

**MINUTES
WITHAM FRIARY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 9 MARCH 2017 AT 7.30 P.M. IN THE VILLAGE HALL**

Present	Roy Featherstone (Chairman)	RF
Present	Colin Horstmann	CH
	Gregory Stevens	GS
	Will Sheppard	WS
In attendance	Anthea Brooks, Clerk	AB
	Jim Rosser, Chairman, Village Hall Committee	JR
	2 members of the public	

ACTIONS

1 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES

1.1 Emergency exits and procedures were explained

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2.1 Apologies were received from Richard Nickless (RN) and Fred Nicholls (FN). It was noted that RN may be absent for several meetings. The Clerk confirmed that it is in order for a Councillor to be absent for up to six meetings.

3 PUBLIC ACCESS

3.1 Beth Horstmann reported that she had attended a recent meeting of FWAG (Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group) at Nunney. The discussions were mainly centred on the waterways and we will be kept informed of any issues arising on the stretch which runs through Witham. Meetings take place every three months and discussions centre around any issues that farmers/landowners have with the waterways with input from the Water Authority with the intention of finding common ground to deal with any issues. BH said that she would pass on information to the Council.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS AND REQUESTS FOR RECORDING

4.1 There were no declarations of interest. It was noted that the meeting could be recorded if requested.

5 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7 FEBRUARY 2017

5.1 It was agreed to amend item 8.7 – cheque for Jim’s Country and Garden Resources for £171.13 to read ‘reimbursement for the cost of materials and delivery at suppliers rate – horse chestnut tree for Recreation Field’. With this alteration the minutes were agreed and signed as a correct of the meeting held on 7 February 2017.

- 6 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF 7 FEBRUARY 2017**
- 6.1 **Keep Fit Group (6.2)** – RF has now met with the lady running the keep fit group in the car park.
- 6.2 **Carpenter (6.4)** – the Clerk gave the Council information on the cost of an annual family pass to Longleat and it was agreed to purchase this and send it to Mike and his family with a letter of thanks for his work in making the benches for the Recreation Field. **Clerk**
- 6.3 **Ditch Clearance – Recreation Field (8.2)** – in the absence of RN, WS agreed to take this action. **WS**
- 6.4 **Witham Water (9.1)** – the Clerk had prepared a draft list of numbers giving contact details for the Council and other emergency numbers. However the Witham Water contact number as provided by FN did not yield a positive response and it was agreed that the Clerk would contact the Estates Office to obtain an up to date number for inclusion on the list. When complete the list will be posted around the village and on the noticeboards. **Clerk**
- 6.5 **Vehicle Gate – Playpatch (13.1)** – WS provided two alternative codes for the gate into the Playpatch. RF will check this out. **RF**
- 6.6 **Broadband (10.1)** – the email that CH had received regarding Fibre to the Premises had been sent out with the minutes as agreed.
- 6.7 **Bus Service (12.3)** – Mendip Community Transport have agreed to consider adding Gare Hill to the bus route and would like to identify potential users. **Agenda**
- 6.8 **Boat in the Car Park (14.1)** – the boat has now been removed.
- 6.9 **Budget (8.2)** – following discussions on possible grants to the village hall the budget will be redrafted.
- 6.10 **Maintenance Contract (8.3)** – contractor assessment forms had been sent to the three companies who had quoted for the work.
- 6.11 **Parking (Littlewoods) (14.1)** – the Clerk had contacted Somerset Highways regarding the parking problems at Littlewoods following a letter from a local resident. A response is awaited. **Clerk**

7 NETWORK RAIL – WORK ON LINE AT WITHAM

- 7.1 RF reported on the severe noise and disruption to the village during the recent work on the railway line
- 7.2 RF reported that he had contacted Network Rail and sent various emails regarding the problems. He had also spoken to someone locally in the yard who has done his best to try and mitigate the situation by staggering the lorry movements and agreed to give notice of the work to be carried out over the next 2/3 weeks including weekends which can be put on the village website.
- 7.3 Two of the main issues have been the noise both in and out of normal working hours but particularly during the hours of darkness and delivery lorries clogging up the village street and damaging the verges by reversing across them.
- 7.4 It was agreed that the Clerk would draft a letter for Councillors to approve to be sent to Network Rail setting out the problems which have arisen and asking for possible compensation or a donation to the village and for the reinstatement of the damaged verges. RF agreed to send to the Clerk the emails he has sent to Network Rail so far.

RF/Clerk

7.4 ***Post Meeting Note:** As you are aware further issues have arisen since the meeting not just with the work on the railway line but following the derailment of a freight train in the middle of March. In the absence of RF, Christine Featherstone, has very kindly met with representatives from Network Rail and has exchanged emails with them. The information contained in those emails will be used by the Parish Council in their letter.*

8 INCREASED IN RENT FOR GARAGES OWNED BY ASTER PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 RF reported that he had been contacted by a parishioner regarding the increase in rent for garages owned by Aster Property Management. RF reported that it seems that the increase only applies to parishioners who are renting the garages privately and not to those who are in council owned properties.
- 8.2 It was agreed that RF would forward to email that he had received to the Clerk who would draft a letter to MDC.

