



## MINUTES OF HIGH HAM PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

HELD on ZOOM

ON TUESDAY 27<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2021

Present: David Vigar (Chairman), Chris Palmer, Amanda Chuter, John Vigar, Rob Webb, Andy Davidson, Clare Paul (County Councillor), V Young (Clerk).

Approx: 5 parishioners

Meeting opened at 7.30pm.

Amanda Chuter chaired

**1) Apologies** Gerard Tucker (District Councillor), Paul Brunsdon. There were no declarations of interest.

**2) Date of Next Meeting** - An additional meeting would take place on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2021 to confirm appointments and the election of chairman and approval of the accounts.

Dave Vigar chaired remainder of meeting.

**3) Declarations of Interest** – None

### **4) Representatives, Appointments and Policies for the following year**

All representatives were thanked for their work over the last year and the following appointments were made;

Chairman/Vice-chairman – Elect on 4<sup>th</sup> May Meeting

Planning Officer – Chris Palmer

Parish Lengthsman Liaison – Amanda Chuter

Village Hall Representative – Rob Webb

Tree Warden – Paul Brunsdon

Playing Field Committee Ratification – Paul Brunsdon, Rob Webb, Nancy Green, Charlotte Bean, Marianne Matthews, Peter Browne

Acknowledgement of CLT – It was noted that this was an entity in its own right. Amanda Chuter and Dave Vigar were board members.

High Ham Primary School Representative – Suggested that this should continue with Chris Palmer as the link via governors and Rob Webb as an additional contact.

Hext Almhouse Trust – Jane Vigar.

Footpath Officer – Amanda Chuter and Nick Fear

Appointment of Internal Auditor for the coming year – Mike Tottle

Millennium Wood Management Team ratification - Amanda Chuter, Dave Vigar, Roger Powell, Tim Horton and Paul Brunsdon.

Adoption of Code of Conduct, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations – These were to continue and would be reviewed if necessary and if there were any updated models by the Finance Working Party.

Finance Working Party – Dave Vigar (Chairman), Amanda Chuter (Vice-Chairman), Andy Davidson.

Environmental spokesperson – Rob Webb

Abatoir Liaison (HGV route) – Dave Vigar

Emergency Plan – Chris Palmer

SIDS (speed indicator devices) – Dave Vigar and Amanda Chuter

Highways – Andy Davidson

Cemetery – John Vigar

### **5) County & District Councillor Reports**

District Council - The period of national mourning had delayed some meetings such as the area north meeting. There were upcoming meetings regarding the proposals for local government reformation. Both the county case for 'One Somerset' and the District Council case for 'Stronger Somerset' had been sent to the Secretary of State for review. The CEO of the District Council was leaving. The 'Recycle More' initiative was to be rolled out in South Somerset from June.

County Council – The County Council had additional pressures on resources to fulfil statutory duties and the redeployment of staff to help at vaccination centres across the county. The annual full council meeting was to be on 5<sup>th</sup> May. District Council meeting would be on 30<sup>th</sup> April – public attendance by zoom.



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It was noted that the Parish Council had been invited to send a representative to a meeting regarding the reformation of the County/District Councils. It was felt that this had been rather an unsatisfactory meeting. Most of the information was 'ifs', with very little confirmed information. The meeting had been very late in the process of the re-organisation and it felt entirely wrong to be pushing ahead with consultation and changes at the same time as the pandemic restrictions.

It was noted that the performance of the planning enforcement system at the district council seemed less than satisfactory.

**6) Approval of Minutes** - The minutes of the meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2021 were held over for approval until the 4<sup>th</sup> May 2021 meeting.

### **7) Matters arising/Items for Discussion**

**Highways** – The surface deterioration at the top of the hill into High Ham was noted and would be reported.

The issue of cars parking at the top of the hill into High Ham, often double parked, had been an issue previously reported. The Parish Council had been informed that individuals should contact 101 due to the particular danger at this place, with children on the way to school and the sharp bend at the top of the road. The Parish Council would write to the police again. It was suggested that double yellow lines might be an option, but that this also may just displace the problem to another place in the village. One letter was to be sent to the police contact and a request be made for PCSO presence at the School and also at the site of the dangerous parking at the top of the hill. A letter was also to be sent to the School for the Head to circulate. John Woodman at the County Council was also to be contacted with regard to the parking issues in High Ham.

**Parish Lengthsman** - Howe Tree Surgery (Craig Howe) is contracted March '21-March '22. Employed 455 hours, over 43 weeks/65 days

April tasks: work included vegetation management in the usual locations: MW, Cemetery, including the verge by the junction on Picts Hill with the notice board. It has been strimmed and the hedge cleared where it was encroaching onto the notice board and the directional signs.

May work to include: MW pond clearance of invasive Parrot Weed 25th May

#### **Millennium Wood**

Mowing of rides.

