

MINUTES OF ST CUTHBERT (OUT) PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT DINDER VILLAGE HALL, DINDER BA5 3PF ON MONDAY 19TH JUNE 2023, 7PM.

PRESENT: Cllrs J Baker; P Cannon; M Cooke; E Danson; M Hayden; I Humphreys; M Mitchell; G Pettitt; J Zorab.

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms M Exton (Parish Clerk); Somerset Council Cllr Ros Wyke; 2 Members of the Public.

01. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TO CONSIDER THE REASONS GIVEN

Apologies were received from Cllrs B Conder; T Hathway; J Joseph; M Lunnon; J Reeves.

RESOLVED: To approve the reasons given for Members' absence.

02. CO-OPTION OF UP TO 1 MEMBER TO REPRESENT THE SOUTH WARD

Co-option was deferred until the 7th August meeting when both Candidates who have expressed an interest in joining the Council would be able to attend.

03. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

03.01. Cllr Cannon declared a PERSONAL interest in item 07 and Cllr Hayden declared a PERSONAL interest in item 11.

03.02. There were no requests for dispensations for disclosable pecuniary interests.

03.03. There were no requests for dispensation.

04. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: To exclude the Press & Public from item 18 for data protection reasons.

05. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

06. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

A Member of Wells City Bus User's Group (WBUG) explained their role and shared their concerns about the local bus services. The tools being used to fight to keep local bus services include recruiting Bus Champions, campaigning in villages, meeting with the Wells bus depot manager, writing to First Bus and organising and getting support for peaceful demos and marches - on one recent visit to Wells bus station, a petition with over 200 signatures and 5 pages of complaints had been collected. Issues that were highlighted included that buses need to run more frequently, it is important that young people can get out and about by bus so that they will not need to move away from their villages, real-time information about cancellations and delayed services is needed as bus services are not reliable (a WBUG priority for this year) and Wells bus station needs daily cleaning and the benches need improvement. Cllr Wyke is meeting with North Somerset Council this Friday and is hoping that they will provide the funds for the 126 service to go to an A road where users will be able to get another connection. Cllr Wyke recognised that the support from this Parish Council over the years, has made a huge difference in helping to keep local bus services running (including the 67 and 174 services). Although the extension of the £2 single fare is encouraging more people to use buses, Cllr Wyke suggested that everyone could help boost usage numbers by taking a bus trip once a fortnight.

07. LOCAL AUTHORITY REPORTS

To receive reports either in person or in writing from:

- Avon & Somerset Police – the Clerk had not received a Police report for May.
- Somerset Council Councillors – Apologies were received from Cllr Robbins whose report for June had been sent to Cllrs before the meeting. Cllr Wyke confirmed that there are 11 Parish Councils and 6 Somerset Cllrs in our LCN (see item 13). The next Local Plan for Somerset must be ready for 2028; the process is complex, there will be high-level consultation and it is really important if the Parish Council wants to protect any land, that it identifies the desired/needed land usage. The Strawberry Line now connects the communities of Easton and Westbury-sub-Mendip and Cllr Wyke believes this will contribute positively to many aspects of both communities' lives. Referring to Cllr Robbins' report on the rollout of EV charge points, Cllr Cannon highlighted the disadvantage that electric car drivers are subject to compared to fossil fuel car drivers if the former must have an app on their phone to use a public EV charge point and asked for reassurance that an app on the user's phone would not be required. Cllr Humphreys added the great difficulties in using public carparks that also require an app on the user's phone. Cllr Wyke will feed both points back to Somerset Council.

08. MINUTES OF ST CUTHBERT (OUT) PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY 3RD MAY 2023

RESOLVED: To confirm and sign as a correct record the minutes of the Council held on Wednesday 3rd May 2023.

09. REVIEW BUDGET AND SPEND 2022/23

Members considered the recommendation of the Finance & Scrutiny Committee 7th June 2023 to approve the budget and spend for the financial year 2022/23.

RESOLVED: To approve the budget and spend for 2022/23.

10. ACCOUNTS 2022/2023

The Council considered the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022/23. It was noted that Full Council 20th March 2023 had reviewed the effectiveness of the Council's internal control systems, considered the findings of the review and had resolved to approve the 'Statement of Internal Control 2022/23'. The Annual Internal Auditor's Reports and recommendations were received and reviewed by Members and the Clerk confirmed that all recommendations were either being actioned or had been scheduled to be explored. Confirmation of the dates of the period for the exercise of public rights 2022/23 was noted to commence on 27th June and end on 7th August 2023.

