

WEMBDON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 16 APRIL 2007

Present

Mr Webb (Chairman), Cllr Ann Bown, Mrs Riddle, Mrs Coombes, Mrs Lumber & Messrs Perry, Brown, Harris & Bagg.

1) Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed the Parish Councillors, County Cllr John Edney, PC Tony Freeman & 6 members of the public to the meeting.

2) Apologies for Absence

These were received in respect of Mr Solomon. County Cllr John Edney advised that he might have to leave the meeting before it finished.

3) Minutes

The minutes of the meeting dated 12 March 2007 were agreed & signed.

4) Report from PC Tony Freeman

PC Freeman reported continuing problems with vandalism to the Church windows. Regular checks were being undertaken. He remained open minded as to whom was responsible for the vandalism.

Generally, the Wembdon part of the Beat was relatively quiet although the pub & several other properties had been burgled.

A member of the public thanked PC Freeman for his continued presence in the village, which, in her opinion, had contributed greatly to the reduction in anti-social behaviour.

5) Matters Arising

5.1) Footpath/Road at the bottom of Wembdon Hill

In view of the fact that the mulched leaves remained & the difficulty for the Council cleaning vehicle gaining access Mr Brown & Mr Harris volunteered to clear the area.

5.2) Verge in Church Road

Cllr Ann Bown agreed to raise this once more with S.D.C., as they still had not replaced the shrubs they had accidentally destroyed.

5.3) Area Working Panels

It was agreed, provisionally, that Mrs Lumber & Mrs Riddle would represent the Parish Council at the meeting to be held on 16 May. To date the Parish Council had no proposals for the Working Panel in respect of possible areas for expenditure during 2007/08 that were in accordance with the stipulated funding guidance.

5.4) Bridgwater Cluster Group Meeting

Mr Solomon had supplied a written report. He advised that there had been a long discussion regarding the County Councils bid for Unitary Authority status. There was general agreement that Town/Parish Councils had not received sufficient information to support or reject the bid. The meeting had also been advised that it was unlikely that the Government would listen to the views of individual Town/Parish Councils & therefore the best way forward was through County Associations. There was a possibility of a referendum being held after the local elections although the value of it was questionable as the result was likely to be influenced by the questions asked.

Somerset County Council had arranged a series of events to put their case across & S.D.C. along with other District Councils had produced a document "Team Somerset" which was their alternative to the proposals submitted by the County Council. Mr Perry offered to attend one of the meetings launching "Team Somerset". A decision on attending one of the County Council events would be made at the May Parish Council meeting. Details of the timetable for determining Unitary Authority status were placed in the correspondence folder.

Mr Solomon's report included concern raised by Councillors regarding the poor quality of street cleaning & in particular the amount of broken glass left after recycling collections. It had also been noted at the meeting that although Avon & Somerset Police raised one of the highest precepts they were noted as poor performers according to national statistics.

5.5) Parish Council Elections

Nominations had been received from the 10 existing Parish Councillors & also from Mr R Western. Therefore an election would be held on Thursday 3 May 2007.

6) Correspondence

6.1) Sedgemoor Charter for Local Councils

S.D.C. had prepared a revision to the existing charter between themselves & Town/Parish Councils & this was placed in the correspondence folder.

6.2) The Mitchell Trust

The Chairman reported on a meeting he had attended in respect of the above Trust. The Charity had been set up in 1623 for the benefit of the poor in Wembdon. At the beginning £40 had been invested in land. Over the years the investment had changed. The Trust had been run by 4 trustees, who served a term of 5 years, + a clerk, who from time to time had been the Clerk of the Parish Council. Until his retirement the late Jim Woodley had acted as Clerk to the trust. This position was not handed over to his replacement upon his retirement. The trust had, effectively, become dormant & the four existing ex-members were in agreement that it had become time to hand over the trust to the Parish Council for them to decide the future for the trust. The former trustees were recommending closure of the trust with the Parish Council determining the distribution of the assets held. If the Parish Council decided to continue with the trust then their recommendation was that the Clerk to the Parish Council should once again become Clerk to the trust so that the Parish Council could once more oversee appointment of new trustees.

