

Clatworthy Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting held on 6 February 2024 in Clatworthy Village Hall

Present: Sally Moran (Chair), Kevin Chesterman, Margaret Deere, Jake Forgham, Frances Nicholson (Somerset Councillor), Linda Sharp, Steven Pugsley (Somerset Councillor), Norma Martin (Clerk)

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Stephen Branfield (recorded after the meeting), John Ward.

2. Minutes of meeting held on 7 November 2023

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 7 November 2023 were confirmed as correct and signed by the Chair.

3. Update from Somerset Council

Cllr Frances gave an overview of Somerset's current budgetary problems. The county council had failed to get the requirement for a county-wide referendum to be carried out before the cap on a council tax increase could be exceeded and as the cost of a referendum would have negated the benefits of any proposed increase, that possibility is not available. The option of calling in administrators is also extremely costly and the council are still hoping to balance the budget by cutting expenditure on non-statutory services, devolving services to towns or parishes and/or taking out a loan, although a loan would increase costs in future years until fully repaid. Detailed proposals are being prepared by the Executive Committee and will be put to the full council on 20th February; the result will be notified to town and parish councils.

The meeting expressed much concern about the possible closure of Williton recycling centre as one of the cost cutting measures. Cllrs Frances and Steven both assured us they will be doing everything possible to block that proposal.

On a more positive note, Cllr Sally (Chair) noted that the Exmoor Local Community Network (LCN) was working well to address local issues directly; including rural housing needs and planning, the promotion and support of rural businesses and, in particular, road maintenance, where the involvement of local communities in scheduling maintenance and working together to solve problems has made a noticeable difference.

Other matters, specific to Clatworthy, were discussed and are recorded in Section 6 of these minutes.

4. Planning

3/06/24/001 Conversion of outbuildings to residential accommodation at Rowe's Farm.

There were no objections to the plan from the parish or councillors. It was noted that there is almost no impact on the outward appearance of the buildings from the approach drive and the immediate neighbour is in favour of the development.

5. Village Emergency Plan

To progress the emergency plan Cllrs Sally, Kevin and Jake will draft more detail on the facilities required at the 'emergency centre' (heat/light/water/etc.); the members and responsibilities of the 'community contact network' and; the role of the 'plan co-ordinator'. A meeting was scheduled for 23/2/24.

Action: Jake, Sally and Kevin.

6. Roads

As agreed at the previous meeting of the parish council, as well as hedge cutting, the roads' maintenance programme should also include clearing drains, especially after heavy rain, and keeping the verges back, to stop them encroaching on the carriageway. A number of individual problems were reported on the Highways website and dealt with promptly, but had not always solved some ongoing problems

6.1 Drains and potholes

CLlr Frances explained that reports made on the Highways website generate a speedy response, but that they must be 'specific' and the 'location(s)' of the problem(s) must be as accurate as possible. If a generic problem is identified direct contact should be made with the Highways team to discuss and agree a solution.

6.2 Hedges and verges cutting

There was much discussion around verge and hedge maintenance and it is unclear in many instances who is responsible at a particular location. Information on land ownership will be sought from local farmers and the county road records.

Action: Sally, Norma

6.3 New road signs

The new village sign on the road from Forches Cross is in place, but does not have vandal proof bolts. The sign at the other end of the village is still awaited. No progress has been made.

7. Finance

7.1 Current Position

	£		
Current a/c balance at Lloyds 6/11/23	5110.50		
Receipts			Details
None	57.85		Transfer from savings to current account
Total Receipts	57.85		
Payments		Cheque #	Details
Chris Sanders – BACS 21/11/23	57.85	-	Village children: Xmas gifts – reimbursement
Clatworthy VH	514.96	84	Re-furbishment of village phone box
SALC	23.26	85	Affiliation fee 2023-24
Total Payments	596.07		
Current a/c balance at Lloyds 31/1/24	4572.28		

7.2 Payments for Authorisation

All the money in the savings account is held on behalf of the children of Clatworthy, as a result of a bequest made many years ago. It is managed by the Parish Council, but is generally spent as part of village celebrations run by the Village Hall. Retrospective authorisation is therefore sought for the payment to Chris Sanders, as Chairman of the VH trustees, for the expenditure: £57.85

As of February 2024, payment to HugoFox for hosting the parish website has been transferred to a Direct Debit from the parish current account. Consequently the clerk will be claiming back the payments made via her credit card for the previous four months, as agreed at the November meeting. Total: £47.96 (£4x£11.99).

In addition it was agreed to make the following donations to charities that provide important services to Clatworthy residents. Wivey Link £100; St Margaret's Hospice £100; Dorset & Somerset Air Ambulance £100.

8. Correspondence

All general correspondence had been e-mailed to Parish Councillors before the meeting for information. No associated points were raised.

9. Other matters for information.

The Risk Register should be reviewed and the Asset Register updated before the May meeting.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9 p.m.

Next meeting: Parish Meeting and AGM Tuesday 6 May 2024