

Minutes of meeting of Queen Camel Parish Council on Monday 20th January 2025 at 7:30pm, Marples Room, Queen Camel Memorial Hall

Present - Councillors John Brendon (JB), Bryan Norman (BN), Angus Davidson (AD), Phil Jones (PJ), David Lowe (DL) Roy Lawrenson (RL)

Somerset Cllr Henry Hobhouse (HH) joined the meeting at 01/05

7 members of the public were in attendance including Kathy Grainger (KG) and Martin Lilley (ML)

Open session – ML updated the following

1. Grant funding for the Pegel alarm system has been secured from Persimmon
2. The Section 19 flooding report is due at the end of January
3. The Memorial Hall still needs to be registered with Somerset Council as a Place of Safety – the Clerk will let AD know what details are needed for the registration

01/01 Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Philip Hall (PH) and Dan Hewlett (DH). It was noted that Cllr John Carnegie (JC) was not in attendance

01/02 The following **Interests** were declared

1. Agenda item 01/09 2. – PJ
2. Agenda item 01/17 - JB

01/03 The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 18th November 2024 were **APPROVED** and signed as an accurate record by the chairman. It was **NOTED** that Cllr John Carnegie is deemed not to have resigned as no written resignation has been received by the chairman

01/04 It was **APPROVED** that the press and public shall be excluded from the meeting for 01/26 by reason of the Staff-in-Confidence nature of the item in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 s 1(2).

01/05 To **RECEIVE** Somerset Councillor report

- a grant for the River Cam flood alert app has been agreed with Persimmon and a recipient in the UK is needed as a conduit for the payment. It was **APPROVED** for the Clerk to give HH the parish council BACS details to effect the transaction
- HH is meeting with National Highways on 23/01/2025 to discuss the problem with the southern attenuation pond with continuing flooding on the Bridgehampton Road despite the size of the pond being increased 3-4 times. The drainage pipe under the A303 cannot cope with the volume of water
- Somerset Council is currently £2.8 million under budget but will be £54 million short for next year's budget. Cuts are currently being worked on to try and achieve a balanced budget. The Government has delayed its decision on social care until 2028. Details of the budget can be found in the Scrutiny and Audit Committee agendas which HH will send to the Clerk for distribution.

01/06 DL announced he was resigning at the end of the meeting. Formal thanks and gratitude were **NOTED** for his time served as a parish councillor and particularly for his contribution to the Neighbourhood Plan. It was **APPROVED** for the Clerk to begin the notification process arising on a casual vacancy

01/07 The Clerk's Report was **RECEIVED**. There were no items to discuss however JB will ring DH for an update on the grit bin and planters

01/08 Highways and Traffic

1. **A303 works** - It was **REPORTED** that work will not be complete by Easter and drainage problems are likely to continue. Vehicles are still using Blackwell Road to go up Traits Lane and there are more potholes on Blackwell Road

2. It was **NOTED** planning permission with conditions has been granted for the repair of Wales bridge
3. BN read out the draft letter to be sent to Cllr Nicola Clark from the Chairs of the 4 parish councils asking Somerset Council to enforce action for any planning breaches at Sutton Farm and the problems being caused by the high volume of Hopkins Estate HGVs going through the village. These concerns were emphasized by some members of the public along with noise and light disturbance at the farm during the early hours. It was **NOTED** that Sarah Dyke MP has agreed to attend a meeting to listen to concerns. It was suggested that the action group write to The Daily Telegraph and promote the issues via social media. It was suggested that the culvert by Camel Bridge was in danger of collapsing as well as the bridge itself. Various other points were made:
 - Deployment of police resources is on evidenced demand
 - Advised to report each HGV as ASB due to volume and lack of planning permission. ASB is a priority for Police and Crime Commissioner. Needs to trigger analyst reports.
 - The original planning application was dealt with by a planning officer and did not go to Committee
 - HH will send a letter and speak to portfolio holder for planning and report back
 - Cannot go for judicial review but can go for court action
 - HH to bring leader of council and planning portfolio holder to a meeting.
4. BN reported Church Path is seriously deteriorating and has a fundamental drainage problem which Somerset Council do not seem to be dealing with. Generally problems with drains and gutters throughout the village need to continue to be reported to Somerset Council. PJ gave an update on reports and it was **AGREED** a short summary of problems should be sent to Somerset Council monthly. HH can arrange for John Nicholson to visit for a walk around the village to inspect the reported problems. PJ will continue to keep a record and provide a summary for HH to share with John Nicholson
5. Some residents have complied with requests to cut back vegetation overhanging road signs from their property and others are being asked to do so

