

## Hinton St George Parish Council

### Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2025, at St. Georges Village Hall, Hinton St. George.

**Present: Cllrs R. Lewin (RL), F. Voss (FV), P. Lanham (PL), A. Barber (AB) and S. Ashton (SA).**

The Parish Path Liaison Officer and the Clerk were in attendance.

**Members of the Public: 26**

#### **1036. Open Forum.**

A member of the public mentioned an issue with regard to updating the village website. The Clerk confirmed the regular member of staff at the host company had left and she hoped the situation would improve soon. Another person asked why the agenda had not been on the website and the Clerk replied she was not able to upload documents to the website, so again this was an issue with the host company, but the Agenda had been placed on the Parish Council notice board on the Tuesday of the previous week as usual.

A member of the public enquired about the cost of the Conservation Area Appraisal and questioned if finances were stretched given the Parish Council may have to take on devolved services given the cuts at Somerset Council.

The Chair gave an update on the appraisal and the process and stressed that no decisions have been made with regard to extending Conservation Area or possible Article 4 directions. He said the information gained from the appraisal would feed in the Local Plan which Somerset Council has started and once agreed this plan would run from 2029 until 2046, so it was important the Parish Council submits the correct responses to questions which may impact on the village.

He assured everyone the Parish Council were simply gathering information and educating themselves about what people feel is important with regard to the village and the Conservation area and nothing will be done without a full process of consultation.

He apologised if there had been any misunderstanding, but he felt the Parish Council now had a better understanding what is significant to people with regard to the Conversation Area and its setting.

Cllr P Lanham added that the process involves everyone and if it goes further there are ways of protecting it as a group, if we feel that is necessary. The information was there for everyone to have a detailed look at the Conservation Area and to gather views. He said the Conservation area was a statutory designation, but we do need the appraisal for part of the Local Plan from Somerset Council.

The Clerk replied that the anticipated costs were in the region of £ 6,500 spread over a few years, and this includes the cost of holding consultations and printing information.

The Chair confirmed that the Parish does bear the cost, but it the Parish Council's job to make such decisions and they feel the Heritage Consultant is very knowledgeable and professional.

A resident felt the increasing number of holiday lets was killing the village and asked what could be done. The Chair said he understood her concerns, but they cannot discriminate against use of properties.

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A resident asked what planning applications had been detrimental to the Conservation Area and there was a short discussion about Friarney Cottage and the issues that raised about curtilage of listed buildings.

He repeated that the Parish Council has not made any decisions with regard to Article 4 and no recommendations have been made at this point.

A resident asked if the Parish Council could confirm they had received the letter asking for another meeting and if there would be a meeting.

The Chair confirmed they had received the letter, and this would be discussed in the meeting. He also said the questionnaire was required to form part of the feedback and people can submit further comments as the appraisal progresses.

A member of the public asked if the Parish Council were considering increasing the Conservation Area and would that include newer houses.

The Chair said the appraisal would consider if the shape of the village has changed over the years, but it was not specific to houses, it might include landscape and trees, but this would not involve Jubilee Woods. There was further discussion on why the Conservation Area was designated, the fact it had not been reviewed since late 1970s and that it had originally been drafted noting that the village was considered exceptional. Cllr Lanham explained that in some areas the boundary may be tidied up, as for example on South Street, where the boundary is the centre of road and it might be more appropriate to include the wall along the side of the road.

The Chair explained that the consultation would include a draft appraisal, which everyone would be able to review and comment on, but it would be for Somerset Council to make any final decision.

He stressed again this is a process which will include everyone who wishes to comment and it is important to better understand the Conservation Area and what can be done to preserve the beautiful village and its setting.

There will also be things in the Local Plan which we need to understand and consider with regard to the Parish, and the Parish Council must be well informed as Hinton is a remarkable village.

He agreed an extension of another week for anyone to send comments to the Clerk.

A resident asked about the light pollution and the Clerk confirmed that she had written to Somerset Council Planning department and Adam Dance MP, and she would chase for a response.

