

WEMBDON PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Council Clerk, Tony Jay, 5 Maple View, Kewstoke, Weston-super-Mare, BS22 9XQ.
Email clerk@wembdon.org Telephone 07859911204

Minutes of a meeting of Wembdon Parish Council held at Wembdon Village Hall on 12th February 2024 that commenced at 7.30pm when the following business was transacted.

Present: Councillors A Reed (Chairman), C Chalk, L Edwards, J Hayden-Briffett, P King, P Major and M Phillips.

Parish Clerk: Tony Jay

- 35/24 To receive any apologies for absence.
Apologies were received from Councillors D Claydon, D Gliddon and B Hedaux.
- 36/24 To receive declarations of any pecuniary interests on items relating to this agenda, which have not been previously declared in the Councillors register of interests.
There were no declarations of interest.
- 37/24 To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on 29th January 2024.
It was unanimously resolved to approve the minutes as being a correct record of the meeting.
- 38/24 To invite public speaking – any parishioner of Wembdon and/or members of the press who has given.
A member of the public spoke about agenda item 40/24.
- 39/24 To receive the Clerk's report.
Nether Stowey Parish Council are writing to Somerset Council asking for more data to be shared on the Parish Online database. It was agreed that Wembdon Parish Council will be a co-signatory to the letter.

Wembdon St. Georges Primary School has been consulting with residents who live in the vicinity of the school regarding the introduction of a 'Schools Streets' initiative. This would involve the shutting of Brantwood Road to most drivers taking children to school or collecting them, for a short period each school day morning and afternoon. It would not apply to residents of Brantwood Road, and their visitors. The Parish Council was not invited to be part of the discussions on this initiative, although Councillors have submitted their personal views.
- 40/24 To consider a request from a parishioner for a memorial bench to be installed on the playing fields.
It was unanimously resolved to allow a memorial bench to be installed.

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- 41/24 To consider the date and arrangements for the Annual Parish Assembly
It was unanimously resolved to hold the assembly on Monday 22nd April.
Councillor Hayden-Briffett will arrange a speaker with an environmental theme. Refreshments will be served after the Annual Parish Assembly.
- 42/24 To receive an update from the Neighbourhood Plan Review Group.
When the neighbourhood plan was first written it included in Section 7 that it would be reviewed after a period of time. A review group has now been set up. Professional assistance will be required during the review process. Funds have been allocated in our budget to finance this. Additionally, we also need to write and adopt a community strategy.
- 43/24 To receive a report on Highways.
A wall has collapsed in Hollow Lane, which has caused the road to be closed. The Clerk will contact Highways to see what action they intend to take. Councillors will try to find out who owns the wall.

Councillor Major has been in touch with the project manager for one of the Cokerhurst Farm developers, who is very keen to keep the council updated with developments.
- 44/24 To receive a report on the Footpaths and Verges.
There was nothing to report.
- 45/24 To receive a report regarding SID results and Speedwatch.

The most beneficial aspect of the 20-mph introduction so far is the decrease in traffic volume using Wembdon as a rat-run.

The volume of traffic coming from Sandford roundabout through the village has fallen from an average of 717 vehicles per day to 426, a drop of almost 300 vehicles! From the NDR towards the village a drop from 1,735 vehicles per day to 1,444! Again almost 300 fewer movements – the school run partially accounts for the higher figures.

The average speeds have fallen, in ALL locations we measure, by up to 5 mph which is considerable. The average on Sandford Hill is now 25.68 mph and on Wembdon Rise from the NDR is 20.74 mph.

Thank you to the Speedwatch team who were active on February 2nd with a total of 14 drivers being reported to the police for driving above 25 mph including one with no tax. This was approximately 5% of vehicles recorded at that spot on Wembdon Rise by the Inwood junction. Those drivers will receive warning letters from Avon and Somerset Police.

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The Speedwatch team are always on the lookout for new recruits who can spare an hour or two a month to help out with the monitoring. Please contact the clerk with your details if you're interested.

The impact of the Cokerhurst Farm junction work on the A39, now due to have started on February 12th, will be closely monitored by councillors. We can expect vehicles to try to circumvent any delays by cutting through the village.

46/24 To receive a report on the Parklands.

The installation of a new vandal proof water station is being considered. Drawings will be prepared and submitted to Somerset Council for their approval in principle. There will be an agenda item at a future meeting to approve this expenditure.

It has already been agreed to repair the fence on one side of the bridge at the Parklands, but the one on the other side now needs some work doing to it. Councillor Edwards will liaise with the contractor doing the work regarding this.

