nd May 2024**

**Please note that these minutes are draft until approved
at the June 2024 meeting**

Present: Parish Councillor

P. Tully
K. Barrow
T. Lindley
R. Curtis
G. Goddard
D. Peaster

Somerset Council - Councillor

M. Caswell (left at 8.00pm)

1. Election of Chair and Chairman's Acceptance of Office

Cllr Curtis nominated Cllr Tully who stated that he was willing to stand. There were no other nominations and it was proposed that Cllr Tully should undertake the role.

Proposed: Cllr Curtis **Seconded:** Cllr Peaster

This was resolved unanimously and Cllr Tully was duly elected as the Chair.

The Acceptance of Office was signed and Cllr Tully moved on to the next item.

2. Election of Vice-Chairman and Vice-Chairmans Acceptance of Office

Cllr Peaster nominated Cllr Barrow for the position of Vice-Chair who stated he was willing to stand. There were no other nominations and it was proposed that Cllr Barrow should undertake the role.

Proposed: Cllr Peaster **Seconded:** Cllr Curtis

This was resolved unanimously and Cllr Barrow was duly elected as the Vice-Chairman.

The Acceptance of Office was signed.

3. To receive any apologies for non-attendance

Cllrs Bartlett and Bolt

One member of the public was in attendance regarding Broadband and road safety at Marsh Mills crossroads

4. To agree representatives for the following groups:

- a. Forestry - Cllr Bartlett
- b. Planning - Cllrs Peaster, Tully and Lindley

- c. Village Hall and Recreation Ground Committee - Cllrs Tully and Barrow
- d. Footpaths and Bridleways – Cllr Goddard, backed up by all other councillors
- e. Finance and Personnel - Cllrs Goddard and Lindley
- f. Representative for Hinkley Point A and B Forum - Cllr Curtis

5. Declarations of Members Interests in Respect of Items on the Agenda:

None were declared

6. Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on April 17th 2024

Proposed: Cllr Goddard

Seconded: Cllr Peaster

7. Correspondence:

a. Email re Public Rights of Way questionnaire

- The council agreed responses and it was proposed that these are submitted by the Clerk

Proposed: Cllr Lindley **Seconded:** Cllr Curtis

b. Email received re Chair's Award for 2023

- A nomination has been suggested and the Clerk will add this to the agenda for the June meeting to be considered fully

8. Items for Discussion:

a. Review of Standing Orders

- There are amendments to be made, therefore this will be reviewed in June

b. Review of Code of Conduct

- There are amendments to be made, therefore this will be reviewed in June
- Additionally it was agreed that all council members and the Clerk will attend the Code of Conduct training provided by SALC

Proposed: Cllr Barrow **Seconded:** Cllr Curtis

c. Somerset Council – update

- The issue of broadband speeds in the parish was raised by the member of public in attendance
 - Cllr Caswell repeated the information given at the April 2024 meeting (see minutes)
 - The issue will not be resolved quickly
 - Other options were suggested – with new technologies potentially giving improved service, however there are cost implications to households with these
- The structure of SC will change and is currently being consulted on
 - There have been 372 applications for voluntary redundancy, with 201 being accepted. A number will be presented to full council for review due to the cost of the redundancy package
 - Some vacancies for discretionary services will be removed
 - Compulsory redundancies will be consulted on in November, to take effect before the end of March 2025

- The waste and recycling company Suez have reported significant losses on their contract with SC and may need to end the contract unless new terms can be agreed
 - This is due to commercial challenges
 - Any changes will be more expensive and cost significantly more than the current contract
 - It was also stated that Suez are not looking to change general waste collections to fortnightly as has been reported in the press
- Updates from SC at the online meetings are continuing on a fortnightly basis

