

Clatworthy Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2017 at 7.30 in Clatworthy Village Hall

Present

R.Barlow, S.Branfield, A.Cowling, C.Giddings, P.Goodwin (Vice-Chairman), S.Moran, F.Nicholson (Somerset County Councillor), N.E.Martin (Clerk)

1. Apologies

S.McIntosh.

2. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 22 November 2016 were accepted as correct and were signed by the Vice-Chairman.

3. Matters Arising

Missing records: Details of the correspondence relating to this matter have been copied to Councillors and a formal complaint was raised with the Solicitors' Regulation Authority in September. The authority eventually replied saying they could not act on the complaint as the Parish Council was neither a charity nor a small business. It was explained that the complaint was being made on behalf of the Village Hall Trust which is a registered charity and a customer of Risdon Hosegood. The authority accepted the submission, but no response has as yet been received.

Action: P.Goodwin ONGOING

Following the meeting the Vice Chairman received two phone calls from the Legal Ombudsman's office clarifying certain points and, as a result, the matter is to be forwarded to the Investigation Department who will decide if they intend opening a full scale investigation.

Common land at Raleigh's Cross: Following the recent lighting of the beacon for the Queen's 90th Birthday, Councillors expressed some concern about the ownership of the land used for the beacon and agreed that an attempt be made to clarify the legal position.

The Clerk had acquired a copy of the registration of the land as 'Clatworthy Village Green' from the County Commons Register, but the register had no further information regarding the sale of part of the land to Raleigh's Cross. This will be pursued with Land Registry.

Action: N.E.Martin ONGOING

Drainage works in Clatworthy: The drainage work was completed before Christmas 2016, but has left the verge opposite Wry Lane with a soft soil bank rather than the original hard standing. This makes it difficult for the farmer to use the Wry Lane entrance and has reduced the available parking area for the Village Hall. The Highways Department are not able to reinstate the hard standing, nor to sanction such remedial action by the Parish Council. County Councillor Frances offered to investigate the situation in an attempt to find a satisfactory conclusion.

Action: F.Nicholson

Essential First Aid Course: Sally reported that, following a survey to assess interest, St John Ambulance have been booked to deliver a course on Thursday 30 March, 6 pm– 9 pm (or 9.30 pm to include defibrillator training). This course is now fully booked.

Action: COMPLETE

Top Five Parish Priorities: The existing list was reviewed and amended. The amended list is attached.

Road salt – no more bags could be accommodated in the bin behind the village hall, but the dumpy bag that had been left at the bottom of Wry Lane should be moved to Sheared Oak Hill. Stephen and Andrew would arrange the transfer.

Action: COMPLETE

4. Updates from County and District Councillors

County Councillor Frances reported that the Exmoor Signpost Project now has a Project Manager and that the Maintenance, Repair and Restoration Handbook was at 'final draft'. She then made her apologies and left to attend another PC meeting.

There was no report from District Councillor Keith Turner who was not present.

5. Financial report

5.1 Current position

	£			
Balance at Lloyds Williton 14/11/16	2253.57			
Receipts	£	Ref		Details
Total Receipts	0.00			
Payments	£	Cheque #		Details
Clatworthy Village Hall	284.52	19		Village Hall insurance
WAP	100.00	20		Donation to Wivey Link
P.D.Goodwin	34.19	21		Parish Newsletter postage, envelopes & ink
Total Payments	418.71			
Balance at Lloyds Williton 13/2/17	1834.86			

5.2 Signatories

Lloyds account: Two further signatories have been added to the Lloyds bank account making a total of four: P.Goodwin, S.McIntosh, S. Moran, N.E.Martin. Any two to sign. **Action: COMPLETE**

Investment account: The NS&I account is now held solely in the name of R.Barlow. As additional names cannot be added, Council agreed that the account should be closed and re-opened in the names of S.Moran and A.Cowling. **Action: N.E.Martin**

5.3 Internal audit 2016/17

The internal audit is due and Council agreed that the Clerk should ask Judith Bryant if she was prepared to carry it out again. If she cannot do so, the Clerk will attempt to identify an alternative auditor for a similar price.

5.4 Domain name

The domain name CLATWORTHY-PARISH.UK will be due for renewal before the next meeting. Council agreed that it should be renewed for 3 years at a cost of £26.97. **Action: N.E.Martin**

5.5 Postage/stationery allowance

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

6. Report from Brendon Hills Meeting

Peter reported that the meeting was largely focused on the plan to replace Taunton Deane and West Somerset District Councils with a single council. No new issues were raised except that any ideas for the name of the new council would be gratefully received. A questionnaire is also being distributed and parish councils are being encouraged to complete (see section 7.2 below).

A brief update was also given on the Broadband project which still appears not to impact Clatworthy.

7. Correspondence

7.1 Fracking licence

Councillors expressed substantial concern about the possibility of fracking taking place in West Somerset and the effects it might have in this rural area, especially on our unstable shale with its many old and unmapped mine workings. In the circumstances it was agreed unanimously to follow the example of Watchet and declare that Clatworthy Parish is and must remain a FrackFree area.

7.2 Council Questionnaire

Councillors felt that the questionnaire regarding the new council was largely not applicable to Clatworthy and decided not to respond.

Vice-Chairman's statement

Following the e-mail exchange between the Vice-Chairman and the Clerk concerning the involvement of the Parish Council in decision making, which was cc'd to Councillors, the Vice-Chairman made the following announcement.

1) If issues were raised by parishioners he would action them as they arose in order to get things done and would continue to take such actions as he thought necessary. If he felt further action was required by the Parish Council to resolve an issue then it would be raised at the next Parish Council meeting. He felt it was more appropriate to action issues in this manner instead of waiting for the next Parish Council meeting, which could be two or three months away, before formulating any action plan. He would do this without involving the Parish Council or seeking prior authorisation from them, even if appearing to act as their spokesman.

As an example he drew attention to his response to the cattle damage to the graveyard.

2) He did not accept that matters relating to the church should be directed to the Parochial Church Council but considered it appropriate to intervene directly as if the Parish Council were responsible.

In addition, the Vice-Chairman raised the separate matter of his claim for reimbursement of expenses for printing the village newsletter. The Clerk had queried the number of ink cartridges used (four since January 2016) and suggested that a mistake may have been made. The Vice-Chairman detailed the printing that he had carried out over that period and said:

3) All his printing had been carried out on behalf of either the Village Hall or the Parish Council and he was not prepared to bill the two organisations separately.

Councillors were not invited to respond to the statement nor did they choose to.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 8.45 pm

Meeting dates for 2017

Tuesday 21 February 2017, 7.30 in Clatworthy Village Hall

Tuesday 23 May 2017, 7.00 in Clatworthy Village Hall (Annual Parish meeting) – note earlier time.

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

Tuesday 22 August 2017, 7.30 in Clatworthy Village Hall

Tuesday 21 November 2017, 7.30 in Clatworthy Village Hall