

## MILVERTON PARISH COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT VICTORIA ROOMS, MILVERTON ON MONDAY 4th MARCH 2024 at 7:00 pm

<b>Present</b>	R Burton (Chair)	M Dinning	G May
	P Chambers	J Hoyle	T Phelps
	A Dakowski	A Mather	J Townend

In attendance: Mr T Payne, Clerk to the Council  
SC Cllr G Wren  
Five members of the public

	<p><b>Public Questions</b> Comment was made on the footpath diversion at the site of the solar farm at Preston Farm. It was noted that the application documentation would provide details of any diversion.</p> <p><b>Reports from County Councillors</b> SC Cllr G Wren reported on the following: re the latest position on Somerset Council's finances, namely that the Government had refused the request to raise Council Tax by an additional 5%, though it did approve a Capitalisation Directive, thereby providing borrowings of £45 million, repayable over 21 years, which has enabled SC to present a balanced budget for 2024/25. However, a significant shortfall is already being projected for 2025/26; The state of the Wiveliscombe Road that suffered a partial collapse has deteriorated to the extent that remedial works are now a substantial engineering project. Whilst being urgent, it is competing with similar issues in Somerset though the impact on the safety of bus passengers is being highlighted (<i>A letter from the PC is to be written to Cllr G Wren expressing the PC's concerns with the length of time being suggested for the repair</i>); There is confusion around the recent announcement on a new bus timetable which was issued but then subsequently said to be only provisional. Clarification is being sought.</p>
1.	<p><b>Apologies for Absence</b> Apologies were received from Cllr C Mann and SC Cllr D Mansell.</p>
2.	<p><b>Declarations of Interest</b> None declared</p>
3.	<p><b>Minutes of the Ordinary meeting held on 5th February 2024</b> After minor typing corrections, the minutes were approved as circulated.</p>
4.	<p><b>Actions from previous meeting</b> - None</p>
5.	<p><b>Planning</b> <b>5.1 Consideration of Planning Applications for comments to SC</b> - 23/24/0003/LB <i>Various internal and external alterations at Chapel House, Fore Street, Milverton</i> Following discussion, it was resolved that the Parish Council support the application - 23/24/0004/LB <i>Various internal and external alterations at Little Carlton House, North Street, Milverton</i></p>

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	<p>Following discussion, it was resolved that the Parish Council support the application, but only conditionally in respect of there being obscured glazing in particular windows and suitable acoustic material being put in place where the proposed new studio is directly over Carlton House.</p> <p><b>5.2 Report on Planning Decisions and other Planning Matters</b>  Clerk reported that the recent applications re St Michael's Lodge and 3 and 4 Wood Terrace, Wood Street (works) had been approved by SC; The Class Q application in respect of barns at Higher Bickley Farm had been refused</p>
6.	<p><b>Flooding in Milverton and Preston Bowyer</b>  Chair reported a meeting attended by Chair, Cllr C Mann, SC Cllr G Wren and Anna Meares, SC Flood Risk Officer. There will be an overview report published in March 2024 without analysis, the report with analysis will be completed by July 2024, allowing the PC to engage with residents affected by the flooding to get feedback. The report will then be finalised by November 2024. SC is continuing to progress registering its ownership of the culvert, following which the Somerset Rivers Authority will be asked to finance the CCTV investigation and an improved grill by Woodbarton. Clerk to formally write to Cllr G Wren asking him to seek a summary of actions underway from the bodies involved and timescales for completion, also noting that the PC would be willing to consider contributing towards the costs</p>
7.	<p><b>Bus Service in Milverton and related issues</b>  A draft of the proposed new timetable had been received through Cllr D Mansell which was noted to be inconvenient for students returning from Taunton. Cllr J Townsend to draft a response on behalf of the PC. It was reported that since the £2 fare campaign was launched, bus usage had increased by 30% and it was hoped that this would continue, albeit that the ongoing closure of Wood Street is not helping passenger numbers in Milverton. The potential new Wiveliscombe to Wellington bus link is to be reviewed through the LCN.</p>
8.	<p><b>Consideration of Grant Applications</b>  It was confirmed that no grant requests had been received.</p>
9.	<p><b>Solar farm, Preston Farm</b>  Further to the planning application being approved, it was resolved that the offer of monies from the Community Fund by the applicants be accepted. It was further resolved that Chair and Cllr P Chambers enter discussions with Halse Parish Council in respect of the split of the Fund monies between the two parishes</p>
10.	<p><b>Unitary Authority</b>  <b>10.1 Update</b>  Chair reported that he and Cllr J Townsend had put themselves forward to be on the LCN Highways and Traffic Working Groups respectively. The next LCN meeting is in April.</p>
11.	<p><b>IT Review</b>  Clerk had circulated a draft report stating the current state of play, the considerations for making any changes and ball-park costs. In addition to addressing concerns on data security, the three topics to be determined are Google vs Microsoft platform, whether to move to a gov.uk domain and whether to set up dedicated email addresses for</p>

