



Minutes of a meeting of COTFORD ST LUKE PARISH COUNCIL held in The Hub, St Luke's Centre, Graham Way, Cotford St Luke, commencing at 18.30 on Wednesday 5th June 2024.

PRESENT

Cllrs. S. Draper-Gammon (Chair), M. Best, L. Birch (Vice Chair), T. Freeman, P. Grover, J. McCrea.

In attendance: Locum Clerk K. Sheehan, Somerset Councillor M. Rigby and twenty-five members of the public.

PUBLIC FORUM

Members of the public spoke on the following issues:

- Issues of speeding and children playing on and around the roundabout (Cllr. Rigby to pick up with Somerset Council Highways officers and local policing team to get some speed monitoring in place). Members of the public were encouraged to report any near misses to assist with building a picture of issues of concern in the area. It was suggested that the Police and Crime Commissioner could be invited to a future meeting. Cllr. Draper-Gammon agreed to send Parish Council minutes to the policing team.
- Grass cutting around the parish; this item was addressed during the relevant agenda item.
- Bin replacements; Cllr. Best confirmed that three bins were on order.
- Councillors were asked to consider improving disabled access to the park and provision of disabled play equipment.
- The current status of CIL and S106 monies and plans for maintenance of flood defences and other PC responsibilities in the parish.
- Increased public engagement and interest in Parish Council meetings was welcomed.
- A previous complainant had been asked for clarification, a response was awaited. Existing Freedom of Information and Subject Access Requests lodged with the previous council would be progressed as the required information became available. Motions previously agreed were listed on the agenda to ensure that they were being progressed where appropriate.

In response to a query asking why Any Other Business (AOB) had been removed from the agenda, the Locum Clerk explained that this did not meet the threshold for notifying business to be transacted three clear days ahead of the meeting. It was no longer advised that AOB be included in Council agendas, but some councils operated a 'Matters of Report' item for the exchange of factual information only.

Cllr. Draper-Gammon thanked everyone for their constructive participation in the Public Forum, explaining that the remainder of the meeting was for the Councillors and further participation would be only at the invitation of the Chair.

Cllr. Best welcomed everyone to the meeting, explaining that as Chair of Somerset Council he was currently acting Chair of CSLPC. However, he was now stepping down as acting Chair in favour of a councillor local to the parish. Additionally, two further candidates for co-option had come forward, which would mean that ward members Cllrs. Rigby and Sully would step down as parish councillors. The current parish councillors all introduced themselves.



10/24 **ELECTION OF A CHAIR**

It was AGREED that Cllr. Draper-Gammon be elected as Chair. There being no other nominations, she accepted the role.

11/24 **ELECTION OF A VICE CHAIR**

It was AGREED that Cllr. Birch be elected as Vice Chair. There being no other nominations, she accepted the role.

12/24 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Somerset Councillor A. Sully (unwell) and prospective co-optee G. Hand (personal).

13/24 **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

No declarations of interests were made.

14/24 **TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 24 MAY 2024 AND MATTERS ARISING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 May 2024 were AGREED as a true and accurate record, outstanding matters arising were all listed on the agenda.

15/24 **CO-OPTION OF NEW PARISH COUNCILLORS**

Applications from Peter Grover and Graham Hand to fill the vacant positions on the Council were considered. It was AGREED that both be co-opted to the vacancies, and a resolution permitting an extension for signing of Declarations of Acceptance of Office for both co-optees as well as the offices of Chair and Vice Chair until the next meeting was also AGREED.

Councillors were reminded that they needed to complete and submit Registers of Interest within 28 days.

Cllr. Grover joined the Councillors, participating but not voting for the remainder of the meeting.

16/24 **COUNCILLOR RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR**

It was AGREED that areas of responsibility be covered as follows:

Planning, Parish Plan, CIL and S106 funds – Cllr. Birch

Allotments and Estates – Cllrs. Freeman and Grover

Events, Communications, Social Media and Website – Cllrs. Draper-Gammon and Birch.

The outstanding areas were deferred to a future meeting for agreement. Cllr. Best agreed to look after finance until a permanent Clerk was appointed.

17/24 **TO CONSIDER TRAINING ARRANGEMENTS FOR NEW COUNCILLORS**



It was AGREED to spend £590 for bespoke, face-to-face SALC training for the new councillors, which could be offered out to nearby parishes to assist with offsetting the cost.

18/24 **TO AGREE THE PROCESS FOR THE RECRUITMENT OF A PARISH CLERK**

It was AGREED to proceed with the recruitment of a parish clerk for twelve hours per week, which was felt to be commensurate with the Council's requirements, using the updated pay scales. Cllr. Best agreed to draw up an advertisement and supporting recruitment documents and submit to Somerset Council and SALC for circulation.

19/24 **TO CONSIDER INTERIM ARRANGMENTS FOR CLERK SUPPORT**

It was AGREED to appoint Katharine Sheehan, a qualified and experienced clerk as locum cover until a permanent appointment could be made. Cllr. Best would carry out the financial part of the role due to time constraints from the locum clerk's substantive role.

20/24 **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

None.

21/24 **S106 FUNDS**

To receive an update on the Community Association application for S106 funds from 53/12/20008 (Orchard Lodge, Dene Road)

Cllr. Best reported that he had spoken to Somerset Council officers who had identified two S106 funds available to CSLPC. He reported that the Community Association application for kitchen upgrade using one of these funds had been declined.

Some discussion took place about the availability of S106 funds generally, including purpose and expiry. Councillors noted that they would need to spend some time understanding parish priorities and identifying possible projects which might benefit from the funds. Cllr. Birch agreed to research the funds available.

22/24 **ESTATES UPDATE**

To receive an update on actions requiring follow up from the March CSLPC meeting

Picnic tables – ongoing.

Reinstatement valuations for MUGA and tennis court – Cllr. Best is progressing.

Play equipment safety inspections – completed by Somerset Council.

Hard path signage – ongoing.

Additional bins – three bins had been placed on order.

Estate management and weed control – Cllr. Best had spoken with the contractors and was now in possession of the specification and locations. Weedkilling contractors were due to start the following week. Bin emptying will continue in its current form and Somerset Council would continue to provide 6 cuts per year to highways verges. Cllr. Best agreed to obtain a copy of the grass cutting schedule from Somerset Council.



Cllrs. Freeman and Grover agreed to conduct site visits to determine what has been done and report back at the next meeting.

23/24 **VILLAGE NEWSLETTER**

It was AGREED to defer this until the following year.

24/24 **FINANCE**

It was AGREED that all councillors would become signatories to the bank accounts with the exception of Cllr. Best.

It was AGREED that the locum Clerk would request an extension from the external auditor for the submission of the 2023/24 AGAR.

25/24 **AUDIT**

a. Appointment of an internal auditor

It was noted that an internal auditor had been appointed, Cllr. Best agreed to find contact details.

b. Review of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

It was agreed to accept the current Standing Orders and Financial Regulations without change, but that the locum clerk would review both documents before handing over to the new clerk to ensure both were fit for purpose.

26/24 **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

Thursday 18th July 2024, 19.00, Community Centre.

The meeting closed at 19.42.

Signed:

Dated:

CSLPC05June2024