

Witham Friary Parish Council Meeting

Minutes of the remote meeting held on Thursday 10th September 2020, 7.30pm

Present: Hugo Brooke (Chairman) (**HB**), Will Shepherd (Vice Chairman), Colin Horstmann (**CH**), John Knowles (**JK**), Marcus Powell (**MP**), Fred Nicholls (**FN**)
Members of the Public

09/01 Apologies

None – Michael Gay and William Shepherd joined the meeting late due to prior commitments.

09/02 Disclosures of Interest

None

09/03 Minutes of the last meeting

These were approved as an accurate record of the August 2020 meeting.

Meeting was suspended for the Public to speak on any relevant issue.

Members of the public offered these observations:-

Fiona from West Barn Farm asked for assurances regarding the issues with Ben Goldsmith and his re wilding project.

Action - HB responded to the parishioners query in item **09/05**

Cllr Michael Gay gave an update about the 'One Somerset' meeting and Covid 19.

The Parish Council passed a vote of thanks to **FN** for trimming the Holt lane/Private Road hedges.

09/04 Planning None

09/05 Re Wilding Plan Update

HB reported that Ben Goldsmith has apologised for leading the Parish astray with regard to his imported red deer. He advised the Chairman he is commencing a fencing programme but has had to apply to Highways to install cattle grids. He expects the fence will encompass Holt farm and 42 acres and the Hermitage, as these land owners are interested in participating in his re wilding project. He has denied releasing Beavers, he also stated he is not planning to release Pine Martins, wildcats or any other non-native species onto his land. He advised that the Selwood re wilding project is not his and the wild boar are now reduced to one sow and her piglets.

In response to the parishioner query, **HB** agreed to keep the dialogue with Mr Goldsmith moving forward and has confirmed that as far as possible the PC will keep on top of the situation.

CH advised that the Hermitage and 42 Acres are re fencing their land defensively, so as to protect their land from red deer and wild boar, not as Ben goldsmith implied to protect the Parish.

The Clerk advised the council that the discrepancy between protective fencing and the implied participation fencing between the land owners needs to be clarified.

Action - HB to speak to landowners concerned to gain clarification of this point.

JK advised that no licences have been issued for Wild Boar in the area and the Wild Life Officer PC Wills is continuing to investigate the alleged releases.

09/06 Bus shelter Update

JK Planning and preparatory work has commenced

MP September was planned as the deadline, however Jim Rosser is quite busy at the moment, **MP** will try to get a definite date for work to start.

09/07 Finance

09/07.1 To present current financial statement - **Approved**

09/07.2 To present accounts for payment including the clerk's times sheet - **Approved**

09/07.3 Network Rail – **NFA**

09/07.4 Online Banking - **Pending**

09/08.5 VAT Return – 2019/2020 has been submitted and the clerk is to look at archives for years between 2015 and 2019 for possible additional claims.

09/08.6 Budget Plans or suggestions for 20/21. **JK** requested a sum of £250 per month be made available improvements within the village and ad hoc repairs – **Motion Passed**

09/08.7 Annual Training Budget PC voted unanimously to allow the Clerk to join ad hoc training courses without having to wait for approval from the whole PC. The Clerk just needed to get confirmation from the chairman. Clerk has enrolled on the ILCA course with the ..

09/08 Actions

Actions from September confirmed, included in the minutes from September's meeting.

09/09 Reports

09/09.1 **Highways (FN/MP)** Private road, surface has degraded. Mendip advised it has been resurfaced, but this is not the case .

There are two blocked drains, one opposite the church and the other just south of the railway bridge. Also two large potholes, one outside Richard Gould's property and another outside Barrow Farm. **Action; FN** to contact Highways.

FN to also see if he can assist with vegetation obstructing vision at the Private drive junction.

09/09.2 Communications. **(CH)** said no village groups or requests to take up pages on the parish website had materialised. The village working group needs galvanising into action!

Action HB to consult Roy Featherstone .

09/09.3 **Recreation Ground (WS)** Richard Gould has moved his goalposts, however there may be a spare one so the village children can still have a kick about – **Action WS** to chase.

09/09.4 **Playpatch (JK)** Some of the wooden posts on the play equipment have small vertical splits. A filler recommended by the equipment providers has been purchased and repairs will be made shortly.

09/09.5 **Footpaths (JK)** Sign is missing at entrance to Tynemead. Somerset CC (SCC) asked to replace. West End Wood. Restricted Byway is impassable. SCC to ask Somerset Estates as the Landowner to repair. **CH** Footpath Stile between the Black Arabian Stud and 42 acres is rotted and needs replacing. **JK** to action

09/10 Witham Water Update

CH Suggested we should save some money just in case it is required for the water network. **Action - PC** voted unanimously to transfer and additional £2000.00 to the deposit account, should an emergency fund be required in the future.

09/11 Witham Working Group,

Chair to ask Roy Featherstone to chair the Group

09/12 Other business brought to the Clerk

Possible addition of picnic tables to the Rec Field – **Action** – Agenda October – Set up a seed swop – ask **MF** if she can organise the phonebox for that.

WS to look to give the PC a copy of the playing field minutes.

SSE would like to install a smart meter for the car park lights and the clerk has queried the bill, they will be contacting **VB** about the tariff.

Grave yard The annual upkeep donation of £400 has been sent to Postlebury.

09/13 Date of next WFPC meeting confirmed as Thursday 8th October 2020