The Chairman reported that he believed there to be about £3,000 capital & around £500 interest accrued. He believed that the trust should be closed but wanted the Parish Council

to consider it before making a decision. Correspondence relating to the trust was therefore placed in the correspondence folder. The Chairman added that in his opinion there was quite a lot of work required to finalise the trust & he would therefore be recommending a fee be paid, from the trust fund, to whomever took on responsibility for doing so.

6.3) Highways Related Questionnaire

Mr Harris agreed to complete this on behalf of the Parish Council.

6.4) Somerset County Council Statement of Community Involvement

The Parish Council noted that the statement, which set out minimum levels of consultation that the County Council must carry out on planning documents dealing with minerals & waste, & on planning applications determined by them, had been adopted & published.

6.5) Local Councils Update

A free copy of a monthly publication that provided legal advice to Councils was placed in the correspondence folder. The Parish Council was asked to consider, after reading the update, subscribing to the publication at the cost of £65pa or £100pa if they required access to the Internet, which provided on-line advice & answers to questions.

6.6) Other Correspondence

The following was placed in the correspondence folder

- Thatch magazine – spring edition
- The Parrett People magazine – spring edition
- S.C.C. Environmental Maintenance newsletter
- Information on Home Composting bins

7) Report from Cllr Ann Bown

After several months of problems at the Children's Home Cllr Bown was pleased to report that, presently, all was quiet.

Cllr Bown was still trying to finalise details of the other play areas off the NDR but stated that negotiations with the developers was slow.

Cllr Bown thanked the Parish Council for showing her respect & making her feel welcome during the past 4 years.

8) Reports from Sub-committees

8.1) Footpaths

A Public Rights of Way guide for dog owners & walkers had been received.

Mr Brown reported that the footpaths were generally in good condition. The Rights of Way Officer had advised that there would be 3 cuts of vegetation on the footpaths, annually, with the first taking place in mid May.

Mr Brown had raised concerns, once more, regarding access over the footpath bridge at the NDR end of the playing field & had been disappointed with the response from the Footpaths Officer. County Cllr John Edney agreed to take this matter forward on behalf of the Council.

Mr Brown notified the Parish Council that the Rights of Way Officer had confirmed that the footpaths BW 34/16 & BW 34/11 conformed to legal Rights of Way standards & that

the fencing now surrounding the fields bordered by these footpaths did not infringe the Rights of Way.

8.2) Playing field

The Parish Council was advised that Viridor had approved a funding bid of £20399, which meant that the playing field project, as outlined, could proceed. Prior to receiving any funding from Viridor the Parish Council were required to pay a sum of 10% of the amount awarded to them from monies received from the community. This was in effect the payment to be received from the WCA.

The following resolution was approved "The Clerk is authorised to sign the funding agreement with Viridor & make a payment to Viridor Waste Management Ltd totaling £2033.90.

The Parish Council had now received or been promised the following funding

Awards for All £6000

RLT2 £3792

WCA £2000

Viridor £17898

In addition the Parish Council had allocated an amount of £6000 towards the project & Mr Solomon was hopeful that within the next month the O2 Community fund would award the Parish Council £1000.

Mr Harris reported on the quotes received for supplying the new equipment & undertaking the necessary ground works & recommended that the quote from Sutcliffe Play for £28455 + VAT be accepted as their quote was the most competitive & they had a proven track record on installations of this type, including working with S.D.C. The Parish Council approved the quote.

It was noted that the fallen Elm tree at one end of the playing field had been removed.

8.3) Parish Plan

Mr Bagg was pleased to report that, subject to accepting the terms & conditions, Defra had awarded the Parish Council a grant of £2750 to produce a Parish Plan. The Community Council for Somerset had been active in supporting the Parish Council's application. The Clerk was authorised to sign the terms & conditions agreement & seek payment of the grant. Since the last meeting a further volunteer had joined the steering group. Guidance packs on the production of a Parish Plan were to be supplied to the steering group. Information on the provision of a Parish Mapping Service supplied on a CD ROM had been received.

