

OTTERHAMPTON PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

held on

THURSDAY 12th DECEMBER 2024 at 7.00pm at OTTERHAMPTON VILLAGE HALL

PRESENT:

Lindsey Parsons (Chair), Tina Gardener (in the absence of the Clerk T Gardener took the minutes), Steve Parker, Mike Haycraft, Dave Dodge, Mike Caswell, and six members of the public.

179/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Connie Sanders, Carol Bradbury, Gina Mear and Cllr Brian Bolt

In Gina's absence T Gardener will carry out the Clerk's duties as best she can. Non-urgent matters may have to be deferred.

DECLARATION(S) OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS:

Dave Dodge declared an interest in minute 182/24 planning application 39/24/000/11/FHY. Member's Interests are disclosed at the time of taking Office. This information can be viewed on the Somerset Council website.

PUBLIC SESSION (INCLUDING SOMERSET COUNCIL COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

1. Somerset Council members report

- Cllr Mike Caswell advised that Somerset Council is seeking to increase the council tax by 10% and to remove the single person and low-income allowances
- There is a call for sites to determine the future planning requirements.
- There have been various flooding incidents throughout Somerset. With regards to Brookside Road flooding, Cllr Mike Caswell stated that we should seek permission from Somerset Highways to carry out CCTV on the drains/culverts in Brookside Road to determine if there any blockages.
- Parts of the County Hall building are being put up for sale.

2. Public

- Two new volunteers have come forward to carry out checks on the defibrillator. A new location is being considered for the second defibrillator (previously located at the Anchor Inn).
- Concerns were raised that flooding from the highway is constantly going on to the drive and garage of a property at Crossways.
- A member of the public asked if welcome packs were still given out to new residents.

180/24 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14.11.24

The minutes of the Meeting held on 14.11.24 were APPROVED and signed by the Chair.

181/24 MATTERS ARISING – NOT COVERED BY A SEPARATE AGENDA ITEM

There were no matters arising not covered by a separate agenda item.

182/24 PLANNING MATTERS:

- a. 39/24/00010/FHY Erection of a single storey extension to NW elevation on site of existing annex, to create accommodation to be used as holiday let or HPC workers. 20 Brookside Road, Combwich, Bridgwater, Somerset, TA5 2QW. All councillors agreed to support this application
- b. 39/24/00011/FHY Installation of 12 panels above ground solar pv array at Coxs Farm, Steart. All councillors agreed to support this application. (Dave Dodge left the room for this agenda item)
- c. 39/24/00012/SR Fell 1 no Oak (TPO Ref G5) and treat stump with eco plugs at Hill House Christian Centre, Otterhampton. All councillors agreed to support this application

183/24 FINANCE:

1. Bank Reconciliation and Budget Statement for November 2024

The budget statement and bank reconciliation for November 2024 was circulated prior to the meeting and was agreed. The balance at the 30th November 2024 was £59,318.10 including reserves of £22,436.69.

2. The following payments were AGREED:

- a) G Mear - £847.83 (Clerk salary – October including pay rise April to September 2024)
- b) Nest - £61.82 (Pension contribution)
- c) Otterhampton Village Hall - £12.00 (Hall Hire – Community Shop)
- d) Otterhampton Village Hall - £16.00 (Hall Hire – Steart Forum)
- e) Somerset Council - £352.80 (Grass Cutting)
- f) SALC - £35.00 (Training)
- g) Mike Ingram - £695.00 (Bramble clearing)

3. Income Received:

- a) None

4. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

The CIL payment for the planning applications 39/18/00010, 39/20/00001, 39/22/00006 & 8 at 9 Church Hill has still not been received. It was agreed to write to Duncan Starkey Chief Executive of Somerset Council, copied to Cllr M Caswell.

5. Budget for 2025/26

The deadline to submit the Precept requirement to Somerset Council is 31.01.25. The current precept is £26,000 and over recent years a healthy reserve has built up. Councillors were mindful of the current financial position and did not think there was a need to increase the precept for 2025/26. This will be confirmed at the January meeting.

184/24 ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

A bicycle left locked at the bus shelter at Crossways has been stolen.

185/24 HIGHWAYS

- a. Following the article in the last Otter Tales the issue with inconsiderate parking opposite the Anchor Inn appears to have been resolved.
- b. Cllr B Bolt will be asked to contact Highways regarding the state of the pavements in Estuary Park.

