

ENMORE PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 2nd January 2024 at 7.30pm in Enmore Memorial Hall

Attendance: Cllr. Hopkins, Cllr Jackson, Cllr Comley, Cllr Hucker, Cllr Hubbard (Footpaths Officer)
Clerk: D. McIlroy, RFO: A. Stoye. Members of the public: Mr M. Ingram,
Mrs J Eggar, Mr A Eggar.

1. Apologies were received from Cllr Fergusson.
2. There were no Declarations of Interest on Agenda Items.
3. The Minutes of last meeting, held on 7th November 2023, were approved and duly signed.

However, Cllr Hopkins informed all present that a matter had arisen at the previous council meeting in November which he wished to address at this point as it was not on the agenda for this meeting.

Concern had been raised at that meeting by an Enmore resident regarding the traffic congestion and therefore the safety of children and parents walking in the road around the school at the beginning and end of the school day. As a result of this the Parish council had met with Mr MacRae, the headmaster, to discuss possible solutions. Whilst he stated that he had no control over parents on the highway, he admitted that the school car park was not always used adequately by parents who wished to make a speedy departure from the school. He agreed to write to parents to raise an awareness of the issue and hoped to resolve the problem through discussion. The Parish Council and Mr MacRae agreed to monitor the situation for a three month period and then review the situation.

4. There were no Public Comments on Agenda items and Questions on matters of concern.
5. There are two outstanding planning applications; the proposed barn extension at Pightley Lane and the siting of 5 caravan pitches at Cutter's Combe. There have been no further updates on these.

A new application has been submitted by Enmore Park Golf Club with associated work and extra lorry traffic around the area. This is to be thoroughly discussed with representatives from the Golf Club at an Extraordinary Meeting held by Enmore Parish Council on January 15th, to start at 7.30 pm in Enmore Memorial Hall, to which members of the public are invited.

6. Actions arising from previous meeting minutes:

6.1 Speed management update.

Cllr Comley stated he was able to send collected SID data to the police and that the results were following a pattern: vehicles approaching the SIDs were slowing down but increasing speed on leaving the 30 mph section. He thought it very unlikely that mobile speed units would come out to Enmore on a regular basis and that there was a lack of support from the police after the Parish Council had taken steps to reduce speed through the village as a whole. As a result of this he is composing a letter to the Police Commissioner for Somerset to express his dissatisfaction of the lack of support.

Cllr Jackson reported on an email she had received from Katherine Tyson suggesting that the proposed new speed limits through the village could be ready for April 2024 and that the cost to Enmore Parish council would be less than £4000 for the new signage required. (Although Highways will pay for existing road signs they would not be responsible for new signage where no accidents/fatalities had occurred.) Thus Enmore Parish Council would be liable for new posts/signs as required.

Cllr Hopkins remarked that all the signs through Enmore needed refurbishment as some were facing the incorrect way, poles were bent and the reflective coating on the surface of the signs had worn off. Therefore, to in order to show consistency through the village with the new signage it would be beneficial to renew all existing signs under Highways control.

Cllr Jackson agreed to speak to K. Tyson regarding this matter and ask for a breakdown of the £4,000 estimated cost as it was agreed by all Councillors that the amount seemed excessive for what was required. Cllr Jackson also added that the flashing lights outside the school were not the responsibility of the Parish Council as they were a nationwide initiative.

The financial implications of this item was reviewed when discussing item 8.

ACTION: Cllr Comley to write to the Police Commissioner.

ACTION: Cllr Jackson to email K Tyson requesting a breakdown of the estimated cost for new signage and what is included.

6.2 Broadband update.

Cllr Comley reported he had no further updates from Faye Cross, the Airband representative, and therefore was going to write to the operations manager at Airband for further information and updates.

Cllr Comley reported that the Openreach roll-out programme has been put on hold. No further details are available.

ACTION: Cllr Comley to write to Airband Operations Manager requesting an update on Broadband roll-out for Enmore.

6.3 Jubilee Field/cemetery.

Cllr Jackson that, due to adverse weather and ground conditions, the seating area had still not been completed. S. Bowditch had confirmed that as soon as there was a dryer period of weather and the ground conditions improved, he would carry out the remaining work to complete this project. A. Stoye had updated the Greater Quantock Landscape Development Fund on progress to date and the reason for the delay in completing the work. Assurance has been received that an extension to the deadline for completing the work will be available if it does not prove possible to complete the work by the original deadline of 1 March 2024.

ACTION: Cllr Jackson to liaise with S Bowditch regarding work on the seating area and other minor improvements.

6.4 Wilder Enmore update.

The “Wilding” project has been renamed “Wilder Enmore” in keeping with the Somerset Wildlife Trust’s ‘Wilder scheme’. The project has been awarded £500 grant towards increasing biodiversity in the churchyard (but not for routine churchyard maintenance). Cllr Jackson suggested this could be used to plant more flower species in the churchyard (some work has already been done to start this process) and to purchase bat/bird boxes to be placed in the trees within the churchyard itself. Denise Hopkins is the lead person in the area so further decisions need to be made. As yet the grant money has not appeared in the Parish Council’s bank account (the Parish Council applied for this grant and will administer the expenditure of this money). The team working on this project was having discussions with Jem Gibson, Wildlife Officer, and was awaiting costings.

ACTION: Cllr Jackson to arrange a meeting with Jem Gibson and D Hopkins to investigate ideas for animal habitats in the churchyard.