The architect of the proposed building off Gas Lane gave a brief overview of the plans, including walking distance to the village, replacing the utilitarian building with a stone building which will sit quietly and sensitively on the site, and is lower than the stone wall and other properties in the area. She said the building had local character, trees were being preserved, and new planting was proposed, and the lighting would be bird and bat friendly. She gave Councillors images of the building and how it sits within the Historic Park and said they had considered views of the proposed building from multiple angles.

A Councillor asked if the application should have been listed building proposal given the status of the park, and she replied as a full application it had a heritage assessment which did include Hinton House, although it does not sit within the curtilage.

A Councillor asked if there were plans to plant trees to replace the old cedar and oak trees, Hinton St. George Parish Council

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and she said they would keep trees which are there and add some for screening. One member of the public raised concern about additional traffic on Gas Lane and one member of the public said she liked the design of the property. The Chair confirmed he would reclude himself from the discussions as he is a tenant. The public forum closed at 8.15 p.m.

**1036. Apologies for Absence:** Cllrs P Reynolds and M Herbert ( personal) and Somerset Councillor J Roundell Greene as she had to be at another meeting

**1037 Declarations of Interest:** Cllr R Lewin and Cllr F Voss declared an interest in planning application 25/00098/FUL as Cllr Lewin is a tenant and Cllr Voss is a neighbour.

**1038. Minutes of last Meeting:** The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2025 were approved and signed by the Chair of the Parish Council.

**1039. Somerset Councillor Report:** Somerset Cllr S Ashton gave an updated and confirmed that Government had agreed Somerset Council could increase the precept by more than the limit of 5 %, so he felt it was likely it would be set at 7.5% .This would produce around £ 17 to £ 20 million but the Council would still need to borrow additional money and use some capital reserves.

He stressed that anyone impacted by recent flooding should report this to Somerset Council, and this would not be shared with insurance companies but there is funding which Somerset Council can claim from the Government to help tackle the flooding issues.

He said two grants had just been received, for rural amenities and capital improvements and some of this would be spent on an improved bus service from Crewkerne to Bridport. He said at the moment almost all meetings were focussed on the Budget for 2025/26.

**1040. To receive update on Conservation Area Appraisal:** Councillors had received the letter requesting further clarification and confirmed they were happy to invite people to another meeting to review the information and ask further questions. They discussed how to summarise the information and if the meeting needed to be part of a Parish Council meeting or an extraordinary meeting. It was agreed the Clerk speak to the Heritage Consultant and check availability of the hall to see if a meeting could be held sometime in March.

**1041. Clerks Updates:**

**a) Flooding on Merriott Road:** The Clerk reported she had written to Adam Dance MP copying in Somerset Councillor J Roundell Greene, but there was no progress on the issue.

**b) Planning application off the A30** -Councillors noted the objection from Highways and the request from West Crewkerne Parish Council for 30 mph speed restrictions.

**c) To note correspondence with regard to light pollution:** Councillors noted the letter sent to Planning and requested that the Clerk chase for a response.

**d) To receive Clerks letter of resignation** – as this is a staffing issue it will be discussed in confidential session at the next meeting.

**1042. Highways and footpaths updates:**

**a) Parish Path Liaison report** – the Parish Path Liaison Officer reported that the footpaths were still very muddy but were slowly drying out. It was agreed he should speak to Cllr Voss with regard to contacting landowners to see if drainage could be improved, as some ditches are blocked. Cllr Ashton gave an update on clearing ditches and who is responsible for ditches in front of hedges along the side of the road.

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Councillors thanked him for his report.

**b) to receive update on Jubilee Lane** – Councillors felt the lane was well used and it was right they should try to make some improvements, so they requested the Clerk to obtain some options and costs from the lengthsman for consideration at the March meeting.

**c) Potholes – Merriott Road and in the village**- the Clerk had not yet taken photographs along Merriott Road, but the potholes and erosion at side of road in Gas Lane had been reported and was deemed not severe enough to mark for repairs by Highways. The Clerk will contact Highways again.

**d) update on drain clearance** - Councillors noted the response that specific dates were not available yet and that blocked drains should be reported to Highways.

