

**SEAVINGTON ST MARY / MICHAEL PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
HELD AT THE SEAVINGTON MILLENNIUM HALL
ON TUESDAY 20th MARCH 2018**

ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

Present Mr N Loxton [Chair], Mrs J Ash, Mr N England, Mrs P Parsons, Mr C Reyland, Mr C Turner
Mr A Dance (District Councillor) Mr Crispin Raikes (District Councillor)

Apologies Mrs E Edwards (Parish Councillor)
Mr & Mrs D Froome

Also Present Seven members of the public

ANY QUESTION TIME – No questions had been submitted to the Parish Council and none were raised at the meeting

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON 21st MARCH 2017 were agreed as correct and signed.

CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

Chairman – Nick Loxton welcomed all present and introduced Parish, County and District Councillors.

The purpose of tonight's meeting, in addition to opening the floor to public questions, is primarily one of information flow from your Council, which will be a brief resumé of the major events of the past year.

Planning

Last year I reported upon two pending applications for Planning consent one external and one internal which could affect our community, namely Shrudrick Lane in Ilminster, and the slightly controversial Southernways application in St Mary. After much discussion and an appeal in one case both of these were turned down by the District Council.

In addition to the above within the villages I highlighted two other developments which over the past year have affected us all, namely Pond Farm now three quarters sold, and the former Lift West Site rapidly approaching completion.

In more recent months there has been an application by the owners of 10 Winchester Cottages for an extension, which although your Parish Council asked for and was granted an extension of time to discuss and evaluate the application, the District planning department took it upon themselves to approve the application without the Parish Council being able to give an opinion one way or the other - two weeks earlier than the deadline agreed by the District Council. There has also been an application by the owners of Court Farm to reinstate planning permission approved 25 years ago to change the use of a barn to one in number residential dwelling, this application is awaiting a decision.

Village Car Parking

Car Parking in the village is still causing some issues in several places. The white lining of the village car park [opposite The Volunteer] has made the situation there much better. However, all residents need to be aware that use of the Millennium Hall Car Park is for visitors to and customers of The Seavington Playing Fields, The Millennium Hall and The Village Community Shop and Cafeteria ONLY, and NOT a general free-for-all village parking area. The indiscriminate use by external workers and the continued unauthorised parking by residents not only denies the facility to the legitimate users, but also demonstrates a level of irresponsibility similar to that which prompted the recent positioning of posts on the verges of Water Street.

It is hoped that this recent, but not yet finished work, will deter irresponsible parking on the verge. On a separate but related note, considerable damage was inflicted to a wall at the West Street/Water Street junction with the culprit remaining unidentified.

Highways

Many of the Planning issues highlighted just now were identified by your Parish Council last year to have the potential to alter traffic patterns within the villages with their consequential impact upon road safety, to which end following previous disappointment, in a renewed impetus in consultation with our County Councillor, we have submitted a Small Improvement Scheme (SIS) to the County Council. The overall aim is to improve Road Safety by reducing speeding through the villages. Various measures are being proposed within this SIS, including along the C5021 - alteration of some of the white-lining, moving some of the 30mph speed limit boundaries, relocation of bollards in the village, some surface refurbishments. Our County Councillor has done considerable work lobbying Highways on our behalf and we hope for a decision soon.

Numerous instances of potholes, road edge erosion, drain problems and flooding in Water Street, Rookesmeade Lane, New Road and Church Lane have all been reported recently to Highways, and we await rectification.

Repeated clarification has again been requested as to the classification of the main road through the village, is it the C5021 or the B3168, Highways have not been forthcoming with a reply!

C5021 and Speeding Issues within the Villages

Many of you will have read the letter in the March edition of the News which raised concerns over the increased volume of heavier traffic through the Villages. Mr Nick Bragg (the owner of the Anaerobic Digester (AD) at Frogmary Green Farm) and his Farm Business Consultant were in attendance at the last Parish Council Meeting, and were able to clarify a number of concerns raised both the letter and by Parish Councillors:-

- Mr Bragg advised that for the next maize harvesting period it was hoped that the amount of maize being stored in Ilminster would be cut by 60% with the similar consequential reduction in vehicular Traffic transporting Maize from Whitelackington to Frogmary
- Mr Bragg had not had to get any planning permission for the store as it was only ever considered to be temporary. The

- new concrete driveway has been created to save mud being brought onto the Highway at Whitelackington
- Mr Bragg advised Councillors that the installation of the digester was in response to his farm ‘changing focus’ and that the energy created was supporting not only the chicken enterprise at Frogmary Green but surrounding parishes as well
- In answer to a perception that all farm vehicle movement through the village emanate from Frogmary Green, Mr Bragg advised that at present his vehicles **were only** operating between the hours of 7.45am to 9.30pm to bring maize from Ilminster to Frogmary Green. [The times quoted are maximum times during harvesting periods]. Vehicles transitting through the village outside of these times were not his, but Mr Bragg agreed to try and get some form of identifying signage on his vehicles for clarity, he also agreed that he would provide reports for the Seavingtons’ News giving details of known predicted movements and plans
- Aware of the village concerns over the speed of haulage vehicles, Mr Bragg reported that he too had been in discussion with the Police and had and would continue to advise **his** drivers accordingly.

