

ASH PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Julie Ferguson. Chilthorne Knapp, Chilthorne Domer, Yeovil, BA22 8QZ

Tel: 07783 475200

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Minutes of a Meeting of Ash Parish Council held on Monday 7 November 2022 at 19:00hrs

Present – Councillors (Cllrs)

Lesley Andrew, Antoinette Groves, Tim Groves, Caz Halfhide (Chair), Lily Humby

In attendance:

J Ferguson – Parish Clerk, County Cllr John Bailey and 4 members of the public.

County & District Councillors Reports.

County Cllr Bailey had provided a written report that had been circulated by email and asked the Parish Council to give consideration to the message contained in the recent letter from the leader of Somerset County Council, Bill Revans, explaining the budgetary constraints and projected overspend that the County Council are expecting in the next financial year. Parish Councils were being asked to take these and other key issues into consideration when setting their budgets and submitting their precept requests in January 2023.

' We cannot be definitive at this stage about the impact of the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) process, with the Chancellor's statement on government spending delayed yet again, and we don't yet know the outcome of the work to devolve assets and services to local communities. We believe, however, it is prudent for your organisation to consider how it can take steps to ensure it is financially resilient in the light of the new Somerset Council's profound budget challenges and difficult decisions that may need to be taken.'

(extract from Letter to all City, Town and Parish Councils from the leader of Somerset County Council, Bill Revans – 1st November 2022)

Public Open Session

A member of the public asked the Parish Council to consider arranging CPR training for members of the public who were interested in learning this vital life saving skill. Cllr Humby agreed to look into what she might be able to arrange, being qualified to carry out the training.

19:30 – Meeting opened

22/143 Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Steve Davey due to work commitments.

22/144 Declarations of interests

Cllr A Groves declared an interest in item 8a and 8c (22/150 and 22/152), Cllr T Groves declared an interest in item 8a and 8f (22/150 and 22/155).

22/145 To approve the minutes of the previous meeting

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Council Meeting held on Monday 3rd October 2022 were approved and signed as a correct record.

22/146 Matter to report from a previous meeting

Cllr Halfhide gave an update on the consecration of the cemetery, explaining that the process was becoming complicated and recommended that the Cemetery Committee (once agreed later in the meeting) would need to meet to agree the consecration process and all associated costs and Cemetery rules.

Cllr Halfhide reported that she had spoken to a local farmer who was employing contractors that were driving tractors through the village. He had agreed to speak to the drivers to ask them to be more considerate, but explained that the tractors were limited to 30mph and all cabs were fitted with hands-free Bluetooth capability. Cllr Halfhide agreed to be a liaison for parishioners and the farming business and asked for anyone witnessing any unacceptable behaviour from operators to note down a description of the driver and/or vehicle registration number. The farmer agreed to speak to any individuals identified.

Cllr A Groves reported that the grit bin had been purchased, installed and was ready for use. It was agreed that Cllr A Groves could purchase a replacement shovel.

ACTION: Cllr A Groves

Chairman

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Cllr Halfhide reported that SSDC pest control had discovered the source of the vermin infestation in the unoccupied property on Main Street, that being a Wessex Water owned pipe. They had put down measures to control the vermin and the situation was being monitored.

Cllr A Groves reported that several of the Jubilee mugs had been purchased.

22/147 To co-opt members to the Parish Council

RESOLVED: Rebecca Gray was proposed, seconded and duly elected on to the Parish Council. She signed the declaration of Acceptance of Office, agreed to provide the Register of Interests within 28 days and took a seat on the Parish Council.

ACTION: Cllr Gray

22/148 Planning decisions report – None.

Noted.

22/149 Planning applications – None.

Noted.

22/150 Finance – To approve the schedule of payments:

Ash Parish Council - Nov 22 Payments			
DATE	PAYEE	DETAIL	AMOUNT
07-Nov-22	STAFF	SALARIES	£ 893.75
07-Nov-22	STAFF	EXPENSES	£ 38.60
07-Nov-02	J FERGUSON	REIMBURSEMENT DEFIB PADS & STORAGE	£93.99
07-Nov-22	WATER2BUSINESS	PAVILION 5TH MAY-17 OCT22	£ 82.18
07-Nov-22	PINNACLE ACCOUNTANCY	PAYROLL FEE	£ 42.00
07-Nov-22	CAZ HALFHIDE	KEY CUTTING	£ 13.00
07-Nov-22	STEVE DAVEY	PAVILION HEATERS	£ 429.12
07-Nov-22	SSDC	RANGER SEPT 22	£ 192.07
07-Nov-22	A GROVES	POSTAGE	£ 1.45
07-Nov-22	ASH IN BLOOM	GRANT	£ 500.00
07-Nov-22	BIN SHOP	GRIT BIN (FOR REPORT)	£ 130.50
07-Nov-22	T GROVES	PLANNING FEE	£ 30.00
	TOTAL PAYMENTS NOV 22		£ 2,446.66

RESOLVED: To approve all payments totalling £2446.66

ACTION: Cllrs Davey and A Groves

22/151 Finance – To approve cashbook and bank reconciliation

The cashbook and bank reconciliation was not presented at this time.

22/152 Finance – To consider a grant request from Ash In Bloom for £500

RESOLVED: To approve a grant to Ash In Bloom for £500.

22/153 Finance – To consider the draft 2023-24 budget

All Cllrs agreed to look carefully at the draft budget and forward to Cllr Halfhide, for approval at the next meeting. Cllr A Groves agreed to obtain 3 quotes for grass cutting contract for the next year.

