

Clatworthy Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2016 at 7.30 in Clatworthy Village Hall

Present

D.J.Cowling (Chairman), R.Barlow, S.Branfield, P.Goodwin, S.McIntosh, S.Moran, F.Nicholson (Somerset County Councillor), K.Turner (West Somerset District Councillor), L.Baker (Exmoor Historic Signposts Project representative), N.E.Martin (Clerk)

1 Apologies

C.Giddings

2 Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 24 November 2015 were accepted as correct and were signed by the Chairman.

3 Matters Arising

Peter Goodwin wrote to Risdon Hosegood requesting that the Clatworthy parish records (including original minutes and the parish maps) be returned to us, but without success. Peter made direct contact again with Eric Kidner with no further progress and subsequently wrote to the Senior Partner. No response has been received. Advice will be sought from the County Solicitors as to how we should proceed.

Action: F.Nicholson

County Councillor Frances was asked to arrange for photos to be taken to record the state of the road before any work [related to the extraction of timber from Cordings Cleeve] started, so that the cost of necessary repair work can be reclaimed from the contractors. As the current planning request has been rejected this action is withdrawn. If and when necessary, the Parish Council will arrange for photos to be taken.

Action: WITHDRAWN

In the meantime, County Councillor Frances will consult with the Highways Department on the best way to record any damage.

Action: F.Nicholson

Auditor procurement: Council agreed that, as an 'exempt authority' (annual turnover <£25,000), Clatworthy would opt out of the SALC scheme to procure an auditor. Clerk to progress. The Clerk has notified SALC and NALC that Clatworthy is opted out.

Action: COMPLETE

Transparency Web Site: It was agreed that the Council would investigate the possibility of setting up a web site that could also be used as a general village web site. Clerk to attempt to assess effort required and costs involved in order to make grant application to SALC.

In consideration of the difficulty of assessing the ongoing cost and effort that would be required to maintain an independent web site the Clerk investigated the option of using part of the Wiveliscombe and 10Parishes web site, which already has an entry for Clatworthy and which offers facilities for further pages to be developed and maintained by a named individual. There are two 'levels' available, the first of which would be free to Clatworthy and may be adequate for our needs, but until someone is registered and allocated a profile by the site owner, and tried it out, it is not possible to be sure. The second would involve development work by the site owners and would almost certainly need more technical understanding on our part to maintain, but both the cost and the result are currently unknowns. However, the advantages of the management and maintenance of the site itself being someone else's responsibility are considerable.

The Clerk therefore recommends that we try out the free option as a first step, but that at the same time, we purchase a suitable domain name (both clatworthy-parish.org and clatworthy-parish.uk are currently available at a cost of £7-£8 pa plus VAT) so that our pages will be found by a search for 'clatworthy'. This way forward was agreed.

Action: N.Martin

Conference on Isolation and Loneliness: An update on actions placed at the conference had been distributed, but none are directly relevant to Clatworthy and there were no questions.

4 Financial report

4.1 Current position

Balance at Lloyds Williton 19.11.15	2055.11
Total receipts	0.00
Payments	
P.Goodwin Parish Newsletter postage	17.28
Clatworthy Village Hall (Insurance)	282.32
WAP (donation to Wivey Link)	100.00
SALC (Councillor training, S.Moran)	20.00
Total payments	419.60
Balance at Lloyds Williton 17.2.16	1635.51

4.2 Audit of accounts for FY 2015/16

Judith Bryant is available to audit the parish accounts as she has done for several years. Council agreed to using her again.

4.3 Agreed payments

Council agreed to pay the budgeted sum of £20 to the Clerk towards the annual cost of postage and stationery.

See also sums agrees in Section 3: £7-£8 and Section 7: around £55

5 Planning

West Somerset Council local plan to 2032 is available for examination from:

<https://www.westsomersetonline.gov.uk/Planning---Building/Planning-Policy/Local-Plan-to-2032/Examination>

the Examiner will be in Williton from 14 March for 4 days. Should anyone wish to raise any issue they can attend the meeting with the District Council and ask to speak.

3/06/15/002: Logging in Cordings Cleeve. The initial planning application has been rejected, although it is expected that the applicant will appeal. Council wish to record their thanks to District Councillor Keith for the important part he played in achieving this result.