The Village Ranger

Sterling work is being done by our village ranger Karen, keeping our Community tidy over the year, and particularly recently the work done in tidying up the edge of the path eastwards up the hill out of the village, and hedge and ditch work on David’s Lane and in Water Street by the Millennium Hall.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

Once again Parish Councillors unanimously agreed that they would continue to increase the Precept as there were still concerns that in the future it could be capped by Central Government and that works that had been carried out by both District and County may be passed over to Parishes.

This financial year the Precept applied for was £14,370 but because of the Council Support Grant [£230] paid by South Somerset District Council the actual amount received was £14,600. This was a decrease in the Precept because of the reduction of the Council Support Grant by some £550.00. As stated previously these monies stay within the Parishes to be spent on village maintenance and local projects. At present the Current Account stands at £904.62 and the Business Reserve at £14,809.93. This is a reduction in our Reserves of some £3,000.00. Total monies spent this year to date are £19,078.58. However, the purchase of a defibulator, grant for Shop air conditioning unit and the purchase of an extra seat in the Orchard totalling some £2,376.00 have been taken from Reserves or Donations. The only outstanding invoice is for the hire of the Millennium Hall. There will be £2,029.64 VAT to be reclaimed.

The main areas of expenditure are - The Ranger Scheme – costs of which this year have increased to £5,661.00 as the Parish Council agreed to more hours during the winter months to cope with blocked drains and other general maintenance. However, I am sure you will agree that buying into this scheme is worthwhile. Cutting of the Playing Field, maintenance of the footpaths and the cutting of the two play areas, Cafe picnic area and strimming various parts that the gang mowers cannot do on the playing field and other areas around the village have totalled £5,271.70. Sadly during the year Jamie Gillard gave up cutting the play areas and other areas around the village. We thank Jamie for the hard work he did over many years to keep the areas looking tidy. Somerset Landscapes were employed by the Parish Council to cut the main playing field and they took over the cutting of other areas on the field and Phil Gordon-Smith has taken over the other areas that Jamie cut. Because of the increased costs it was with regret that the Parish Council informed the Playing Fields Association that with effect from 1st April 2018 they would, once again, have to arrange and pay for the maintenance of the play areas and the cafe picnic area. The Parish Council will continue to pay for the gang mowing of the main field.

The grant paid to Seavington Parochial Church Council remained at £1,250 towards Churchyard maintenance. Other grants paid are as follows - £500 [for rent due to SPFA], £300 [for provision of Broadband and WiFi] to the Shop/Cafe. The promised grant of £1,000 was also paid to the Community Shop towards the installation of the air conditioning. Seavington Youth Club received a grant of £250. Equipment costing some £150 was also purchased on behalf of the Youth Club. A defibulator costing £1,148 was purchased for the village. Our thanks go to Ian Gibson for arranging this through St John’s Ambulance Service.

The village car park and Millennium Hall car park were white-lined at a total cost of £480.00.

The Orchard Project has been completed and our thanks go to Karen Sutton and her helpers that made this possible. Another seat has been installed and a donation received to meet these costs.

My thanks go to Tony Beresford who has agreed to continue to be the Internal Auditor for the Parish Council.

Pauline Parsons [Responsible Financial Officer].

REPORT FROM NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH CO-ORDINATOR –Parish Council is still waiting for someone to take this over.

REPORT FROM VILLAGE TREE WARDENS – The Seavington Tree Wardens have mostly been clearing around some established planting and cutting down dead elms in various key areas. It is hoped that the dead tree on the green opposite Dark Lane will be replaced. [After meeting agreed this would not happen as one of the new troughs has been placed here]. The Wardens have also been liaising with the SPFA and doing work in The Orchard behind St Mary’s Close. Thanks go to Phil Gordon-Smith and Alan Graham for their continued work on behalf of the Parish Council

REPORT FROM PARISH PATHS LIAISON OFFICER – Footpaths are being well maintained with extra work being promised along the footpaths around Meade Farm. Replacement posts have been obtained from the County Council and erected where necessary. Thanks again to Phil Gordon-Smith and Andrew Gillard for this work.

REPORT ON VILLAGE WEB-SITE -

The Parish Council’s thanks go to Eugene Mulligan for his continued maintenance and up-dating of the village web-site. At

present the Parish Council only pay for any necessary software and licence fees

VILLAGE ORGANISATIONS REPORTS

(i) Seavington Playing Fields Association and Millennium Hall – Chairman Chris Gough reported that the Association are now working closely with other organisations in the village. At present the Millennium Hall is self supporting through hire charges and at present no fund raising is being done apart from the continuation of The Lottery. Thanks were given to the Volunteer Inn for hosting the monthly Quiz. The defibulator purchased by The Parish Council has been installed on the Community Shop. A new projector screen has been installed that can be used by any hirer of the Hall. Two football clubs are using the pitch and changing rooms for this season. Several major long term projects are now being discussed. Tree and hedge management is already taking place. Discussions are being had and quotes obtained to provide overflow car parking behind the Millennium Hall. A major re-vamp of the play areas is also being considered. Although the SPFA have funds at the moment monies will have to be raised to carry out all of these works and the Committee are looking to obtain grants. Any S106 monies due from the old Lift West site can only be used on Leisure and Recreation so these monies could go towards the re-vamping of the play areas.

