

# WITHAM FRIARY PARISH COUNCIL

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## Mendip District of the County of Somerset

Chairman: Hugo Brooke, hugobrooke@gmail.com

Clerk: Jen Gregory, withamfriary.parishcouncil@gmail.com

## MINUTES

### Of Witham Friary Parish Council

Held on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2022 at Witham Friary Village Hall

**Present:** Chair H Brooke, Cllrs J Knowles, C Horstmann, F Nicholls, W Sheppard

**Also Present:** J Gregory Proper Officer, plus 2 members of the public

**02/22/01 Apologies for absence**

Cllr Marcus Powell and District Councillor Gay gave apologies for absence. Cllr Powell has Covid at home and Cllr Gay is unable to drive

**Resolved: Given the circumstances the apologies were accepted.**

**02/22/02 Declarations of Interest**

Members were asked to advise any Declarations of interest in today's agenda items or any pecuniary interests in line with Councils' Code of Conduct.

**Resolved: It was noted that no declarations, pecuniary or otherwise were received.**

**02/22/03 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

To receive the minutes of the meeting held 14<sup>th</sup> December 2021. Amendments; Precept figure should be £9972.00

**Resolved: Minutes of the previous meeting agreed on the basis of the amendment advised to members and would be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.**

**02/22/05 Matters Arising**

Cllr Sheppard was continuing to chase the Grass Valley contract.

The Caravan in the car park was still in situ. Mendip have issued it with a disposal notice, Cllr Brooke has placed a letter inside but appears not to have moved, pleas for the owner have been made on Facebook and the website, however the tyre has been replaced.

**Resolved: given the opportunities and time passed, Mendip authorised to continue with disposal. Noting they will keep it for 1 week before final disposal.**

Grit dump bags had been delivered to Cllr Nicholls in the event of bad weather for him to distribute.

**Public Participation**

Tom Hyde from Witham Friary Cricket Club presented draft proposals for a pavilion. There would be a more detailed proposal available at the next meeting.

**The Parish Council supported the draft proposal (in principal) and were willing to consent to any grant application in its name for VAT purposes however noting that the Cricket Club would cover the administration of such and prepare bids for grant funding. Cllr Brooke and the Cricket Club would approach householders affected.**

The Parish Council heard of the Tree Strategy and the meeting with the biodiversity lead at Mendip. There would be "tree wardens" to build a picture of logging what we have and incorporating that with other organisations such as the Bat Society.

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02/22/06

### Planning Applications

To consider the following applications:

No planning applications received

Adoption of Local Plan Part II by Mendip District Council noted.

An update was provided on the visit to Moorleaze. As a result councillors felt comfortable with the current proposals. Cllr Horstmann advised of Mendip's zero carbon toolkit adopted Jan 22 which may affect the Moorleaze development.

**Resolved: Clerk to provide a copy of said Toolkit to Moorleaze.**

02/22/07

### Finance

1. To receive financial statement

There was no bank reconciliation due to being locked out of the Natwest Account. Whilst statements had been obtained today we could only physically obtain 6 months, 8 months worth of statements needed to be posted!! Current balances on the accounts as of today were £7337.66 (current) and £27,202.04 (reserve)

2. To agree schedule of payments as indicated below

Witham Friary Payment Schedule - February 2022		
Payment Method	Payee	Amount
BACS	J Gregory	£229.80
	Clerk Salary 01.12.21 - 31.12.21 plus WFH	
BACS	J Gregory	£225.60
	Clerk Salary 01.01.22 - 31.01.22 plus WFH	
BACS	SSE	£120.22
	Car Park Lighting quarter 3	
BACS		
<b>Total Agreed at February PCM</b>		<b>£575.62</b>

Cllr Knowles requested advance authorisation to purchase a new battery for the defibrillator at a cost circa £150 and this would require replacing by the end of March.

**Resolved: The above payment schedule was agreed along with the purchase of a defib battery.**

3. To discuss NatWest issues

Due to the lock out situation we have been subject to somewhat a farcical situation of being passed from branch to the online section of the organisation in a never-ending loop, achieving very little, resulting in three signatories and the Clerk going to the branch and practically having every member of staff including the Manager caught up in the situation which has become increasingly frustrating as a result of the amount of time (since the December meeting) and bills remaining unpaid needing resolution. We did find a temporary solution to the urgent payments by signatories authorising a cash withdraw to pay to the Clerk's account (also Natwest) to pay the accounts needed and have been issued with a cheque book whilst the online situation is rectified although we have been advised this could take up to 6 weeks to resolve. In order for the Clerk to administer the account we need to add the clerk as a signatory along with Cllrs Brooke, Knowles, Nicholls as two signings from four. We are advised to make a resolution as follows:

**Resolved: Banking relationship to be maintained with Natwest in accordance with the mandate that:**

**1) the individuals identified as Authorised Signatories may, in accordance with the signing rules**

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- \* Sign cheques and give instructions for standing orders, direct debits, electronic payments bankers draft and other payments on the accounts (even if it causes an account to be overdrawn or exceed any limit
- \* Sign, accept or endorse bills of exchange
- \* Request and give counter-indemnities for the issue of letters or credit or guarantees (including bonds, indemnities and undertakings)

### Proposal to move to Unity Bank

As a result of the problems above, the paper from the Clerk was re-circulated. It was noted that from the previous meeting the Natwest Community account was not appropriate as the Council was a corporate body and not eligible for such.