ACTION: D McIlroy to send A Stoye completed application for grants as she will monitor and ensure monies are released in accordance with the terms of the grant.

6.5 Neighbourhood watch update.

New Neighbourhood Watch signs have been placed on poles through the village by Cllr Fergusson.

6.6 Flooding issues Enmore Road.

Cllrs Hopkins, Hucker and Hubbard attended a site meeting with Lawrence Hackling from Somerset Highways to discuss the issues as to why certain stretches of Enmore Road flood during heavy rainfall. It would appear that the drain from the Tynte Arms travels under the road to the Tynte Arms car park (manhole in the car park) and then down a pipe to join a stream further down Enmore Road. However, a blockage in the pipe causes the water to back up in the drain and the manhole cover. Cllr Hucker has tried to unblock the pipe, but no avail.

The response from Mr Hackling following the site meeting is available, as are various maps. In this instance he suggested that it is not the responsibility of Somerset Council to clear any blocked drains or gullies but under riparian ownership, the responsibility lies with the occupants of the property or landowners.

A member of the public mentioned that he had a similar problem in a previous property and stated that if the road is adopted (ie a council highway) he believed it to be the responsibility of the council, but not if the road was unadopted.

Cllr Hopkins suggested that the matter be further investigated as the issue has not been resolved satisfactorily.

ACTION: Cllr Hopkins and D McIlroy to write to L Hackling on the subject of flooding issues on Enmore Road and asking about the ruling on riparian ownership and the lack of maintenance by Somerset Council.

7. Finance report/ approval of payments.

As a result of the insurance claim for the damaged SID the Parish Council had to pay a net amount of £100 to repair it (the excess under the insurance policy). All VAT has been reclaimed for the year so far.

A. Stoye requested approval for payment of the Clerk's salary, and a maximum of £20 for refreshments for the next litter pick. Undertaking this work is worthwhile and refreshments were a way of showing appreciation of the community spirit of the volunteers. Otherwise there were no further requests for approval.

Due to the inclement weather, no further work on the cemetery had been possible and therefore the balance of the cost of this project remained unpaid.

A. Stoye informed the Parish Council that it was, overall, well within budget for the year.

Cllr Hopkins thanked A. Stoye for her detailed report and the Parish Council agreed all payments should be made.

8. Enmore's parish precept for 2024/2025.

Cllr Hopkins gave a brief report on the financial situation of Somerset Council as it was known at the time. As Somerset Council has not finalised its budget, the implications for Enmore village are not yet known. It was believed, from the consultation documents issued before the date of the meeting, that the main implications are likely to be road signage and maintenance of hedgerows and gullies.

Enmore Parish Council have to set their precept and submit their request by the end of January. A paper had been circulated with budget figures for expenditure in 2024/25 and capital reserve figures. It was the opinion of the Responsible Financial Officer that routine expenditure based on current responsibilities could be met without an increase in the precept. It was noted that even no increase in the precept amount would lead to a 2.5% increase in the Parish element of residents' Council Tax bills because the tax base for the village had decreased by 2.5% since last year, so the same amount of money for the Parish Council was effectively being spread over fewer households.

In 2024/2025 the Parish Council is committed to work on the car parking area at the lower end of the Jubilee Field/future civil cemetery. The Council holds sufficient reserves to finance this project but it is hoped that the cost to the Council will be mitigated by a £5,000 grant (awarded in the expectation of there being funds available for the Quantock Access Fund in 2024/25). Receipt of this grant will leave the Council with sufficient reserves to meet the cost of new signage for the speed management programme should this be approved and the cost fall on the Parish Council.

Cllr Hubbard remarked that most government bodies have increased their precepts for 2024 and asked therefore would it be fair for Enmore Parish Council to raise theirs? This point was also raised by Cllr Hucker who was concerned about the financial strain on households.

Cllr Hopkins asked for confirmation that without increasing the precept the Parish Council would still be able to cover the cost of the cemetery car park and the new road signage. Having looked at the monies available, both A. Stoye and Cllr Jackson confirmed this.

After discussion it was proposed by Cllr Comley and seconded by Cllr Hucker not to increase the precept for Enmore Parish Council for the next year. (However there would be an effective increase of 2.5% arising from the reduction in tax base for the parish.) The Parish Council therefore unanimously agreed not to increase the precept for 2024/2025.

ACTION: A Stoye to complete the precept request form and send to Somerset Council on the basis of no increase in the amount of precept.

9. Report from Footpaths Officer.

Cllr Hubbard apologised for not circulating her report prior to the meeting. She reported that she had received an email from Sarah Cresswell stating that, as a result of the letter she sent, the Golf Club had assured her that it would improve signage for walkers and golfers across the golf course itself. Cllr Hubbard wished this to be noted in the minutes and that she would be monitoring the situation for improvement.

Cllr Hubbard encouraged all present to report broken stiles, footpath sign etc. via the roam.somerset.gov.uk/roam/map.

Luke Manning had undertaken to strim the footpath between the school and the church again.

10. It was reported that a litter pick has been organised for February 25th, with details and times to be confirmed.

ACTION: Cllr Jackson to liaise with Somerset Council regarding equipment for the litter pick on 25th February and the subsequent collection of the rubbish collected.

NEXT MEETING Tuesday March 5th 2024 at 7.30 pm.

Signed:Date:
Chairman of Council