

# ENMORE PARISH COUNCIL

## Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> September 2023 starting at 7.30 pm in Enmore Memorial Hall

Attendance: Cllr. Hopkins, Cllr Jackson, Cllr Hucker, Cllr Fergusson, Cllr Hubbard (Footpaths Officer)  
Clerk: D. McIlroy, RFO: A. Stoye. J. Eggar, N. Gatcombe, P. Hobbs, D. Rice, S. Tottle, L. Winwood.

1. Apologies had been received from Cllr Comley, Cllr Caswell and Cllr Bolt.
2. There were no Declarations of Interest on Agenda Items.
3. D. Rice wished to raise a concern as a member of the public over the proposed planning application in Pightley Lane. He gave a brief history of the development of the site with the loss of trees, pond and the introduction of hard core standing and wondered how such a development could be permitted within the Quantock Hills Area of Natural Beauty. He stated that originally there had been no notification of the development and that it started during lockdown in June 2020.

He noted the destruction to habitats caused by the construction of an access track and new entrance. (This retrospective planning application has been refused but the track and large gate are still in use.) He asked the Parish Council to consider commenting on this development and objecting as he felt (as had many locals in the area) that enough development of the site had occurred. Various wildlife organisations (Somerset Wildlife trust, Friends of the Quantocks) had also complained, but to no avail. P. Hobbs added that he supported everything D. Rice had said and that he was also concerned that the Quantock Hills AONB had appeared to show a lack of interest in the matter.

The Chairman thanked D. Rice for raising his concerns.

There were no other matters raised.

4. The minutes of last meeting, held on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2023, were approved and duly signed.
5. Actions arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.
  - 5.1 Speed management update.

There was no further update regarding the SID data given to the police, or from Highways about the speed limit reduction through the village.

- 5.2 SID update.

Cllr Comley had circulated photographs of the damaged solar powered SID by Mill Farm to members of the Parish Council prior to the meeting. Unfortunately, he is unaware of how the damage occurred.

He has sought advice and received quotations for repair of the device (£1244.84+£248.97 VAT) and replacement (£1840+£368 VAT).

**ACTION:** D. McIlroy to contact the Council's insurance company and submit a claim on behalf of the Parish Council.

### 5.3 Broadband update.

There has been no further information from Openreach or Air band. However, an Airband representative has been invited to the next Parish Council meeting

### 5.4 Wilding Update.

It was agreed at the last meeting that a discussion be held to determine whether the Wilding project be a parish initiative or a Parish Council initiative.

In the absence of Cllr Comley, D. McIlroy read a statement of his views (sent from him as an email to the Parish Council prior to the meeting) making it clear that he opposed Wilding as a Parish Council initiative. Cllr Jackson then read out her reply to this email in support of its adoption. (Both are available.) She suggested that it was possible that the term 'Wilding' was creating the wrong impression: that areas to be 'wilded' are left untouched, whereas the aim of Wilding is to create biodiversity and improve habitats. This cannot be achieved without managing the areas. Cllr Jackson added that support for the initiative was shown by various groups in the village community.

After lengthy discussion the Chairman asked the council to vote on the resolution, -"Should the Wilding initiative be a parish or a Parish Council one?" Cllr Fergusson proposed that it should be a Parish Council initiative, this was seconded by Cllr Jackson and the attending councillors all approved. The resolution was passed that Wilding should be considered a Parish Council initiative.

### 5.5 Cemetery update.

Cllrs Jackson and Hucker had circulated an update to all councillors prior to the meeting (available on request). The AONB Capital Access fund has pre-allocated £5,000 towards the car parking costs from its expected 2024/25 funding pot. This means that work cannot be started until April 2024 and formal confirmation of the grant award. S Bowditch has been notified of the revised timetable for starting work.

A grant application has also been made to the Greater Quantock Landscape Development Fund for 75% of the planting costs for the wild flower meadow, orchard and seating at the top of the cemetery. (Total estimated costs £4077.51 excluding VAT, so a 75% grant would be £3058.13.) The grant awarding panel meets on 20<sup>th</sup> September and Cllr Jackson will be notified if the Parish Council application was successful. Cllr Hopkins thanked Cllr Jackson for her work on this project. She stated that AONB has been very supportive, as had the Enmore residents, whose pledges would cover most of the 25% balance.

