WEST CAMEL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the West Camel Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 4th July 2024 at 7:30 pm in The Davis Hall.

Present:	Chairman	**Kathy Miller-Hunt (KMH)**	
	Councillors	**Jenny Down (JD)**	**Geoff Chapman (GC)**
		Sally Palmer (SP)	**Mick Richens (MR)**
		Cliff Baker (CB)	
	Clerk	**Les Stevens (LS)**	

Somerset Council Councillors – **Cllr Henry Hobhouse (HH)**

Members of the public – none.

0724.01 Electors' Participation – None.

0724.02 Apologies for Absence – Cllr Kevin Messenger (KM).

0724.03 Minutes of the last meeting (09/05/24) to be agreed and signed - The minutes were agreed by all councillors and were duly signed by KMH and LS.

0724.04 Matters of Report arising from the previous meeting minutes (not on the agenda) –
0120.08 C ii a – Finger Post – re-erection. – Closed.
0923.07 c vii – LS to repair bench by Home Close – Ongoing.
0324.08C iii – Flood Monitoring Proposals – ongoing.
0324.08 C iv – Flood mitigation Proposals – ongoing.
0324.08 C v – Village lengthsman to develop role – ongoing.
0324.08 I iii – Clerk's discretionary spending powers – Closed.

0724.05 Declaration of Interest and details of dispensations requested / granted since last meeting (councillors and/or visiting councillors). – JD expressed an ongoing interest in item 7 C iv (Flood Mitigation Proposals). KMH suggested discussing this item at the end of the meeting which would allow JD to leave the meeting in order to allow free discussion. JD agreed to do so.

0724.06 Somerset Council Councillor feedback – HH gave an update on the 'Phosphate' position. He and like-minded colleagues have been challenging the SC position for the last 4 years and legal advice has concluded that SC have been acting illegally by allowing Natural England (NE) to dictate Council policy on building permissions. There is no scientific proof that building work is responsible for any increase in Phosphates on the Somerset Levels. Similarly, there is no scientific proof that mitigation works (planting trees / set-aside / fallowing land) has any proven positive impact on phosphate levels. To date Wessex Water have removed 17.2 tonnes more phosphates than Ofwat requires, only 4 tonnes of which would effectively offset all the suspended building works in Somerset. Current scientific opinion is that 98% of man-made phosphates entering Somerset Rivers end up in the sae (Bristol Channel). HH added that this position will be revealed at a public meeting in QC Hall on 26th July. KMH thanked HH for his contribution.

0724.07 Standing Items of Business

a. **Local Crime**
   I. **Neighbourhood Watch** – The Co-ordinator had nothing to share this month.

b. **Footpaths / RoW –** LS mentioned the Cottis Lane was still uncut and virtually impassible. At the

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SC Devolution forums and via SALC Pete Hobley the Service Director for RoW is pressing for Town and Parish Councils to take on more RoW maintenance and he wondered whether the late cutting of RoW was in fact deliberate? He suggested that the PC will probably need to budget to cut these paths itself next year either using the 'Lengthsman' or volunteers.

c. Environment.

i. Flood Plan – Review arrangements. Ongoing.
ii. Flood Warden – Action Plan / Onboarding. Ongoing.
iii. Flood Monitoring Proposals – Ongoing and new gauge expected to be installed in September 2024.
iv. Flood Mitigation Proposals – *this matter was discussed at the end of the meeting after JD had left to allow councillors to discuss freely* - LS stated that he had received some feedback from individuals who were unhappy about the use of CBF funds to proactively remove / pollard trees downstream of Frog Lane. After discussion it was agreed that Council should write to all residents to give them the opportunity to reject Council's proposals. **AP LS to draft a letter for councillors to hand deliver.**
v. Village 'Lengthman' (LM) – LS reported that he and Jeff Stamp had attended a training course on 3rd June. The SC offered training still hasn't materialised – **AP LS to write to HH**. LS/ CB / JS to meet and draw up a programme of works. The Volunteer day on 22nd June included some preparatory works on Howell Hill and ditch clearance etc will take place later this summer.
vi. Wall by Parsonage Rd Bridge – LS reported that work is progressing well and construction works are nearing completion.

d. Play Area / Ground.

