

# ENMORE PARISH COUNCIL

## DRAFT

### Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at 7.30pm in Enmore Memorial Hall

Attendance: Cllr. Hopkins, Cllr Comley, Cllr Fergusson, Cllr Hubbard, Cllr Hucker, Cllr Jackson, Clerk: D. McIlroy, RFO: A. Stoye. Members of the public.

1. Apologies were received from Cllr Caswell.
2. There were no declarations of interest on agenda items.
3. The minutes of the meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2024 were approved and duly signed.
4. T. Searle asked to be permitted to speak regarding the proposed signage for horse riders (Item 5.3). Cllr Hopkins noted her request.
5. Actions arising from previous meeting minutes.

#### 5.1 Speed management update

Cllr Comley reported that recent SID data suggested that the speeds between Mill Farm and Stone Hall Lane were showing an encouraging improvement (more compliant with the limit) since the new speed restrictions were implemented. Apart from this, the SIDs are not showing any major change in data with drivers tending to speed up on leaving the village.

The SID outside the Enmore Inn which had previously been hit has been sent off for repair as it could no longer be programmed; presumably as a result of the damage it received earlier. As the seal around the SID had been broken, presumably by the impact, the Parish Council will have to pay for the repair at a cost of approximately £340 (plus reclaimable VAT).

All four SIDs are coming to the end of their initial warranty period and there appeared to be three options to prevent damage from high vehicles: place the SID on brackets away from the road (as seen in Kingston St. Mary), move the SID further up the pole (now done for the Stone Hall Lane and Enmore Inn SIDs, which are at the maximum height on the current poles) or install a protective casing. The SID by Mill Farm cannot be moved higher due to hedge height but is partially protected by the telegraph pole behind it. The SID by Red Cottage is embedded in the hedge. Cllr Comley will try to move the other SIDs to reduce the risk of further damage.

#### 5.2 Discuss extended guarantee on SIDs from Elan City

On the expiry of the initial warranty Elan City (the supplier) is offering extended warranty at a cost of £199 per SID per year. The cost of this would be equivalent to £2,400 over a three year period (enough to buy a replacement or to have a number of repairs carried out). Cllr Comley suggested not taking out extended warranty cover but instead holding a reserve in the budget to pay for any repairs needed. It is also hoped that taking action to reduce the risk of damage from passing vehicles will keep repair costs down. A vote was taken and it was agreed not to accept the extended warranty offer from Elan City and to make a allowance in the budget for repairs when needed.

Cllr Comley commented that he was very impressed with the customer service he receives from Elan City when asking for advice and he had received confirmation that going forward all advice would be free of charge.

Cllr Comley also stated that 1% of drivers were still exceeding speeds of 50 mph. These speeds generally occurred between 7 am-9.30 am and 2 pm-5 pm. However, due to the low number of offending vehicles the police were not prepared to visit Enmore as they had other areas with bigger problems. Fixed speed cameras were expensive and, once installed, are believed to become less effective after a period of time.

### 5.3 Discuss costings for completed work and additional signage for horses/wild life

Cllr Jackson noted that due to different contractors having separate responsibilities for different aspects of the new signage, the road markings denoting speed limit changes and the flashing lights outside the school are yet to be completed. K Tyson is aware of this.

Additional warning signs alerting drivers to riders and wildlife were suggested at the entrance to Enmore from both ends and at either end of the old 40 mph speed section of the road. Cllr Jackson is currently waiting for K Tyson to send information about costs and about the format of up-to-date signage and its availability.

T. Searle then asked to speak on behalf of horse riders/pedestrians as she had an unfortunate incident whilst on her horse outside the school. She had felt very vulnerable and wished to promote a campaign for safer roads for non-drivers. She noted that the Highway Code had changed in 2022 with regard to horse riders and pedestrians and that there should be a two metre distance between drivers and other road users. She requested the Parish Council to improve signs to illustrate this change. She had found suitable signs at a cost of £150 for 8 and asked whether the Parish Council would pay for these signs and arrange their installation.

Cllr Hopkins reminded all present that permission was needed from the Highways Dept to place signs on poles on the road; but he suggested that T. Searle approach private landowners to seek their permission to post on their land, also ensuring that planning permission is not required for these signs even if they are placed on private land.

Cllr Comley noted that PSCO Dan Cox had recommended that all horse riders and cyclists wear cameras on front and back. Video evidence of incidents could then be reported to the police and relevant action/ prosecutions could be then follow.

