

Witham Friary Parish Council Meeting

Minutes of the remote meeting held on: Tuesday 13th April, 2021 @ 7.30pm

Present: Hugo Brooke (Chairman) (HB), Will Sheppard (Vice Chairman) (WS) Colin Horstmann (CH), John Knowles (JK), Marcus Powell (MP), Fred Nicholls (FN), Councillor Michael Gay (MG), Donna Featherstone (DF)

In attendance: Roy Featherstone (RF)
Ann Howard (AH)

02/21/01 Apologies: None

02/21/02 Disclosure of Interest: None

02/21/03 Minutes of the Last Meeting:

The minutes of the meeting on 9th March 2021 were approved as an accurate record.

02/21/03.1 Matters referred to the Chair

Nothing referred to the chair.

Meeting to be suspended for the Public to speak for 2 minutes on any relevant issue.

No issues to discuss.

District and County Councillors may give short verbal reports on matters affecting the Parish.

MG sent his report prior to the death of Prince Phillip and the ensuing debate as to whether any council meetings should take place. Mendip has said that everything should carry on as normal and is calling forward the Full Council Meeting so it can be held virtually on the 26th. The County Council is taking the government to court on the subject of not finding time to discuss provisions for continuance of virtual meetings. MG will keep us updated on the situation. CH asked whether it was actually illegal to hold a virtual meeting past May 7th. He stated that it would be illegal to have a gathering of more than 6 people on that date so it didn't make sense.

MG answered that the provisions were to allow virtual meetings whereas the original law said they had to meet physically. As things stand we are required to meet physically to make decisions as a Parish Council but it is ok to hold virtual meetings if not making any decisions. Councils are bringing meetings forward. A discussion took place regarding this and it was decided that the next meeting should be brought forward to Tuesday 4th May to allow for a virtual meeting.

02/21/04 Covid 19

HB thanked Roy Featherstone for his hard work which enabled the Seymour Arms to re-open. He emphasised that we should all continue to obey the rules.

02/21/05 Planning

Application Number 2021/0492/FUL

Proposal: Internal and external alterations/improvements to main house.

Location: The Hermitage, Holt Lane, Witham Friary, Frome, Somerset

Applicant: Mr Seth Tabatznik
Application Type: Full Application

No objections were raised so unanimous approval was given.

Application Number 2021/0493/LBC

Proposal: Internal and external alterations/improvements to main house.

Location: The Hermitage, Holt Lane, Witham Friary, Frome, Somerset

Applicant: Mr Seth Tabatznik

Application Type: Listed Building Consent

No objections were raised so unanimous approval was given.

04/21/06 Finance

04/21/06.1 To present current financial statement

Current finances are healthy with a total positive balance of £35,966.

04/21/06.2 Year End/AGAR 20/21

The RFO presented the Year End cashbook and AGAR. She clarified some items on the cashbook and requested input on the Assets. JK agreed to send a list of Assets with values. It was agreed that members should meet in person outside the meeting, to complete Section 2 of the AGAR and to agree Section 1. Date to be confirmed.

04/21/06.3 To present accounts for payment:

PKF Accountants & Business Advisers, SB20204174, £240.00 (AGAR 19/20)

SALC Training, 20768 £30.00

SALC Training, 20779 £30.00 All approved

SALC (Chairman), 20750 £25.00

All invoices were agreed for payment.

04/21/07 Actions

HB asked if we needed to have a Parish Meeting before 7th May. MG stated that normally Annual Parish meetings are held May to June but some have decided to postpone until September on the grounds that the situation would be clearer by then. MG stated that the Annual Meeting had to be called by 2 councillors or the Chair or 2 residents not the Parish Clerk. It is quite separate to the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council when decisions on officers for the following year are made. HB stated that there was a big issue with the water so a Parish meeting was required. He suggested that this was postponed until after 21st June so that an open meeting could be held. All agreed. MG agreed that this would be fine and to minute this.

Regarding the Wanstrow footpath, we still need to hold discussions with Claire Haskins. Clarification is still needed as to whether it is a footpath or bridleway. MG and JK to continue with investigations.

After note: Network Rail has offered to help with a community project so we have suggested re-surfacing the first 300 metres of the Wanstrow bridleway. We await this decision.

Signposts: RF confirmed that the Conker Committee are looking at all the signs and the village name plates with a view to putting a logo on them (picture of church). HB stated that the Council needs to see this before it happens. RF agreed.

