

CHAPEL ALLERTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council meeting held at the Old School Room, Stone Allerton on Monday 24th August 2020 at 7.30pm.

Present: Cllr Peter Duggan-Rees (in the Chair) Cllr F Torrens-Spence, Cllr J. Blakemore, Cllr Wallach, District Councillor Godwin-Pearson by Facetime phone call and the Clerk Miss C Harris.

2 parishioners were in attendance.

5a/20 Apologies: Apologies were received and accepted from: Cllr R. Williams

6a/20 Minutes of Meeting held on 15th June 2020, 20th July 2020 and the Annual Parish council meeting minutes on 13th May 2019

The minutes of these meetings were read and agreed.

Any matters arising were to be discussed later in the meeting.

RESOLVED: To accept these as a true record of the meetings

7a/20 Declarations of interest and dispensations

None

8a/20 Footpaths and Highways

8a/20 i) Highways

A parishioner had raised concerns about speeding in Notting Hill Way and surrounding villages. This was discussed and it was agreed to write to Somerset County Council to highlight the issues

RESOLVED: To draft a letter to other neighbouring parishes about this, and also to ask the 20 residents who had previously registered as concerned about this to do the same.

8a/20 ii) Footpaths

The Chair had nothing to report and is expecting an update from Martin Cooper who is the new liaison officer soon.

Cllr Torrens-Spence reported concerns that there are electric fences being used across public footpaths without signage and/or without safe crossing provision.

9a/20 Outside bodies reports

District Cllr Godwin-Pearson reported that:

- There is more information on the future of the 'One Somerset' proposals expected shortly.
- Old Church Road will be closed for up to 3 weeks at Cross.
- The phone box in Axbridge is being threatened with removal by BT
- Cllr Torrens-Spence asked how planning would be affected by the 'One Somerset' changes and the reply was that no details about this are yet known.

10a/20 Accounts and Finance

Clerk's wages of standard hours, paid by Sedgemoor payroll

Clerk's expenses being 6 month's office costs from April 2020 to September 2020 inclusive

£36.00

RESOLVED: To approve these payments

11a/20 Ornamental Cherry Tree – removal of dead wood

This was deferred to the next meeting as there was no updated quote to report from Cllr Wallach.

12a/20 Standing Orders

This was deferred to the next meeting as there was no updated quote to report from Cllr Wallach.

13a/20 Outgoing Chair's report

During the last five years Chapel Allerton Parish Council has successfully lobbied for the provision of faster broadband in our community and the result has been provision of door to door internet services by, not one but, two internet providers. This has been greatly appreciated by all age groups in the Parish. It has been particularly useful during the period of Covid 19 lock-down when good internet speeds have been essential to those working from home, to those in education and to those with loved ones who they were unable to see.

The Parish Council has established an accessible Parish Council website which is easy to navigate and fit for purpose in the twenty first century. Thanks to an internet connection to the Old School Room, provided gratis by True Speed, the Parish Council is now able to look at Planning documents and other online material on screen at Parish Council meetings.

The Parish Council has refurbished all the historic fingerposts in the Parish to a very high standard. All the Parish Notice Boards and benches have also been refurbished with help from volunteers.

The Parish Council has listened to Parishioners concerns about speeding in Chapel Allerton and Ashton and on Top Road and vehicle speeds have been monitored. This has not yet led to speed limits on our roads but the Parish Council is working on measures to get drivers to reduce speeds particularly when driving through our villages and hamlets.

One area in which the Parish Council has been notably unsuccessful during the last five years is getting Highways to improve drainage on Top Road near Ashton windmill so as to prevent flooding after heavy rainfall. Indeed the problems of standing water on the road have been becoming worse each year. The Parish Council alerted Highways to the problem five years ago, but requests to Highways to sort it out have fallen on deaf ears. The Parish Council has met with an equally unsatisfactory response from Highways on all

other road drainage issues.

Lest this report should end on a negative note, it concludes with the Village Design Statement update project. It is now almost twenty years since the original Village Design Statement was produced, so the Parish Council set up a review group to update the Design Statement. After initial meetings in 2019, two open events in the Old School Room took place at the end of February 2020 and a Survey Monkey questionnaire was set up. Parishioners provided lots of feedback and the Village Design Group is now working on a draft which will reflect the views of Parishioners. Most Parishioners said that they enjoy living in Chapel Allerton Parish and that they like the current mix of traditional and more modern housing and strong local community. Parishioners also appreciated being close to unspoilt countryside and having unlit streets at night.

14a/20 Matters of Report

Village Design Statement Group

Cllr Torrens-Spence reported that the next meeting could be held at her house which would save the hire costs of the Old School Room. There are no further updates from Dave Nevitt at this time and the aim is still for completion by the end of the coming Winter.

15a/20 Old School Room Committee update

Cllr Torrens-Spence read out a letter that she had written to Peter Evans (the Diocesan Finance Board,) in answer to his query about the attitude of Chapel Allerton Parish Council to renewing the long lease on the School Room.

(letter to be included in Minutes)

Councillors agreed that the letter was an accurate representation of the Council's views and that the Old School Room is essential to our community especially as Covid 19 has been a considerable blow to any prospect of creating alternative community facilities at the Cricket Club and it is possible that this plan may be dropped.

There was a discussion about the Parish Council's responsibility to fund repairs of the fabric of the Old School Room.

Cllr Wallach advised Council that we should employ a surveyor to produce a survey of the building when renegotiating a long lease/ starting on a new long lease. Once these repair needs are understood then a schedule could be worked out and budget proposals made. The Clerk advised Council that money for repairs might be raised by raising the Parish Precept or approaching the Public Loan Board in the case of major repairs.

Cllr Torrens-Spence reported that the Old School Room Management Committee is in good shape and is now well funded thanks to a Government Grant of £10,000 which was made to cover short falls in revenue resulting from the Covid Lock Down. The Management Committee has carried out risk assessment and set up Covid protocols. The only organizations which will regularly use the Old School Room this autumn are the Parish Council and the Art Club (Tuesday mornings).

16a/20 The Clerk's Report

The clerk reported that the website needs to have an Accessibility Statement added to

it by the 23rd September 2020. Cllr Torrens-Spence had prepared a draft which was shared with members.

RESOLVED: To add this to the website with some small changes

17a/20 The Windmill

Cllr Blakemore reported that that the area around the Windmill had been tidied again. The damaged car park surface remains a problem with no one taking responsibility for repairs.

Meeting closed at 8.45pm

Next meeting will be Monday 5th October 2020 at 7.30pm at the Old School Room, Stone Allerton.