186/24 WHARF ROAD

The Community Payback Team will tidy the Estuary Park side of the road. Rachel Perrett kindly agreed to meet with them to agree what work needs to be carried out.

187/24 ENHANCEMENTS

Use of Pesticides – Regarding the use of an alternative non-pesticide weed killer system, D Dodge has prepared a draft application to Otterhampton Parish Project Team for funding through the EDF mitigation fund. The cost of a new system could not be justified and so a second-hand system will be sought. WWT have agreed to store it.

188/24 SALC – COMMUNITY HEALTH & WELLBEING PROGRAMME

Steve Parker reported that the Art Group would be interested in seeking grants to utilise experts in providing tuition to encourage more take-up. The Garden Club would also be interested in this grant to fund visits to gardens and increase participation.

189/24 EMERGENCY PLAN

This has been deferred until the next meeting

190/24 FLOODING

- a) Emergency Flood Store – Homes in Sedgemoor (HIS) had no record of the Parish Council renting garage number 2 and decided to let it to another tenant. The lock was changed and some of the contents of the garage removed. This only came to light during the flooding on 24.11.24 when we tried to access the garage to get the pump. After breaking in to the garage the pump was missing along with grit bags, shovels, wheelbarrow, wooden poppy, and a broken seesaw. HIS only admit to taking the grit bags. T Gardener found the rent agreement and sent a copy to HIS and has been trying without success to get some answers from HIS. Cllr M Caswell agreed to speak to HIS on our behalf.
- b) Flooding to north of Brookside Road. Once again, the gardens of the houses were flooded from the field to the north. It was only with the help of Robin Prowse and Simon Darch bringing

pumps from Steart that saved the houses from being flooded. It was agreed by all to purchase another pump for Combwich.

- c) Flooding at Crossways. This was discussed in the public session.
- d) Brook clearance by Environment Agency. All attempts will be made to carry out the vegetation management to the Combwich Brook between Withycombe Hill and the Pill before the end of January 2025.

191/24 MEETING REPORTS

- a) **14.11.24 EDF Transport Forum** – This was attended by Dave Dodge and the minutes will be circulated once received.
- b) **19.11.24 Steart Forum** (including Bristol Port Authority – including Steart Habitat Creation Scheme) – This was attended by Dave Dodge and Tina Gardener. The Bristol Port Authority scheme has now changed and they will be constructing a facility for the production, assembly, and deployment of floating offshore wind turbines in the Celtic Sea. To mitigate this work, it is planned for a wetland habitat at Steart. There was also a public drop-in session held in OVH on 11.12.24.
- c) **11.12.24 Village Hall AGM** – This was very well attended and there were 5 volunteers to become trustees and a volunteer came forward to become the treasurer. The next meeting will be held in January 2025.
- d) **11.11.24 Dowsborough LCN** – This was postponed due to illness.

192/24 REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES

- a. Public Rights of Way (PROW) (B Birkenhead) – Nothing to report.
- b. OPRA (T Gardener) – The OPRA Christmas dinner was held on Saturday 7th December and was a great success and very well attended. No-one was put off by Storm Darragh! Unfortunately, the storm battered the village tree and although the lights remained intact several baubles were lost.
- c. Steart Ward (D Dodge) – Nothing to report
- d. Social Media (D Dodge) – This is still work in progress. A logo is required. The Parish Council should also consider having its own website.
- e. Otter Tales – It was agreed to change the format of the Parish Council report and to include ad hoc reports and projects currently being undertaken. Dave Dodge agreed to write an article on the non-pesticide weedkiller system.

193/24 FORTHCOMING MEETINGS:

- a. OVH – 14.01.25

194/24 CORRESPONDENCE/COMMUNICATIONS

- a) Combwich Ponds/Estuary Park vegetation control. It was agreed to contact the Bridgwater Angling Association to arrange a site visit to discuss this ongoing issue.
- b) Dorset, Somerset, and Wiltshire Councils have revised their Expression of Interest in devolution, committing to a Mayoral Combined Authority for the Heart of Wessex region.

195/24 DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 9th January 2025, 7.00pm at Otterhampton Village Hall.

The meeting finished at 8.50pm.

Signed:

(Chair)

Date 9th January 2025