6 Correspondence

Exmoor Historic Signposts project

Lewis Baker, who has been representing Clatworthy on this project, attended the meeting and gave a comprehensive review of the background and progress to date. He showed photographs of each of the six signposts in the parish and outlined the repairs and refurbishment they needed. He surmised, and was supported by County Councillor Frances, that responsibility for the necessary work would fall on the parishes concerned and that it was unlikely that there would be sufficient funds available to do everything. He therefore suggested that the Council should be prepared to prioritise the signposts and recommended that for Clatworthy this should be:

Top priority – The two signs that are nearest to the village (Forches Cross and Clatworthy Cross) because their improvement will reflect directly and positively on the village;

Medium priority – the two signs at Flint Cross and Fryan Cross as they name Clatworthy;

Lowest priority – the signs at Raleghs Cross and Galloping Bottom Cross, as they are only relevant to Clatworthy in as much as they stand on Clatworthy land, but have no other obvious connection to the parish.

Council thanked Lewis for all the work he had done so far and were grateful that he was prepared to continue his active involvement with the project.

County Councillor Frances was pleased to find a parish so supportive and was very interested in the background information that Lewis had uncovered. She said that in addition to the funds set aside by the Exmoor National Park and the hoped for contribution from the Hinkley Point development, an application was also being made to the Heritage Lottery Fund and the historical information would be very valuable.

The Queen's 90th Birthday

NALC had contacted us with regard to lighting a beacon on 21 April. Chairman David agreed to take lead responsibility for this.

Action: D.Cowling

Keep Britain Tidy are promoting a Clean for the Queen day. Council felt this was better handled by the Village Hall committee. Peter agreed to take it on.

Action: P.Goodwin

District Councillor Keith reminded Council that a joint event with other parishes had been suggested at the Brendon Hills meeting, but as there is already a move afoot in Clatworthy being led by the editor of the Parish Newsletter, it was not thought appropriate to take up an alternative.

Precept for 2015/16

Due to a miscalculation by the West Somerset District finance department, the portion of the Clatworthy Council Tax taken for the Parish Council in 2015/16 was about half that needed to produce the precept requested. Whilst the difference has been made up by the District Council, Councillors should be aware that the percentage change shown on council tax demands this year (when the precept was halved) will show as -5.37% rather than -50.17%.

7 Vandalism of Village Signs

About a week before Christmas the village name signs at both entrances to the village were stolen. One was found a day later in Huish Champflower and has since been retrieved and re-attached using vandal proof sheer nuts; the second is still missing. Highways Group of Somerset Council advise that they can supply and fix a new sign (white with black lettering and a black border) for around £55 and Council agreed that this was a sensible option. The Clerk was asked to arrange it.

Action: N.Martin

8 Feedback from Meetings Attended

Brendon Hills' Group

Sally and Norma went to a very well attended meeting on 1st February. A representative from Magna Housing gave a review of the past year and described how they will be affected by the extended 'right to buy' legislation and talked about the application process and priority system.

A handout was available which was passed on to Sophy.

There were progress reports on the Exmoor Historic Signposts project (no timescale for action until money is available) and the Haddon Mobile mast (there may be some progress in 6-9 months time).

Both District and County Councillors warned of Council Tax increases in the coming year (see below).

9 Updates from District and County Councillors

Both County Councillor Frances and District Councillor Keith re-iterated their warnings that their elements of Council tax were expected to rise by around 5% this year. It was noted that both contained a similar percentage for the flood levy, doubling the impact on individual households.

Councillors were asked if anything could be done about the parking opposite the church, as the grass bank was being damaged by large vehicles passing. It was thought that no formal action could be taken, but that a request might be made by the Parish Council to the car owners concerned.

Dates of next meetings

Tuesday 24 May 2016, 7.00 in Clatworthy Village Hall (Annual Parish meeting) – note earlier time.

“ “ “ “ 7.30 in Clatworthy Village Hall (Parish Council meeting and AGM)

Tuesday 23 August 2016, 7.30 in Clatworthy Village Hall

Tuesday 22 November 2016, 7.30 in Clatworthy Village Hall

There being no other business the meeting closed at 9.10pm