

Pitcombe Parish Council

Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council held in Hadspen Village Hall on Tuesday 9th June 2009 at 7.30pm

Present: Councillors Carter, Hartnell, and the Clerk, Mrs. R. Morgan
In the Chair: Councillor Beech

In attendance: District Councillor Maili Felton

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were accepted from Councillors Elliott, Whittaker and Jury.

2. Declarations of Interest

None.

3. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 12th May 2009 and the Annual Parish Council Meeting of 12th May 2009

The Clerk reported that a suitable change had been made at the request of Mr. Taylor to say that his resignation was due to business pressures.

This amendment was agreed and both sets of minutes accepted as a correct record of the meetings.

Note: The Clerk reported that the financial report presented at the May Annual Parish meeting needed to be verified before it could be accepted and published. See item 6 below.

4. Matters Arising

a. Parish Council Vacancy

Councillor Beech reported that the statutory notice had been posted on Parish Notice Boards and in the Pitcombe News regarding the vacancy. If an election was not requested by 12th June 2009 then the Parish Council could proceed with co-option.

Some interest had been expressed.

It was agreed that those interested should email the Parish Clerk to formally declare their interest.

b. Parish Clerk

Councillor Beech advised those present that Mrs Morgan in her role of Parish Clerk was the Responsible Financial Officer and Proper Officer of the Parish Council undertaking 16 hours per month. A formal contract was in place.

5. Standing Orders

A copy of the standard document had been circulated to everybody for consideration.

It was agreed that as a formally agreed and signed copy of this statutory document could not be located, it was timely to review its status and make any necessary amendments.

As only three Councillors were present, it was agreed that discussion and acceptance of the document be deferred until the August meeting. It was imperative that all had a chance to fully consider the terms. The Clerk agreed to circulate to all a brief covering those clauses in need of insertions and amendments in line with legislation.
Action: Clerk.

Registration of Interest Forms were also needed as the District Council had reported to the Clerk that several were missing. It was agreed that as these forms needed to be regularly reviewed to note any changes it was also an opportune time to circulate a copy to all for completion. Action: Clerk.

The Clerk reported that Financial Regulations needed to be reviewed and formally adopted by the Parish Council. The Clerk agreed to circulate the standard template to all. This would be tackled once the Standing Orders had been completed.
Action: Clerk.

6. Parish Portfolios for 2009/10

a. Councillor Carter reported that thanks to Mr. & Mrs. Drysdale, the public footpath from Pitcombe Farm House to the Church was being cut regularly through the season.

The Clerk agreed to contact the Countryside Ranger to confirm the status regarding maintenance.

Some discussion followed and it was agreed that it would be within the remit of the Parish Council to offer a small consideration by means of a thank you gift to the gentleman responsible.

Action: Councillor Carter agreed to investigate what might be a suitable offering.

b. Councillor Beech apologised for the notice in the Pitcombe News stating there was money available for funding of suitable Parish projects. This had been incorrectly reported.

Discussion followed regarding an informal approach made by the Pitcombe Flood Action group. It was agreed that it was far too early in the project for there to be any consideration of donations. The Clerk pointed out that any such requests must be formally submitted to the Parish Council for consideration in line with Standing Orders, the allotted time for this being November when the next year's budget was to be discussed.

Councillors Hartnell and Carter suggested that the Group should also approach County and District Councillors and any other appropriate funding bodies for financial support. Councillor Beech agreed to relay this back to the Group.

c. Councillor Beech raised the subject of the numerous notices and fly posters appearing on the Parish Council Notice Boards. The Councillors present agreed that notices should be community based and relate to local events. It was agreed that padlocks be installed on all Notice Boards with a suitable notice giving details of who to contact for the insertion of such notices.

d. Re Pitcombe Flooding. Councillor Jury had reported to the Clerk that there had been no major developments since the last meeting of the Flood Action group. A progress meeting was planned for July 4th.

e. Re Highways. Councillor Jury had also advised the Clerk that since the May meeting he had requested the clearance of drains and gullies in Lime Kiln Lane and a patching repair in Honeywick Hill. The work requested had been acknowledged and put in hand.

7. Report from the Parish Clerk

a. The Clerk reported that there was a lot of work that needed to be addressed to bring the Parish Council up to date. This had been borne out by the Internal Audit recently completed for the period 2007/8. The lack of a Parish Clerk for such a long period had not helped the situation.

b. The most pressing area was that of Parish Council Finances. The Clerk was currently in correspondence with both Barclays Bank and Scottish Widows with regard to operation of the accounts and mandates in place. Progress was finally being made with the former and a Bank Mandate for the latter was presented to the Parish Council for agreement and authorisation. This would allow the Clerk to operate the account, to be a signatory on the account and receive statements. Councillors Beech and Elliott were already signatories on the account. This was agreed and signed by Councillor Beech. Councillor Elliot was to be contacted by the Clerk for completion of the documentation.

