

North Wootton Parish Council

Clerk to the Parish

Hazel Brinton

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Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting of North Wootton Parish Council held via Zoom on Tuesday 4th May 2021.

PRESENT: Cllr S Shimmin (Chairman), Cllr A Bovey, Cllr K Bissett, Cllr M Hoddinott and Cllr M Smith.

Also present: Hazel Brinton (Clerk), Dan Foster (planning agent)

The Chairman opened the meeting at 19.46 after the preceding Annual Parish Meeting.

01/21 Election of Chairman

Cllr Simon Shimmin was elected as Chairman for the municipal year 2021-22.

02/21 Statutory Declaration of Acceptance of Office by Chairman

Cllr Shimmin signed the statutory declaration of acceptance of office in front of the clerk.

03/21 Election of Vice Chairman

Cllr Alistair Bovey was elected Vice Chairman for the municipal year 2021-22.

04/21 Apologies for absence

None.

05/21 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interests.

06/21 Adoption of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

The revised Standing Orders and Financial Regulations as circulated by the clerk were adopted.

07/21 Asset Register

The asset register as circulated by the clerk was agreed by members.

08/21 Council's Insurance Policy

Members agreed the insurance schedule as presented by the clerk was sufficient for the council's requirements and noted that it was arranged with a provider that specialised in local council insurance.

09/21 Bank mandate and banking arrangements

It was agreed that the bank signatories should remain as Cllrs Shimmin, Bovey and Hoddinott and the clerk. It was agreed that the clerk begin looking at requirements for online banking with the council's bank.

Signed by Chairman.....

20th July 2021

10/21 Summons, notices and documentation by email

All members agreed that their preference was to receive summons, notices and documentation via email.

11/21 Financial statement for year ending 31st March 2021 including Annual Internal Audit Report

- i. **Resolved:** the council certified that it was exempt from a limited assurance review having an income and expenditure below £25,000 for financial year 2020-21. The Certificate was signed by the Chairman and Responsible Financial Officer.
- ii. The council noted the Annual Internal Audit Report. **Resolved:** the council further agreed and approved the Annual Governance Statement for the year ending 31st March 2021. The statement was signed on behalf of the council by the Chairman and the Clerk.
- iii. **Resolved:** the council agreed and approved the Annual Accounts as presented and signed by the clerk for the year ending 31st March 2021. The Chairman signed the accounts on behalf of the council as previously signed by the Responsible Financial Officer.

12/21 Appointment of Council's Internal Auditor for 2021-22

Resolved: it was unanimously agreed that Mr Bradfield remain as council's internal auditor. **The council passed on its thanks to Mr Bradfield for his work on behalf of the council and for which he makes no charge.**

13/21 Approval of minutes

The minutes from the meeting of March 16th 2021 were approved.

14/21 Finance

- i. It was **resolved** to approve the payment of the following items of expenditure:
 - o Clerks expenses of £93.75 for April and May 2021 including any items paid on behalf of council
 - o Clerk's salary for April and May 2021
 - o SALC invoice – Chairman Training £30

15/21 Planning matters

Standing Orders were suspended to allow Dan Foster, agent for the application at Folly Lodge to speak in support of the application.

Standing Orders resumed.

- i. **Proposal:** Retention of access track and erection of artist studio building at Folly Lodge Folly Lane North Wootton Shepton Mallet Somerset for Dr and Mrs Terry and Charlotte Flaxton and Humpston 2021/0829/FUL
Resolved: that the parish council supported the application and noted the assurances given by the applicants in respect of the infrequent use of the track; the use of the building as an artist studio only and the plans to minimise the visual impact of the building.
- ii. Delegation to the clerk.

It was noted that the legislation permitting virtual meetings of the parish council would expire on May 6th. As large indoor gatherings would not be permitted until 21st June at the earliest, it was **resolved** to delegate authority to the clerk to submit comments on planning applications where the parish council was a consultee after consultation with members and until such a time as face to face meetings could resume.

16/21 Park in the village

Members discussed the provision of a children's play area in the centre of the village. Members agreed that the idea had merit in principle but noted that there was a great deal of work in providing such a facility and that they would look to those proposing the idea to do the background work and come forward with a proposal. Cllr Bissett would publicise the issue on the village Facebook page. Members noted that there were play areas at Dulcote, Dinder and Croscombe.

17/21 Fingerpost refurbishment

Cllr Bovey advised members that he had obtained an alternative quotation in addition to the one provided by Somerset Forge but the company had not viewed the posts and were looking to do the work in situ whereas Somerset Forge took the posts away for refurbishment. On that basis, he recommended that Somerset Forge do the work for the additional sum of around £200-£300. **Resolved:** to accept the quotation from Somerset Forge and ask them to proceed.

Cllr Smith requested that village signs at the entrances to the village be looked at for the following year.

18/21 Parish Reports

i. Local Government reorganisation

Members noted the referendum request by the district authorities on which unitary option was preferred by Somerset residents.

ii. Highways

Cllr Bovey advised that the majority of potholes had been dealt with by Somerset County Council apart from the one on Middles Lane which they deemed to not be bad enough to repair. He noted further ones had appeared on Long Drove which he would report in due course.

iii. Footpaths

Cllr Hoddinott advised that 14 faults had been reported to SCC and he had received replies for 9 of them of which the majority were not considered to be worth addressing currently. SCC had agreed to alter some stiles that were difficult to cross but others would only be replaced at end of life of the stile. One footpath by Barrow Farm was too overgrown for the Ramblers to cut back which suggested it was little used as there was not enough foot traffic to keep the growth down. The footpath officer at SCC would be approached about other paths in the parish in due course as Cllr Hoddinott was

currently awaiting responses on 5 other paths he had already reported.

Members noted that no report had yet been received on Batts Bridge. Cllr Hoddinott would contact Chris East.

iv. Moors and Levels

The Chairman reported that he and Cllr Hoddinott were in talks with landowners in respect of the maintenance of rhynes along Mead Lane. He noted that they used to be maintained by the river board but it was now down to individual landowners to clear them.

The Chairman further reported that during the conversation with the representative of the river board, he had been advised that the Environment Agency was responsible for the river as far as Batts Bridge for land between Batts Bridge and Stocks Lane. The Chairman undertook to clarify this with the Environment Agency.

19/21 Public Rights Notice

Members noted that the posting of the Notice of Audit for the exercise of public rights would be between 7 June and 16 July 2021.

20/21 Date of meetings for municipal year

The parish council would continue to meet on the third Tuesday bi-monthly with the next meeting on 20th July 2021. The aspiration was that this would be a face to face meeting in the village hall.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 20:57.