RF

9 PROPOSED NEWSLETTER

- 9.1 In the absence of RN, the Clerk will ask the Clerk at Trudoxhill to provide her with a copy of their newsletter.

Clerk

10 PLANNING

10.1 There were no planning issues to discuss

11 FINANCE

11.1 **Financial Statement** - The financial statement at 09.03.17 was agreed and signed.

11.2 **Maintenance Contract** - After discussion it was proposed by GS and seconded by CH and agreed unanimously to award the maintenance contract to Grass Valet. The Clerk will inform them. RF agreed to look into the supply of some chippings which will be required for the Playpatch.

RF/Clerk

11.3 **Cheques for signature**

- **Clerk's Salary for the period ending 28.02.17** = £153.78
- **Mrs A Brooks** - £70.00 – reimbursement for gifts as agreed by the Council
- **Mendip Community Transport** - £62.24 – contribution to bus service (February)
- **SSE** - £13.60 – recreation field car park lighting
- **Mrs A Brooks** - £416.50 – reimbursement for cost of annual pass for Longleat for Mike White and family (see minute 6.2)

12 WITHAM WATER

12.1 Nothing to discuss

13 BROADBAND

13.1 CH reported that he had been informed that both Witham Friary and North Brewham were being commissioned and should be live by the end of next week. This is one of the biggest developments of fibre to the premises in Dorset and Somerset area and has proved to be one of the most complex. Every installation will need to be surveyed before it is connected. If the pickup rate is 25%, i.e. 80/90 premises, and it takes a day for each survey then it will obviously take some time for the surveys to be completed. The link below can be used to register to be notified when the system is available

<http://www.productsandservices.bt.com/products/speed-checker>

Within a week of the commissioning taking place interested ISP's should be able to offer a connection. The village website and Facebook will be updated when more information is available.

14 VILLAGE HALL

- 14.1 Jim Rosser attended the meeting and provided copies of the major projects undertaken at the Village Hall since the original lease in 1965. JR also provided copies of the suggested improvements, requirements etc. which are needed at the moment. A copy of this is attached to these minutes.
- 14.2 JR reported that recently the stonework renovation work had been carried out and a new kitchen and toilets installed. However there is much work to be done and JR would like to ask the Parish Council to consider granting the money from the wind turbine to cover some of this.
- 14.3 A grant of £7,500 had been received recently from the Solar Farm at West Woodlands, suggestions for the use of this money include replacing both sets of sliding doors or raising the wall between the main and secondary part of the main hall (to the left)
- 14.4 The provision of disabled access was discussed. JR explained that this would have to be a long term aim as it would be difficult to get a design as there are so many levels to consider and this would potentially cost a lot of money. There is however level disabled access at the back of the hall and a right of access around the back however this access is through a farm track and is generally very muddy and not ideal.
- 14.5 After discussion it was proposed by CH and seconded by GS and agreed unanimously to ask JR to obtain quotes for the first three items on the maintenance/improvement list which were
- Replacement of the rotten gable end bargeboard on west end (back yard) - cost £400/£500
 - Paint and repair rest of bargeboards/woodwork – likely cost £1,500 to £2,500
 - Repoint gable end wall (lime) on West end (back yard), install drainage channel at bottom of wall, remove concrete on interior of this wall – cost - £2,500 - £3,000.
- The Council will then consider the quotes when they are submitted and make a final decision on the grant to be provided.
- 14.6 JR was thanked for his attendance and left the meeting.

15 BUS SERVICES

- 15.1 The bus service continues to be subsidised by the various Parish Councils. The Clerk is awaiting information from Michael Gay about his application to Awards for All and Somerset Community Foundation for a grant and will contact him to find out what is happening.

Clerk

- 16 RECREATION FIELD AND PLAYPATCH**
- 16.1 **Recreation Field** – a charity football tournament is to take place. WS will discuss with RF. **WS**
- 16.2 **Playpatch** – nothing to report
- 17 HIGHWAYS/ROW MAINTENANCE**
- 17.1 **Footpaths** – The Clerk agreed to contact the Footpaths Officer but in the meantime will investigate the use of volunteers to walk the paths and report problems. This method works well with other Councils and may be the way forward for Witham. **Clerk**
- 17.2 **Potholes** – various potholes were reported near Holt Cottages and also just beyond Holt Cottages heading up to Sweetnap Farm. The Clerk will report these on FixMyStreet. **Clerk**
- 18 CORRESPONDENCE**
- 18.1 The Clerk had received the following correspondence
- Parish Information Bulletin
- 19 MISCELLANEOUS AND FUTURE BUSINESS**
- 19.1 Nothing to report
- 20 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**
- 20.1 It was agreed that the next meeting will be moved from 13 April to **20 April** to accommodate Easter. The meeting will take place as usual at the Village Hall at 7.30 p.m. The May meeting will be the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council the format of which will be discussed at the next meeting. The July meeting will be moved from 13 July to 6 July to accommodate an event in the Village Hall.
- 20.2 The meeting finished at 9.10 p.m.