

Pitcombe Parish Council

Minutes of a Pitcombe Parish Council Remote Meeting held on Tuesday 14th July 2020 via Zoom.

Present: Chair R. Waller, Councillors M. Groom, C. Donald, L. Donahue and R. Currie.

Clerk: Holly Callow

Also Present: PCSO Tim Russell.

There was one member of the public present at the start of the meeting.

The meeting started at 19:32.

1. **Apologies:** Councillors Anna Groskop and Alan Wells had sent their apologies.
2. **To receive Declarations of any Interest:** None declared.
3. **To approve the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 9th June and 7th July 2020.**

RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed to approve both sets of minutes as presented.

4. To receive reports from

- i County Councillor Anna Groskop had sent her apologies.
- ii District Councillor Robin Bastable informed the council that he would need to leave the meeting at 8pm to attend another Parish meeting. Councillor Bastable had no further update regarding the enforcement notice on the land at the Old Embankment, but reported that it was being dealt with by Tim Wills. He would ask for a progress report at the end of July if there had been no further update. Councillor Bastable had been informed that Simon Fox was leaving his role at SSDC with immediate effect. Another senior officer in the planning department was leaving in August; this caused concerns as it was unclear how the planning department would cope with the workload moving forward.
- iii PCSO Tim Russell had provided a report which is attached. There had been 5 crimes in the Parish of Pitcombe during June and July. PCSO Russell noted that the spike on the crime incidents graph was mainly due to one individual and it was expected that these specific crimes would reduce over the coming months. Councillor Groom commented that the figures provided had not always been very clear and it was helpful to have the PCSO attend the meeting and provide an explanation where possible. PCSO Russell reported that burglary in the Parish is quite rare and that the crime trends referenced on the report refers to the entire Wincanton Policing area. Referencing the possible 24 hour security to be noted in item 5 iii a, Councillor Donahue asked PCSO Russell whether he thought such security measure were effective. PCSO Russell thought that such measures were a good deterrent to theft, and noted that the Police should be called to any incidents. Councillor Currie requested that a PCSO attend future meetings, PCSO Russell informed the Council that he would always attend if he was on shift at the time of the meeting, and that he could always be contacted via email with any questions. The Council thanked PCSO Russell for attending.

PCSO Tim Russell left the meeting at 19.48.

5. To review Planning Applications, Road Closures, Foot Path Diversions.

- i Outcomes of applications considered at previous meetings:
 - a) **20/01156/S73A** - Variation of condition 2 of planning permission 18/02384/FUL to enable minor material amendments to the proposed buildings and landscape; variation of the wording of conditions 3 (Materials), 4 (Archaeology), and 9 (Construction Management Plan) to reflect the approval of the required details and secure compliance at Land West of Cattle Hill Welham Castle Cary Somerset - **Application Permitted with Conditions**

Noted.

- ii. New Planning Applications: None to report

iii. Other planning matters:

- a) To note an email from the Project Management team of R G Shylan informing the council that landfill works on the slurry pit would start week commencing 6th July. To further note that RG Shylan is looking at security options following theft, this may include 24 hour attendance on site.

Noted. The council felt that this would be of advantage to the Parish in terms of overall security.

- b) To note an email received from the owners of the land at The Old Embankment, Mill Lane, Pitcombe, which included an invitation for council members to meet on site and discuss any concerns. To decide if any councillor would like to attend a site meeting with the owners.

Councillor Robin Bastable left the meeting at 19.52

Chair Waller asked if any Councillors felt there would be any value in attending such a meeting. The Council **agreed** that they would like to attend a site meeting, but felt that more could be gained from such a meeting when there had been

some progress with the enforcement notice.

RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed that the Clerk should reply to the land owners thanking them for the invitation and proposing a meeting be arranged at a later date.

- iv. Temporary Road Closures: None to report.
- v. Path Diversions: None to report.

6. Reports from Portfolio holders not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

Councillor Donahue provided a Quiet Lanes update. She reported that feedback received from other Councils was largely that it was a toothless way of operating speed. Councillor Donahue had spoken to Gary Warren who had told her that although Quiet Lanes was a government policy, Somerset did not currently have any so he would have to conduct further research. Councillor Donahue was awaiting a response. Councillor Donald commented that footfall through the lanes had been very high during the lock down period and it would be good to protect and encourage these walkers in the future.

7. Finance.

- i. To review the Budget vs Spend sheet.
- Noted.

- ii. To approve the cash book and bank reconciliation for May 2020.

RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed to approve the cash book and bank reconciliation as presented.

- iii. To approve payments of:

Holly Callow	Salary June 2020	£199.13
Holly Callow	Expenses June 2020	£10.02
Holly Callow	Salary July 2020	£199.13
Holly Callow	Expenses July 2020	£9.41
HMRC	Income Tax RE H Callow June 2020	£21.00
HMRC	Income Tax RE H Callow July 2020	£21.00

RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed to approve the payments as presented and that Councillors Waller and Groom would sign the cheques.

