

ENMORE PARISH COUNCIL

Draft

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 5th March 2024 AT 7.30 pm in Enmore Memorial Hall

Attendance: Cllr. Hopkins, Cllr Jackson, Cllr Comley, Cllr Fergusson, Cllr Hucker, Cllr Hubbard (Footpaths Officer) Clerk: D. McIlroy, RFO: A. Stoye.

1. Apologies were received from Cllr Bolt.
2. There were no Declarations of Interest on Agenda Items.
3. The minutes of the meetings held on 2nd and 15th January 2024 were approved and duly signed.
4. There were no Public Comments on Agenda items and Questions on matters of concern.
5. Proposed planning applications. Parish council discussion and responses.

Planning application number: 27/24/00002/CM

Location: The Tythe Barn, Enmore Road, Enmore, Bridgwater, Somerset, TA5 2DP

The Parish Council supports this application provided a report was received by the planning department from Historic England as the property is in the vicinity of a Grade 2* listed building. Cllr Hubbard also wished it to be noted that the plans submitted showing the location of the property were not accurate and should be amended.

Action: D. McIlroy to reply to planning dept supporting planning application with comments.

Cllr Hopkins mentioned that a letter had been sent to the planning officer refuting claims made by Enmore Golf Club that the Parish Council had given them guidance slides on planning matters. Cllr Comley said that he had given these slides to the Golf Club but that he was not aware that they would state they were from the Parish Council.

Cllr Comley asked why the application for Little Lovedere had been put on hold/withdrawn. Cllr Jackson was able to clarify the situation as she had spoken to James Venton, who was acting on behalf of the residents likely to be the most affected by the planning application. Mr Venton had spoken to the Planning Officer and been told that there were irregularities in the application itself and also a contravention of the agricultural tie. Cllr Hopkins noted that, as there was no further news regarding the application, there was nothing for the Parish Council to discuss at this point on this application until it was re-submitted.

Cllr Fergusson asked if it were possible for councillors to have individual opinions on matters brought to the Parish Council. Cllr Hopkins remarked that parish councillors were elected as individuals and were entitled to express their opinions and challenge views of the other councillors. However, when collective decisions are made at Parish Council meetings, these are a majority decision of councillors with the Chairman having a deciding vote. Cllr Jackson noted that one of the responsibilities of Councillors was to represent the residents of Enmore rather than have a platform for personal opinions.

6. Actions arising from previous meeting minutes.

6.1 Speed management update.

Cllr Comley had circulated his report prior to the meeting (available on request). The main points were that the damaged SID which had been returned has had to be sent back again and would be repaired free of charge. It should be returned by the end of the week.

The new pole had been installed for the last solar panel SID which has to be modified by the manufacturer. The solar panels on the SIDs appear to be charging satisfactorily despite the winter light.

Cllr Comley then discussed next steps with regard to speeding motorists. As Enmore is not considered a 'collision' hotspot it would be very unlikely that the police would monitor the area. One of the suggested proposals was to use volunteers as speed watch patrols. However, it is the police who define where these patrols are placed and training has to be given by them. Cllr Hopkins felt that it was incumbent on the Police to follow up on the work the Parish Council had done to prevent speeding through the village. He suggested that a letter saying such should be written to the Chief Constable. However, after discussion, it was decided by the majority of the Councillors that this should now be put on hold until all of the speed changes/signage work throughout the village has been completed. Then, with the analysed data available from the SIDs, the situation could be reviewed and next steps taken.

Cllr Jackson had received an email from K. Tyson regarding the Enmore Speed limit changes. She stated that the 21 day public consultation period is due to commence 16th April 2024. She did not foresee any major concerns in terms of objectors as the Parish has already done some very thorough pre-consultation along with support from the police. She had also received new rates/prices from the new Highways contract so would prepare an accurate quotation for the new signage. Cllr Jackson would ask her to revisit all the road signs/ road markings in Enmore and see what improvements could be made. She would also request how much the new signs would cost. The new flashing 20mph advisory warning signs for the school will be funded by Somerset Council and not the Parish Council.