- JK to send a list of Assets and values to DF
- MG and JK to continue investigations regarding footpath.
- FN to contact Highways regarding damage to verge on Private Drive.
- HB to send questionnaire regarding table tennis table to CH
- CH to put questionnaire on website.
- WS to speak to Tom Hyde and Grass Valet regarding current grass cutting contract.
- WS to obtain at least two quotes for grass cutting and track maintenance.
- WS to find out who owns the Recreation Field fence in poor repair.
- HB and RF to meet with Project Manager of Network Rail regarding ongoing issues.
- DF to transfer £5k into savings account from current account.
- HB to find out more information on the Churchyard request for funds.
- JK to issue car park lights quotation to councillors for comment.
- CH to put Code of Conduct on the village website.

04/21/08 Reports

04/21/08.1 Highways (FN)

The signpost at the top of Private Drive is pointing in the wrong direction. HB asked RF if that signpost was included. RF said he would pass the issue on to the Conker Committee.

CH reported that between his drive and 42 acres, something had squashed the verge into the ditch. FN agreed to ask Highways if they were responsible.

04/21/08.2 Communications (CH)

Nothing to report. Website updated. HB thanked CH for his continuing work. He Suggested the item regarding the table tennis be sent to CH.

04/21/08.3 Recreation Ground (WS)

WS stated that we need a grass cutting quote for this year. WS will speak to Tom Hyde and Grass Valet to find out start and end dates of the current contract. He will try to get at least 2 quotes with the track maintenance included.

WS also stated that the fence between the Recreation Field and the Emery's field was in a very poor state. WS agreed to look into who owned the fence.

JK stated that where you come out of the Recreation Field and turn towards the church, on the left hand side, there used to be a wall to protect people from falling into the ditch. JK stated that he had obtained a quote from Steve Orr for under £600. He proposed for safety and appearance that the wall should be re-built. It would match all village walls of original type and it would slope away so children could be seen. All agreed to wall being re-built.

04/21/08.4 Play Patch (JK)

The ROSPA investigation of the Playpatch will take place in June. HB suggested they do the cycle track at same time and RF agreed.

Footpaths

Nothing further to report.

04/21/09 Network Rail – Easter Weekend

CH stated that full details of the works are on the website.

DF reported excessive noise, traffic and dangerous driving.

RF stated that they had been helpful in the past but that they seemed to be ignoring the residents this time. HB to have a meeting with the Project Manager. RF agreed to attend.

04/21/10 Witham Water Update

MG stated that he was in correspondence with Bristol Water and that it was essential that we get back the options that were sent with some costs so people could see what was being proposed. He was happy to continue with this but felt other options should be looked at.

CH suggested transferring some funds into the savings account for water issue as the current account is particularly healthy. MP felt strongly this should happen. All agreed should move £5K immediately for legal fees, then look at whether we need more. DF to transfer £5K.

It was felt that the Water Committee should be re-invigorated in order to move the situation forward.

04/21/11 Village Signposts

Nothing further to report.

04/21/12 Outdoor Table Tennis

HB stated that a concrete table would cost £3,500. He agreed to put a questionnaire on the website and Facebook page to ascertain the feelings of the village. Decision to be made at next meeting.

04/21/13 Working Group Report

RF stated that there were 13 organisations in the village and that he had itemised what they did and their plans for the future. Examples were a village walk and quiz by the History Society in July.

04/21/14 Pump Track Insurance

HB stated that covering the Track had doubled the village's insurance premium but it left us with scope for other items to be covered such as a zipwire.

04/21/15 Churchyard Trees

HB stated that we had been asked to contribute £500 to prune trees in the churchyard. As we have already contributed to the churchyard this year, HB stated that he would find out more.

04/21/16 Car Park Lights

JK reported that he had asked an electrician to investigate the tripping of the lights. The quote for rectifying the situation was £500-£600. CH felt this was excessive. JK stated that replacing the bulbs with LEDs was included in the quote. HB suggested we had to rectify the situation for safety. JK to send the quote around for councillors to investigate further.

04/21/17 A Stronger Somerset

CH wished to abstain as he didn't think there was sufficient information.
HB proposed vote as a council for 2 councils. Seconded by WS. Passed.

04/21/18 Village Website – Code of Conduct

JK proposed that the Code of Conduct should go on the website. HB seconded this. All agreed. CH to put it on the website.

04/21/19 Meetings after 7th May

Nothing further to add.

04/21/20 Other Business referred to the Clerk

DF reported that £2285.00 had been received from Distgen.

02/21/21 The next WFPC meeting was confirmed as Tuesday 4th May at 7.30pm, via Zoom