

Minutes of the meeting of Stawell Parish Council held on Monday 12th April 2021 at 7.00 pm.

(Conducted via telephone conference call)

Present: - Cllrs. Penny Badcock, Hugh Gange-Harris, Brian Lishman (Chairman) and Linda Osborne.

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

In attendance: - The Clerk (Chris Fry).

1424 Apologies: - Cllr. Rod Conaway, Simon Thomas and Cllr. Stuart Kingham (SDC).

1425 Declarations of Interest: - None.

1426 Minutes of the last regular meeting of 1st March 2021 were taken as read, agreed and signed.

2Matters arising from the minutes:-

a. Emergency use bollards.

The latest place that the Clerk has tried to obtain some parking cones for occasional road safety use, SCC Highways, has drawn another blank. Lawrence Hackling advises that SCC do not keep any cones. Although their contractors do, they are for their own exclusive use. Lawrence advises cones are sold by Screw-fix.

The Clerk was asked to investigate costs and report back to the next meeting.

b. Poor state of the roads in Sutton Mallet.

In March SCC Highways arranged the installation of a bund in the road near the potholes, to direct the surface water into the outfall ditch. Other pressing road repairs presumably had to wait for the new financial year. Shortly afterwards a local landowner removed the bund and it was left on the side of the road, partially blocking the entrance to the ditch, thereby removing the improvements made. Lawrence has since had a discussion with the landowner responsible for removing the bund, who is of the opinion that the bund had been placed on his land. Lawrence had checked the extent of the highway, before arranging the works. We therefore have a dispute which may take a while to be resolved. SCC are determined to get to the bottom of the matter and they will give the landowner an opportunity to provide information he has that shows the land is his. Even if it were private land, the creation of the bund would have been beneficial to all. Cllr. David Huxtable (SCC) said he thought it best to await further developments, as legal steps are being considered by the County council.

1428 County/District Councillors' Report.

County Councillors Report: - David Huxtable produced his April County Council report:-

a. Remote Council meetings.

Central Government announced on 25th March that the Coronavirus regulations allowing remote council meetings would not be extended beyond 6th May 2021,

which means that any meetings scheduled for 7th May or later will have to be held in public. There is a legal challenge from Hertfordshire CC but this will not be heard until late April.

b. Easing of Covid restrictions.

The road map out of lock down is now proceeding.

c. Covid infection rates.

As of 1st April confirmed cases of Covid in Somerset were 19,982 (up from 18,890 on 28th February). Covid attributable deaths 787 (722). The R value for Somerset is between 0.7 and 0.9.

It is vitally important to remember, even those who have had a jab, to observe **Hands – Face – Space**
And to ventilate indoor areas at all times.

d. Somerset Coronavirus Support Helpline.

A single phone number continues to be available for anyone in Somerset who needs Coronavirus related support: -

0330 790 6275 – Open seven days a week from 8am to 6pm.

e. Somerset Medal.

This is designed to say a heartfelt thank-you to the best of the best that have really gone beyond the call of duty during the Pandemic. To nominate someone who has really made a difference to your community please submit an email with a maximum of 250 words, providing the nominees name and location and describe why they deserve a medal, to: -

Democratic.Services2@somerset.gov.uk

And put “Somerset Medal Nomination” in the subject field. Nominations close on 23d April with inaugural Somerset Medal award winners awarded on Somerset Day, 11th May 2021.

District Councillors report: - None.

1429 Financial Matters.

Three cheques to issue: -

No 483 £173.47 payee CN Fry (April net salary).
No 484 £90.00 “ HMRC (paye Jan/Feb/Mar).
No 485 £257.60 “Zurich Municipal (insurance 2021/2022).

End of year accounting procedures – Annual Governance Statement 2020/2021 to be adopted. Following a discussion a motion to adopt this annual document was proposed by Brian Lishman and seconded by Hugh Gange-Harris. All in favour.

1430 Planning – No new applications.

a. Reference: 46/21/00002

Type: Notice of Proposed Agricultural Development.

Location: Agricultural building on land at, Moor Lane, Stawell, Bridgwater TA7 9AA.

Proposal: Application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed erection of an agricultural building extension.

Applicant: Mr and Mrs Hooper.

Decision: Formal Application Not Required.

Details of this were not sent to the Clerk, he simply picked it up from the weekly list of application approvals, where it appeared with the decision.

It is felt this was in effect a technical enquiry rather than something which needed consultation.

b. Possible planning breaches at Sutton Mallet

A possible breach of planning regulations was reported, involving the (permanent) installation of a residential mobile home (complete with green wooden cladding) sited to the immediate rear of Dairy House Farm House, Sutton Mallet, Bridgwater TA7 9AT.

The Clerk has visited the site and the installation causes considerable loss of privacy to the householders of the farm house.