### 5.6 Car park additional usage

This matter was raised due to the ongoing problems associated with traffic congestion around the school during school drop off/collection times and during special events held at the school eg Sports Day. Several residents had complained about the congestion and how this affects the safety of all road users. L. Winwod remarked she had been clipped by cars whilst walking her children to school. All agreed "there was an accident waiting to happen." Cllr Jackson enquired whether it would be feasible to offer the cemetery car park as additional car parking for the school when it has been completed.

It was therefore agreed to include the topic of road safety and the use of the cemetery car park on the next Parish Council agenda. It was also suggested that the headmaster of the school (D. Macrae) be invited to attend to share his thoughts.

**ACTION:** D. McIlroy to email Mr Macrae and invite him to the next Parish Council meeting.

## 5.7 Flooding in Enmore Road.

There has been no contact from Somerset Council regarding this issue and Cllr Hubbard felt that she has no choice but to resort to official legal channels as her issues have not been resolved.

N. Gatcombe, a neighbour who lives in Gate Cottage on the Enmore/ Andersfield junction, reports that the gullies outside his house have not been cleaned while he has been living there and frequently flood but, because he does not live on Enmore Road, no work has been done to remedy it.

**ACTION:** Cllr Hopkins and D. McIlroy to write a letter of complaint to Somerset Highways on behalf of the residents.

## 5.8 Signpost outside Castle House

The signpost has been cleaned and repainted by J. Nicholson and D. Cole and now looks smart and legible. The Chairman recorded his thanks and asked for it to be recorded in the minutes how much their efforts are appreciated.

Cllr Hopkins asked that emails be sent to both on behalf of the Parish Council thanking them for their time and effort, and to enquire if they need to be reimbursed for materials.

**ACTION:** D. McIlroy to write to both with thanks from the Parish Council.

## 5.9 Road surface in Church Lane

D. McIlroy reported she had no response to her report on the Fix My Street app about the state of disrepair of Church Lane. But she had been able to report potholes on the Somerset Council road site. (Unfortunately the site does not give an option for road surface degradation.) Consequently, only the largest pothole in Church Lane has been filled in, leaving the rest of the road untouched. Cllr Hopkins suggested that, as the matter was not resolved, a letter should be sent to Somerset Highways raising our concerns.

**ACTION:** Cllr Hopkins and D. McIlroy to write a letter of complaint on behalf of the residents to Somerset Highways regarding the degradation of the road surface.

## 6. Report from Somerset Bus Partnership and Footpaths Officer.

Cllr Hubbard's reports on bus and footpaths had been circulated to the other councillors prior to the meeting.

In a letter from S. Coman (Rights of Way Officer) Cllr Hubbard was told that, due to the backlog of work, it could be some years before a definitive right of way along the gully could be shown and in such a case it would not prevent the gully from being filled in as long as the way was traversable. If, however, it could be shown to be a site of special interest then it could be investigated. S. Cresswell, Footpaths Officer, has also written to the golf club asking about the rights of way across it, but as yet not had a reply. She also commented on the strimming undertaken by L Manning, especially the maintenance of footpaths by the school, and how grateful she was.

Following discussion, it was agreed that a letter should be written to Enmore Park Golf Club asking that a route be found which is sign posted and which gives safe passage across the course.

**ACTION:** Cllr Hopkins and D. McIlroy to compose a letter to the Chairman of Enmore Park Golf Club.

**ACTION:** D. McIlroy to write to L. Manning on behalf of the Parish Council and thank him for his voluntary attendance at the recent strimming course and his work around Enmore.

Cllr Hubbard noted that she had been unable to attend the latest Zoom meeting of SBP, but would like to investigate the bus system being used in Nether Stowey and Wiveliscombe to see if could be applied in Enmore.

7. Report on Neighbourhood Watch.

Cllr Fergusson reported that he had received about 30 responses to his flyer in last month's Enmore & Goathurst Magazine regarding the best way to contact residents of Enmore in an emergency. These responses suggested that a 'Whats App' group was the best way forward. Following discussion with Cllr Jackson it was decided to utilise and expand the existing Enmore Village Broadcast group. Therefore, any numbers given to Cllr Fergusson were added to this group and will be used in future to notify residents of emergencies. It is hoped that those not on Whats App, especially elderly residents, will be kept informed by email, or by word of mouth, by those using it.

Cllr Fergusson also proposed purchasing six Neighbourhood Watch signs (at an estimated cost of £40) to attach to poles in the area to act as a deterrent. Cllr Jackson seconded this proposal and this was agreed by the remaining councillors.

