



## **LONG SUTTON PARISH COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the Ordinary meeting of the parish council held on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> January 2025 at 7.30pm**

**Present:** Councillors Cox (Chairman), Rousell (Vice Chairman), Coombes, Pritchard, Rickards, Tulk & Wielgus.

**Members of the Public: 5**

**Somerset Councillors:** Cllr Tim Kerley, Cllr Page sent apologies.

The meeting started at 7.30pm.

#### **Public Questions and Observations**

None

#### **Somerset Councillors Report**

Cllr Kerley said that there was very little to report although to date the budget position looks just as bad for the coming year as it was last year. There was a discussion about the devolution of services and the budget challenges it presents for parish councils, and the lack of information about what will be devolved. He explained that devolution works in urban areas - it is easier for towns to take on devolved services and assets as they usually have existing permanent staff and infrastructure, but rural parishes cannot do the same and would require funding. Other comments were that locally parish councils could be better placed to take on certain services, but when council tax bills remain the same and then precepts must rise to cover certain statutory services that should be provided by county, it leaves all parties in a very difficult position.

Public session closed at 7.42pm & the meeting opened at 7.42pm

### **MINUTES**

#### **24/132: Apologies for absence (LGA 1972 s85(1)).**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Ward & Greenfield.

It was RESOLVED to receive and approve the apologies and reasons submitted.

#### **24/133: Declarations of Interest.**

Cllr Wielgus declared a personal interest in item 24/137.



**24/134: Minutes of the last meetings held on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2024 (LGA 1972sch12 para 41(1)).**

To receive and approve the [minutes of the meeting](#) held on 3<sup>rd</sup> December as a true and accurate record of that meeting.

It was RESOLVED to agree the minutes of the meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2024 as a true & correct record of the meeting. The Chairman duly signed the minutes.

Matters Arising

The WW1 silhouettes hadn't been ordered yet as the clerk was unsure where they could be delivered. The chair offered to receive them & the clerk will order them as agreed.

**24/135: Finance**

- a. To approve the accounts for payment in January 2025.

It was RESOLVED to approve the accounts for payment for January 2025.

- b. To view and approve the bank reconciliation to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2024.

It was RESOLVED to approve the bank reconciliations to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2024 as circulated.

- c. To note and approve the spend to budget to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2024.

It was RESOLVED to agree the spend to budget to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2024 as circulated.

- d. To discuss the draft budget for 2025/'26.

The Chair provided a summary of the draft budget and discussions centred around 3 possible precept options. Having increased the precept last year to pay for the improvements to the tennis courts and playground, some members wanted to decrease the precept this year. Others felt it was important to allow for the devolved services such as gully clearing & bin emptying and do some flood alleviation works around the village. Cllr Wielgus proposed, and Cllr Roussel seconded the motion to maintain the precept at last year's level of £53,120. This was not carried. Cllr Coombes then proposed the second option of £50,000 which was seconded by Cllr Pritchard and carried by a 6-1 vote.

- e. The formal precept request for 2025/'26 of £50,000 was approved and the clerk was asked to submit the request before the deadline of 31<sup>st</sup> January.

**24/136: Somerset Council - Enhanced Highways Maintenance Scheme Pilot.**

The clerk summarised some information provided by Kier / Somerset Council about the location and cleaning cycle of gullies in the parish. Members were still keen to engage a day's services from Kier and the clerk was asked to arrange an in-person meeting with the chair to decide on the most appropriate locations in various parts of the village.



### **24/137: Knole Flooding**

*The chairman invited members of the public to contribute in accordance with Standing Order 3(h): The chair of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given.*

- a. Martin Minogue provided an update on the grant application to the SRA for the pipe work between Grove Lane and Southmead Lane, as discussed previously. He again expressed the group's appreciation for the PC's support so far. They are awaiting a final permission from the drainage board for a wall at the upstream end to solidify the entrance to the pipe and will liaise with the clerk as soon as the final information is received. They are still well within the deadline for applications of 25<sup>th</sup> February.

David Crawshaw then spoke about two further projects at Knole now merged into one. The raising of bridges to allow flood water to flow through as previously discussed and other mitigation measures such as leaky dams and ponds to delay the flow of water. The total cost is now approximately £45k for the bridge work & £20-25k for the other work. A Heritage Lottery fund is for a maximum of £250k. An initial expression of interest can be submitted and would give an indication of likely success and whether to proceed further and the group would like to do that as soon as possible. He again asked the PC to consider making the application as the other options to form a limited company or a charity are not desirable.