Cllr Hopkins stated that the Parish Council was working on reducing the speed of traffic through the village, which is a lengthy process, and when everything is in place the police will be called upon to enforce it.

Cllr Fergusson was of the opinion the more signs used the better and Cllr Jackson remarked that the main area with traffic issues was outside the school and the problems were largely caused by the lack of safe parking available to parents. The school has been approached on many occasions and are trying to minimise the disruption.

T. Searle thanked the Parish Council for allowing her to raise her concerns.

#### 5.4 Broadband update

Cllr Comley reported that from an email received from Amanda Williams (Connecting Devon and Somerset) he had learned that due to Airband's financial situation and consequent restructuring they are unable to deliver the promised broadband to certain areas, Enmore being one of them. The contract has been terminated. Upper Enmore did not qualify for this as their speeds were already higher and since the broadband speed has been increased at the school those within a certain area have now been connected by Openreach. Cllr Comley will therefore continue to contact Openreach on behalf of the lower Enmore residents to enquire as to possible options.

**ACTION:** Cllr Comley to contact Openreach

#### 5.5 Civil cemetery update

Cllrs Jackson and Hucker had circulated a report prior to the meeting. A padlock was now in place, the code for which was provided in the magazine.

#### 5.6 Wilder Enmore update.

Councillors were informed that a meeting had been held with Bethany Paddon from QLPS at Nether Stowey on 1st October. The meeting was principally about Hedge Surveys but also discussed handover after QLPS, in its current form, disbands next year. Bethany is training up a volunteer group to carry on doing hedge surveys which will continue to feed in to the hedge map for the Quantock Area to which she has been contributing.

Cllrs Jackson and Hucker's written report noted that the balance of the Magic Little Grant is to be spent on mixed wildflower bulbs. These have now been ordered for further planting, mostly in the churchyard and a few around the trees adjacent to the Jubilee Meadow car park.

Another Litter Pick took place on Sunday 3rd November and quite a number of bags were collected. The Durlleigh end of the village including the lay-by appeared to have slightly less rubbish but the Kingston end seemed to have more. The next Litter Pick will be in early February.

### 6. Planning applications.

At this point no new application has been notified to the Parish Council. However, the Parish Council has been notified that Enmore Park Golf Club has appealed to the Secretary of State to have the previous planning application decision (refusal) overruled.

**ACTION:** Cllr Hopkins to discuss next steps with the other members of the Parish Council, including an extraordinary meeting with Enmore residents. (*Note: now arranged for 22 November.*)

### 7. Finance report/ approval of payments.

A. Stoye had produced a finance report, including year-to-date accounts, which was circulated to all prior to the meeting. She noted that some additional deposit account interest had been received and that some money had been moved from the NatWest deposit account to Lloyds in anticipation of approval to pay various invoices.

Currently the Parish Council has accounts with two banks as there were considerable problems changing bank mandates with Nat West: it was quicker to open a new account with Lloyds. Lloyds have previously provided free banking services under their Community Account scheme but have given notice that charges will be introduced from mid-January (£51 per annum at the proposed rates). Authorised signatories had found Lloyds online banking much easier to use than NatWest and their customer service better. It was agreed that A Stoye should investigate opening a Lloyds deposit account and moving all funds from NatWest, subject to the rate of interest on deposits not being very

different. A Stoye will report to the January meeting and a decision on banking will be made. If the NatWest account is closed, arrangements for the receipt of the precept and the payment of the loan instalments must be changed.

A. Stoye asked for approval from the council to pay A. Hucker £394 for 12 months' maintenance work, £241 to Zurich Insurance (renewal premium), £4.60 to herself for paper (of which £0.77 is reclaimable VAT) and £421 to Elan City for SID repair (£343.53 plus £68.71 reclaimable VAT). Councillors approved all these payments.

As yet no invoice has been received for work completed for the speed limit reduction through the village. Cllr Comley expressed concern about the size of the expected bill (£5,000) and was unhappy about the agreement to pay when signs were costed at approximately £50 each. Cllr Jackson reminded him the total costs were considerably greater, covering preliminary work, reports, statutory consultations, roadworks as well as signage. Furthermore, Councillors' agreement to go ahead on this basis was noted in the minutes of 7<sup>th</sup> May 2024: "the Parish Council agreed to pay no more than £5,000 provided they had been given an itemised invoice clearly showing amounts due." A. Stoye will notify all when the invoice is received.

