

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STAWELL PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 6th DECEMBER 2021
IN THE VILLAGE HALL AT 7.00 PM.**

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

Also present: - Cllrs. David Huxtable (SCC) and Stuart Kingham (SDC).

In attendance: - The Clerk (Chris Fry) and eight members of the public.

1501. Apologies: - Cllrs. Rod Conaway and Simon Thomas.

1502. Declarations of Interest: - none.

1503. Minutes of the previous meeting of 1st November 2021 were taken as read, agreed and signed.

1504. Matters arising from the minutes: -

a. Ownership of the road at Spring Hill in Sutton Mallet.

The Clerk reported that he had received a copy of the Spring Hill road plan from SCC Highways, which indicates the section of the road that is under SCC ownership.

A discussion took place in which the residents of Spring Hill Farm said that they have received no written confirmation and they added that ownership of the road has always been a grey area that needed some clarification. The Chairman said that he thought SCC Highways would have clarified the position to the residents (not forgetting that they have no internet access).

David Huxtable (SCC) kindly agreed to ask SCC Highways to send a recorded delivery letter to them.

b. Wood Lane potholes.

The Clerk read aloud an informative email from a Wood Lane resident which pointed out that he considered the potholes in the lane to be in their best condition in 22 years, even though the volume and speed of traffic using the lane has greatly increased.

He agreed that it is up to the residents to make their own collective arrangements to rectify the pothole problem, and he added that he understands the lane to be a definitive path with vehicle access being limited to access only.

Parking at the Wood Lane/Stawell Road junction area continues to be problematic and he feels this problem could be improved if the give way lines were painted in the correct place ie from the drop in the pavement across to the bollard in front of the wall of Leap Year Cottage.

1505. County/District Councillor's reports: -

County Councillor: -David Huxtable reported as follows: -

- a. **Ford Lane depth marker post** – a work in progress.
- b. **Local bus services.**

SCC has applied for £163 million of Central Government funding to be used to improve the county's bus network services.

c. Unitary Authority elections.

The Government has decided that the initial elections to the new unitary authority will take place in May 2022.

District Councillor's report: - Stuart Kingham reported as follows: -

a. Gravity site in Puriton.

SDC is currently holding a formal consultation in the local community for a Local Development Order for the Gravity Enterprise Zone at the former Royal Ordinance factory in Puriton. This will be a positive planning tool which will be used to support investment and bring forward the site's transformation and deliver significant numbers of high quality and skilled jobs for the local area.

At 7.23 the Chairman suspended the meeting to allow public participation and discussion.

The following matters were brought up: -

a. Dog walkers at Spring Lane in Sutton Mallet.

The problem of dog walkers leaving dog dirt, either in or out of plastic bags, together with them letting their dogs off the leads (on occasion representing a danger to both grazing livestock and sheep), was discussed.

The Chairman reminded the Clerk to arrange appropriate warning signage for erection in the area.

b. Possible Planning Breached in Crengre Lane Stawell.

There was considerable concern voiced by several parishioners present. A discussion took place and the Clerk reported that he had sent an email to the SDC enforcement team asking them to get in contact with the Chairman as he wished to give them full details of the situation here. The Chairman duly confirmed that he had received a call from them and all details have been passed on, and now matters were in their hands.

It was reported that recent activity at the site was likely to have a detrimental effect on the drainage efficiency as well as creating privacy issues in the locality.

The Clerk was asked to email the SDC enforcement team to advise them of the considerable disquiet there is in the parish about this matter.

c. Rubbish deposited at the Ford Lane garage site in Stawell.

A discussion was held on this ongoing problem, and it was reported that the offending resident may have been given a period of time to clear the area of the rubbish, or face a possible court order or even risk his tenancy being terminated by Homes in Sedgemoor.

The Chairman resumed the meeting at 7.40 pm.

1506. Financial matters.

Four cheques to issue: -

No 505 £346.54 payee CN Fry (December/January net salary).

No 506 £88.43 " " (expenses).

No 507 £47.50 " DM Payroll Services (payroll second half 2021/2022).

No 508 £130.00 " HMRC (paye Oct/Nov/Dec).

a. Precept setting exercise 2022/2023.

The Chairman has agreed with the Chairman of the village hall committee that the financial support given by the Parish Council should be a nominal £50 for 2022/2023. This is taking account of the substantial support that village halls have received from Central Government during the Covid-19 period.

The Clerk conducted a line by line examination of the projected income and expenditure for 2022/2023, based on the precept being levied at £4500 (down from £4950 for the current year). Projected expenditure totals £4385, giving a modest uplift to projected reserves at the 2022/2023 year end of £115, making total reserves at that time some £1838.

The Chairman made reference to the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in 2022, and said any support given could be met from reserves.

A motion to set the 2022/2023 Precept at £4500 was proposed by Hugh Gange-Harris and seconded by Linda Osborn and agreed unanimously.

1507. Planning: - no new applications.

a. Possible Planning Breaches at Crengre Lane in Stawell.

This has already been covered (see above).

1508. Correspondence.

a. Disruption caused by Open Reach during recent fibre cable laying in Sutton Mallet.

The Chairman opened this discussion by reporting that he had received many complaints from parishioners about the unnecessarily obstructive and disruptive manner in which the recent fibre cable laying exercise was carried out by Open Reach in Sutton Mallet. He said the team handling the operation appeared to have no means of alleviating road use. The situation in Sutton Mallet, with there being only single lane entry points into the village, led to a generally chaotic situation for much of the time.

The team that cleared the telegraph poles ahead of the cable installation, dumped vegetation from both the poles and hedgerows (where wholesale clearance and unnecessarily significant breaches in hedges were created), into drainage outfall ditches, with girdles being blocked. An undertaking given to the Chairman (when he queried their method of working), to return and clear out the ditch near to his farm, had not yet materialised.

Following a discussion the Clerk was asked to write to Open Reach and express the Parish Council's frustration with all the unnecessary problems caused, in the strongest possible terms, also writing to SCC Highways and express the wish that any future such activities are conducted by properly trained, competent and sympathetic contractors.

b. Somerset Waste Partnership Festive Collections 2021/2022 and the Launch of "Recycle More" in February/March 2022.

Details of the festive collection date changes have been received and posted on the web.

"Recycle more" – now successfully up and running in Taunton Deane, Mendip and South Somerset, is due to be rolled out in Sedgemoor and West Somerset in February/early March 2022.

For the latest news and updates – check: -

www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/recyclemore

c. Clerk's and Council's magazine.

The latest edition has been received.

1509. Matters for report and items for next meeting – none.

1510. Any Other Business and Date of Next Meeting.

Any other business.

a. Recent filming work in Sutton Mallet.

Considerable inconvenience seems to have been caused to parishioners during the recent filming exercise in Sutton Mallet. There have been reports of vehicles speeding around the village, and the Chairman is looking into the possible unauthorised trespass into the churchyard.

b. Hedgerow Coppicing on the Cossington Road.

Several complaints received by the Chairman about the alleged destruction of the hedgerow here seem to have been somewhat misunderstood. This is, in fact, a re-coppicing exercise and the hedgerow will sprout and become more substantial and form a stock-proof field boundary in due course, thereby creating an improvement to the environment.

There being no other business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.07 pm.

Date of the next regular meeting Monday 7th February 2022.