Members still had some concerns about the legality of receiving funds to carry out work on private property. The clerk & Cllr Coombes are seeking advice which wasn't available at the time of the meeting.

It was RESOLVED to continue to support the grant application to the SRA – the clerk to work with Martin Minogue. It was further agreed to support the Heritage Lottery fund expression of interest in the first instance whilst further investigating the legality issues. The clerk, Cllr Coombes and David Crawshaw will liaise on this matter.

- b. Other flooding issues

The issue of flooding on Crouds Lane to Shute Lane had been raised at the previous meeting and Cllr Tulk confirmed that the work will be carried out once the necessary machinery is back in the village.

Cllr Wielgus asked if a group should be formed to deal with flooding issues in Long Sutton and it was agreed that the clerk will include the topic in the next newsletter.

### **24/138: Village Hall and Recreation Ground**

Cllr Cox reported that the committee had met the previous evening, and the main issues were power cuts and complaints by users about the AV technology. An electrician has disconnected the solar panels inverter, and a full electrical safety check will be carried out as part of the works to resolve the issue. The committee are also researching new AV equipment. He confirmed the new Wi-Fi contract costing half the previous one is now in place.

Leading into the next agenda item, he confirmed that the VH were successful in their applications to various groups for the pavilion refurbishment and will be setting up a Just Giving page with the Cricket Club in order to claim Gift Aid.



#### **24/139: Pavilion Refurbishment**

Cllr Cox reported that the deposit has now been paid for the modular building (Spacemaker). The required groundworks are being done for free by Nick Reed Construction and the main works are due to start on 1<sup>st</sup> February. The once-used shipping container is being donated & will arrive soon.

#### **24/140: Footpath Modification Orders**

Members noted the content of the orders and decided not to comment.

#### **24/141: Safeguarding Policy**

All members were satisfied with the draft that was circulated previously by the clerk.

It was RESOLVED to adopt the policy.

#### **24/142: Environment Group**

Cllr Rickards reported that the fantastic owl map is currently being displayed in the Village Hall. The owl box building workshop is postponed until February. Cameras have been set up in the Ilchester Lane field to further add to the survey which has already discovered the presence of newts. Cllr Wielgus confirmed that many offers of help have been received from various organisations & they will prepare a report for the next PC meeting with a plan for community involvement. Some tree planting will take place before March, but the main efforts will be starting then.

#### **24/143: Communication: website and e-newsletter**

- a. Members agreed that the next newsletter should include the following matters: Village Hall Committee call for new members; the go ahead for the Pavilion project; “Business of the Month” – café/farm shop; Environment Group update; a call for other flood alleviation projects.
- b. Members wanted to communicate to residents the reduction in the precept and a summary of PC achievements and responsibilities.

#### **24/144: Representative reports from councillors.**

- a. Community Safety (including the monthly crime statistics from Police.uk and the SID - Speed Indicator Device).

Cllr Roussell reported that there had been 5 crimes in the local area in October. The SID is currently elsewhere & there has been no further communication with the school about flashing lights.



- b. Lengthsman – Cllr Cox is asking Craig to deal with clearing grips – gullies that are cut into the verge.
- c. Highways and Footpaths – Cllr Pritchard said that there was nothing to report this month.

#### **24/145: Other correspondence not previously distributed & Councillors' Comments**

- Licensing Variation – The Lime Kiln Inn, Knole

Residents have been informed of how to make a representation. Members decided not to comment.

- Tour of Wessex cycle event – 24<sup>th</sup> May 2025. Event details noted.
- Access to Parish Online – members agreed to grant permission for all users to have login details. The clerk to confirm details.
- Clerk's SLCC membership – members agreed to pay the membership fee, which will be shared with the other parish council where the clerk works.
- DD payment request for IT support – members agreed to the clerk setting up direct debits for the regular payments where appropriate.

#### **24/146: Date of next meeting.**

There will be an Additional Planning Meeting on **Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2025 at 7.30pm** in the Village Hall.

The next Parish Council meeting will take place on **Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> February 2025, at 7.30pm in the Committee Room of the Village Hall.**

#### **24/147: Agenda items for the next meeting.**

Risk register

Press and Media Policy review with additional section covering social media (BW to provide?)

Complaints policy review.

Meeting closed at 9.20pm

**END OF MINUTES**

