



MINUTES OF HIGH HAM PARISH COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD AT HIGH HAM VILLAGE HALL  
ON TUESDAY 30<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at 7.30pm

Present: Dave Vigar (Chairman), Amanda Chuter, Catherine Roberts, Rob Webb, Nick Fear, Nancy Green, Rob Rice. V Young (Clerk).

Unitary Councillors : Richard Wilkins

Pubic approx: 17

Meeting opened at 7.35pm.

**1) Apologies & declarations of interest:-** Mike Stanton (Unitary Councillor) had sent apologies. Nancy Green declared an interest in application 3D by virtue of its locality.

**2) Public Session** – John Vigar thanked the Parish for the Dennis Davis Award which had been presented to him at the ‘carols around the tree’. The carols around the tree had been enormously successful and it was estimated that there had been 120 in attendance. There was a question as to whether the format could be built upon to include a verse or two in sign language.

Concern from Hamdown was raised re bus route 54 was raised to the unitary councillor. Unfortunately at this point in time the councillor was unable to give assurance as to the future of the route but would do all that he could.

Richard Wilkins was congratulated on his new ‘cabinet’ role at Somerset Unitary Council.

**3) Planning applications for consideration**

A) 23/03090/HOU - Proposal: Forward two storey extension and creation of new access and parking, Location: 2 Hillside Long Street High Ham Langport Somerset TA10 9DN - There was some concern with regard to the watercourse and also some confusion with regards to roof height inconsistencies on one of the plans. This lead to concerns as to whether the extension was subserviant to the house or not. It was suggested that the applicant contact their agent and ask that the planning authority allow time for the Parish Council to reconsider the application at next month’s meeting when the inconsistent details had been clarified. In its current format the Parish Council unanimously objected to the application but would welcome a chance to reconsider the application once the inconsistencies had been resolved.

B) 23/03158/HOU - Proposal: Replace existing garage with single storey side extension & new detached garage. Location: Stamford Picts Hill Huish Episcopi Langport Somerset TA10 9AA - This application was unanimously supported.

C) 24/00183/TPO - Proposal: Application to carry out Tree Sugery Works to No. 3 Trees as shown within the South Somerset District Council (HIHA 1) 1983 Tree Preservation Order.

Location: 1 Hamdown Court Huish Episcopi Langport Somerset TA10 9EB – The Parish Council unanimously raised no objections.

D) 23/03214/HOU - Proposal: Demolition of existing rear single storey extension and erection of a single storey side and two storey rear extensions (Retrospective). Location: Moor View Henley Langport Somerset TA10 9BH Nancy Green made a few comments as a parishioner regarding the application and left the room whilst the application was considered further and a vote taken.

The application was fully discussed. It was noted that this was a retrospective application which was extremely disappointing particularly in regard to the fact that it was so objectionable in design and size for the neighbours. By a vote of 3 against, 2 not objecting and one abstention that the application be objected to. The following points were to be made to the planning officer;

It was felt that the development was over dominant, not subserviant and out of proportion to the existing, whilst additionally being over bearing on the adjacent semi detached. It was felt at the very least that the application needed scaling back.

Additionally it was felt that the windows were excessive. It was hoped that in the windows should have a condition on so that they were obscured.



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It was very disappointing that considering the increase that there was no waste treatment plant consideration and also that there was no ecological report.

As always the Parish Council were disappointed to see a retrospective application particularly one of an overbearing nature with adverse effects to the neighbours.

The Parish Council would in principle support development of this property that was of a more modest nature than this application.

At the closure of this item Nancy Green returned to the meeting.

#### **4) Planning applications decided**

23/02816/TPO Land Rear Of 11 Hamdown Court Huish Episcopi Langport Somerset - Proposal Application to carry out tree surgery works to No.01 tree included within South Somerset District Council Tree Preservation Order (HIH1) 1993 - Approved

**5) Unitary Councillor report** – Liaison with enforcement had taken place to try and address parishioner concerns with regards to an application. It was noted how difficult it was to get meaningful information from the Unitary Council reporting system on enforcement issues that had been reported. The financial savings that the unitary council would have to make were going to be discussed at an upcoming scrutiny meeting before going to the full council. The unitary council were requesting from central government an allowance to increase the precept further. There was also an urgent appeal for volunteer drivers and foster parents. There was concern raised at the meeting with regards to the length of time a dangerous stile had taken to be repaired at the present time. With cut-backs the concern for the future was increased. Questions were answered with regards to street lighting and why some options that appeared viable to save money by switching off x percent etc did not make any difference. It was mentioned that the Moors and Levels LCN meeting had included information on a likely cost of a highways stewardship scheme. Given the quoted cost of approximately £50,000 for someone to cover the whole LCN who was less qualified than the current lengthsman it was felt that this was not a viable option for High Ham or any small parishes.

#### **6) Approval of Previous minutes.**

The minutes of 2023 were approved with minor amendment as a true record.

#### **7) Ongoing Action Points and Updates.**

##### **Lengthsman** –Lengthsman

Drainage - during recent 'days of rain', Craig and Rachael focussed on clearing grips, grids and MW - work has now started on felling the selected diseased ash trees.

The Green - continuation of pollarding is imminent.

