

ENMORE PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 3rd September 2024 at 7.30pm in Enmore Memorial Hall

Attendance: Cllr. Hopkins, Cllr Comley, Cllr Fergusson, Cllr Hucker, Cllr Caswell,
Clerk: D. McIlroy, RFO: A. Stoye. Mr D. Cole. Ms L. Hallett, Mr. G. Stevens, Mrs M. Hill, Mr P. Evans

1. Apologies were received from Cllrs Jackson, Hubbard and Bolt.
2. There were no Declarations of Interest on Agenda Items.
3. The minutes of the meeting held on 2nd July 2024 were approved and duly signed.
4. Mr Evans, Mr Stephens, Mr Cole and Mrs Hill requested permission to speak on items on the agenda as they arose.
5. Actions arising from previous meetings.

5.1 Broadband update

Cllr Comley had written a report which he read out to those present (available upon request). He will also submit an article to the Enmore & Goathurst magazine for inclusion in the October issue. He gave a brief summary of his efforts to improve connectivity and speeds in Enmore and expressed his frustration at the lack of information given by Airband and Openreach in response to his enquiries. Cllr Caswell echoed this frustration and asked Cllr Comley to attend the next Dowsborough LCN meeting as a representative of Enmore Parish Council. There will be a representative from CDS (Connecting Devon and Somerset) present at this meeting and hopefully more information about progress.

ACTION: Cllr Comley to attend the LCN meeting on 11th September at Wembdon village hall and report back to the Parish Council.

5.2 Speed management update

Cllr Jackson had submitted a report in her absence prior to the meeting. There was no further news on when work would start on the changes to speed limits and road signs.

Mrs Hill asked if it would be possible to install horserider warning signs on entering and exiting the double bends along the Enmore Road where visibility of other road users (horse riders, cyclists etc) is reduced. Mrs Hallett also requested horserider signs on the straight section of road towards Bridgwater. Even though visibility is not reduced here many cars exceed the speed limit and are inconsiderate of horses.

When the new road signs have been installed, the Parish Council proposes to purchase suitable horserider warning signs and display them on appropriate poles, after consulting K Tyson of Somerset Council.

5.3 Jubilee Meadow/future civil cemetery

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting. A sign has been installed by the weeping birch inside the gate, and out of sight of passing traffic, reading

“Jubilee Meadow” & Enmore Cemetery
Kindly funded through QLPS, NL & Enmore Village

A chain and combination padlock have been purchased for the gate. Following discussion, it was agreed that the gate should be padlocked and the code will be provided to all households in Enmore.

ACTION: Cllr Hucker to put padlock on gate after October's magazine has been distributed.

5.4 Wilder Enmore update

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Ella Bedford, QLPS Wildlife Officer, conducted a Hedge Survey on Mill Farm with input from Phillip and Steve Burge, who are keen to support the Wilder Enmore and Goathurst Initiative in their farming practices. A meeting was held to discuss her report and an empathetic positive approach has been formulated to take to other farmers and landowners in the district. The objective is to encourage practices that maximise hedge wildlife habitat to promote wildlife diversity that will have a positive effect on farming management and income.

A proposal to seek financial support or sapling donations for the recommended planting at Mill Farm has been put together and has been initially sent to The Woodland Trust who are offering some free saplings.

Another Litter Pick will be scheduled for late October/early November.

6. Proposal to reinstate the Enmore Village Fete (this agenda item was brought forward for earlier discussion)

D. Cole on behalf of Enmore Memorial Hall asked the Parish Council whether they would be happy to support a joint venture with Enmore church and Enmore Memorial Hall in organising a village fete. Following discussion Cllr Hopkins agreed to support the joint venture in a personal capacity, providing liaison between the committee, the Parochial Church Council and the Parish Council.

7. Proposed planning applications.

Cllr Hopkins noted that a new planning application (Mill Farm, Enmore) had been received after the agenda had been posted. He stated that, in the event that the Parish Council wished to submit comments on the application, an additional Parish Council meeting will be called, open to members of the public, to discuss this application.

Static Caravan sited at Cutter's Coombe Stables

Cllr Hopkins stated that, as complaints had been received from the public, the matter was included for discussion on the agenda.