8. Preliminary discussion regarding budget for the 2025/26 financial year.

A. Stoye had provided figures for the current year's budget, and how actual figures and best estimates for the remainder of the year compared with budget figures. These provide a helpful starting point for estimating next year's financial requirements. Although the Clerk is now working in the capacity of an unpaid volunteer rather than an employee, it is prudent to allow for the possibility of having to pay a Clerk and this potential item of cost should remain in the assessment of precept requirement. A discussion ensued and several of the provisional budget figures in the first draft will be amended accordingly.

Capital requirements were also noted, allowing for the expected invoice from Highways, potential SID replacement costs, as well as the usual recommended reserves for items such as election costs and a percentage of the usual precept.

A. Stoye commented that the Parish Council was holding funds in excess of prudent reserve levels and therefore consideration should be given to repayment of the balance of the loan for the civil cemetery. It was agreed to examine this in greater detail at the January meeting.

Cllr Hopkins thanked A. Stoye for all her hard work in preparing financial updates.

9. Discuss moving the Parish Council domain to gov.uk

A. Stoye informed Councillors that she had received communication suggesting that the parish council's website (which she currently updates) should now use a gov.uk address, and that Councillors and Officers should use gov.uk email addresses for Council business. Reasons given for this recommendation included security and authentication of any communications. However this would incur a cost and it was unclear whether it would be harder to update the website using the Wix platform exactly how approved council email addresses would be added and removed. This might be beyond her capabilities and, if so, there would be further cost from having to employ someone with the relevant expertise.

Another point that arose during the free online seminar A Stoye attended was the desirability of making the website "accessible to everyone living in the parish". However, councils are permitted to excuse themselves from this requirement if the cost outweighs the benefits.

Enmore is a very small parish and, following discussion, Councillors all agreed that the change was not necessary at the moment.

10. Discuss Flood/Environment Agency Property Flood Resilience Scheme (Cllr Hubbard from last meeting)

Cllr Hubbard noted that it would be useful to have an up-to-date survey of the ditches/ underground streams for Enmore. The main road through Enmore continues to flood during periods of heavy rain despite gullies and ditches being cleared. The ditch opposite Red Cottage and further up appeared to be the same level as the road and therefore required clearing.

**ACTION:**~Cllr Hopkins to write to L. Hackling (Somerset Highways dept) to request advice. Cllr Hopkins on behalf of Enmore Parish Council to write to landowners and request ditches be maintained.

11. Rights of way 15/4: modification in respect the “Gully/ Ancient Packway” footpath across Enmore Park Golf Club. (Cllr Hubbard from last meeting) Discussion/ Debate – should it be a proposed council initiative?

Cllr Fergusson stated that he thought it unlikely any action would be taken by the golf club until a decision had been reached on their planning appeal to the Secretary of State. However, after that he suggested meeting with the golf club to see if an agreement could be reached with regard to the route through the ancient packway/ gully and the clubhouse.

Cllr Hubbard offered, in the meantime, to start a route of enquiry through legal means. She also offered to talk with Somerset Footpaths as to what evidence was required. Cllr Jackson stated she thought this a good idea. Cllr Comley wished it noted in the minutes that he did not approve of this action nor did he consider that this subject should a be a council initiative. However, all other councillors agreed that Cllr Hubbard could start investigating the process of re-routing the foot path.

**ACTION:** Cllr Hubbard to contact Somerset Footpaths for advice.

12. The poor condition of the highway road surface near the golf course.

The road surface on a section of road along by the golf course has markedly degraded. Despite the pot holes being filled, the rest of the road is in a poor state of repair. Cllr Hucker noted that the presence of the stream running under this section of the road may be undermining the road and contributing to the degradation.

**ACTION:** Cllr Hopkins to write to Highways and bring the matter to their attention.

13. Report from Footpaths Officer.

Cllr Hubbard had circulated a report prior to the meeting. She stated her main concern was still the over-cropping of footpaths and bridleways. She intended to investigate pathways and report findings to the new Rights of Way Warden John Melrose.

**ACTION:** Cllr Hopkins to write to Somerset Council on behalf of the Parish Council about overgrown rights of way.

14. Report from Neighbourhood Watch.

Cllr Fergusson had no major news to report. However, two cannabis plants had been seen planted in the field next to the Golf Club. These have been reported to the police and to the Golf Club.

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

**NEXT MEETING** Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> January 2024 starting at 6.30 pm. (New start time for January and March.)

Signed: .....  
Chairman of Council

Date:.....