(ii) Community Shop – This year so far, has been an improvement on the last, and we are heading for our forecast figures for the financial year. A slight hiccup when the bad weather forced closure for three days. Staffing costs for the cafe are our biggest investment, but this is more than justified by the large increase in customers – we are especially grateful for the builders on the former Lift West site as they have now a traditional cafe time every Friday morning spending not just on large cooked breakfast but also in the store. We shall miss them when the building is completed. We are beginning a new marketing campaign by using leaflet drop and Facebook and website promotions to gain extra business from the village. At present 75% of our clientele reside outside of Seavington – we are hoping to attract more local trade. We have also remerchandised the store layout to cafe for regular “sellers” and our grab and go customers. We have also rationalised our stock to include more products which customers have asked for. We still are in a careful management programme for the cash flow and despite some very heavy maintenance bills we are managing.. – Ian Gibson

(iii) The Seavingtons’ News – Since the last AGM the Seavingtons’ News Team has continued to produce a monthly issue which has been delivered free of charge to every household and business in the two villages.

The annual accounts will be available in April after the end of the financial year.

The News continues in a healthy financial position and has again increased the amount available for grants to village organisations. Income from the monthly waste paper skip remains steady but there has been a drop in the amount of advertising. We are looking to increase this over the next few months and 5 new advertisers have already been acquired in 2018.

So far in this financial year only one small grant has been made although another of £200 has been recently approved. After allowing for a reserve for equipment replacement there are funds available for further grants

We are grateful to the SPFA for permitting us to continue parking the skip in the Millennium Hall car park in spite of thoughtlessness on the part of some of the donors who create litter.

At the request of the Parish Council we are trying to work with a later monthly copy date, now 20th of the month. This is so that reports from the Parish Council can be up to date whilst still getting the magazine through letterboxes by the start of the next month. We will review this later in the year.

I am grateful to all our contributors for their untiring efforts and loyalty. Nevertheless, there is still a shortage of residents who are prepared to contribute articles for the magazine and, the significant drop in the activities of village clubs and organisations noted last year continues.

I would like to repeat my thanks to the "behind the scenes" volunteers who make the village magazine possible. These include Tony Beresford, our Treasurer and Advertising Manager, Maria Potts who helps with the editing and compilation of the magazine together with Elaine & Brian Edwards who collate, staple and deliver the finished magazine to our street distributors as well as this, unsung, army of individuals who tramp the streets with the magazines once a month.

I would particularly like to thank John Tudor who has recently stepped down as a street distributor after some twenty years and welcome Shirley Farrington who has taken over his round.

There will be some balancing adjustment to the distribution system when the Lift West development has been occupied and a new round will be created. Peter and Janice Ash have already agreed to take on the new round.

David Froome, Editor.

(iv) Youth Group – The Seavington Youth Club continues to attract a good number of children aged between 8 and 15 from the village, surrounding villages and even Ilminster. We usually have between 15 and 22 children attend each session and continue to run 2 sessions per month, reducing to 1 if there is a school holiday in the month.

The children have really enjoyed the new table tennis net, badminton net and equipment that we have recently purchased with funds from the Parish Council.

As ever we are always on the lookout for more adult volunteers. We are run by just 3 volunteers. Our concern for the future is that when our own children lose interest and become too old for the club - what will happen to the youth club? We have asked for more parental involvement, on several occasions, but have only been able to recruit one new volunteer who is now our third adult. (Jane Rice and myself have been running the club for three years, with other adults helping and then leaving for various reasons.)

Looking forwards, we would like to have the Bikeability course run again for our younger members, a lot are now nearing the age (9 years) when they can do this course. Our tuck shop is, as ever, popular and we make a small profit from tuck sold.

(v) SEAVINGTONS’ CLT

Much has happened with the CLT since the last PC AGM.
The Board of Directors of the CLT was elected in late March 2017
Construction of the 13 houses on the former Lift West Site started in late May last year and as we now see has continued apace
Regular monthly Board meetings have been established
Construction of the First of the three CLT houses has commenced
Solicitors for the transfer of the properties to the CLT and a managing agent for the CLT houses have been appointed
A Bank account has been opened
Membership is up to 100
Rental has to be set at no more than 80% of the 'going' rate
The development is to be named Falcon Close
First AGM is set for 27th March 2018 at 7pm

As there was no other business the meeting closed at 8.15pm

Signed

Date