10A. The Annual Governance Statement (Section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022/23) was considered by the Council.

RESOLVED: To approve the Annual Governance Statement (Section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022/23).

10B. The Clerk provided Cllrs with the Statement of Accounts showing Receipts and Payments, the S137 Transactions, all Bank Reconciliations as at 31st March 2023, the Explanation of Variances and the Accounting Statements (Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022/23) which were considered by the Council.

RESOLVED: To approve the Accounting Statements (Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022/23).

11. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

The Council reviewed a schedule of items of expenditure and issuing of payment. The bank statements and reconciles for all bank accounts for April and May 2023 were verified by the appointed Member.

RESOLVED: To approve a schedule of items of expenditure and issuing of payment.

12. ALLOTMENTS RENT REVIEW

Members reviewed the recommendations of the Asset Management Committee 17th May 2023 and the Finance & Scrutiny Committee 7th June 2023 concerning the allotment rents 2023/24.

RESOLVED: To approve that the allotment rents for 2023/24 are increased as follows:
In-Parish: Full plot = £45; Full plot (OAP concession) = £35; Half plot = £30; Half plot (OAP concession) = £25.

Out-of-Parish: Full plot = £67.50; Full plot (OAP concession) = £52.50; Half plot = £45; Half plot (OAP concession) = £37.50.

13. WORKING WITH THE NEW UNITARY AUTHORITY

It was noted that the first meeting of the Area 4 Wells and Rural LCN will be a hybrid meeting held on 29th June 2023 in Priddy Village Hall and that Cllr Hathway and the Deputy Clerk will attend. Somerset Council are encouraging participation by groups who wish to be represented although there was some concern that participation of wider group representation for eg. Dark Skies is included. It was suggested that if Cllrs wished to attend as Members of the Public, that they should carshare. It was recommended that Cllrs read the LCN Handbook which they had been sent. The Chair is to investigate which authority/organisation now deals with rough sleepers.

14. ENVIRONMENT WORKING GROUP (EWG)

Cllr Pettitt updated Members that Cllr Joseph is very busy with the 5-mile food initiative. The EWG has not met recently, and the next meeting will start at the Dulcote end of the Strawberry Line on 10th July when the EWG will be investigating supporting the installation of a pool as a wildlife habitat and part of the wildlife corridor. Cllr Cannon elaborated on the ongoing work to replace damaged and poorly located waymarks on some footpaths and to create a St Cuthbert Out Parish Explorer (SCOPE) trail comprised of existing rights of way paths which will connect the Parish villages/communities. The Council's logo will be used on waymarks to give a sense of the Council's identity. Publicity of the trail and new waymarks will be needed to encourage resident usage.

15. REPORTS OF WARD ACTIVITIES

Cllr Cannon reported that following on from the extension to the Strawberry Line between Easton and Westbury-sub-Mendip, he will be supporting the work to provide the missing link between Easton and Wookey Holes into Wells and is requesting a new dog waste bin at Easton. The increase in dog walking Parishioners from the new housing developments using the Strawberry Line that links Haybridge and Wellls means more frequent dog waste bin collections are needed and are being requested.

16. NEW CHAIRPERSON TO BE ADDED TO THE BANK MANDATE

RESOLVED: To approve that the new Chairperson Cllr Zorab is added to the bank mandate.

17. APPROVAL TO RECRUIT ADDITIONAL CLERICAL SUPPORT STAFF

Members discussed the recruitment of additional clerical support staff due to the increasing workloads of the Clerks and RFO.

RESOLVED: To approve that the Staffing Committee assesses the staffing structure and commences recruitment for clerical support staff for up to an additional 20 hours per week.

RESOLVED: To approve that the Advertising Budget is used for the recruitment of additional clerical support staff, supplemented by the Employment Budgets if necessary.

18. SOMERSET COUNCIL'S CHAIRMAN'S AWARD

Members considered nominations for Somerset Council's Chairman's Award.

RESOLVED: The Clerk to contact the nominated resident for their permission to submit their name for the Somerset Council's Chairman's Award.

19. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

7th August 2023 at **7pm**.

20. DATE OF NEXT PARISH MEETING

9th April 2024.