WEST CAMEL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the West Camel Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 9th January 2025 at 7:30 pm in the Conference Room at The Davis Hall.

Present:	Chairman	**Kathy Miller-Hunt (KMH)**	
	Councillors	**Mick Richens (MR)**	**Cliff Baker (CB)**
		Jane Lawrence (JL)	
	Clerk	**Les Stevens (LS)**	**Angela Suter (AS)**

Somerset Council Councillor – **Cllr Henry Hobhouse (HH), Cllr Kevin Messenger**

Members of the public – 0

0125.01 Electors' Participation – None.

0125.02 Apologies for Absence – Jenny Down (JD), Geoff Chapman (GC)

0125.03 Minutes of the last meeting (07/11/24) to be agreed and signed - The minutes were agreed by all councillors and were duly signed by KMH and AS.

0125.04 Matters of Report arising from the previous meeting minutes (not on the agenda) –
0923.07 c vii – LS to remove bench base by Home Close – Ongoing.

0125.05 Declaration of Interest and details of dispensations requested / granted since last meeting (councillors and/or visiting councillors). – None.

0125.06 Somerset Council Councillor feedback – HH reported SC had a budget surplus at this time. HH asked if we were aware Steart Hill closed for 3 weeks for works by Highways England at huge inconvenience to residents with only 5 days' notice of a 3-week closure. Possible issues could arise in the event of flooding in Babcary as diversion goes this way- LS to speak to Sam Langdrigan (Galliford-Try).
Podimore/Bridghampton culvert full when it last rained possibly due to 3 outlets now into 1. Meeting at Yeovilton potentially 17th January to discuss HH to advise KMH. A303 westbound flooded at Wincanton appeared to be run off from fields.
LS enquired about LCN HH advised ignore Yeovil and access Southeast meeting at Wincanton Town Council building 22nd January (online) HH to forward link to LS. LS enquired about the phosphate situation HH advised awaiting final opinions from solicitors. KMH thanked him for his contribution.

0125.07 Standing Items of Business

a. **Local Crime**
   I. **Neighbourhood Watch** – The Co-ordinator Adrian Davenport (AD) had nothing to share this month.

b. **Footpaths / RoW –** footpath from Cottis to the Bakery and The Spinney to Slate Lane had a fence also installed so although the gates were in situ they cannot be used. Highways still need to be approached. **(LS)**

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c. Environment.

i. Flood Plan – Review arrangements. Ongoing. JL said the contingency plan was still a work in progress but was advancing.
ii. Flood Monitoring Proposals – JL updated all on flood defences from EVAC recently fitted (x5), another x3 lined up some refusals and x7 more to visit and discuss. Apparently although the cost is listed at £50-£80 it asks for a donation towards this cost. JL explained how the defences worked as a second barrier against flood ingress. All complimented JL on her work towards this so far.
iii. Flood Mitigation Proposals 2024/25 - River was reported to be clearer and flowing faster. Riparian Landowners have started clearance with some complete and tidy. Some Riparian Landowners upwards from Greystones have asked what assistance they will receive in clearing the river up into the village, particular mention made of The Old Mill and the excess silt by the bridge.
iv. Hire of working boat – all agreed hire of a boat for a week March/April and a volunteer working party arranged to see what work could be done.
v. SRA Flood Mitigation funding application – all agreed council should make an application. LS to forward information to JL to action. **(JL)**

d. Play Area / Ground.

i. Replacement play equipment – AS mentioned she had submitted 2 applications one to National Lottery (£20K) and another smaller to South Western Railway (£5K) and result should be known in April.
ii. Mowers Supper – booked for 15th January at The Lime Kiln.

e. Community Housing Scheme

i. Community Housing – On hold.
ii. Plot 1 – offer made and accepted LS stated offer complies with second tier, so agreed.

f. **Traffic Calming.**

i. SID stantion repositioning outstanding awaiting reopening of Howell Hill – ongoing
ii. SID 3-year warranty extended ends December 2027.
iii. Southmead extension of 20MPH speed limit discussed. Application and payment would need to be made to Highways, and it was felt this had not made much difference through the rest of the village. Agreed new 'Slow Children Playing' signs to be erected as KMH pointed out the current sign was not visible. JL suggested using 1st Image Signs at Sparkford. **(LS)**

g. Community Engagement & Communication

i. Website / Comms in general – LS mentioned some housekeeping to be done but otherwise all good.
ii. Notice Board Replacement / repair – LS stated that he would refurbish the Parsonage Rd notice board at some point - Ongoing LS
iii. SALC Health and Wellbeing programme committee declined to attend.
iv. Register of Community Assets – The Walnut Tree KMH proposed renewing the application. **(LS/AS)**
v. Bakery signage – no sign in the finished plan but several councillors mentioned there was now a sign for Mattia Diner so it was felt the same should be done for the Bakery. It was stated that assistance in erecting signs in fields had been offered.
vi. West Camel Signage off main A303 – LS pointed out that this had been decided at the initial planning stage and is it really necessary?