d. Feedback from meetings/visits

- Cllr Peaster had met with members of Nether Stowey Parish Council and although no plans have been confirmed, if there is an initiative that the parishes could both benefit from there will be support as ever from each side
- Cllr Bartlett will report back at the June 2024 meeting
- Cllrs Barrow and Lindley, with the Clerk attended the site visit at New Stowey farm reported back the plans that Quantock National Landscapes who are renting the land from Somerset Council have for the location. A number of comments and queries were made by council members:
 - There are concerns that as Somerset Council have declared a financial emergency and are going through cost cutting measures, why has an asset not been utilised to maximise income to increase revenue for the council
 - The project itself is not the issue – councillors would have no concerns if the land was privately owned, however it is publicly owned by the local authority and therefore should be for the benefit of the county, particularly in the current financial climate
 - Additionally, are the agreements that are in place between SC and Quantock National Landscapes subject to transparency rules and if so is this information readily available and in the public domain

e. Review and consider annual insurance renewal options

- The insurance renewal from Zurich has been received and at £327 there is no increase from last year and is less than budgeted for
- It was proposed that this policy is taken out for the year 2024/2025
Proposed: Cllr Peaster **Seconded:** Cllr Barrow

f. Confirm appointment of Internal Auditor for 2023/2024 AGAR

It was proposed that the Internal Auditor from 2022/2023 be appointed for the last financial years AGAR
Proposed: Cllr Goddard **Seconded:** Cllr Lindley

g. Highways issues

- i. The issue of the missing visibility mirror was raised by the member of public in attendance
 - The Clerk communicated the policy of Somerset Council with regards to visibility mirrors which states on their website:
'We do not allow the use of mirrors on the road. This is because we know that rather than improving safety, a mirror could, in certain circumstances, increase risk'
 - This has been explained to the Parish Council a number of times
 - Highways have installed other road signs, markings and the bollards, but it is still considered that the hazard remains and more needs to be done to rectify this
 - As this is an ongoing issue, the Clerk will contact the relevant Highways Department officer to again request what other options are available in this location
- ii. Drainage inspection camera
 - Cllr Tully will research suitable options
- iii. Cockercombe
 - The issue with the water running down the road is still ongoing
 - It was proposed that the Clerk contacts the relevant Highways Department officer to meet with Cllr Peaster and the landowner to ascertain who is responsible for work to rectify this
Proposed: Cllr Goddard **Seconded:** Cllr Barrow
- iv. Pothole repair options
 - Deferred to the June 2024 meeting
- v. Potholes on private land
 - A number of residents have asked if the potholes on the track to Great Wood are due to be filled in
 - It was proposed that the Clerk contact Forestry England to ask this question
Proposed: Cllr Lindley **Seconded:** Cllr Curtiss

h. Potential parish projects

- i. Update re fingerpost sign grant application
 - The grant application has been submitted
 - A decision is expected soon and an update will be given at the June 2024 meeting

9. Matters Arising for the Agenda for the June 2024 meeting:

- a. Review of update Financial Regulations and all other policies for 2024/2025
- b. Review and sign off of the AGAR for 2023/2024
- c. Chair's Award nomination
- d. Grant application from Over Stowey Village Hall and Recreation Ground Committee

- e. Work to be undertaken at the cemetery
- f. Issue re water from spring running down the road towards the cemetery

10. Planning

- a. Planning Applications
 - There were no planning application
- b. Planning updates
 - 40/23/00003 – granted 16/05/2024
- c. Resolution to hold a confidential session for item 10.d.
- d. Potential breaches of planning - updates
 - Updates were given and further follow ups will take place

11. Personnel - There were no personnel matters to be discussed

12. Financial Matters:

a. Payments

i. Clerk’s wages	May 2024	325.00
ii. Village Hall hire	Meetings 23/24	275.00
iii. Zurich	Annual insurance renewal (As agreed - item 8.e.)	327.00
iv. Mobile phone contract	D/D May 2024	<u>26.25</u>
	TOTAL	£953.25

Proposed: Cllr Peaster

Seconded: Cllr Curtis

13. Date of next meeting:

Wednesday 19th June 2024 at 7.00pm at Over Stowey Village Hall

There being no other business the meeting adjourned at 8.20pm

Amanda McMurren - Clerk to Over Stowey Parish Council

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Signed:

Dated: