

WINSFORD PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Winsford Parish Council Held on Monday 25th March 2024, at 19.00pm in Winsford Village Hall

PRESENT: Councillors: Colin Wilkins (CW) – Chair, Mel Mileham (MM), Sarah Little (SL), Bryany Neal (BN), Mike Hillier (MH) and Clerk Jennifer Yates (JY). Somerset Councillor Steven Pugsley (SP) attended for part of the meeting.

CW opened the meeting at 19.03pm.

70.1 Public Question Time: None

70.2 Apologies for non-attendance: Councillors Ian Brooks and Kevin Connell

70.3 Declaration of Interests: None

70.4 To agree the Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held 26th February, and any outstanding actions: Thanks were given by the clerk and Councillors to Mr Connell for writing the minutes from this meeting. The minutes were approved as accurate – proposed BN, seconded MH and agreed by all.

70.5 Update re Somerset County Financial Emergency: There has been little further news, however the highways department have been in contact to say that they realise that too short notice/lack of information had made it very difficult for parish and town councils to accurately budget so they are going to continue providing many of their non-statutory services until April 2025. However, they have failed to provide any information regarding arrangements for salt bags and salt bins so it is likely the Council will need to pay for these services. CW reported that some ongoing contracts such as dog bin waste removal will be continuing also at this time as the contracts have not expired and there would be a cancellation fee. Discussion was held re the withdrawal of the Highway Steward service and whether the LCN can support a replacement service going forward. JY fed back that the Lengthsman scheme organised by Dulverton Council is being discontinued. CW and JY will continue to attend the LCN meetings where any further information will be shared.

70.7 Exford Road improvements and issues arising, including speed monitoring and damage along the diversion route: CW attended the recent public meeting at Wheddon Cross with regard to this ongoing works and the only Winsford resident in attendance. The contractors reported that they are currently on schedule and, weather permitting, believe that they will finish on time 10th May. Any frost or high winds will cause disruption. Somerset Council will then attend to the verges on the diversion route with a view to making good. They are keeping a close eye on signage and can be seen checking daily that the signs are clean and in place, and have installed additional signage at Larcombe Foot. CW has sourced a SIDS machine as Somerset have failed to locate one as promised. This was put up recently and has been observed in action by several of the councillors. Concern has been raised by one resident as to the placement not being

at the approaches to the village which was discussed. CW reported that Somerset did place some 'black box' monitoring at the approaches to the village over three months (December to February) to monitor the speed and usage prior to and during the period of the diversion, and this had picked up just a 2% variance which was less than expected. It was agreed JY should write and refer the concerned resident to Somerset who should be able to provide the details. The current SIDs will be turned around shortly and after a month the owner should be able to provide some data from what it has picked up.

Cllr Brooks has been in contact with a Somerset Highways representative with regard to what will need to be made good at the end of the works, and signage going forward that has proved useful at Larcombe Foot and that it may be beneficial to be made permanent.

It was noted that Ash Lane is being used more frequently but no concerns have been raised.

70.8 Storage of resilience items: Many of the items on the grant bid have been secured including storage within the new bus shelter. Lighting is now being fitted. JY was asked to make an inventory. The padlock code was shared between councillors in case of emergency, and will be shared with the resilience group, a list of their names will be placed in the bus shelter. CW reported that Nicola Dawson from Somerset Con had spoken to the LCN attendees. She has produced a map showing what people should do in the event of an emergency but Winsford appeared to be missing, despite producing a resilience plan. MM to bring up at the next resilience meeting and JY to contact Nicola Dawson. The initial meeting place in the event of an emergency should be the Village Hall as the only place with kitchen and toilet facilities, but in the case of a flood could move up to the church. JY will contact Sue Hayes re obtaining a list of keyholders who can be contacted if needed. Thanks were given to MM for all of her hard work and organisation on this matter.

70.9 Winsford Village Car Park: Further damage has occurred. Somerset Councillors Pugsley and Nicholson are lobbying on behalf of the village on this matter. JY will follow up on the previous email to the devolution team at Somerset Council.