8. Council Matters:

- i. To hear an update regarding 'Bruton's Safer Walking and Cycling Group' (LD)

It was agreed to take item 8 vi at this point as the two items were connected.

Chair Waller provided the Council with an overview of the manifesto. Councillor Groom supported the idea but did not think the manifesto covered all necessary points. He suggested that the Council support the manifesto in principle but noted that certain practicalities of living in a rural environment must be accepted, such as the high percentage of people who use vehicles to travel due to the lack of regular public transport. The Council agreed with the principle of improving the environment for walkers and cyclists. Councillor Donald suggested that post Covid more people were expected to work from home so there could be fewer vehicles on the roads.

RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed that the council would support the manifesto in principle.

- ii. To decide what action the Council should take regarding fly tipping in the Parish.

Councillor Groom reported that he had reported a fly tipping incident and that he was very pleased that the Council had dealt with it so quickly and efficiently. Councillor Groom suggested that occasional reminders of how to report fly tipping should be included in the Pitcombe News.

RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed that Councillor Donald would write a short report on the fly tipping reporting process which would be included in the Pitcombe News.

- iii. To receive an update regarding the Tree Forestry Commissions response relating to Rodberd's Barn.

There has been no further update and Councillor Currie reported that progress was slow as certain processes had to be adhered to by The Forestry Commission. Councillor Donahue thanked Councillor Currie for reporting the felling so swiftly and felt that it had made a great difference. Councillor Donald further reported that she had spoken to SSDC regarding the possibility of carrying out a tree survey in the Parish but had been told it would be a waste of time as they had satellite imagery which they used to effectively monitor trees.

- iv. To decide whether guidance should be displayed on the Parish website and notice boards regarding the control of noxious weeds.

Chair Waller summarised that a local land owner had been contacted by the Council due to the presence of Ragwort on

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their land and felt that the Council should consider spreading guidance throughout the parish. Councillor Donald suggested guidance should also be included in the Pitcombe News. Councillor Currie informed the Council that noxious weeds legislation covers four varieties of weeds and that it was difficult to identify them, it would therefore need a detailed level of guidance. Councillor Groom informed the Council that the Weeds Act 1959 is still in place, and the Ragwort Control Act 2003 states that an occupier of land which allows weeds to grow can be prosecuted so people should be aware of this.

RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed that guidance would be drafted by Councillors which would then be published on the notice boards, in the Pitcombe News and sent to the Clerk to publish on the website.

- v To note that Hadspen Village Hall plans to reopen on September 1st 2020 and will send out further information soon.

In line with current government guidance, the Council **agreed** to continue to hold meetings virtually until the guidance was updated.

- vi To decide whether to support the 'Walking and Cycling Manifesto for Somerset'. Discussed in item 8 i.

- vii To agree a response to the Local Government Re-organisation feedback form.

The Council discussed the seven recommendation included in the report. There was general concern that under the Unitary Authority the Parish Council would be asked to take on responsibility for extra duties. Chair Waller commented that he would be reluctant to take responsibility for additional duties such as pothole repairs as the Council did not have the necessary resources. The Council felt that jobs which were currently salaried would be pushed on to Parish and Town Councils who would be expected to raise the funds by increasing the precept. Councillor Currie commented that he had been through four different government reorganisations and that none had improved service delivery. He further commented that Parish Councils would have to form groups with other Councils to cover contracts, effectively re-creating another organisational level. Although the Council did not believe that the seven recommendations would provide an ideal scenario, it was agreed that the council supported them in principle as the best current option.

RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed that Chair Waller and Councillor Currie would complete the feedback form to reflect the council's view.

9. Exclusion of Press and Public

To consider exemption of press and public for the remainder of meeting under Public Bodies Admissions To Meetings Act 1960, Section 1 (2) on the grounds that discussion of the following business is likely to disclose confidential information relating to the engagement of a Locum Clerk.

RESOLVED: It was proposed and agreed that the press and public would be excluded for the remainder of the meeting.

One member of the public left at 20.42.

- i. To consider employing a Locum Clerk and to agree an hourly rate and to cover mileage and any other pertinent expenses.

The Council agreed that a Locum Clerk would be employed starting on the 17th July and an hourly rate was agreed.

10. Items for report and for the next agenda

Councillor Currie had arranged to meet John Nicholson to discuss the recent flash flood at Pitcombe rock. He would also discuss the deterioration of the bridge which dated back to 1700s, he believed it should be renewed as a monument with important historical significance. The Clerk was instructed to add a report from this meeting to the next agenda.

11. Date of the next Parish Council meeting: 8th September 2020 at 7.30pm

The meeting closed at: 20:51

Signed:

Date: