

**Draft Minutes
of the Meeting of
Yatton Parish Council
held on**

Monday 15 January 2024

At Hangstones Pavilion, Stowey Road, Yatton.

Meeting opened: 7.30 p.m. Meeting closed: 9.20 p.m.

Present: Councillors: David Crossman, Jonathan Edwards, Ann Hodgson, James Hooper, Steve Humphrey, Chris Jackson, Peter Lomas, Jessie McArdle, Caroline Sheard, Bryan Thomas and Roger Wood.

Also in attendance: Clerk, District Councillors Wendy Griggs and Steve Bridger and one member of the public.

Prayers or a Moment of Reflection was held.

MATTERS FOR DECISION

COU71/24: To receive apologies for absence, and to approve reasons where appropriate. Apologies have been received from Parish Councillors Graham Humphreys, Robert Jenner, Steve Lister and Massimo Morelli.

COU72/24: To receive declarations of interests by Parish Councillors and to consider any written applications for dispensations.

NONE.

MATTERS FOR INFORMATION

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

COU73/24: Public participation.

The member of the public asked questions about agenda item 12. He wanted to know the following which was referred to Councillor Steve Bridger to *respond*:

- When will the speed cushion work begin on Mendip and Stowey Road? – *the work should commence in June but no precise date confirmed yet.*
- Will the properties located by the cushions be informed? – *this is already being done by public consultation.*
- How long will the work take and will it be done in one go or in stages? – *this was yet to be determined.*
- Will the High Street Improvements be subject to a cost benefit analysis? i.e. assessment of whether the scheme has delivered the benefits for the money that has been spent. *They are the response to historic complaints about speed and no analysis was planned.*

The member of the public thanked the Parish Council and Councillor Steve Bridger and left the meeting.

North Somerset Council - Ward Councillors' Reports.

Councillor Steve Bridger spoke on behalf of both District Councillors about the 2024-25 North Somerset Council budget. He highlighted the position of a number of local councils that had been declared bankrupt in the past few months and he stressed that North Somerset was not in that position but it was extremely challenging and worse than last year. They were facing a two million overspend for 23-24 and have approved emergency measures by only providing

statutory services to try and close the gap. There will be an impact on discretionary services which will unfortunately have to be cut. North Somerset Council were the lowest funded Council in the south west and were having to make huge savings to address a mounting deficit over the next four years due to increased demand for services and increased costs i.e. energy. They were the lowest funded because the formula used to decide funding levels deemed North Somerset as a wealthy county even though it has pockets of serious deprivation.

The root cause of the crisis in local government is reduction in central Government funding from 40% to 12% and the ability to raise funds via council tax is capped. The Government has been lobbied about this but are not listening and there is no-one championing local government. The budget was being approved on 20th February.

Members asked when the crossing at North End will be open, it was expected to be by the end of February. The 20mph speed limit in Chestnut Park was also raised as the Parish Council had requested this sometime ago. They had been informed it cannot take place because the roads are not adopted yet. Councillors Steve Bridger and Wendy Griggs would pursue this.

Police report

NONE.

MATTERS FOR DECISION

COU74/24: Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 13th November 2023.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13th November 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

COU75/24: Exclusion of public:

RESOLVED: that the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of agenda items 14 and 15 on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business of competitive quotes.

COU76/24: To consider the planning documents Yatton & Cleeve Football Club have prepared prior to submission of a planning application for a new changing room extension to Hangstones Pavilion.

Councillors had received the plans prior to the meeting but they were displayed again as a reminder. The plans were scrutinized and deemed appropriate and correct. The plans would come back to the Parish Council as part of the consultation process for the application.

RESOLVED: that the plans were correct and can be submitted to North Somerset Council for registration.

COU77/24: To consider the Bus Improvement Scheme planned for Woodhill.

Some councillors had received an informal presentation on the Bus Improvement Scheme prior to this evening's meeting. In general, most members considered the scheme was a compromise within the constraints of the location and any improvement was welcome.

RESOLVED: to thank the North Somerset Council officer who gave the presentation for his time and helpful information. The Parish Council will watch the development of the Woodhill scheme with interest.

COU78/24: To receive a report from the Connected Yatton meeting held 9th January 2024.

The report from the meeting had been circulated prior to the meeting and members discussed the outcomes. It was mentioned that the village will be very disappointed that the crossing by the fish and chip shop was not being raised.

****The report was noted by the Parish Council.**

COU79/23: To discuss the Citizens Advice North Somerset (CANS) outreach service in Yatton.

The detailed reports on the background history of this agenda item had been circulated prior to the meeting. Chairman of the Finance, Personnel and Administration Committee highlighted the process leading up to the end of a three year grant arrangement the Parish Council had made with the Citizens Advice North Somerset (CANS). This arrangement had ended with the final grant payment being made in May 2022. There had been no correspondence from CANS regarding a new grant application hence no budget provision had been made. On the 30th November 2023 an invoice from CANS was received for £7,232.