8.4) Allotments

All the allotments had now been let.

Mr Harris reported that the overgrowth on the wall alongside the access to the allotments was in the process of being removed. Mr Bagg reported that work on filling the potholes was ongoing.

9) Finance

The annual audit of the accounts was due to take place on 30 June 2007. The draft accounts were handed to the sub-committee to review.

A new Internal auditor had been identified, which offered a considerable saving on the costs currently incurred.

The Employers Annual Return had been submitted on-line, which afforded the Parish Council a refund from HMRC of £150. This was on top of the £500 received in the past 2 years.

The following payments were authorised

- Subscription to the Community Council for Somerset £25
- Payment to the Clerk for the advertisement of the Annual Parish Meeting in the Bridgwater Times £54.64
- Ground Maintenance £331.50
- Clerk's Salary & Income Tax £790.00

Balance at 12 March		£17387.91
Bank Interest	£115.88	
Allotment Rent Received	£ 40.00	<u>£ 155.88</u>
		£17543.79
Less		
Annual Allotment Rent	£200.00	
Allotment Rent Refunded	£ 8.00	
Clerk's Expenses	£ 38.62	
Dog Waste Bin Emptying	£141.75	<u>£ 388.37</u>
		£17155.42

The Parish Council was provided with a bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2007.

In view of the funding received for separate projects the Clerk was instructed to keep a record of expenditure against each project.

10) Planning

51/06/00046 – Barton Farm, Perry Green. Application for Certificate of lawfulness for existing occupation of dwelling without complying with condition 5 of Planning Permission **51/91/14** & condition 2 of Planning Permission **51/91/23** restricting the occupation to a person employed in agriculture or forestry.

No objection from Parish Council sub-committee.

13/06/036 & 037 – Spaxton Road, Bridgwater. Allow continued use of land for storage, crushing & recycling of hardcore & the continued importation of waste for site restoration purposes for a period of 10 years.

Permission granted.

51/07/00003 – Barn to the South of, Perry Court Farm, Perry Green. Change of use & conversion of former agricultural barn to bungalow.

Permission granted.

51/07/00004 – Copperlia, Blakes Road, Wembdon. Erection of single storey rear extension.

Permission granted.

51/07/00005 – 17 Inwood Road, Wembdon. Erection of new porch to front elevation.
Permission granted.

51/07/00006 – 3 Church Road, Wembdon. (Tree Preservation Order). Crown lift one Lime Tree (T1) to provide at least 5.5m clearance above carriageway, remove branches to give 2m clearance above telephone lines & crown clean.
Permission granted.

51/07/00007 – 24 Wembdon Hill. Formation of parking and access.
No objection from Parish Council sub-committee.

51/07/00008 – 68 Oak Apple Drive, Wembdon. Erection of conservatory to West elevation.
No objection from Parish Council sub-committee.

51/07/00009 – 66 Oak Apple Drive, Wembdon. Erection of conservatory to East elevation.
No objection from Parish Council sub-committee.

11) A.O.B

11.1) Bin for Shop

Previously the owner of the shop had supplied a small bin for the collection of rubbish. The Parish Council was now being asked whether they would like to provide one. However, the Parish Council agreed that it was their expectation that the shop should supply one.

11.2) Functioning & Organisation of the Parish Council

Mr Harris questioned the current working arrangements & suggested that responsibilities be allocated to specific Councillors. It was noted that no decision could be made until the formation of the new Parish Council following the elections on 3 May.

11.3) Vote of Thanks

On behalf of the Parish Council Mr Harris thanked Mr Webb for his hard work & dedication as Chairman of the Parish Council.

The date of the next meeting, which is the Parish Council AGM, is Monday 14 May 2007, commencing at 7.15pm