8. Finance.

A. Stoye had produced and circulated a finance report, including year-to-date accounts, before the meeting.

She asked for approval to pay the invoice for the balance of L Manning's strimmer course (£82.50 +VAT) - Somerset Council paid half the cost. Cllr Jackson proposed this should be paid and it was seconded by Cllr Fergusson- agreed by all.

She also mentioned the outgoings expected over the two months before the next meeting: Clerk's salary, loan repayment, and the annual SALC subscription which was £68.09 last year and therefore would possibly increase this year. She suggested that if it was less than £80 she might be authorised to pay it, but should it be a higher figure she would inform the councillors and seek further guidance and authorisation. Cllr Hubbard proposed that these payments should be made, Cllr Jackson seconded and all agreed.

With regard to future spending on the landscaping at the cemetery, including tree planting, she asked if she could be authorised to pay bills EITHER in accordance with the budget provided for the grant application if the Greater Quantock Landscape Development Fund awarded a grant OR, if our grant application was unsuccessful, proceed with only the tree planting element. The trees themselves were all being donated by residents but there would be some labour costs involved in planting them and possibly items like stakes, ties and rabbit guards for the Parish Council to meet (not expected to exceed £150). It would be desirable to order and plant the trees this autumn. If no expenditure can be authorised until the November Parish Council meeting, this would delay implementation of this project.

Cllr Jackson proposed that this approach to meeting the costs of the cemetery landscaping be approved, Cllr Fergusson seconded and all agreed. A. Stoye undertook to provide councillors with regular financial updates on the implementation of the landscaping project.

A. Stoye noted that work on next year's budget, and therefore setting the 2024/25 precept, would begin at the November meeting as it has to be finalised and submitted in January 2024. It was suggested that a subcommittee, consisting of Cllr Hopkins, Cllr Jackson and A. Stoye should meet before November to begin work on this. The date for this meeting is to be arranged. Input from all other Councillors will be welcome.

Cllr Hopkins thanked A. Stoye for all her work on the Council's finances.

9. LCN update.

The next meeting of the Dowsborough area LCN is due to take place on 13<sup>th</sup> September at 7pm in Spaxton village hall. Cllr Hopkins hopes to attend in person.

10. Planning applications

No planning application has been received from Enmore Park Golf Club.

Referring back to the public comments by D. Rice regarding the planning application in Pightley Lane, after a lengthy discussion it was considered appropriate to inform AONB of the loss of habitats (pond, hedges etc) caused by the unauthorised construction of the track and site entrance. The site is within AONB, rich with wildlife and habitats. The Parish Council therefore agreed that they were opposed to the extension of the building as there were a number of concerns, including outstanding issues that need addressing.

**ACTION:** Cllr Hopkins and D. McIlroy to compose a strongly worded comment and objection to the proposed development and seek further information, also sending copies to other organisations within the Quantocks.

11. Litter pick

After a short discussion by Cllr Jackson and Cllr Hucker it was agreed by the council that another village litter pick be held in late autumn. A. Stoye also commented on the improved appearance of the lay-by at Durleigh reservoir since the litter bin was removed by Somerset Council.

**ACTION:** Cllr Jackson to liaise with Somerset Council over borrowing litter pick equipment, and to advertise for volunteer labour.

**ACTION:** D. McIlroy to write to the Chairman of Durleigh Parish Council on behalf of Enmore Parish Council thanking him for his work on the issue of litter in the lay-by and suggesting that the litter bin not be reinstated.

12. Road congestion 11<sup>th</sup> August 2023

The congestion on this date was due to accident on the M5 resulting in its closure in both directions at one point, with north-bound traffic being directed onto A38 which also became congested thus traffic came up over Buncombe Hill and through Enmore. This caused severe queuing down the Enmore Road to Bridgwater itself.

A member of the public noted that it didn't help that road signage was missing. At the last Parish Council meeting (4<sup>th</sup> July) Cllrs Caswell and Bolt said that they understood it was not Enmore Parish Council's responsibility to replace/pay for missing signs but the Highways Department's. As no update had been reported from the councillors, it was resolved that Highways should be contacted.

**ACTION:** Cllr Hopkins, Cllr Jackson and D. McIlroy to write a letter to Somerset Highways highlighting the problems of 11<sup>th</sup> August, requesting clarification of the responsibility of payment for road signs and an update on the proposed change of speed limits through Enmore.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.40 pm

**Next meeting:** Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2023 at 7.30 pm.

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