ACTION: All Cllrs

22/154 Finance – To approve a budget for the Christmas celebrations (Cllr A Groves)

It was agreed that no Parish Council funds were required for the Christmas celebrations this year, due to the generosity of individuals and local businesses offering their time, food and drink.

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22/155 Finance – To approve the Newsletter printing costs

Cllr A Groves had provided 4 quotes for the October 2022 edition of the village Newsletter printing costs.

RESOLVED: To approve Glen Prince to print 300 copies of the October 2022 village newsletter at a cost of £30.

ACTION: Cllr A Groves

22/156 Parish Council Matters – To agree members for a Biodiversity Committee

It was agreed that a committee was not what was required at this time, but a working group would be appointed instead.

RESOLVED: To agree to appoint Cllrs Andrew, A Groves and T Groves to a Biodiversity Working Group (BWG) to include 2 members of the public (not present at the meeting).

22/157 Parish Council Matters – To agree Terms of Reference (ToR) for a Biodiversity Committee

The ToRs had been circulated in advance of the meeting. It was agreed that a meeting would take place before the next Parish Council meeting and the Leader/Chair of the BWG would report back.

RESOLVED: To agree the Biodiversity Working Group Terms of Reference as presented.

ACTION: BWG

22/158 Parish Council Matters – To agree members for a Cemetery Committee (CC)

It was agreed that a committee was not what was required at this time, but a working group would be appointed instead.

RESOLVED: To agree to appoint Cllrs Davey, A Groves, T Groves and Halfhide to a Cemetery Working Group(CWG).

ACTION: CWG

22/159 Parish Council Matters - To consider and approve the Warm Space Project and grant application

The options for providing a Warm Space were being explored with consideration being given to extending the hours on days that the Post Office use the Pavilion. Suitable volunteers for manning the warm space would be needed and the grant application required a safeguarding policy to be adopted before it could be applied for. Cllrs agreed to continue investigating all options for a Warm Space.

RESOLVED: To apply for the Warm Space grant (£1000) from the Somerset Community Foundation.

ACTION: Cllr Halfhide

22/160 Parish Council Matters – To adopt a safeguarding policy

Cllr A Groves had prepared and circulated a safeguarding policy for everyone to consider and provide comments. Cllr Halfhide suggested that safeguarding training should also be completed and agreed to provide a link for some virtual free training that was provided by The Church of England. It was recommended that all Cllrs and volunteers helping with the provision of a Warm Space should receive the training.

RESOLVED: To adopt a Safeguarding Policy as presented.

ACTION: All Cllrs

22/161 Parish Council Matters – To consider granting permission for Gigaclear to install fibre broadband equipment on Ash PC land (to include associated works)

Cllr A Groves was concerned that the repair at the bottom of the concrete ramp accessway to the Pavilion might not be reinstated to the same standard and it was agreed that Cllr Davey should speak to his contact at Gigaclear to obtain such an agreement, but it was acknowledged that this probably wouldn't be enforceable and the PC should proceed to sign the agreement.

RESOLVED: To sign the agreement granting Gigaclear permission to install fibre broadband equipment on Ash PC land (to include associated works).

ACTION: Cllr Davey and Parish Clerk

22/162 Parish matters – To report on progress with parish bus shelters

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Cllr A Groves reported that SCC Highways had agreed to the two locations submitted for the two bus shelters, as requested by the Parish Council. The agreed locations being the corner of Burrough Street/Main Street and the corner of Witcombe Lane/Main Street. Quotes for the shelters and installation were being obtained and would be agreed at a future meeting.

ACTION: Cllr Groves

22/163 Cemetery

Cllr T Groves reported that he had contacted the contractor who had installed the fence around the new cemetery land and had agreed a repair for the broken post at a cost of £125 + VAT.

ACTION: Cllr T Groves

22/164 Highways, footpaths and Rights of Way (RoW)

Cllr T Groves had made contact with SCC RoW officer to understand the issue with the closed river bridge at the end of Milton Lane. The bridge had numerous problems due to age with potentially hidden structural faults meaning that the crossing was unlikely to be open in the near future and SCC were waiting on a report before anything could be progressed. He further reported that he would be attending the Rights Of Way Legislation Zoom presentation.

ACTION: Cllr T Groves

22/165 Clerk's report and correspondence

The following items of correspondence had been circulated by email:

- SSDC members briefings
- SALC LGA webinars – Councillor safety and online safety for councillors
- Warm spaces questionnaire – Response sent
- SALC health and wellbeing survey
- Covid 19 booster & flu vaccination programme
- Avian influenza outbreak
- St Margaret's Hospice newsletter
- Clarks Foundation Community grants
- Winter service snow ploughing local support/community resilience
- SWP briefings
- Somerset Bus Service – Bus service under threat
- Somerset emergency community contact
- SALC Rights of Way Legislation presentation – Cllr T Groves to attend
- CCS Community Buildings conference
- Somerset Wildlife Trust virtual event
- Letter from the Leader of Somerset County Council – Budget & precept
- New Model Councillor-Officer Protocol
- Letter from a resident, presented at the meeting asking for a muddy footpath to be made safe - Clerk to respond saying the PC would investigate ownership/responsibility

22/166 Items for the next agenda

- To approve the draft budget 2023-24

22/167 Date of next meeting – 5th December 2022

20:58 - Meeting closed

Chairman

Date