Additionally, a mobile home removed from the Parchey area of Chedzoy (following planning enforcement involvement) has been moved to Sutton Mallet somewhere near Dairy House Farm.

The Clerk was asked to advise the SDC planning enforcement team appropriately.

1431 Correspondence: -

a. Covid restrictions easing.

The road map out of lock-down is progressing.

b. Sparkling Sedgemoor.

Sedgemoor's Clean Surroundings and Parks teams are out and about, sprucing up the District for spring, so the residents can enjoy the outside as and when government guidelines permit.

c. Local Government Reorganisation Event report.

The Clerk reported on the "zoom" meeting he took part in last week on the unitary reorganisation proposals for Somerset. He said that the "status quo" is not an option, and that in autumn 2020 when the Secretary of State invited the district councils of the county to submit their proposals for unitary reorganisation, it is now for either the SCC's "One Somerset" or the district councils' "Stronger Somerset", when the consultation period has run its course (end date 19th April).

a. **One Somerset:** - this involves just one unitary authority covering the whole county.

b. **Stronger Somerset:** - this involves two unitary authorities, east and west Somerset together two trusts to run Children's and Adult Social Care.

Although Parish Councils are not being specifically consulted, Brian Lishman

confirmed they can make representation. Following a discussion it was decided that the Chairman should draft comments in support of the “Stronger Somerset”, for the Clerk to post on line before the end of the consultation period.

The submission comments were as follows: -

“The Parish Council of Stawell wishes to express its strong support for the option of two unitary authorities to replace the present structure of four District councils and the County Council – the “Stronger Somerset” option.

We feel that this is the option that represents the wishes of our parishioners, gleaned by conversation but not by any official vote. We feel that it is vitally important that the views of everybody within the area be taken account of by the Secretary of State in arriving at his decision, a ruling that will effect them all.

The proposed boundary between west and east is one that, is also the boundary between the two policing areas covered by the Avon and Somerset Police Authority and also that between different Trusts of the NHS. The council feels that this structure will lead to a feeling of more local control of decisions that will affect everybody and as such will provide a greater understanding of our needs and wishes and make for greater ease if we wish to consult over any matters.

In this area of Somerset we have a strong affinity with the area proposed for West Somerset but much less so with the area proposed for East Somerset and we feel that to be represented by just one unitary authority would lead to decisions being taken that would not necessarily represent our needs and wishes. The areas of proposed east and west Somerset are two very different areas and we would feel much more remote from the decision making.

The two current local authority areas covered by the proposed West Somerset already work closely together in some areas and we feel that this option would lead to less disruption and change and be more efficient.

The proposed areas of responsibility to be covered by Trusts for the whole of Somerset in the Stronger Somerset plan we feel would be better handled by this structure than by a unitary authority as demonstrated by areas covered by this way of operation. To be covered directly by a council does not seem to have worked in the past, being areas that have shown poor performance under the current county council.

In practice we feel the Stronger Somerset proposal will, in the end lead to a much greater cost saving and be more workable and efficient than the current situation.

In summary we feel: -

1. Strongly that the Stronger Somerset option is the preferred and best option.
2. That it is vital that the work of each Somerset resident be taken into account by the Secretary of State in making his decision.
3. That the Stronger Somerset option is more workable and in the end will lead to greater efficiency and cost saving and represent more local control.”

1432 Matters for report and items for the next meeting: - None.

1433 Any other business and Date of the next meeting: -

Any other business: -

a. Waste bins.

Simon Thomas sent an email suggesting the Parish Council purchase and install two waste bins – one for each parish. We understand that the Somerset Waste Partnership will service the bins at no charge to the parish council.

Following a discussion all were in favour and the Clerk was asked to make the appropriate arrangements. An appropriate "No Dog Waste" sticker should prevent those sort of problems.

b. "Unlocking" the village Hall.

Simon Thomas (Chairman of the village hall committee) assures us all that he will ensure Covid rules are adhered to, social distancing, sanitiser etc. also including "Track and Trace" records as appropriate.

c. Dog bins.

Cllr. Stuart Kingham (SDC) has confirmed that SDC played no part in the installation of dog bins in Moorlinch.

d. HRH Prince Philip – Duke of Edinburgh.

The Clerk had previously suggested the idea of sending a loyal message of condolence to HM the Queen, following the sad death of Prince Philip. This had been agreed by all and the Clerk has posted the following message on the Royal web page: -

"I should be grateful if you would accept the heartfelt condolences of the Stawell Parish Council on the sad occasion of the death of HRH Prince Philip – Duke of Edinburgh.

The whole Royal family are in our thoughts and prayers at this time of sadness and grief"

Date of next meeting Monday 10th May 2021 which will include the annual meeting.

There being no other business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.52 pm.