Future work: Clearance of invasive Parrot Weed: work party 25th May  
Bramble bashing would be required soon.

#### **Volunteer Footpath Strimmer**

Nick Fear will be starting clearing stiles/gates, priority paths in May.

#### **Tree Planting**

The PC received a donation of native tree whips left-over from the Re-imaging the Levels (RtL) project thanks to Phil Stone - he designed and enabled the planting of Millennium Wood in 2000.

Whips planted in Millennium Wood, outside the cemetery, and Playing Field.

#### **Cemetery**

Mowing and strimming completed by Craig and Rachael Howe - Rachael is now a member of the Howe Tree Surgery team.

**Website:** in addition to monthly documents added to PC area by Vicky, updates have continued for the following pages: MW, Lengthsman, Events, Book Club, High Ham Nature, and a new page added for the BT boxes.

**Any other matters arising – playing fields/village hall/phone boxes.**



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The Village Hall agm was on 17<sup>th</sup> May and after that it may be clearer how/when it could be booked for Parish Council meetings in light of the requirements of the covid legislation.

Work on the phone boxes had started. Roger Powell thanked for his work painting the High Ham box and Geoff Webb for the shelving. The work was of high quality. Refurbishment of the kiosk on The Green was completed at the start of April. The Exchange Box had already seen many visits since opening - book stock from the church has now been added. Spare stock is available for the Low Ham and Henley kiosks. Low Ham kiosk is next to be refurbished. Work was starting with the Low Ham box with collecting ideas. A defibrillator was being considered as a possibility for the Henley phonebox.

With regards to the Playing Fields Pavillion work had started on the foundations, and had been inspected and passed. This meant that the car park could be open again since work access was no longer required.

Tree planing as part of the re-imagining the levels had taken place. Some of the trees had gone in Millennium Wood, Cemetery and Playing Fields.

There was a query regarding an overhanging hedge opposite the school making it difficult to use the full highway. It had been cut back previously but not severely enough. Rob Webb would ask if it could be cut back.

### **8) Correspondence**

The following had been received

#### **Letter re. Beer and Aller Woods - Somerset Wildlife Trust - Dogs on leads**

*Mark Green Somerset Wildlife Trust*

*We have seen a significant increase on dog walking on all of our more accessible nature reserves since the start of Covid restrictions. Now that Spring is here and there is a greatly increased chance of uncontrolled dogs disturbing wildlife and grazing livestock I am planning to display more signs asking that dogs be kept under effective control or on a lead. However, I'm about a month behind on my work programme, so it may take me a while to get notices up on all my reserves.*

*Have you noticed a decrease in the numbers of dogs running around following the display of your signs at the Millennium Wood?*

#### **Turn Hill NT - Fires**

*Philip Bruss, Area Ranger*

*Somerset Coast & Countryside - Mid-Somerset (Polden, Coast & Levels*

Thanks for taking the time to register your concerns about the site.

As you correctly point out, misuse of our sites has increased dramatically over the last year and Turn Hill has been no exception. The site is a SSSI, so the lighting of fires is a breach of this legislation as well as our bylaws. Technically the fires do constitute criminal damage, so we would suggest contacting the police on 101 if fires are known to be underway. In our experience, those lighting fires will certainly have seen the existing signs but elected not to obey them, so increasing the prominence of these is unlikely to have a significant effect, indeed we often speak to people (at other sites) who are camped with a fire a matter of metres from prominent signage.

We will endeavour to check on Turn Hill soon to assess the damage. Thankyou for you message.

**Cemetery Rates** - The Parish Council had been asked to complete a rates 'valuation' return based on acreage required for burials for future years. The clerk and John Vigar had completed it to the best of their knowledge and using best estimates as to the future.

### **9) Planning Applications for Consideration**

21/00581/FUL – Change of use of land and installation of a manege for personal turnout and riding use.

Location: Part of Land Opposite Keepers Cottage, Church View, Low Ham

The Parish Council unanimously raised no objections to this application but did feel that it should be kept for daylight use only- as currently shown.

21/00923/NMA – Land North of Long Street – This application had been refused as it will be coming in as a S73 amendment application instead.

21/01065/NMA - Whilst the Parish Council are not consulted on NMA applications this was just to update the Council that this application had been withdrawn. It was for some minor amendments only.



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**10) Planning Applications Decided** - None

**11) Summary of meetings attended**

The levels climate forum had been attended and was about reducing carbon levels on the levels. The erosion of field margins and the effect of this had been discussed.

**12) Financial**

The following payments were authorised.

Clerk wages and expenses - £330.54

Parish Lengthsman - £773.51 – This now included VAT

Tandem – Re Playing Fields - £1058.03

Amanda Chuter – phone box expenses £16.00

**13) Date of Next Meeting**

The Date of the next meeting was set as Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> May 2021 to at 7.30pm

The meeting closed at 21.50hrs.