

# ***Clatworthy Parish Council***

## **Minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2017 in Clatworthy Village Hall following the Annual Parish Meeting, which finished at 7.09pm**

### **Present**

R.Barlow, S.Branfield, A.Cowling, C.Giddings, S.McIntosh, S.Moran, F.Nicholson (Somerset County Councillor), K.Turner (West Somerset District Councillor), N.E.Martin (Clerk)

### **1. Apologies**

It was noted that Peter Goodwin had confirmed his resignation prior to the meeting. Cllr Sally recorded the Council's regret at his decision and expressed its thanks for all he had done for the village over the past years.

### **2. Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman**

Sally Moran, proposed by S.McIntosh, seconded by C.Giddings, was elected nem con as Chair.

Sophy McIntosh, proposed by C.Giddings, seconded by S.Moran, was elected nem con as Vice Chair.

N.E.Martin continues as Clerk.

### **3. Minutes of last meeting**

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 21 February 2017 were accepted as correct and were signed by the Chair.

### **4. 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 and the matter was referred to the Investigation Department of the Solicitors' Regulation Authority. A final response (previously copied to Councillors) has now been received which states that since Risdon Hosegood had no formal contract to store the records, and could not be held responsible for the independent action of one of their partners, the complaint was rejected.

In the circumstances, Council reluctantly agreed that no further action could be taken. Once again many thanks were expressed to Peter Goodwin for his tenacity in pursuing this matter on the Council's behalf.

**Action: COMPLETE**

There was some speculation that another ex-member of Risdon Hosegood's staff might be able to help and Council agreed she should be contacted.

**Action: C.Giddings**

**Common land at Ralegh's Cross:** Following the lighting of the beacon for the Queen's 90th Birthday, Councillors had 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 Ralegh's Cross. This will be pursued with Land Registry if no further information can be discovered by Cllr Chris (see previous item). The Council may also investigate the possibility of registering the land as common land owned by the parish.

**Action: N.E.Martin ON HOLD**

**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 has investigated the situation and has gained agreement from the County Council that the work, whilst a sound engineering solution, did not meet the village's requirements. Progress on this issue has been halted due to the County and General Elections, but she will follow it up as soon as she can.

**Action: F.Nicholson**

**Casual vacancy:** The resignation of Peter Goodwin following his statement at the previous meeting has left a vacancy on the Council which will be advertised in the next village newsletter. The clerk will produce a draft for approval prior to publication.

**Action: N.E.Martin**

## 5. Finance

### 5.1 External audit

#### 5.1.1 Review of Governance

Councillors reviewed the system of internal controls applied to the Council's financial transactions, the preparation of the accounts and the workings of the Council within the legal framework.

Council confirmed the governance statement in the Annual Return for 2016/17, which was then signed by the Chair.

#### 5.1.2 Review of accounts for FY ending 31/3/2017

The Receipts and Payments account and Bank Reconciliation, which are to be submitted to the external auditors with the Annual Return, were reviewed and accepted by Council and then signed by the Chair.

#### 5.1.3 Review Annual Return

Council approved the accounting statement in the Annual Return, which was then duly signed by the Chair.

## 5.2 Other

### 5.2.1 Current position

	<b>£</b>			
<b>Balance at Lloyds Williton 13/2/17</b>	<b>1834.86</b>			
<b>Receipts</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>Ref</b>		<b>Details</b>
West Somerset DC	1000.00		Precept	
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>1000.00</b>			
<b>Payments</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>Cheque #</b>		<b>Details</b>
N.E.Martin	20.00	22	Postage/stationery allowance to Clerk	
<b>Total Payments</b>	<b>20.00</b>			
<b>Balance at Lloyds Williton 25/4/17</b>	<b>2814.86</b>			

### 5.2.2 Payments for authorisation

Council agreed the following payments:

£157.78	Community First Trading	PC Insurance 1/6/17-31/5/18
£40.00	Judith Bryant	Internal audit
£28.76	N.E.Martin	Re-imbusement of domain name registration fee for 3 years (Note that this figure is slightly different from the amount quoted in the previous minutes (£26.97) due to the Clerk's inability to get her sums right)
£300.00	Village Hall	Grant for 1st Aid course
£35.43	P.Goodwin	Village newsletter postage and ink

### **5.2.3 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. NS&I no longer offer this type of account to Parish Councils and advice is being sought from SALC as to other options. In the interim, Cllr Ron will close the account and hold the balance for transfer to the Council as soon as a suitable account has been identified.

**Action: N.E.Martin, R.Barlow ONGOING**

### **5.2 4 Update account signatories**

The resignation of P.Goodwin requires his name to be removed from the list of signatories and has reduced their number again. It was agreed that Cllr Andrew's name would be added.

**Action: N.E.Martin**

## **6. Update on signposts**

### **6.1 Historic signposts project**

Peter Moran and Lewis Baker attended a training meeting at Exmoor House on Friday 19 May and they will go ahead with the renovation where possible. The project is intending to provide contractors to address mechanical problems, whilst cleaning and painting can be carried out by village volunteers within the health and safety constraints and in line with the project guidelines. Timescales and funding are not yet defined.

### **6.2 Clatworthy village sign**

As there has been no progress with the Highways Department, Council agreed that Lewis Baker should go ahead and fit tamper-proof bolts to the new sign at the northern entrance to the village.

## **7. Update from District/County Councils**

### **7.1 County Council**

The Chair congratulated Cllr Frances on her re-election to the County Council and thanked her for her continued interest in, and work for, the parish

Following the election Cllr Frances reported that there have been some changes to the Council, notably with a new Leader and the introduction of succession planning in key areas. She is retaining her responsibilities for families and children and is already working to extend work experience opportunities, so as to widen the options available to young people in the area. She is also reviewing the implications of the findings of the recent demographic surveys.

Providing the general election did not spring any major surprise, she expressed the hope that there would be no further major cuts to the County's budget in the immediate future

### **7.2 District Council**

Cllr Keith reported that the move to a single District Council to cover Taunton Deane and West Somerset had been put on hold during the election periods, but arrangements would go ahead once they were over. It is planned to hold elections for the new council in 2019, when the number of councillors will fall from 25 to 15 or 16. It is likely that Clatworthy will retain Keith as their District Councillor, but will become part of a larger constituency including Langley and possibly part of Wiveliscombe, but losing some of the Brendon Hill parishes.

The negotiations over the Business rates for Hinkley B have continued, but it seems that the final outcome has favoured West Somerset and should reduce the expected deficit for the next financial year from £800,000 to a manageable £130,000.

## **8. Meeting dates for 2017/18**

The start time of Council meetings was discussed and it was agreed to leave it at 7.30.

A change to the dates was also considered, but was rejected, with the exception of the May meeting, which would be moved a week earlier to fit in with May elections and to give more time to consider insurance before the 1 June renewal date.

## **9. Other Items**

Cllr Ron announced that he expected to be moving away from the area before the next Council meeting in August and would be tendering his resignation when his moving date was fixed. He reported that John Ward of Old Holcombe Water farm was interested in becoming more involved in the village and might be a suitable replacement.

The Chair thanked Ron on behalf of the Parish Council for his sterling service to both the Council and the village over many years and stressed that he would be much missed.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.44pm.

### **Meeting dates for 2017**

Tuesday 22 August 2017, 7.30 in Clatworthy Village Hall

Tuesday 21 November 2017, 7.30 in Clatworthy Village Hall

Dates for 2018 will be set at the November meeting.