70.10 Defibrillator storage arrangements, including lighting: Discussion was held re the problems seeing the box in the dark in order to input the code. MH proposed purchasing the phone box when it is discontinued from the network as it would have lighting and power in it and the defibrillator could be moved into it, as has happened in a lot of villages. It was agreed that in the short term a battery powered light could be placed nearby. MH will follow up with the village hall committee and the installation. Thanks were given to SL for all of her work with the defibrillator, as BN is now taking this over from her due to heavy work commitments.

SP arrived at 20.08pm

70.6 Updates from Somerset Councillor: Re the Exford Roadworks SP referred to the recent public meeting and commented that there was low attendance which had led to an understanding that people do generally feel that they are going well. He reinforced that there was a commitment to follow up re damage to the verges taking

place once the work is completed. He agreed that the perception of speed can be deceptive and the SIDS often shows that the speed is within the approved limit when it has appeared to be higher.

SP confirmed that he and Cllr Nicholson are doing their best to liaise with Somerset Council re the village car park and they are looking into historic documents and papers to support their cause.

SP agreed that the Highways department letter was ambiguous with regard to the provision of salt bins/bags and salt going forward. The decision to delay devolving costs was taken to give parish and town councils time to plan.

The Highways Steward would cost £50,000 to continue (the cost for the van, tools and worker). The view has been taken that this would cost too much for our LCN (Local Community Network) and therefore he is in discussion with a neighbouring LCN as to whether they would be willing to share one and split the costs. It may be that the LCN source a contractor that parish councils can buy the services of.

There are no current updates re the plans to withdraw some recycling sites.

SP will explore grazing rights on Winsford Hill following concern raised about damage caused by cattle and ENPA's level of responsibility regarding this, if there is any. Also possible interested parties are Natural England, the National Trust and Mr Thomas-Everard.

70.11 To consider Highways Matters;

a) Yellowcombe Leat: The feeling is that unfortunately due to financial constraints it is unlikely that the Somerset Highways team will carry out any further works unless the Leat collapses. MH raised concern re the current signage and SP requested that he sends photographs to SP and Cllr Nicholson.

b) AOB:

SP was thanked for his attendance and left the meeting at 8.38.

70.12 Finance: To receive financial report and agree to pay amounts due: Payment was agreed for Netwise £20 for the annual domain renewal.

70.13 Discuss and agree criteria for charity donations: Cllr Connell had circulated a draft proposal, but in his absence it was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting.

70.14 Winsford Charitable Trust

a) Financial Report: CAF Cash = £4935.22, CAF Gold = £2235.60. JY was asked to check the levels of interest being received on each account for the next meeting so options could be explored re the saved funds. Accounts need to be renamed to Winsford Village Green Trust once the Risdon Hosegood work is complete.

b) Discussion re Trust funds: as above. JY to contact the charity commission to see if they recommend any popular arrangements for managing savings. Accounts need to be renamed to Winsford Village Green Trust and the name needs to be confirmed with the Charity Commission.

c) Arrangements for Village Green maintenance going forward, including advertising: MM and MH have put together an advertisement.

d) Update re Risdon Hosegood work: Ongoing with no update.

- e) **Benches including the Orgill bench:** A request was received to check the Orgill bench and MH kindly offered to take a look at this and tidy it as requested. Agreement was made to purchase three replacement benches using the recent grant funding, to include a wheelchair friendly bench. Costs of installation need to be factored in. A request has been made for the old benches to be donated to the Recreation Association and this was agreed. JY to check the swings guarantee re when the first play equipment inspection will be needed (believed to be two years after installation).
- f) **AOB:** The water level in the Wynn Brook has been too high to carry out the work replacing slats on the bridge. It will be closed while the work is in progress.

70.15 Correspondence and Emails received: One email re concerns about health and safety caused by the Exford Road diversion, as discussed above. The Parish Council were copied in on an email re land at Badgeworthy which was for information only with no action required, and the Councillors appreciated being kept informed. One email re the Orgill bench as discussed above.

70.16 Reports from Councillors on meetings attended: CW has attended the recent LCN meeting and the Exford Road public meeting.

70.17 Any Other Business: None

70.18 Items for Next Agenda: Discuss and agree criteria for charity donations.

70.19 Date of Next meeting: 29th April 2024 at 7.00 in Winsford Village Hall with the date for the annual assembly to be agreed and publicised.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 21.17