

## Minutes of the Council Meeting Held on Monday 8th January 2024

Meetings are held at 7.00pm at the Village Hall unless stated otherwise - Nigel Ashton, Gordano Valley Ward Cllr, attends when possible

*We have a vacancy for a Councillor - contact the Clerk or a Councillor, in the first instance, to apply*

**Present:** Cllrs Brian Cannell (Chair), Rachel Dickinson, Claire Flower, Dave Wherrett

**In Attendance:** Don Hill (Clerk)

**Public Attendance:** 1

*The sudden passing of Sue Betts during the Christmas break came as a huge shock to the Parish. Sue grew up in the Village: she was a Member of the Social Committee, a Church Warden and Chair of the Village Hall Committee of Management. She gave her energies tirelessly to Parish affairs and events and most recently put her efforts into securing a Defibrillator at the Village Hall in memory of her late husband Roy. Her natural intelligence, her warm smile and her kindness will be sorely missed.*

### 001/24 APOLOGIES

**Cllr Nigel Ashton (NSC)** - the meeting wished to congratulate Nigel on his award of an OBE via the Special Honours recently issued at the Monarch's pleasure.

### 002/24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Dispensations apply to Cllrs re setting of the precept, and Village Hall matters)

Cllr Flower re Minute 005/24 i, and Minute 005/24 5b as they relate to matters on land of which her father is the tenant farmer.

### 003/24 LAST MEETING MINUTES & Matters Arising

The minutes of the December 11th meeting were agreed and signed. There were no matters arising.

### 004/24 PLANNING (The NSC website has full details. Applications notified on the meeting day will also be considered)

**New:** 23/P/2600/TRCA Taggart Ho - Magnolia & Acer crown reduction (for information)

**Decisions Due:** 23/P/0648/FUH Taggart Cabin. 23/P/2675/FUH Walton Bay, Seaway, New Gates.

### 005/24 PARISH MATTERS

- i. **Street Light:** The Heads of Terms re the wayleave to gain access to the pole in its current position were too onerous in particular conditions to permit it proving acceptable. The meeting opted for the NSC alternative of it being placed on the pavement opposite the Moor Lane junction, where an electric power source is to hand. Centregreat to erect and service.  
**Clerk to so inform the Miles Estate agents and to progress with NSC.**
- ii. **Speed Issues:** NSC's policy re Speed Indicator Signs (SIDS) (see Annexe 1 to these minutes) seemed onerous, but discussion found a way through them (for example we would need six locations to be able to use the SID full time whilst complying with the requirement that it be at one site for a maximum of two weeks and not return to that site for three months). Mrs Wyliman gave a lead re a possible police grant and is being contacted re possible funding via the Social Club. Operation via SpeedWatch will be investigated as will appropriate insurance operation and asset value via Zurich. Insurance **Clerk to progress actions indicated in this Minute.**
- iii. **B3124 Clevedon Road Safety:** NSC have recently responded negatively to direct enquiries re these issues. ADL, who advised Norton's Wood residents' re Conygar, will be approached for a guide to the cost of a probable highway report to see if it would be affordable. **Clerk to progress.**