Mr Stephens, speaking on behalf of the owner of the stables Ms Hallett, thanked the Parish Council for the opportunity to clarify what was happening at the stables. He stated that since buying the stables there was a three year plan to upgrade them and that their main priority was the safety of the horses. At present one of the horses was lame and another unwell therefore there needed to be someone on site to attend to them. Furthermore, the stables, being used as a business, required office space and facilities for clients to change. There was a chemical toilet in situ with plans to install a water treatment plant to comply with health and safety legislation for staff/visitors. Although no plans have been made public, Mr Stephens assured those present that planning applications were being made. He stated that the caravan was a mobile one which can be moved and is at present being used as a temporary measure. He acknowledged that planning would be needed for the caravan and, if refused, it would be moved. No further developments to the water treatment plant will be undertaken until planning has been approved.

Mr Evans, a neighbour, replied that he was concerned as he had previously owned the land and inquired about siting a static caravan himself, but had been informed that he would not obtain planning permission. He also stated that Ms Hallett had some stables on her own property across the road and could take any animals needing care to those stables. He added that caravans used for farming purposes eg lambing/foaling periods were only temporary and needed to be moved after these periods.

At this point Cllr Hopkins stated that no further discussion could take place as no planning applications had been made. This was echoed by Cllr Caswell. When planning applications have been made the Council will discuss the plans at a meeting open to the public and decide on their response.

Little Lovedere Farm

Cllr Hopkins stated that, as complaints had been received from the public, the matter was included for discussion on the agenda.

D. McIlroy read a letter of complaint from Mr & Mrs Bowditch concerning the apparent lack of planning applications from Mr Singleton. There were reports of rooms being rented out as well as part of the house and a caravan occupied in the orchard. In addition, Mr Singleton has enquired about making a car park at the top of his field to accommodate the number of vehicles now accessing the property. Planning permission has not been granted for any of these. D. McIlroy had contacted planning to ask what steps should be taken and subsequently informed planning enforcement in accordance with the advice received.

Mr & Mrs Bowditch were also concerned about the agricultural tie in place on the farm which had prevented them from living at the property themselves. Cllr Fergusson expressed his dismay at the lack of interest shown by planning enforcement. Cllr Caswell informed those present that, in order for a covenant to be removed, a planning application needed to be submitted. At this point no planning application has been notified to the Parish Council.

ACTION: Cllr Hopkins/ D.McIlroy to write to planning enforcement and ask for an update on issues raised.

Cllr Hopkins/ D.McIlroy to reply to Mr & Mrs Bowditch's complaint on the Parish Council's behalf.

8. Finance report/ approval of payments

A. Stoye had provided a late August finance report, which was circulated to all prior to the meeting. She noted that a refund of £2.40 had been paid by Wix on the change to a new package, and asked for approval of her making a small expense claim towards stationery costs (not exceeding £5). To supplement the information given in the finance report and inform the discussion on possible repayment of the outstanding loan, she had prepared a spreadsheet illustrating the costs and bank balances under the current repayment schedule and if the loan were to be repaid in full.

There followed a lengthy discussion of the merits and disadvantages of earlier repayment of the remaining loan for the cemetery, taking account of the differential in interest rates earned and charged, and the availability of additional capital for contingencies. It was finally decided to defer any repayment (in excess of the current schedule) and reconsider the subject at the time of the review of the Parish Council finances needed in order to set the precept for the next financial year (initial discussion in November, to be finalised in January).

Cllr Fergusson suggested reviewing interest payable in other accounts, as better returns than that paid on the NatWest deposit account might be available. A Stoye reminded the Council that opening new accounts was a lengthy and tedious business and that better returns usually needed money to be tied up for a period.

9. Discussion of Rights of Way 15/4 modification in respect of the “Gully/Ancient Packway” footpath across the Golf course

Cllr Hubbard had requested the item be placed on the agenda, however due to her absence the item is to be deferred until the next meeting in November.

10. Report from Footpaths Officer

Prior to the meeting a Footpaths report was circulated to councillors, which was noted. There were no points to be raised.

11. Report from Neighbourhood Watch

Cllr Fergusson stated that there was nothing new to report.

12. Discuss new initiative “Community Council for Somerset Launches New Affordable Rural Housing Project”

Cllr Comley requested that this item be placed on the agenda for consideration. However, following discussion, it was decided that as the Parish Council was not currently aware of any need for this initiative in the parish no action would be taken at this time.

13. Discuss “Flood/ Environment Agency Property flood Resilience Scheme.”

Cllr Hubbard had requested the item be placed on the agenda, however due to her absence the item is to be deferred until the next meeting in November.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 9.10 pm

NEXT MEETING Tuesday 5th November 2024 at 7.30 pm.

Signed:Date:
Chairman of Council