**1043. Planning applications to review:**

**25/00241/LBC – End Cottage, Church Street, Hinton St George – installation of gas supply from the Highways into the dwelling** – Councillors were supportive of the application and recommended approval, but with a note that the flagstone pavement should be reinstated appropriately – all approved

**25/00098/FUL – building off Gas Lane, Hinton St. George – proposed new dwelling in the place of an existing barn** - Cllrs Lewin and Voss took no part in the discussion as they had declared an interest. Councillors had visited the site and felt that the dwelling was well designed and would sit well in place of the barn. They would like to see specimen tree planting and perhaps cobble stones at the entrance and stressed the importance of appropriate lighting which was sensitive to the environment. They noted the concerns of a neighbour, but felt construction issues would not be severe and there may be a limit to work hours. On balance they felt it was low impact as described, was appropriate building materials with a low roof line and trees were retained, so they would support the application. Application supported and two votes were cast.

**b) Decisions to note:** none

**1045. Finance:**

**a) review of the current receipts and payments schedule and verify bank reconciliations.** – Councillors noted the balances on the bank accounts.

**b) Invoices for payment to be considered and approved by Councillors prior to payment –**

SSE energy solutions	£ 21.43
J Chant – salary	£ 445.52
PAYE	£ 81.60
Heritage Lighting	£ 3930.00
Clerk – reimbursement	£ 27.65
Parish Magazine Printing	£ 123.75
Home and Garden Services	£ 451.98
Crewkerne Heritage Centre	£ 50.00
CPRE membership	£ 60.00

Councillors also noted payments for reimbursement had been made to

Cllr P Reynolds	£ 150.74
Clerk	£ 368.00
K. Morris	£ 76.20

All payments were approved.

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**c) to agree works to the Pelota Wall** – Councillors had discussed the proposed works with the owners of 2, Hinton Close as the scaffold would need to be erected in their garden. The Reading Room Trust had kindly agreed to make a contribution towards the costs and Councillors were in agreement that the works discussed should go ahead as soon as the stonemason has availability. There was further discussion about time scales and the difficulty in judging what needs to be done and how long it will take, given the nature of the works, the height of the wall and unpredictable weather, but once the work is underway the situation will be regularly reviewed and if all goes well and finances are in place as much work as possible will be undertaken in this first phase.

Councillors mentioned that the stonemason had worked in the village and was familiar with the wall and noted his estimate was subject to a certain of level contingency given the nature of the work. All agreed to the proposed work.

**d) To agree scaffolding to be erected at the wall** – Councillors noted the cost and agreed to proceed with the company who submitted a quote of £ 2,200 plus VAT. All agreed It was noted that a skip and portable toilet were not now considered necessary. Councillors noted that both items c) works to wall and d) scaffolding required they waive item 10.3 of their financial regulations due to the nature of the works - all agreed.

**e) To agree internal auditor for 2024/25** – the Clerk confirmed the auditor was happy to continue for another year – all agreed.

**1046. to receive Parish Councillors reports:**

AB –Open Reach will be closing High Street for works in June. Wessex Water visited the Cross area, but had no drain plans or permit to take CCTV of drains, but they will be a priority. He also noted the road is sinking outside the Old Tearooms and the Clerk will request a visit from Highways Inspector. He also confirmed replacement pads are needed in some of the defibrillators.

FV – the lengthsman has done a wonderful job of painting the heritage road sign near Yarcombe Timber – the others now look shabby.

The Clerk has added the CRP training video to the website and on the Parish Council noticeboard. It was noted that Misterton Parish Council intend to run a training session, so the Clerk will forward contact details to them.

PL – lighting should be completed 27<sup>th</sup> February, and he is awaiting delivery of a replacement bollard for the High Street, which the lengthsman will erect.

RL – has received correspondence with regard to grass cutting at St. Georges Churchyard, so this will be an Agenda item in March.

SA – Waitrose in Crewkerne have signed a new lease so refurbishment works are underway. Cllr Voss raised the issue of yellow lines for the crossroads of High Street, South Street and Lopen Road and the Clerk confirmed that Highways had replied that the Parish Council needed to show there was support for this from residents. This will be on the March Agenda

**1047. To note correspondence received** – Councillors had received various updates from Somerset Council, a letter with regard to a public consultation about children walking to school and possible measures to enable this and a letter asking for another meeting with regard to the Conservation Area Appraisal, which will be arranged.

**1048. Next meeting date:** The next meeting will be held on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2025  
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The meeting ended at 21.20

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