

**Minutes of the meeting of Stawell Parish Council held on Monday 2nd November 2020 at 7.00 pm
(Conducted via telephone conference call)**

Present: - Cllrs. Hugh Gange-Harris, Brian Lishman (Chairman) and Simon Thomas.

Also present: - Cllr. David Huxtable (SCC).

In attendance: - The Clerk (Chris Fry).

1384 Apologies: - Cllrs. Penny Badcock and Rod Conaway.

1385 Declarations of Interest: - None.

1386 Minutes of the last meeting of 5th October 2020 were taken as read, agreed and signed.

1387 Matters arising from the minutes:- None.

1388 County Councillor's report: - David Huxtable reported as follows: -

a. Covid-19: -

He said Somerset was experiencing a significant rise in the infection rate, although the South-West in general and Somerset in particular, still enjoys the lowest level of confirmed cases in the country. He is concerned at the rate that acute hospital beds are being taken up by Covid cases. He is particularly concerned at the moral draining effect the virus is having on staff, both at SCC and, of course, the NHS, as the emergency continues.

Although the younger generation are more likely to recover from Covid, they are well able to pass on the infection to the older people.

With young people accounting for a large proportion of the care service workforce, time away on sick leave has a significant effect on the capacity of the care sector to cope.

David invited questions from the floor: -

b. Drainage problems in Sutton Mallet: -

The Chairman asked the Clerk to read out an email received from a Sutton Mallet resident who expressed concern about surface water being unable to drain away satisfactorily and the mess it causes outside and at the entrance to his property.

David has overall responsibility for such highways issues and he offered to look into the problem as a matter of urgency. He asked the Clerk to forward the email on to him and he said he would get back to the resident directly.

District Councillor's report: - None.

1389 Financial Matters: -

Four cheques to issue: -

No 473 £120.00 payee C N Fry (November net salary).

No 474 £ 50.68 payee C N Fry (expenses).
No 475 £240.00 “ PKF Littlejohn LLP (external audit fee).
No 476 £100.00 “ Sedgemoor CAB (donation).

The external audit has now been completed and the required notices advertised.

The Clerk reported that cheques issued to the Stawell Heritage Society for £150 and Sutton Mallet Church for £100 had not yet been presented for payment. Hugh Gange-Harris and Brian Lishman said they would make enquiries.

a. Clerk's salary review: -

The Clerk has requested a review of salary to take effect from 1st April 2021. He said the current level of remuneration had remained the same for many years and he submitted a request for an increase as follows: -

Payment for four hours per week (a seven member council usually attracts five hours per week), at £12.50 per hour = £50 per week or £2600 per year (currently £1800).
Other expenses to remain as at present.

A discussion took place and the need for a review was acknowledged. The position of Clerk involves many varied duties, all of which are pivotal in ensuring the smooth running of the Parish Council. The level of increase being sought was thought to be entirely reasonable and Brian Lishman proposed that the request be accepted on the basis submitted. Simon Thomas seconded this and all agreed.

b. Precept- setting exercise for 2021/2022.

The Clerk presented the income and expenditure forecast for 2021/2022, including the Clerk's salary increase which comes into effect at the start of that year.
Total estimated expenditure for the year amounts to approximately £4830. The precept levied from SDC is the sole source of funding open to the Parish Council and a general discussion took place, after which Brian Lishman proposed a precept of £4950, which was seconded by Hugh Gange-Harris and unanimously agreed.

Taking this level of support into account it would seem that projected expenditure would be covered, with a modest uplift in reserves (of £120) to about £1200 as at 31st March 2022.

1390 Planning –

Although there were no new applications received in time to be discussed at this meeting, the Chairman said one had been received this very morning by email, which requires the statutory public notice to be given before it is discussed by the Parish Council. Brian Lishman said he would liaise with SDC planners and the matter would be placed on a future agenda appropriately.

1391 Correspondence: - None.

1392 Matter for report and items for the next meeting: - None.

1393 Any other business and Date of the next meeting: -

Any other business: -

- a. **Sutton Mallet drainage problem:** -Dealt with under item 1388(b) above.
- b. **Mendip Community Transport:** - A request for grant aid was noted.

c. Covid – 19 Survey: -

The Clerk outlined an email from SCC about a new survey being launched this week. Somerset residents are being asked to have their say on how the Covid-19 pandemic is impacting on their lives. The purpose of the survey is to understand the barriers people are facing in adhering to Government guidance designed to stop the spread of the virus.

To take part in the survey, go to: -

www.somerst.gov.uk/covidsurvey

Date of the next meeting Monday 7th December 2020 at 7 pm.

There being no other business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.34 pm.