

Kingsbury Episcopi Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on Wednesday 6th December 2023 at 7.30pm at Kingsbury Episcopi Primary School.

116. Attendance and Apologies

Present: Cllrs Hall, Carpenter, Paul, Herridge, Loxston and Spree.

In attendance – Kim Larsson (Clerk) and Somerset Council Cllr Stanton.

Apologies for absence – Cllrs Frost, Baldock, Mason and Somerset Council Cllr Wilkins.

117. Parish Council Vacancies

There are currently 2 vacancies on the council which may be filled by co-option; anyone interested in becoming a member of the council should contact the Clerk.

118. Approve and sign minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 1st November 2023 were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting, and duly signed by the Chair.

119. Declarations of Interest – Cllr Loxston declared an interest in item 10 on the agenda – Churchyard and Cemetery Grounds Maintenance, due to his connection with potential suppliers through his business.

120. Somerset Council Councillor Report

The monthly written report is being finalised and will be circulated shortly.

Cllr Stanton commented on the flash floods, noting that many of these were caused by bridges and culverts being too small or blocked and that operatives are in the process of clearing these.

Somerset Council has declared a financial emergency. Measures already implemented are a freeze on recruitment, closing inefficient buildings to save on running costs and restructuring debts. All functions and roles within Somerset Council are having to be reviewed and staff reductions are expected. Town and Parish Councils are being advised to increase precepts and hold sufficient reserves to enable them to cover costs of providing services which may be lost. Further information to assist towns and parishes in these decisions will be circulated over the coming weeks as it becomes available.

121. Questions and comments from the public

A member of the public enquired as to what is happening with Loal Community Networks. Cllr Stanton commented that these could now be key to provision of services on a local basis, but it was noted there is no budget allocated to these except for Officer time.

122. Planning Applications

- a. 23/02692/FUL Land Os 8500 Part North of Owl Street, East Lambrook, South Petherton TA13 5HF - Proposed development of four dwellings and associated development. Councillors agreed to submit a “comments only” response to the application, with the need to give regard to the impact of surface water run-off and highways safety.
- b. 23/02815/HOU Applewood Owl Street East Lambrook South Petherton Somerset TA13 5HF - Demolition of existing single storey extension and conservatory and erection of two storey side extension. Councillors agreed to submit a “comments only” response to the application, with note to the presence of bats and as such consideration should be given to measures recommended to mitigate impact of any development.

Responses will be sent to Somerset Council Planning and will be available to view on the planning portal against the respective applications in due course. [Link to Planning Portal](#)

123. Financial Matters

a. Payments - The following cheques were approved:

East Lambrook School Rooms	2023/24 Grant Award	£1000.00
K Larsson	Clerk Salary incl. PAYE (Nov)	£568.09
K Larsson	Admin Expenses	£29.16
P Carpenter	Batteries for Christmas lights	£14.99

b. **Grant Applications** – Presentations were given by representatives for the East Lambrook School Rooms, Kingsbury May Festival, Kingsbury Community | Enterprise (Community Shop and Café), Kingsbury Community Centre and Parrett Talk. The total value of grant requests received was £19,550. The council will consider the applications in full at the January meeting during the budget and precept setting discussions.

c. **Somerset Council Asset and Service Devolution** – The list from Somerset Council of potential services which could be taken over by Town and Parish councils was circulated to Councillors in advance of the meeting. It was noted that many areas are not applicable to Kingsbury Episcopi, but it was discussed that Highways services are most likely to be impacted. There are early discussions regarding a Highway Steward programme which may be beneficial to the parish. Further discussion will be held in January, when additional information is expected to be available.

124. Our Hundred Heritage Matters Project

Further to previous request for funding of £250 for a parish-wide publication (minute 99, October 2023), financial information has been supplied as per the grant application requirements and Councillors unanimously agreed to award the £250 grant for the project.

125. Churchyard and Cemetery Grounds Maintenance

A number of potential contactors have attended site visits to discuss required works. Quotes are in the process of being submitted and will be reviewed in January.

126. Updates

- a. **Local Community Networks** – Unfortunately there was not a representative for the Parish Council at the most recent meeting, however, it is hoped that the LCNs will be a useful tool for parishes/towns to come together to provide services currently offered by Somerset Council. The next LCN meeting is planned for Monday 15th January.
- b. **Wildlife Group** – The group continues to be well supported and have been fundraising at the Community Centre Christmas fayre.
- c. **Sensory Garden** – The Wildlife Group are working on establishing areas and planting programmes with a variety of species. They are looking to have both educational and sensory aspects to the area and are combining this project with maintenance of the cemetery and churchyard in sympathy with the environment and natural habitats.
- d. **SID reports** – It was reported that residents in East Lambrook have now received the Speed Action Group survey to respond to. SID data continues to be provided to the group.
- e. **Lock-up** – No updates. Clerk to follow up.
- f. **Defibrillator at the Rusty Axe** – Partial funding is available and the Rusty Axe will look to fundraise for the additional costs.
- g. **Highways** – It was noted that an extremely large pothole which appeared following the severe rains was filled extremely quickly. Residents are encouraged to report any issues directly to Somerset Council so they can be accurately recorded and dealt with as promptly as possible. The online reporting tool on the Somerset Council website can be found on the following link: <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/report-a-problem-on-the-road/> or alternatively the Fix My Street website can be used <https://www.fixmystreet.com/>

- h. **Flooding** – It was noted that the flooding had caused a number of issues locally with some residents reporting problems with being unable to flush their toilets where water had backed up in the drainage.
- i. **Footpaths and Bridleways** – The May Festival are looking into the possibility of increasing the size of the footbridge access, which is understood to be Environment Agency land.

127. Items for the next meeting

- a. 2024/25 Budget & Precept Setting
- b. 2024/25 Grant Applications
- c. Churchyard & Cemetery Grounds Maintenance

128. Date and time of next meeting

Parish Council meeting – Wednesday 3rd January 2024 at 7.30pm at Kingsbury Episcopi Parish Primary School.

The Chair closed the meeting at 8.58pm.