

Kingsbury Episcopi Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on Wednesday 7th February 2024 at 7.30pm at Kingsbury Episcopi Primary School.

129. Attendance and Apologies

Present: Cllrs Hall, Frost, Carpenter, Paul and Loxston.

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

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

130. 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.

131. Approve and sign minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 6th December 2023 were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting, and duly signed by the Chair.

132. **Declarations of Interest** – Cllr Loxston declared an interest in item 9 on the agenda – Churchyard and Cemetery Grounds Maintenance, due to his connections through his business. It was agreed for Cllr Loxston to be able to remain in the room during discussion but to be excluded from any votes taken.

133. Somerset Council Councillor Report

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

Cllr Stanton talked about the ongoing work to cut costs in order to reduce the Somerset Council budget deficit. A full written report will be circulated to the Parish Council following the next financial report at the end of the week. Cllr Stanton commented that until the Somerset Council budget is set in February there is no certainty with regards to which services will be affected and recommends Town and Parish Councils are putting as much money aside as possible 'for a rainy day'.

134. **Questions and comments from the public** - There were no questions from the public.

135. Planning Applications

a. **Applications** - There were no new applications for consideration.

b. **Enforcement** – 23/00015/ENF West Lambrook Farm, West Lambrook

Councillors had no points to add and agreed not to submit any comments.

136. Financial Matters

a. **Payments** - The following cheques were approved:

S Brooks	Cemetery Maintenance 2023	£2200.00
Thoroughbred Marketing	Wildlife Group printing	£81.00
K Larsson	Clerk Salary incl. PAYE (Dec)	£433.50
K Larsson	Admin Expenses	£18.50
Community Shop	2023/24 Grant Award	£7000.00
Recreation Committee	2022/23 & 2023/24 Grant Award balance	£12655.76

A transfer from the reserve account to the current account of £15,000 was agreed in order to cover these and upcoming payments.

- b. **Budget and Precept** – In advance of the meeting a summary of the Councils financial position, including reserves, committed and estimated spend for the remainder of the financial year had been circulated to Councillors. A draft budget was presented to Councillors by the Clerk based on this information and estimated costs for the upcoming financial year. In the process of considering the level of precept for 2024/25, Councillors considered the potential need for a contingency fund for loss of services currently provided by Somerset Council and the level of grants requested from local organisations. Cllr Loxston proposed an increase of 4% to the precept to £45,760.00, which would allow for a contingency fund and enable to Council to award the full amount on each grant request. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Frost and all Councillors voted in favour of the proposal.
- c. **2024/25 Grant Requests** – Councillors voted unanimously to award the following amounts:

Community Shop	£8000.00
Recreation Committee	£9000.00
East Lambrook School Rooms	£1000.00
Kingsbury May Festival	£800.00
Parrett Talk	£750.00

In addition, an unallocated fund of £2000.00 was agreed which could be applied for throughout the financial year, this bringing the total grant allocation to £21,550.

137. Churchyard and Cemetery Grounds Maintenance

Having reviewed all quotations received, Councillors agreed unanimously to award the contract on an initial 1-year basis to Wrights Trees, subject to references and insurance confirmation, at an annual cost of £4667.00 + vat.

138. Wildlife Group Insurance

Insurance brokers AON offered renewal for the groups insurance at £100 inclusive of taxes for the next year, commencing 1st February 2024. Councillors agreed unanimously to proceed with the renewal.

139. Updates

- a. **Local Community Networks** –The next LCN meeting is planned for Monday 15th January.
- b. **Wildlife Group** – Lots of information and tips were published in the recent issue of Parrett Talk, including ways to help support hedgehogs through the winter.
- c. **Sensory Garden** – The Wildlife Group have not met to discuss yet due to the recent poor weather, but this is scheduled for w/c 12th January. The Group will begin to investigate design options and will be looking to work closely with the Church to ensure both parties are happy with the proposed ideas to develop the space.
- d. **SID reports** – No updates.
- e. **Lock-up** – No updates from Land Registry. Clerk due to follow up. Councillors agreed to purchase of a swag to fill gap in Christmas decorations for next year.
- f. **Defibrillator at the Rusty Axe** – The Wildlife Group have advised that they will not require any additional funds on top of the £2000 Village of the Year prize, and proposed for the additional remaining funds allocated to the sensory garden project to be used for any shortfall of fund raising from the Rusty Axe. Councillors unanimously agreed for the funds to be re-allocated and that any further fundraising by the Rusty Axe should be set aside for installation and/or future maintenance costs.

- g. **Highways** – It was noted that the recently repaired fence at Hangmans Lane has been driven into and damaged. It has already been reported by a member of the public. Residents are encouraged to report any new 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** – Contact has been received from residents of Little Lane, where they report long term issues with drains being blocked and standing water remaining on the roads for prolonged periods. The issues have already been reported to Somerset Council, but the Parsh Council agreed to follow this up to see what actions are being taken.
- i. **Footpaths and Bridleways** – There has been a broken gate reported on the path at Home Farm.

140. Items for the next meeting

None requested.

141. Date and time of next meeting - Wednesday 6th February 2024, 7.30pm at Kingsbury Episcopi Parish Primary School.

The Chair closed the meeting at 8.36pm.

Signed

Date

Initial