

# ENMORE PARISH COUNCIL

## Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 2nd May 2023 AT 7.30 pm in Enmore Memorial Hall

Attendance: Cllr Hopkins, Cllr Comley, Cllr Huckler, Cllr Jackson, Cllr Caswell  
RFO: A. Stoye, Clerk: D. McIlroy, A. Hubbard (new councillor/Footpaths Officer), Members of the public.

1. Apologies had been sent by G. Fergusson (new councillor), Matt Barrow (SCC representative) and Cllr Bolt (issues with email addresses).

Cllr Hopkins welcomed all to the meeting, introduced himself as Acting Chairman of the Council and gave various parish notices regarding Coronation weekend events (church service, lunch, litter pick) and the Parish Council Annual Meeting on May 16<sup>th</sup>, to which all are invited. Further details of all these events were given in the May issue of the Enmore & Goathurst magazine. A new initiative *Wilding in Enmore* would also be launched.

2. There were no Declarations of Interest on agenda items.

3. Cllr Hopkins then handed over to Cllr Comley who, in the absence of Matt Barrow, would talk about the broadband issues in Enmore.

Cllr Comley gave a brief history of his issues with broadband coverage and how it had been improved through BT replacing connections, wires etc, and suggested that others might find this approach an option worth investigating. Cllr Comley then summarised the information he had gathered to date, which suggested that fibre is the main option as it generally provides the highest download speeds.

Cllr Comley had originally recommended Openreach's Community Fibre Program and had asked Enmore residents to register an interest. At that moment around 50% of residents had registered. Openreach have also put this scheme on hold due to the high cost of fibre cables. The Devon and Somerset councils have together formed a partnership with a brief of bringing fibre to the rural areas of Devon and Somerset. They have chosen Airband as the provider having given up on Openreach, so once again residents will need to register an interest. Cllr Comley will give further details in the magazine.

Airband, who have been given the contract to supply full fibre to rural areas, would charge between £25-£55/month depending on download speed requested and supply two routers free of charge to all premises. They also offer fibre to the property rather than fibre to the nearest cabinet with copper from cabinet to property. Fibre cables may either be overhead or buried approximately 50cm deep, depending on the local practicalities, and Airband have a legal right to use the Openreach infrastructure. It was hoped that by September 2024 all of Enmore would be fully connected.

Various members of the public raised concerns about whether the improved provision would include the more isolated properties within the parish and suggested that the Council seek assurances that all properties would have the Airband option available to them. Any resident who has concerns about this issue was invited to send Cllr Comley their address so that coverage could be checked with Matt Barrow.

Cllr Caswell remarked that the main delays experienced by Airband were legal issues, including the process of obtaining permission from land owners regarding crossing private land. Owners unwilling to allow access to Airband caused much paperwork and legal investigation. A. Stoye suggested that by co-operating as a village with wayleave issues it may speed up the process. Cllr Caswell also noted that the Parish Council could communicate with those land owners unwilling to allow access to try to resolve any issues.

It was suggested that joining with Goathurst might help improve the speed of work as the combination of the two villages would give a higher number of customers in one area.

One member of the public had installed a Starlink satellite dish which had proved very successful and improved their signal immensely. It was expensive but, for their business, it was proving worth the outlay. Cllr Comley was pleased to know that there was a viable alternative to Airband and that this would be noted for the future if Airband's expected installation date was delayed beyond next year.

One concern raised was that the depth of any buried cable (0.5 metres underground) might not be deep enough to withstand ploughing, with the risk of interruptions of service if the cable were to be damaged.

Cllr Comley noted these concerns and undertook to raise them with Matt Barrow in the near future. He also reassured those present that this item would appear on every Parish Council agenda as an item with updates.

Cllr Hopkins thanked both Cllr Caswell and Cllr Comley for their input. He also thanked the members of the public for attending and for their comments, inviting them to stay for the rest of the meeting if they so chose.

4. The Minutes of last meeting were approved and duly signed.
5. There were no public comments on agenda items.
6. Co-option of two new Councillors

Cllr Hopkins announced the appointment of two new councillors, welcomed both Cllr Hubbard and Cllr Fergusson (in his absence) to the Parish Council and expressed his own and other Councillors' pleasure that they had come forward, looking forward to working with them.

## 7. Actions arising from minutes of previous meeting.

### 7.1 Cemetery update

Cllr Hucker reported that no work has started on the cemetery site due to the inclement weather and resulting muddy condition of the land. Mr Bowditch will start as soon as the ground dries out sufficiently.

### 7.2 Speed Reduction programme/traffic management

Cllr Comley confirmed that all 4 SIDs were in place; 3 solar powered and 1 battery powered. We are waiting for another heavy-duty pole to be installed to accommodate the weight of the device before converting the battery powered device to solar powered.

Approximately 1800 vehicles a day pass through Enmore and approximately 10% are speeding. Cllr Comley is currently collecting data from the SIDs to send to the police to investigate if there are particular times of the day this occurs and therefore the best time for the police to deploy a speed camera to identify the worst culprits.