- iv. **Website:** Transfer to VisionITC underway in time for April 1st 2024.
- v. **Footpaths:**
  - a. **Past Church** - update due from NSC.
  - b. **Plumtree to Common** - 3 new gates being discussed between Miles Estate and NSC. There are no direct financial implications for the Parish. NSC are legally bound to ensure that they and the associated land owners keep the paths in a safe and useable state: this is obviously reflected in the way they set this element of their budget. At present in situ are three wooden climb-over stiles, non of which are disability friendly. They could possibly to be replaced by stock-proof auto-close kissing gates. Metal ones would cause a noise nuisance (the stile off the B3124 is next to the grade 2 listed Plumtree Cottage). Hardwood wooden stiles would be good both from noise and aesthetic perspectives. The stile in the middle of the field needs replacing. The stile by Plumtree Cottage is in good repair, but it is not disability friendly. The stile to the path up to the Common has been complained about as having caused a minor injury. To gain access to the common there is a steep climb, which, for anyone, is difficult to complete, and for many disabled people probably impossible.. A warning notice about this would be appropriate by the Plumtree stile. **Clerk to pursue the installation of hardwood wooden auto-close kissing gates with NSC and an appropriate notice.**
- vi. **Walton Bay Entry Signs:** Pre-payment invoice from NSC awaited. Meeting agreed to its payment upon arrival.
- vii. **Village Notice Board:** replacement door perspex being sourced by Cllrs Flower and Cannell.
- viii. **NSC General Maintenance in hand with with Area Officer:**
  - a. **The 20mph sign** at the Crosstree junction realignment in hand.
  - b. **Walton St Open Section of Brook:** Damaged retaining wall repair by NSC.
  - c. **Walton Street:** Need to clear open section of brook. Work chased.
  - d. **Walton Street:** Failed repair to channel opposite Chapel - repair has been done.

#### 006/24 GOVERNANCE

**Vexatious Behaviour Order:** The Vexatious Behaviour of the Puxton resident continues in that parish and continues to involve our Clerk. Our councillors also continue to receive emails. Therefore the Chair renewed the order on December 25th.

#### 007/24 COUNCILLORS REPORTS

**Cllr Dickinson:** updated the meeting on Village Hall matters and noted that, with the sudden death of Sue Betts, there may be a management hiatus while a new Chair is appointed.

**Cllr Wherrett:** Discussions continue with Nailsea District Community Transport and an imminent meeting with them will hopefully establish what grant funding they would need to provide a home-pick-up service focused on but not exclusive to Walton Bay. A grant via the NSC WESTlocal fund for community-designed and operated not-for-profit transport services is being investigated. In this context the 'community' may include other areas with no bus service such as Clapton in Gordano through to Norton's Wood Lane. Cllr Wherrett will report further to the February meeting.

#### 008/24 FINANCE

- i. **2023-24 accounts:** to date were reviewed and noted.
- ii. **2024-25 Budget:** Final draft was discussed and agreed. (See Annexe 2 to these minutes).
- iii. **Cheques: 837...** no cheques this month.
- iv. **Internet Banking:** No further progress.

009/24 **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING** - February 12th 2024.

**The meeting closed at 8.43pm**

## NSC Speed Indicator Signs (SIDS) Policy

1. These are signs which display the approaching vehicles speed, they are not authorised traffic signs, so their use is limited to information only.
2. This limits their use to non-permanent signage (so must be mobile) and to limited time periods in varied locations, and they do not, by themselves inform motorists if they are complying with the law or relate to a specific hazard.
3. It should be noted that this type of sign is not always effective in reducing vehicle speeds and in some locations, it can have the opposite effect of causing some vehicles to speed up (e.g. drivers who want to see how high the number will go). The Department for Transport recommend the use of standard Vehicle Activated Signs.
4. If communities want to use this type of sign North Somerset will approve their use under the following circumstances.
5. An application will need to come from the relevant Parish / Town Council
6. **The sign will only be in one location for a maximum of 2 weeks and will not return to that same location for 3 months.**
7. **The PC will identify locations for North Somerset to approve using existing street furniture, if existing furniture is not available, then the installation of additional posts will be added to the Highways works programme for the PC to fund.**
8. **The PC will be responsible for appointing someone accredited to work on the Highway if the signs are to be erected on the Highway**, a list of approved contractors can be found at the following link: [Accredited contractors | North Somerset Council \(n-somerset.gov.uk\)](#)
9. Alternatively, the SIDS could be erected on its own free standing equipment, if free standing equipment is being use the PC take full responsibility for the equipment and any incidents which may occur, it is advisable that the PC take out public liability insurance to guard against any claims.
10. If the PC want to use street lights to erect the signs on they will need to contact [streetlighting@n-somerset.gov.uk](mailto:streetlighting@n-somerset.gov.uk) for approval.
11. When erecting on street furniture it should be erected at a minimum of 1.5 metres above a verge, 2.1 metres above a footway and 2.3 metres above a cycleway, no part of the sign will be closer than 450mm from the edge of the carriageway.
12. **The sign will be clearly seen from 60 metres away.**
13. **The sign face and operation of the sign will be approved by North Somerset before it is purchased.**