A decision was made by the Parish Council to seek for volunteers to help with a community speed watch program and to investigate costs of appropriate training.

Action: Cllr Jackson to email K. Tyson for further information and pass onto Parish Council. Cllr Comley to liaise with police regarding speed watch training and costings.

6.2 Broadband update.

Cllr Comley circulated a report prior to the meeting. He noted that at the November 2023 Parish Council meeting he asked an Airband representative for a more detailed timeline with regard to connecting Enmore with broadband. He has not received any further updates despite repeated emails to them.

Openreach has stated that, as Somerset Council are funding Airband, they will not be installing any high speed fibre into any of Enmore.

Airband will only serve those properties with less than 30 megabits download speed.

Action: Cllr Comley will write an update in the Enmore & Goathurst magazine.

6.3 Jubilee Field/future civil cemetery.

Cllr Jackson circulated a report prior to the meeting. The wet weather has prevented any work to the seating area in the field. S. Bowditch is keen to start as soon as conditions allow, which

means several consecutive dry days are needed.

A. Stoye reported that the deadline for the funding for the project had been extended and that some money from the grant had been released for work completed so far (see Finance report) Cllr Jackson said that as the April deadline was approaching she would enquire whether a Quantock Access grant towards the cost of the cemetery car park was likely to be forthcoming.

Action: Cllr Jackson to follow up funding application.

6.4 Wilder Enmore update.

Cllr Jackson circulated a report prior to the meeting. She reported that bird boxes and hedgehog houses had been purchased for the churchyard with some of the money from £500 grant. A working party was to start work on March 6th in the far corner of the churchyard in preparation for a school visit by the children.

Another litter pick had been very successful. It was a worthwhile exercise and is making a difference to the Enmore Road area.

Private cameras had produced evidence of otters and kingfishers in the Enmore area and feedback from the bat survey showed the presence of rare Barbistrelle and Horseshoe bats in residence.

It has been noted that there are a large number of toads crossing Enmore Road by the Enmore Inn and frogs in Frog lane which have increased in number.

Action: Cllr Jackson to contact Wessex Water to see what action can be taken to protect the toads by Durleigh reservoir.

Cllr Hopkins thanked Cllr Comley, Cllr Jackson and Cllr Hucker for their hard work on these community projects.

7. Finance report/approval of payments.

A. Stoye circulated her report to Parish Councillors prior to the meeting (report available). She noted that an interim payment of grant for the seating and landscaping at the cemetery had been received. No invoice had been received for the heavy-duty pole for the remaining SID, although approval had been given for its payment, as had the cost of the upgrade to the last battery-powered SID.

A. Stoye asked for approval to reimburse D. Hopkins for the purchase of bird boxes etc for the churchyard. She noted that would be able to claim back the VAT element, thus making the grant stretch further. This was approved by all.

Cllr Jackson remarked that as the quotation for the replacement road signs was now reduced to £3000 there would hopefully be some money allocated to other signs should it be necessary but that she would try to obtain exact costings.

Cllr Fergusson enquired as to whether it might be prudent to try to find other deposit accounts with a higher interest rate.

A. Stoye remarked that once work on the seating area and car parking at the Jubilee Field was completed, the amount remaining in the deposit account would be rather less than the current £21,000, so much of the amount currently on deposit could not be tied up for long periods. Following discussion, it was felt that all payments for work currently commissioned should be made first and then there should be a review of investment of the remaining funds.

8. Discussion of possible additional discretionary expenditure.

After a brief discussion about the possibility of the Parish Council providing some discretionary support in respect of churchyard maintenance and to the Memorial Hall, Councillors agreed that none should be made at that time given the financial uncertainty facing parish councils as a result of cutbacks by Somerset Council.

9. Discussion on the implications to Enmore Parish resulting from the financial position of Somerset Council following release of their budget.