	<p>Councillors. After discussion it was agreed that subject to ascertaining the associated costs, moving to a gov.uk and getting dedicated emails would be the preferred option as being best practice.</p> <p>It was further agreed to set up a sub-group (comprising Chair, Clerk, Cllrs A Dakowski and T Phelps) to review options and report back to Council.</p>
<b>12.</b>	<p><b>Committee Reports</b></p> <p><b>12.1 Amenity Committee</b></p> <p>It was noted that the tree outside of the toilets had been pruned by persons unknown. It was agreed to take no immediate action and see how the tree responds.</p> <p>It was agreed that the Amenity Committee should engage with Somerset Council on the possibility of a joint funding approach for the drainage works in Jubilee Gardens.</p> <p><b>12.2 Emergency Planning Committee</b></p> <p>No matters to report</p> <p><b>12.3 Allotment Committee</b></p> <p>A Committee meeting is scheduled for Saturday 9th March at which the purchasing of various items (chippings, plot numbers and dog signs) are to be considered as well as considering the maximum size of greenhouse/polytunnels. It was agreed that Cllr J Townend become a member of the Allotment Committee</p> <p><b>12.4 Parish Plan Working Party</b></p> <p>Cllr J Townend confirmed that the Parish Council had agreed to be part of the Community Review Project through the Community Council for Somerset. A steering group from the village is to be established, via a notice in the magazine and it was agreed Cllr J Hoyle be a further PC representative. The process will involve a mentor from CCS as well as online training, putting together a parish survey by early Summer 2024. Assistance will then be given on the collation of results, with the aim that all aspects will be completed by the end of 2024.</p> <p><b>12.5 Traffic Issues Working Party</b></p> <p>No matters to report</p>
<b>13.</b>	<p><b>Roads and Footpaths</b></p> <p><b>13.1 Footpaths Monthly Report</b></p> <p>Cllr A Dakowski reported on a meeting with the SC Footpath Warden concerning the use of volunteers in maintaining footpaths solely in the village area, for which subsidised courses are available as well as the potential for equipment to be loaned out. It was agreed Cllr Dakowski ascertain from SC which footpaths this would involve to then allow a plan of how footpaths could be maintained between the volunteers, Somerset Council and a contractor engaged by the PC.</p> <p><b>13.2 Roads Monthly Report</b></p> <p>No significant changes to report on road issues.</p>
<b>14.</b>	<p><b>Airband High Speed broadband</b></p> <p>Clerk reported no further update re getting a meeting to discuss siting of poles</p>

15.	<p><b>Finance</b></p> <p><b>15.1 Schedule of Payments</b></p> <p>Payments to be paid online were noted as being approved:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">T Payne - Feb Clerk fee £1,102.32</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Claire's Cleaning - re toilet £310.00</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">12 Cloud - Payroll software cost re Jan - £6.00</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><u>DDs re January</u></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Google £18.40</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">EDF £11.00</p> <p>It was further noted that various contractual payments will be made prior to the year end to enable them to be paid in the correct financial year, as an aid to presentational and comparison purposes.</p> <p><b>15.2 Approval of contracts</b></p> <p>Clerk reported that he would be looking to agree new contracts for 2024/25 for toilet electricity, payroll software and dog-bins. It was agreed that the Clerk seek out preferred options for these and in addition it was agreed that, given the uncertainty of works that will be necessary/required with the SC situation, the PC accept Richard Branfield's rates per a quote for grass-cutting in 2024/25 and that a tendering process take place when there is more clarity as to what the PC will be responsible for.</p>
16.	<p><b>Co-option</b></p> <p>Notice of the PC vacancies had gone in the March magazine and an expression of interest had been received though this enquiry may not meet the residency timescale rule. After discussion it was agreed to put the formal notice up to seek interested parties in April, which should also cover the May meeting as well.</p>
17.	<p><b>Crime Report</b></p> <p>The monthly report from PCSO B Whelan was noted, with there being no specific incidents in Milverton.</p>
18.	<p><b>Matters of Report</b></p> <p><b>18.1. Street light at end of Mill Lane</b></p> <p>Note was made that the light had still not yet been replaced, with SC to be chased.</p> <p><b>18.2 Litter Pick</b></p> <p>A village litter pick is scheduled to take place on 30th March</p> <p><b>18.3 Social Media Course</b></p> <p>Cllr A Dakowski reported on attending a course on the use of social media by PCs, which highlighted the benefits of putting information out. This is a topic that could be included in the Community Review</p> <p><b>18.4 Volunteers for Jubilee Garden maintenance</b></p> <p>Cllr A Dakowski reported that she had sought volunteers at a recent Garden Club meeting and would report back</p> <p><b>18.5 Youth Club</b></p> <p>Cllr J Townsend reported on the suggestion of a youth club being included in the March magazine and advised he is meeting with representatives from a youth project in Wiveliscombe, as well as SPARKS Somerset, on options going forward.</p>
19.	<p><b>Date of next meeting</b></p> <p>The next meeting was confirmed for Monday 8th April 2024, at the Victoria Rooms.</p>
	<p>The meeting closed at 8.56pm</p>