Bird boxes are being removed from the Parklands. Some are found abandoned nearby but others have been taken away.

47/24 To receive a report regarding the Village Hall.

The coffee shop is now up and running and has already proved to be a great success.

48/24 To receive a report on the Parish Paper.

The latest edition has been sent to the printers and will be delivered later this month.

49/24 To receive a report on the Allotments.

Rubbish and vegetation have been dumped on the Parish Council plot. Arrangements will be made for it to be removed.

50/24 To receive a report on Playing Fields and Common.

The basketball post will be refurbished by a local volunteer when the ground dries up and a vehicle can be driven across the playing field.

It was decided that there would be no net on the ring. This follows advice given by two teachers that an unsupervised ring with a net can be a health and safety danger to young people who choose the swing on the ring, as has been witnessed on a number of occasions in the past. If a metal chain net was installed, then fingers could be injured if the person fell. Although string nets are very cheap to buy, they are easily damaged in the same way.

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51/24 To receive a report on Perry Green.
Councillor King gave an update regarding the flooding problems. A number of sites meetings that have been held.

52/24 To receive a report regarding the Transport Forum and the EDF Forum.
A report from the latest meeting has been circulated to councillors.

53/24 To note all statutory payments made since the last meeting (see minute 151/23).

Payee	Detail	Amount £
GWB Services	Maintenance contract (including VAT which can be reclaimed).	2827.99

The statutory payments were noted.

54/24 To note the following non-statutory payments.

Payee	Detail	Amount £
Tony Jay	Clerk's expenses	130.05
RT Signs	Two replacement signs	126.81

The non-statutory payments were noted. A budget update sheet had been pre-circulated to councillors.

55/24 To receive any matters of report.
Councillor Hedaux has circulated her summary of the latest Local Community Network meeting. The summary is included at the end of these minutes. The Parish Council should consider appointing a Councillor to attend the quarterly Local Community Network Highways Working Group meetings. Councillor King volunteered to take on this role.

The front boundary wall which has collapsed at 30, Wembdon Rise has not been repaired. The Clerk was asked to write to the residents of that property to ask when the work will be taking place.

The pavement outside 32A, Wembdon Rise is damaged and is causing a hazard to pedestrians. The Clerk will report this to Highways.

The beacon at the allotments will be lit as part of the commemoration of the 80th anniversary of D Day on June 6th.

56/24 Date of next meeting: 11th March 2024.

End of minutes.

Summary of Local Community Network meeting held on Monday 5th February.

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A very brief update was provided re the timeline of the declaration of the financial situation of Somerset Council. The brief outline told us nothing new. The Somerset Council meeting on 20th February should outline proposed cuts and start consultation on asset release e.g. Recycling centres.

Two schemes were highlighted:

a)- The Local Community Network Highways subgroup / working group was discussed. It was explained that the Exmoor pilot group felt this group was very successful offering an opportunity for collaboration and face to face contact in planning highways priorities across the Local Community Network in a meeting once every four months for a parish representative and highways officers. The Chair asked for expressions of interest in an initial Highways Working Group following receipt and discussion of terms of reference. Many present thought this initial meeting could be positive but were aware that this relies on a parish councillor being available to attend a meeting in the working day once a quarter. The meeting also asked for a Highways officer to be present at the next Local Community Network meeting.

b) Somerset Council Highways Steward scheme.

The Highways Steward scheme is a scheme where parish councils (via the Local Community Network) could employ a Highways operative(steward) full time for £50,000 a year (or for £10,000 for one day per week), to maintain parish highways across the Local Community Network via as a response to ad hoc reported works such as responding to pot holes / clearing drains for surface water clearance etc. or some planned verge management / sign cleaning etc. This operative would be employed via the new contractor Kier who would manage the cover for sickness/ holiday etc. This scheme buy-in would remove issues of risk assessment/ public liability etc. from individual parish councils if they tried to engage their own contractor. Many issues were discussed- time allocation / prioritising jobs, monitoring quality of service and cost. Little data is available to support this scheme, which was a concern to all present.

Parish Online was a resource that was discussed to find and upload details to share and support our planning for devolved services.

Concerns were raised by us and others about problems with planning enforcement across the Local Community Network area. Chairman Mike Caswell explained that enforcement is not a statutory requirement, and in consequence suffers from a lack of staff. Work is ongoing to upload details of enforcement action onto the Somerset website. Somerset Councillors Mike Caswell and Brian Bolt agreed to take these concerns back to the Somerset Council planning strategy committee and planning committees.

The next meeting will be held on Monday March 18th.

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The Local Community Network AGM will be in May when Mike Caswell explained he will step down as Chair.