**Resolved: It was agreed to switch to Unity Bank with immediate effect and the Clerk to make the necessary arrangements.**

02/22/08

### Reports

#### 1. To receive Chairman's Report

The Chair indicated that he had made 3 attempts to contact Witham Water (WW) all of which have not initiated a response. Much discussion was had about communications with WW noting it was purely about the communication and not what they do or the response times. It was felt that all people needed to know that they were aware and the problem was being looked at. Suggestions from the village end was a whatsapp group or similar to look at cutting the amount of people contacting WW.

**Resolved: it was agreed for the Chair to write to WW following the recent outage, advising that something was being set up this end to avoid bombardment when pressure and outage was affected and in return grateful of real time information being communicated back to the village (possibly via website or facebook)**

The Jubilee Sub-Committee's plans were taking shape. Anyone not aware was advised that a street party would be had in the car park. Mechanics of such to be decided.

#### 2. Cllr Nicholls/Powell report on Highways

Highways to be advised of potholes on Strap lane and Cllr Knowles said that a cyclist had problems negotiating potholes on the bend by the church. Cllr Nicholls also noted some subsidence by the railway bridge on Strap Lane

**Resolved: Cllr Nicholls to advise Highways of the pothole situation in the two locations.**

#### 3. To receive Cllr Horstmann report on Communications

Nothing to report, however he had advised of some interesting figures on websites being used by Parish Councils costing approximate 4-5k to design and £300-400 to maintain. Currently our website costs zero in design and £150 to maintain. This led onto discussion around an "understudy" to have an understanding of how the website works if the need ever arose.

**Resolved: Clerk to take on the "backup" role and liaise with Cllr Horstmann regarding training.**

#### 4. To receive Cllr Sheppard/Knowles report on the Recreation Ground

Cllr Sheppard stated that the Conker club would be carrying out maintenance on the pump track in the next month or so. It was noted that the Grass Valet had addressed the perimeter track but thoughts were that it possibly needed rolling and/or top dressing. Cllr Sheppard would look into.

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Cllr Sheppard stated he would need to look at grass cutting quotes for next season. With this it was suggested that the mowing happened with a small verge on the outside avoiding the young trees of which there had been some tree loss as a result of vehement cutting.

**Resolved: Cllr Sheppard to look at Grass Valet and rolling/dressing the perimeter track. Grass Cutting quotes to be obtained.**

### 5. To receive Cllr Knowles report on the Play Patch

Play Patch SW had carried out repairs before Christmas and would be coming back again.

The see-saw company had not responded to emails and as a result Cllr Knowles had asked Michael White, a Woodworker for a quotation for wooden seats

Cllr Knowles stated that he was carrying out regular checks on play equipment and advised repairs would be likely especially to the swings going forward.

### 6. To receive Cllr Powell report on Footpaths

Cllr Powell was not in attendance but advised by email that the stile and footpath stile near Moorleaze, originally reported by Cllr Knowles had been replaced.

Cllr Brooke stated that there was a meeting with FWAG for sometime in the coming week to look at creating a ford along the footpath at the bottom where the concrete had been layed (preventing slipping from cattle) and this may mean the erection of a small footbridge. Further details to be advised following FWAG meeting.

02/22/09

#### Network Rail

Cllr Powell advised by email there was nothing to report

02/22/10

#### Witham Water

This had been covered in the Chairman's report 02/22/08

02/22/11

#### Policies and Council Documents

Resuming the schedule of bringing the Council up-to-date on policies Financial Regulations and Complaints were next on the list. It was noted that Financial Regulations may need to be revisited as it included a section on the authorisation process at Unity Bank which was not yet in force.

**Resolved: It was agreed to adopt the Complaints Policy and Financial Regulations (minus the Unity bank requirement).**

Cllr Knowles was looking at the Village Emergency Plan. He advised that he would be reducing the size as there had been huge emphasis on health and safety. He would also include what to do in a pandemic, referencing to the Helping Hands volunteers and if the village was cut off.

02/22/12

#### Quinquennial Club

To be referred as "friendly society". This was for the Council's information only. Cllr Nicholls stated that it was hoped that this may be brought back to life following COVID with having the usual "whitsun march" over the jubilee weekend. The Council heard of much history of the club and its membership.

02/22/13

#### Further correspondence:

Household Support Fund – Available to individuals struggling with costs. Fund available through the Citizens Advice and open to 31<sup>st</sup> March (details via WF website)

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We are looking to join the LCN Pilot (Local Council Network) for Frome. We have the choice of Frome or Bruton currently. Cllr Sheppard attended a meeting where they talked about the development of young people especially in relation to swimming facilities.

We have set up SSE Electric account online for billing. Log in information to be provided to Cllr Brooke as a backup.

Meeting closed at 9.45pm

Next Meeting 8<sup>th</sup> March 2022 at 7.30pm.

A signed copy of the minutes can be viewed by arrangement via the Parish Clerk.