01/09 Footpaths and Rights of Way (ROW)

1. It was **AGREED** to ask PH to keep chasing Eve Wynn from Somerset Council about the condition of the footpaths and ROW in the village. HH reported the number of ROW officers will be reduce from 14 to 4 following the Somerset Council restructuring
2. PJ reported there is a new footpath on Ministry of Defence land at Camel Hill from the top of Gason Lane west to the top of Traits Lane; however part of the path is restricted due to the mast. There are bridleways on the south and north side of A303
3. It was **AGREED** to defer the appointment of PH as Parish Path Liaison Officer until the next meeting

01/10 Planning

1. JB gave an update on discussions with Somerset Council regarding the outstanding Section 106 agreement on West Camel Road site. The CLT is unable to take on the low cost housing. It was **AGREED** that an urgent meeting is needed with Rosemary Heath-Coleman and Tim Cook from the Community Land Trust, planning officers from Somerset Council and the developers
2. A meeting was held with the property developer of the field by Medical Centre

The Clerk will request an Extension of Time and arrange an Extraordinary Meeting to discuss the planning application received after the agenda was published

01/11 Playing Field

1. It was **AGREED** to refer the inspection report to the consultant, Michael Carter to address with the supplier
2. Three applications for grant funding for the new cricket nets have been rejected. It was suggested an application is made to The Newt community fund

3. It was **APPROVED** for Utility Surveyor to reduce the height of trees and vegetation affecting overhead power lines along the footpath to the Medical Centre

KG advised

- JC has resigned from the Playing field Committee
- Work on the trees should commence in February
- Refurbishment of the car park has been delayed due to contractor's personal circumstances

01/12 Neighbourhood Plan Working Group (NPWG)

1. It was agreed to **DEFER** the composition of the NPWG and **AGREE** date until the next meeting
2. It was agreed to **DEFER** discussion of the Road Safety and Speed Working Group until the next meeting

01/13 Local Community Network (LCN)

1. The value of the LCN was questioned and any consideration of its priorities was **DEFERRED** to the next meeting
2. It was **NOTED** the next LCN meeting is on 22/01/2025 at Wincanton Sports Ground

01/14 The letter from Queen Camel Community Land Trust was **DISCUSSED**. It was **AGREED** that JB will include details in the report for the Camels Magazine and also it would be promoted on the Whats App group

01/15 The email from Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance Charity regarding a clothing donation bank was **DISCUSSED** but not supported

01/16 It was **APPROVED** that the parish council will fund replacement parts for the defibrillators when required

01/17 The quotes for the Village Maintenance Contract for 2025-2028 were **CONSIDERED**. It was **APPROVED** to continue the contract with SLR Outdoor Maintenance, who would be asked if their quote could be reduced by £16 to match the lowest quote

01/18 The **Annual Village Meeting** on Friday 16th May will be organized by BN and Marina Jones

01/19 The draft **Budget** proposal for 2025-2026 was discussed and **APPROVED**

01/20 The **Precept request** for 2025-2026 of £25200 was **APPROVED**

01/21 The **grant request** from Citizens Advice Somerset was **CONSIDERED**. It was **APPROVED** to make a grant of £300 although it was **NOTED** that Somerset Council should be responsible for supporting them financially

01/22 Simon Pritchard was **APPROVED** as internal auditor for 2024/2025

01/23 The Clerk advised HMRC has confirmed all 3 VAT refund claims submitted in December had been received but not correctly processed for which they have apologised. A compensation payment of £50.00 has been made. Refunds totaling £20459.98 have now been received

01/24 Finance

1. The authorised payments since the last council meeting were **NOTED**
2. There were no payments not previously authorised to approve
3. The **bank balances** as at 31/12/2024 were **NOTED** as Deposit account £47945.12 and Current account £2694.04 and credit **interest** of £324.65 was received
4. The financial reports for Q1-3 and the Reserves statement were **RECEIVED**
5. The **bank reconciliations for Q1-3** were **APPROVED** and signed by the chairman and Clerk

4. To **RECEIVE** reports for Quarter 3

01/25 Dates of meetings for 2025 were **AGREED** as
Parish Council meetings – 24th March, 12th May, 21st July, 15th September, 17th November
FPRC – 16th April

01/26 The Clerk's resignation was **RECEIVED**. It was **APPROVED** to advertise for their replacement

Meeting closed 9.40 pm