**Highways/Footpaths** – Seeing the recent Somerset Council's online call for volunteers for the role of Parish Path Liaison Officer, it was asked what budget cuts can we expect for the Somerset RoW team and their work, including the Strimmer Project which HHPC benefits from. A long outstanding repair required to a dangerous stile had been re-reported and was now waiting for landowner permission for the work.

After reporting via the potholes and other damage to surface of Bridgehorn Lane, it was pleasing to note how quickly a Highways team was sent to do repairs, but unhappy how only some of what was reported was repaired, and how shoddy the repair appeared. It was noted that other repairs appeared to have been made in a similar vein. The very damaged section at the bottom of Bridgehorn remained unrepaired.

Four drains on Turnhill had been checked and reported and would be included as part of the Highways planned maintenance by Somerset Highways.



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**Millennium Wood** – see lengthsman report.

**Parish Green** - None

**Playing Fields** – Hedging work was progressing. Some whips for the hedge row had been secured. Bench options were being discussed and a replacement would be a recycled plastic wood effect bench. The cost would be approximately £610 excluding VAT. It was agreed that CIL money could be used. A summer fete involving various organisations was planned for 13<sup>th</sup> July at the playing fields. Goal posts had been painted.

It was thought that additional saplings if required may be available from the abattoir as part of local engagement and mitigation.

**Refurbishment of noticeboards** - Three quotes were considered for the noticeboard on the village green. The quote from Bancombe joinery was accepted (proposed by Dave Vigar, seconded Nick Fear and carried unanimously). The total from this quote (with discounted labour for a local project) was £638 and £191.75 for the posts. Some additional work was currently taking place to seal the board at Henley. It was to be considered whether to save the board being taken down and refurbish it to a standard suitable for an unofficial board at the bottom of Long Street. It was to be considered whether to put a noticeboard at Hamdown at some point. Currently there was one on Picts Hill on the other side of the road and on the Langport side of the junction.

**Any other** – inc Village Hall, School, Website, Defibrillators, Phonebooths etc - The village hall committee were congratulated on the successful big breakfast fund raiser. A planning application for tree work at the school had been received after the agenda had gone out. It was noted that some of the links on the website were currently not working. The defibrillators had been checked and were all functional. Some of the pads may need replacing this October. The phonebooth book exchanges were working very well. e around the tree had raised £276 for the blood biker charity. A cheque was to be written at next month's meeting. Sandbags had been ordered after last month's meeting but not turned up. - The matter was to be chased up. The next meeting of the LCN group was set as 4<sup>th</sup> March. Gerard Tucker was working on the active travel group of the LCN and trying to get an off road cycle route approved that would connect the local Parishes.

**Cemetery** – A quote for grass cutting at the cemetery had been received and was unanimously accepted (proposed by Rob Rice, seconded Rob Webb and carried unanimously) – The annual cost was in the region of £2720.00

**8) Correspondence and meetings attended** – All correspondence had been dealt with in the relevant sections above. Fortnightly online meetings between Parishes and the Unitary Council continued. No definitive information on the effects of budgetary cuts on High Ham Parish was known at the current time.

## 9) Financial

Budget - The budget on Appendix 1 totalling £41,750 was proposed by Dave Vigar, Seconded by Nancy Green and unanimously approved for the year ending 31 March 2025.

The following payments were authorised

Lengthsman - £891.86

Clerk's wages - £437.13

Information Commissioner - £40.00

Village Hall Hire – 1 year - £220.00

Sandbags - £88.95

D Plant - £750.00

The meeting was closed to the public to discuss details of the cemetery maintenance quote and lengthsman contract. Cemetery maintenance quote having been accepted a contract was to be drafted that was separate to the lengthsman's contract.

Lengthsman's contract for the year ending 31/3/2025 – the hourly rate for the contract was unanimously approved.



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The meeting was re-opened to the public.

**10) Date of next meeting** - 27<sup>th</sup> February 2024 was confirmed as the date of the next meeting.

**11) Items for future meetings** – The cemetery regulations document to be updated. Contracts were to be drafted for approval on the basis of this evenings discussion with regard to the revised hourly rate approved.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 10pm

Appendix 1 – Budget for the Year ending 31/3/2025 – below

**BUDGET FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2025**

Actual and expected expenses for the year ending 31.3.24 (net of VAT)

General Administration 13433.73

Clerks wages & exp 3497.04

Grants 140.00

Cemetery 850.00

Playing Fields 784.04

TOTAL 26111.01

precept for 2023/24 26000.00 Therefore last years budget is suitable for the base of the year being currently budgeted as there is only a small shortfall between the budget and the actual.

Projection for year end 31/3/2025

Expenses estimated as approximately 26000 (as previous year) with the following additions

additional lengthsman hours/times 8916 since highways work etc and the budgetry situation at the unitary council is unknown

additional allowance for church wall 1000

allowance for playing field depreciation 3000 life expectancy of new equipment budgeted over 10 yearsotal

TOTAL 38916

Deduct the one off items in year 2024 766.74 toposcope.

Leave in wall repairs by mike cox as this gives an allowance for repairs at cemetery and pound and also the noticeboard repair invoice and further noticeboard works will be undertaken in year ending 31/3/2025

REVISED TOTAL 38149.26

as above + 10% allowance for inflation **41964.186** above at 110%

A budget of **£41750** from precept is therefore appropriate and means that the Council are likely to use some reserves without decompleting them extensively, when so much is unknown with how much work the Parish Council will have to pay for depending how the Unitary Council cuts back on services etc.