i. Replacement play equipment – MC reported that an inaugural meeting of the Working Group has been arranged for 30th August.

e. Community Housing Scheme

i. Community Housing – Plots 8/9 sale – on hold.

f. **Traffic Calming.**

i. Howell Hill – additional SID sites – LS confirmed that now Chapter 8 training had been completed the existing SIDs could be moved around the village and suggested that additional batteries etc could now be purchased within the £600 grant awarded by the CBF. Councillors were happy for this work to progress. **AP LS.**

g. Community Engagement & Communication

i. Website / Comms in general – no update.
ii. Notice Board Replacement / repair – LS that he had removed the South St NB and would refurbish.
iii. Volunteer Days – LS reported that volunteers had reinstated the Fingerpost sign at Parsonage Rd crossroads and also carried out exploratory works on Howell Hill drains / ditches.

h. **Parish Council Processes / Unitary Authority Update**

i. LCN is the Yeovil LCN appropriate? HH stated that he had asked for several parishes within his ward to be transferred to the Wincanton LCN. No update from HH. **AP LS to chase HH.**

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i. **Highways** –
   i. Back St drain blocked – Update – LS reported that the ditch outfall was now functioning but further clearance work and pipe installation was necessary before the winter – scheduled for 2nd August. **AP MC/CB/LS.**
   ii. Howell Hill – works ongoing during the summer before road reopens to traffic.

j. **Community Benefit Fund (CBF) –** Approve recommendations from CBF Panel Meeting -
   a. **Theatre Group** – Discussed at last meeting 9/5/24 – recommended a grant of £500.

MR proposed that the recommendation from the CBF Panel be approved, seconded by GC and agreed by all.

0724.08 Correspondence / Other matters requiring action

a. Public Meeting 19th June to discuss application 24/00841/FUL – attended by over 165 people from West Camel, Queen Camel and Babcary.
b. Replacement Clerk – SP led the discussion and suggested a local advert and review in September. Councillors agreed. **AP SP to draft an advert.**
c. Councillor vacancy – ongoing.
d. Walnut Tree Parking – after discussion it was agreed to see how the LPA respond to planning breach reports submitted by various individuals.

0724.09 Clerk / Responsible Financial Officer Report

a. VAT refund for 2023/24 – a claim totalling £1020.75 has been submitted and received.
b. Interim Fidelity Check – MR agreed to carry out this task. **AP MR / LS.**
c. Payment Authorisation – LS shared the Schedule of Payments for 10th May to 4th July 2024 (below) which totalled £6,503.99. He explained what each payment was for and whether pre-approved in the budget. SP proposed approval of all payments, seconded MR, agreed all.

Cheque No. or OP Ref	Payee	Service / Goods Purchased	Amount
05/2425	Geoxphere Ltd	Parish on Line annual fee	£54.00
06/2425	L Stevens	Concrete for Wall Foundations by bridge	£315.46
07/2425	Mindset Training	Chapter 8 Training LS and JS	£540.00
08/2425	HMRC	PAYE Q1	£209.40
09/2425	Davis Hall	Years Schedule meetings + 19/6 (A303)	£100.50
10/2425	L Stevens	Gen Exp / Fuel etc	£284.63
11/2425	Avalon Surfacing	CBF Grant to Favis Hall Car Park	£5,000.00
Total			**£6,503.99**

d. Potential budgetary impact of replacing the Clerk? – LS raised this for awareness and councillors were mindful that some flexibility may be required depending upon the option taken.

0724.10 Planning Applications

New planning applications –

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24/00841/FUL – New A303 Service area including filling station, truck park, solar PV array, Farm shop and Hotel – Hopkins.
Councillors were unanimous in their agreement to **Strongly Object** to this proposal.

Planning Updates – None.

0724.11 Matters of Report / Future Business

a. **Other Matters of Report –** GC reminded councillors to let him have their comments on his amended Contingency Plan before discussion at the September meeting. **AP All.**
b. **Matters of Future Business –** none.

0724.12 Date of next meetings – Thursday 5th September 2024 in the Davis Hall Committee Room.

0724.13 The meeting closed at 21:20.

Signed.....
Chairman Date 5th September 2024

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Clerk Date 5th September 2024

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Chairman