

BROADWAY PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Broadway Parish Council held in Broadway Village Hall on Tuesday 16th January 2023 at 7.30p.m.

857. Election of Chair of the Parish Council

Cllr Neate was proposed by Cllr Tom, seconded by Cllr Champion and all Councillors voted in favour. Cllr Neate was duly elected as Chair and read and signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office, witnessed by the Clerk.

858. Attendance and Apologies

Present: Cllrs Neate, Champion, Toms, Preece, and Jones;
Somerset Council Cllr Osborne and Mrs Larsson (Clerk)
5 members of the public

859. **Apologies:** Cllr Frayne

860. Parish Council Vacancy

Public notice of the vacancy has been posted, advising the 14-day period in which an election may be requested by electors of the parish. If no call for an election is made by 10 or more electors, the Parish Council may fill the vacancy by co-option. The 14-day period expires on 30th January 2024.

Any parties interested in joining the Council should contact either the Clerk or one of the Councillors for more information.

861. **Declarations of Interest** None.

862. Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 6th December 2023

Minutes were approved unanimously by councillors as a true record and duly signed by the Chairman.

863. Public Question Time, Including Somerset Council Cllr Report

A written report from Cllr Osborne had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting. Cllr Osborne commented that Somerset Council is in serious financial difficulty caused by a number of factors and as a result Parishes and Towns are being given an opportunity to take on assets and services locally which may include highways services such as verge and hedge cutting. She commented that the existing Ranger scheme through Somerset Council will end, but there is an offering from Ilminster Town Council which could be a good replacement. Details of the proposed service have been circulated to Councillors for consideration. There is also a Highway Steward service available through Somerset Council via Keir which should be considered.

A number of measures have been suggested to reduce the Somerset Council budget deficit including reducing costs and an increase in council tax above 4.99% to 10%. Services likely to be affected are recreational facilities, recycling centres, non-statutory highways services and potentially rights of way maintenance. Proposals are being put to full council on the 1st February and more details will be shared as they are known.

There were no questions from members of the public.

864. Planning

- a. **Application:** 23/03017/OUT: Outline application with some matters reserved except for access and layout for the construction of 47 No. dwellings - Land Between Pound Road and Paulls Lane Broadway Ilminster Somerset TA19 9SA
Councillors discussed the application in detail and agreed unanimously to submit an OBJECTION to the application. Basis of the objections were impact on visual amenity due to the proposed prominent location on open countryside; effect on highway safety from additional vehicle movements from the site entrance which has poor visibility; inadequate drainage solutions and increased surface run-off from a large-scale impermeable surface causing increased flood risk and distance to and lack of safe pedestrian routes to village amenities. In addition, it was noted that other statutory consultees had raised a number of queries with regards to drainage, traffic and ecological impact. There were also 65 objections lodged by members of the public, no comments of support and none of neutral position. The Council's full response will be submitted to the planning authority and will subsequently be available to view on the Somerset Council planning portal <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/planning-buildings-and-land/view-and-comment-on-a-planning-application/?district=South+Somerset>

- b. S106 contribution for application 23/03017/OUT: Councillors reviewed the proposal from Somerset Council Strategic Planning to request contribution for improvements to recreation facilities in relation to the application, and were happy with the proposed contributions. It was commented that if there was an opportunity to obtain a separate area of land to develop as a recreation space for older children this would be a good option, but if this was not possible the existing play area can be improved.

865. Accounts and Financial Information

- c. **Financial Report:** The Clerk presented the new format financial report, which contains budget and bank reconciliation information. It was noted there is a 20 pence discrepancy which is due to an incorrect amount on a cheque issued. This will be resolved with the supplier to correct the discrepancy.
- d. **Payments:** The following payments were authorised:
 - i. Christmas tree (2022) - £120.00
 - ii. Clerk salary & PAYE to 31/1/24 (restricted information under GDPR)
- e. **Budget & Precept 2024/25:** The Clerk presented proposed budget figures, based on previous costs and estimates for the upcoming financial year. In addition, provisions for a contingency for loss of services currently provided by Somerset Council were considered. The Council expect services which are affected to be in relation to highways works such as verge cutting and frequency of drain/gulley clearing, emptying dog and waste bins (not household) and rights of way maintenance. As the provision of services from Somerset Council remains uncertain, Councillors agreed to allocate a general contingency fund for such services, noting that if under control of the Parish Council, these funds could be focussed on the areas needed most, such as drain and gully clearance. Having reviewed the budget, including the estimated costs and recommended levels of reserves, Councillors agreed unanimously to set the precept at £31,400 for 2024/25.

866. Grass Cutting Contract

Two quotes have been received, but the Council wish to have three to ensure following best practice as set out in the financial regulations. The item will be deferred to the February meeting.

867. Standerwick Orchard

Quotations have not yet been received, deferred to a future meeting.

868. A358 Position Statement Draft

Cllr Neate attended the recent Community of Parishes meeting and advised that a new Chair has been appointed. The planned meeting with Highways England was cancelled and has not yet been re-organised.

Cllr Neate commented that there was not a unanimous agreement to next steps from all parties, but the new Chair has proposed drafting terms of reference and to look at requesting a financial contribution from parishes.

869. Co-option Process

Councillors considered a draft policy circulated by the Clerk. Cllrs voted unanimously in favour of adopting the policy which will ensure a fair and consistent approach to filling any vacancies by co-option. The policy will be made available on the Council's website.

870. Updates

- a. Clerk Recruitment: Nominated Councillors and the Clerk have yet to meet to put together a proposal, but will do so before the February meeting.
- b. Website: Cllr Neate has progressed implementation of the new website with TEEC. Information required to set up a new .gov.uk domain will be advised to the Clerk to provide this.
- c. Speed Indicator: Cllr Preece advised that locations for the SID have now been approved.
- d. Local Community Network: The next meeting is on Thursday 17th January. Councillors are unable to attend this, but the Clerk is and will provide feedback at the next meeting.

871. Correspondence/Matters for Report

- a. It was noted that no updates had been received regarding planning enforcement cases. This will be followed up with Cllr Osborne who had previously offered to assist with these.

- 872. **Items for the next meeting:** Clerk Recruitment; Grass Cutting Contract; Standerwick Orchard Hedge Maintenance, Vardens Pond Maintenance;
- 873. **Date of next meeting:** Tuesday 6th February 2024, at 7.30pm at Broadway Village Hall

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.47pm.

Signed

Date

DRAFT