Following the release of Somerset Council's budget for the coming year, Cllr Hopkins noted how Band D property rates had increased in both Bridgwater and North Petherton. He stated that the impact of this budget control has had an impact on all councils and eventually those in Enmore would be affected. He reiterated that LCN meetings were important for rural communities in that they join communities together and raise issues pertinent to them.

The likely areas of service in Enmore that would be affected were ditches, verges and clearing of surface water.

10. Discussion on the response from L. Hackling and SALC in relation to the surface water issue along Enmore Road.

Following Mr Hackling's reply to questions about responsibility for the flooding in Enmore, it is deemed to be the responsibility of the land owner to maintain/clear ditches and gullies and this was confirmed by SALC. Initially it was suggested that the Parish Council writes to the land owners asking them to resolve the issue. However, if no action is taken the landowners are then reported to the Flood and Water management team who will enforce action.

The Parish Council thought that this seemed a very 'heavy handed' approach and after discussion about alternatives, it was decided to approach Simon Bowditch for a quotation as to how much it would cost the Parish Council to clear the ditches along the two main areas of the Enmore Road and contact the Burge family directly to clear the ditches by their land.

Action: Cllr Hucker to approach Mr Bowditch and report back to the Parish Council.

11. Discussion on the use of reflective roadside signs to prevent further degradation of verges into ditches.

Following on from item 10, one of the main causes of the ditches becoming full and flooding is due to traffic, especially lorries, tractors etc using the verges as the roads are not wide enough to accommodate vehicles passing in opposite directions. Soil from the verges is pushed into gullies and blocks them. It was suggested by Mr Hackling that the use of reflective posts on the badly affected stretches of road would be beneficial. Councillors were in agreement that this proposal should be investigated further.

Action: D. McIlroy to email Mr Hackling to obtain more information and costings.

12. Discussion on the Rights of way 15/5: modification in respect the "Gully/ Ancient Packway" footpath across Enmore Golf Club.

As there have been no further developments on the planning application by Enmore Golf club, Cllr Hubbard would like to start the process of protecting the ancient packway as a right of way. She had spoken to Sue Coman – Rights of Way officer who advised that the Definitive Map is the **legal** record of public rights of Way and can only be modified by an evidence-based formal application. She suggested looking into heritage or ecological aspects of the Gully/Ancient Packway. Planning Application 27/23/00009 responses may constitute relevant evidence supporting a Modification Application. There would also be a need to apply to designate the 'Packway' a Heritage Asset.

Cllr Hubbard was worried that the implications of closing the Definitive Map to claims based on historical evidence meant that historical claims would no longer be recorded.

Action: Cllr Hubbard to prepare draft letters to begin the Modification Application and apply to designate the 'Packway' a Heritage Asset.

13. Report from Footpaths Officer/ Bus Partnership.

Cllr Hubbard noted there was nothing to report on the bus (or lack of) situation in Enmore. As the weather has been particularly wet she has had very little opportunity for walking. But she mentioned that over the spring/summer she would check on farmers over-cropping on footpaths and not leaving the permitted space for footpaths through fields.

14. Report from Neighbourhood watch.

Cllr Fergusson stated that there was nothing to report. However, Cllr Jackson noted that there had been positive feedback as a result of the Enmore Broadcast WhatsApp group and that villagers had found it a very useful means of communication.

15. Any other business

Cllr Jackson and Cllr Hubbard agreed to attend the next LCN meeting at Stogursey.

It was decided that a low key village event would be held to celebrate the 80th anniversary of the D Day landings on June 6th. Details to be discussed at the next meeting and notification to be submitted to the Enmore & Goathurst magazine.

Cllr Hopkins thanked A. Stoye for all her work over the past year in preparing the Finance reports and budgets.

The meeting closed at 9.35 pm

NEXT MEETING Tuesday May 7th 2024 at 7.30 pm.

Signed: Date:
Chairman of Council