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h. **Parish Council Processes / Unitary Authority Update**
   i. LCN Meeting 22nd January Wincanton Parish Council. HH to provide log in for the Teams call.
   ii. Replacement Clerk – storage for filing has been agreed with the Davis Hall with only AS having access to the key.
   iii. Councillor vacancy – ongoing.

i. **Highways**
   i. Howell Hill – ongoing.
   ii. Lengthsman Scheme draft process – flow diagram discussed regarding process for work allocation. All agreed to be adopted. AS to confer with CB regarding any queries.
   iii. Urgashay ditch update – form/fee required if we go down the EA route.

j. **Community Benefit Fund (CBF) –** no new applications. LS mentioned he had been told another 2 payments coming but officially it is thought only one more payment due.

0125.08 Correspondence / Other matters requiring action

a. Blackmore Vale Sparkford Hunt – agreed parish council does not speak for everyone so no stand to be taken. Email to be drafted accordingly. **(LS)**
b. QCCLT Survey – information only.
c. Consultation on remote meetings – information no action.
d. Consultation on Strengthening the Standards and Code of Conduct Framework in England – for information no action but agreed a good idea.
e. Future consultation on Local Audit reform – discussed briefly hopefully a simpler approach for those under the threshold.

0125.09 Clerk / Responsible Financial Officer Report

a. Interim fidelity checked carried out by MR.
b. Budget build for 2025/26 – Discussion included the purchase of a working boat – opinion divided. AS hourly rate also discussed after MR raised the point. AS would seek an increase following her first 6 months as Clerk following completion of training and assessment. Following some budget amendments and after some discussion JL proposed that the draft budget be agreed as the basis upon which the Precept should be set, seconded by KMH and agreed by all. **LS to post to website.**
c. To agree and set the Precept for 2025/26 – LS suggested that the precept should be set higher to cover the lack of services potentially being covered by Somerset Council going forward. After some discussion, JL proposed that the Precept be set at £117.02 / Band D household (total Precept £22,400), seconded by KMH and agreed by all. **LS to notify SC of Precept requirement.**
d. Payment Authorisation – LS shared the Schedule of Payments for 8th Nov 2024 to 9th January 2025 (below) which totalled £10,889.76. He explained what each payment was for and whether pre-approved in the budget. He explained he had stopped his standing order so he would be paid on an hourly basis Jan-Mar the same as AS, before setting up a SO for AS from April 25.
MR proposed approval of all payments, seconded CB, agreed all.

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Cheque No. or OP Ref	Payee	Service / Goods Purchased	Amount
32/2425	Loxston Groundcare	Mower Service	£337.58
33/2425	Key Contractors	Flood Mitigation Works	£8,100.00
34/2425	Making IT Green	Toner Cartridges	£335.70
35/2425	Elan City	Speed Indicator Devices Warranty Extn.	£1432.80
36/2425	A Suter	Training Hours (Nov) Net	£125.05
37/2425	HMRC	PAYE Q3	£312.60
38/2425	CK Creative	Website Hosting	£90.00
39/2425	A Suter	Training Hours (Dec) Net	£87.70
40/2425	L Stevens	Gen Expenses	£ 68.33
Total			**£10,889.76**

0125.10 Planning Applications

New planning applications – None.

Planning Updates – None.

0125.11 Matters of Report / Future Business

a. **Other Matters of Report –** SALC membership LS not renewing. Council to support AS with her membership. All Agreed. LS to check if allocated in budget.
b. Matters of Future Business – none.

0125.12 Date of next meetings – Thursday 6th March 2025 in the Davis Hall Committee Room.

0125.13 The meeting closed at 21:35.

Signed.....
Chairman Date 6th March 2025

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Clerk Date 6th March 2025

Initialled.....
Chairman