**ACTION:** Cllr Comley to revisit initial quotation for the conversion to solar power.

Cllr Jackson reported that between April 19<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> a speed radar device was used between the school and 40 mph area of road. The data collected would be used as evidence when considering the Parish Council's request to have 30 mph throughout the whole of Enmore with 20 mph only during periods of school activity. Cllr Jackson hoped to have the report from Katherine Tyson by the May 16<sup>th</sup> meeting, and suggested the possible use of wildlife signs to help in slowing down vehicles.

### 7.3 Flooding in Enmore

D. McIlroy reported that, following her email to Highways on behalf of Mrs. Hubbard regarding the flooding issues she has experienced, Lawrence Hackling of Somerset Highways Department had replied. He stated that he had asked contractors to investigate the drainage. Mrs. Hubbard had also received a reply from him. However, no activity has yet been observed. Cllr Hopkins requested that a follow-up email be sent.

**ACTION:** D. McIlroy will email county roads for a progress report on the matter.

## 8. Finance

- 8.1 A. Stoye reported she had completed and signed the Accounting Statements form for the financial year 2022/23, and that the Annual Internal Audit report had been completed and signed by P. Ingram, who had sent a written report to the Council. There were no adverse comments on financial, governance or communications aspects arising from the internal audit this year. Council noted the receipt of the Annual Internal Audit report and recorded its thanks to Mrs P Ingram for undertaking this work with thoroughness and conscientiousness.
- 8.2 Councillors approved the completion of the Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) on the basis of full compliance. There are no trust funds under the control of Enmore Parish Council so section 9 is not applicable. The Chairman and Clerk of the Council were authorised to sign the statement on behalf of Enmore Parish Council.
- 8.3 Councillors approved the Accounting Statements (Section 2) after a brief discussion about the value placed on the fixed assets and the desirability of reviewing the valuation of shorter-term lifespan items in the Parish's asset register in future years. The Chairman was authorised to sign the form on behalf of the Parish Council.
- 8.4 Councillors approved the Certificate of Exemption and the Chairman and Responsible Financial Officer were authorised to sign the certificate on behalf of the Parish Council.
- 8.5 A. Stoye (Responsible Financial Officer) confirmed the dates for the exercise of public rights. The Council is required to offer access to the public to enable them to inspect relevant information for 30 consecutive working days, including the first 10 working days of July. Accordingly, the period of public access in 2023 will run from 5 June to 14 July and these dates are given on the Council's website.
- 8.6 The relevant forms were duly signed by the appropriate office-holders. The Certificate of Exemption will be sent to the External Auditor and copies of the various forms will be added to the Council's website in accordance with required practice.
- 8.7 A Stoye noted that she had prepared year-to-date accounts for the period from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023, reporting on actual past and expected future payments. These had been circulated to Councillors in advance of the meeting and made available via the website. In addition to the expected payments (items previously authorised by Council or obligations such as the Clerk's pay) she sought authorisation to reimburse the Clerk for £9.50 in respect of expenses incurred on stationery. Approval was given for this payment to be made.
- 8.8 There was a discussion about the lack of and possible need for debit cards for both NatWest and Lloyds. A. Stoye said that the inconvenience was minor and noted that the bank mandates provided for two signatories for all transactions. These arrangements had been set up for the prevention of fraud and the use of debit cards by one person would be inconsistent. She commented that most transactions were now done by bank transfer via internet banking and it is now rare to use cheques, or to need a debit card.

In the case of either cheques or bank transfers two separate authorisations are needed for any transaction.

On behalf of the Parish Council, Cllr Hopkins thanked A. Stoye for all her work.

9. Proposed planning applications

Only one application was currently under consideration - from Tirelands Farm to request change of land use from agricultural land to private garden (to allow for the installation of a pool room/swimming pool).

Inspection of the plans showed that the pool house would be hidden by shrubs. The Parish Council decided that they would support the application of change of use.

**ACTION:** D. McIlroy to place comment of support on planning website for this application.

10. Report from Somerset Bus Partnership and Footpaths Officer

The report had been circulated prior to the parish council meeting. The Council decided it was unwilling to become a member of the Bus Partnership at this time (in view of the lack of buses in Enmore). However Cllr Hubbard would monitor this and report back if she felt it was an option worth pursuing.

With regard to her role as Footpaths' Officer (a role in which she was happy to continue) she was very concerned about the route of the footpath down to the Golf Clubhouse (Path BW-15/4 between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> holes). The legal route is on the top of the gully and worryingly exposed to golf balls. Walking in the gully would be a safer option but, as a result of the collection of water at the end of the gully, this route is impassable. Cllr Hubbard is happy to speak to the area warden concerning the direction/ location of the footpath and investigate improved signage for walkers and golfers.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.15 pm

**NEXT MEETING** Tuesday 16th May starting at 7.00 pm in Enmore Memorial Hall for the Annual Parish Meeting and 7.30 pm for the Parish Assembly.

Signed: ..... Date: .....  
Chairman of Council