The Finance Committee discussed the invoice at a meeting 11th December and concluded they would not pay it due to not having received any grant application and because there was no budget provision. CANS were invited to talk to the Parish Council in autumn 2024 to discuss grant provision in 25-26.

The response to this non-payment of invoice was that CANS had said they would withdraw the outreach service for Yatton if the Parish Council weren't funding it.

Councillor Peter Lomas advised that as far as it was possible to tell, Pill had an outreach service but it was not funded by Pill & Easton-in-Gordano Parish Council.

Councillors discussed the matter and while they really did not wish to see the service withdrawn in Yatton, they didn't have the budget and all other grant recipients followed the grant awarding process whereas CANS did not. District Councillor Steve Bridger was to speak with CANS about the Yatton outreach service.

RESOLVED: that the Clerk write to CANS to inform them that the Parish Council were not in a position to pay the invoice and invite them to discuss and apply for a new grant for 25-26 in the autumn this year.

COU80/24: To consider the Parish Council's budget as recommended for approval by the Finance, Personnel and Administration Committee and to set the precept for 2024-25.

The draft budget, additional notes and information, Ear Marked Reserves and a report by the Clerk had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Chairman Chris Jackson invited Chairman of the Finance Personnel and Administration Committee Councillor Peter Lomas to outline the budget-setting process that had been followed. He began by expressing his thanks to fellow Councillors on the Finance Committee together with Aleana and Jill for their help and advice in drawing up the Budget.

The Precept was based on the number of Band D equivalent properties in the Parish. This figure is calculated annually by NSC and sent to Parish Councils together with a Precept Calculator. This is normally received in early December but this year did not arrive until after the December Finance meeting. The figures given for Yatton parish are based on:

1. The number of Band D equivalent properties as at 30th November 2023.
2. Number of new properties expected to become taxable over next 18 months.
3. Number of discounts and exemptions
4. Estimated collection rate to cover collection risk factors.

Last year our Band D properties were 3116 and this year it had increased by 23 to 3139.

The precept last year resulted in a Band D of £82.75. The Finance Committee have, by a 4 to 3 majority, recommended an increase in the Precept of 10%. This is an increase of £8.28 giving a Band D figure of £91.03. This will raise a Precept of £285,746 an increase of £27,871.

It was noted that precepts for Parish Councils are not capped or subject to referendum principles, they are free to set a figure they see fit.

The proposed increase means that our Precept will cost Council Taxpayers £1.75 per week rather than the existing figure of £1.59.

If NSC increase their Council Tax bill by 3% plus 2% for social care, the Police and Crime Commissioner has the expected increase of £13 and the Fire Authority have a similar increase as last year then together with our proposed Precept, will result in an expected Band D bill of £2,131.63. The present Band D bill is £2,058.42 thus an increase of £73.21. Out of the total council tax bill, the Parish Council Precept would account for 4.27% of the total as opposed to the current figure of 4.02%.

A copy of North Somerset Council tax table showing the Council tax bands for the four Town Councils and thirty five Parish Councils in North Somerset had been circulated. The proposed Precept would be the 7th largest based on 2023/4 figures even before other Councils have decided on their figures. Yatton was the 5th largest after the 4 Town Councils so this did not seem excessive.

The Budget presented this evening was based on the Band D equivalent properties remaining the same with a 5% increase applied. If the Finance Committee majority view was approved, then 101/1076 on the Budget will be changed from £270,000 to £285,746. The deficit shown on the last page will reduce from £33,540 to £17,794.

The Salaries were increased by a pay rise flat figure of £1,925 in October backdated to April 2023 and pro-rated for those employees who do not work full time. This is roughly equivalent to a 5% increase.

In calculating the Budget, it has been assumed that a 7% increase would be applied next year and the Pension and NI contributions adjusted accordingly.

The remainder of the figures in the Budget have been flexed according to anticipated expenditure or income and have been explained in the budget notes.

Councillors discussed the precept including the likelihood that some services may come to parish level in the future due to the budget constraints at North Somerset Council. The Parish Council had a number of larger projects to move forward this year. The previous two years had seen large increases in energy costs and the Parish Council had spent a lot of money to save money. This had used a large amount of general reserve. For these reasons the Parish Council concluded its discussion as follows:

RESOLVED: to unanimously approve the budget with a precept figure of £285,746.

COU81/24: To consider approving the Action Plan 2024-25 as recommended on December 11th 2023 by the Finance, Personnel and Administration Committee.

RESOLVED: to approve the Action Plan 2024-25 subject to the addition of regaining Quality Status under the Local Council Award Scheme and the resumption of a bus service in Yatton.