c. The Clerk reported that the most serious omission was that of Internal and External Audits reports. An annual internal audit is a statutory requirement. This had not taken place for two years. As a result, with Councillor Beech's agreement, this had been put in train for the financial year 2007/8 as a matter of urgency. The completed report was provided to all present and would be sent to those unable to attend as there were some serious procedural inadequacies of which the Parish Council should be aware .

d. Similarly the external Audits for 2007/8 and 2008/9, required by law, had not been completed. The Clerk had presented copies of the report for 2007/8 in advance of the meeting to all Councillors. The status of the report was discussed and the document authorised. The Clerk stated that there were likely to be financial repercussions for the delay in submission.

e. The Clerk would now commence work on the External and Internal Audit reports for 2008/9. This was unfortunately dependent on the availability of the appropriate bank statements.

f. The Clerk asked if anyone had a copy of the budget prepared for 2009/10 with the associated precept bid. Nobody present had a copy so it was thought best to start from scratch and prepare a new budget for the remainder of the financial year to include a number of additional items e.g. internal and external audits fees.

Action: The Clerk to prepare a draft for discussion at the next meeting.

g. The Clerk had prepared a draft asset register. This was reviewed as assets needed to be confirmed and the appropriate insurance cover provided. See the attached which details all current assets, their insurance status and action required. Action: the Clerk.

8. Report from the District Councillor.

Mrs. Felton reported that there was a new County Councillor, Mrs. Anna Groskop, following the elections of the previous week.

The Clerk would advise both Mrs. Groskop and Mrs. Felton of the meeting dates of Pitcombe Parish Council for the remainder of the financial year. Action: Clerk.

Mrs Felton reminded everyone of the Planning Workshop with Simon Fox arranged for 6.00pm on June 11th in Churchfields, Wincanton. Mr. Beech confirmed he would be representing Pitcombe Parish Council.

9. Review of Planning Applications

For consideration :

09/01792/FUL (Mayers)

The erection of a first floor extension to rear of dwelling (revised application – amended roof lights/windows).

1 Pitcombe Hill, Pitcombe

There were no objections to this application.

09/01795/FUL (Mr. J. De Bosdri)

The installation of a water storage tank.

Grove Cross Barn, Cary Hill, Castle Cary

The Parish Council agreed that the water storage tank as currently proposed would be visibly obtrusive from the road and would impact on Grove cottages. It was suggested that it be sunk in to the ground to minimise its impact and that screening be used to reduce its visible impact.

The Clerk to advise Planning accordingly.

Pending consideration by SSDC.

Applications:

08/03014/FUL (The Aviaries)

09/01226/FUL (Drysdale)

09/01227/CON (Drysdale)

were all pending consideration by SSDC.

Planning granted.

08/01062/LBC (Mrs. Carter).

10. Accounts for payment

The following accounts were presented for payment and authorised: -

Remuneration for Clerk for May 2009 £221.98 (Cheque No 245)

Two non controversial late bills for payment: -

Internal Audit fee for 2007/8 £80.00 (Cheque No 244)

Village Hall Booking Fee for the period May 2008- May 2009 £130.00 (Cheque No 243).

11. Pitcombe Flooding

Mr. Jury had asked the Clerk to report that there had been no major developments. The next Flood Action Group meeting was 4th July 2009.

12. Pitcombe issues.

Following last month's Parish Council meeting the Clerk had advised James Mayer, the Enforcement Officer of the activity on the embankment on Paul Jennings's land. James Mayer had visited the site and had discussed both the work around the barn and the embankment. The former would be subject to a planning application, the latter would be the subject of a meeting between Mr. Mayer, Mr. Jennings's Agent and Mr. Jennings himself the following week.

The Parish Council had been asked their view of the latter, whether this had always been a footpath as was being claimed and whether there was any photographic evidence of its status.

The Parish Council's view was that the embankment had been used for the grazing of horses, the only 'path' there being a track used by the horses. Photographic evidence would be sent to Mr. Mayer.

Action: The Clerk to advise Mr. Mayer.

13. Accident Hotspot

It was agreed that this item be deferred.

14. Correspondence

SSDC	Area east Bulletin for May 2009
SSDC	Speed Indicator Device results for Feb/march 2009
SSDC	Village of the Year 2009 Competition
SSDC	Open Air Theatre Event

The Clerk asked if she could email appropriate email correspondence to all Councillors and circulate at each meeting any appropriate hard copy correspondence received. This was agreed.

15. Meetings /Workshops

SSDC Planning	11 th June 2009	Planning Workshop with Simon Gale.
South Somerset Together	14 th June 2009	AGM
Grant funding workshop	22 nd June 2009	Grant Applications made easy
Rural services network	26 th June 2009	
SSDC	30 th June 2009	Area East Community Forum

16. Any other Business

None.

17. Dates of next meetings:

It was agreed that these would remain as the second Tuesday in every month.

The next meeting is to be held on Tuesday July 14th at 7.30pm in Hadspen Village Hall and will cover Planning only, in the absence of the Clerk who will be on holiday.

The meeting was closed at 20.45.

Mrs. R. J. Morgan
Clerk to the Parish Council
17th June 2009