## Annexe 2

### WALTON-IN-GORDANO PARISH COUNCIL'S BUDGET FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2024-2025

EXPENSES HEAD	24-25 BUDGET	23-24 BUDGET	% DIFFERENCE to 24-25 Budget	23-24 Estimate	% Difference to 24-25 Budget
<b>Clerk's Pay</b>	<b>£3069.00</b>	£2868.00	<b>7.0</b>	£2868.00	<b>7.0</b>
<b>Clerk's Expenses</b>	<b>£315.00</b>	£315.00	0.0	£315.00	<b>0.0</b>
<b>Hall Hire Fee</b>	<b>£108.00</b>	£108.00	0.0	£108.00	<b>0.0</b>
<b>Public Light</b>	<b>£500.00</b>	£130.00	284.6	£211.00	<b>137.0</b>
<b>Insurance, Subscriptions, Audit, Legal</b>	<b>£650.00</b>	£550.00	18.2	£425.00	<b>52.9</b>
<b>Parish Maintenance</b>	<b>£500.00</b>	£1000.00	-50.0	£655.00	<b>-23.7</b>
<b>Other Costs</b>	<b>£200.00</b>	£100.00	100.0	£92.00	<b>117.4</b>
<b>Website</b>	<b>£1200.00</b>	£100.00	1100.0	£257.00	<b>366.9</b>
<b>Election Provision</b>	<b>£0.00</b>	£150.00	-100.0	£150.00	<b>-100.0</b>
<b>Capital Provision</b>	<b>£1000.00</b>	£1000.00	0.0	£1000.00	<b>0.0</b>
<b>PRECEPT</b>	<b>£7542.00</b>	<b>£6321.00</b>	<b>19.3</b>	<b>£6081.00</b>	<b>24.0</b>

#### NOTES

**Clerk's Pay** increase is +7%. This is the NALC agreed increase due to be paid retrospectively from April 2023, but Walton-in-Gordano Clerk don't take it until the following April - 2024.

**Clerk's Expenses** have not increased over the years.

**Hall Hire Fee** has not increased over the years.

**Public Light:** The 2023 running cost increases have hit this expense dramatically. Our light is

**Parish Maintenance** The £500 is a contingency primarily to part cover the cost of the necessary replacement of the the street light asset. The unspent sum for 2023-24 was for the same purpose but the project has been delayed so the sum remained unspent.

**Insurance, Subscriptions Audit and Legal** has gone from £550 to £650. The ALCA sub is dependant on parish population and is due to go up by some 7%. Our internal auditor officially retired last year; if he is replaced I suspect his modest fee will at least double to £100. With insurance premiums rising, there is a margin built in from the estimated 2023-24 insurance cost, which we do not receive until February 2024, plus, prudently, a further increase provided for in February 2025.

**Other Costs** is a catch all for unforeseen expenses and has been reduced by £100..

**Website** The design and running of the site has been done by the Clerk for years: it has been an extra job taken on by the clerk that is not part of a clerk's employed duties. As part of prudent succession planning that responsibility will pass to a specialist local government service provider on April1st 2024. The cost of this transfer, plus the 2025-26 annual prepayment fee form the total of the website budget.

**Election Provision** has been included to top up the costs of the May 2023 election.

**Capital Provision** has stood budgeted at £1000 since its introduction. As we can see, it takes years to build the fund, but just one or two capital projects to decimate it.

**The Precept Increase:** Principal Authorities - NSC in our case - are funnelling costs down to town and parish councils due to the squeezing of their own funding from Central Government and the annual government-imposed caps on their own precept increases. Parishes like ours, that have no income generating assets, have to be realistic about how much they need to operate with from year to year enthuse circumstances.