COU82/24: To consider approving draft comments on the North Somerset Council consultation to provide speed cushions on Stowey and Mendip Road with two junction

priority changes on Stowey Road as recommended by the Planning Committee on December 18th 2023.

The draft comments were circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting.

RESOLVED: to approve the comments without amendment and submit them to North Somerset Council.

COU83/24: To co-opt Councillor Ann Hodgson to her chosen committees.

RESOLVED: to co-opt Councillor Ann Hodgeson on to the Planning Committee.

COU84/24: Finance.

To authorise payments, including to note receipts and petty cash payments for January 2024.

RESOLVED: to authorise payments, including to note receipts and petty cash payments for January 2024.

***** District Councillors Steve Bridger and Wendy Griggs left the meeting.**

COU85/24: To consider quotes for a new cleaning contract – Confidential Item.

The Clerk had sought three quotes for the cleaning contract and received two.

RESOLVED: to accept the quote of £14 per hour from Debs Cleaning Somerset to provide cleaning services at Hangstones Pavilion on three months trial with an extension of contract thereafter providing the service is satisfactory. The Parish Council would provide materials and the contractor would provide a certificate of public liability insurance and references.

COU86/24: To consider quotes for initial work on the new cemetery including site boundary marking, boundary fencing, drainage works and water supply. Confidential Item.

The Clerk had sought to obtain multiple quotes for the initial works at the new cemetery outlined above. The lease had been completed on Thursday 11th January.

Site Boundary Marking – The Clerk had sought three quotes from land surveyors, one declined to quote, the second wanted a Topographical Survey (this would mean an additional cost) and the third provided a quote of £634.00 ex vat. As the cost was under £1,000 and the Clerk believed the lease was due to complete a few weeks before the meeting she had obtained approval for this work from the Chairman and Vice Chairman, it had been instructed but not yet carried out as the lease had only just completed. Indications were it would be in the next two weeks.

***This was therefore a report to Council of what had taken place and was duly noted by the Council.**

Boundary Stock Proof Fencing and moving and re-installing two gates – The Clerk had contacted four fencing companies, three agreed to quote but only two quotes were received by the deadline though the Clerk had chased the third contractor.

RESOLVED: to accept the quote from Eurimex of £6,600.

Drainage Work – The Clerk contacted two contractors and had obtained two quotes.

RESOLVED: to accept the quote from T.J Richards of £1,300.

To connect a water supply to the cemetery field from the adjacent allotments.

The Clerk had received one quote for the work.

RESOLVED: to accept the quote of £750.00 from A.J Hunt.

****The Council thanked the Clerk for all her work in pursuing the completion of the lease and obtaining the quotes for the work on the new cemetery approved this evening.**

MATTERS FOR INFORMATION

COU87/24: Clerk's Report.

i) The lease for the new cemetery land completed on the 11th January 2024. The Parish Council had covered North Somerset Council costs as a stipulation of the lease. However due to the slow and prevaricated service by North Somerset Council legal department the costs to the Parish Council had increased from the quoted £1,500 to over £8,000. The Parish Council's solicitor had concluded that the scale of the increase was neither the Parish Council's nor their fault so had offered to reduce the cost to £4,000. The Clerk had asked for an itemised schedule of costs showing how the delays and prevarications had increased the costs. The Council can then decide the appropriate action.

ii) The new windows, entrance door and disabled access and correction of the padstones on the RSJ work was due take place shortly.

iii) The rocks to prevent parking on the Parish Council owned area at the junction of Cherry Grove and the High Street were being installed tomorrow.

iv) A request to hold a funfair on Hangstones or Rock Road fields for a week this summer was referred for decision to the Amenities Committee.

v) The Clerk gave a follow up on a few items from the November Council meeting as follows:

- The mobile speed indicator device was to be discussed at Amenities Committee 29th January 2024.
- The Clerk reminded Councillors to renew their register of interests forms if they had not done so already.
- The Clerk had written to Royal Mail about the closure of the Claverham Park postbox but had not received a reply.
- The Clerk had met with Maverick Skateparks regarding the condition of the skatepark. They had sent a very useful report which had been circulated to Amenities Committee members 7th December. Since then the Clerk and grounds staff had met a contractor recommended by Maverick who specialized in metal skatepark repairs across the country. He had assessed the skatepark and estimated verbally a figure of £3,300 to repair the whole skatepark and paint it. In the future to professionally maintain it and extend its life for in excess of five years annual cost estimate of £1,500. He was to send in a written quote for the repair work and on going maintenance costs with a view to doing the work in time for the Easter holidays. There was 24/25 budget provision for the repair work. The maintenance can be budgeted for 25/26.

COU88/24: Future agenda items.

The new proposed cemetery off Mendip Road.

Weight limit signs in the Parish.

Newsletter provision.

Chairman

____/____/2024