

BLEADON PARISH COUNCIL

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Clerk to the Parish
Hazel Brinton
BA (Hons)

60, Worle Moor Road, Weston Village, Weston-s-Mare, North Somerset BS24 7EG
Tel: 07341 977235 E-Mail: parishclerk@bleadonparishcouncil.gov.uk

Members of the public were invited to speak before the formal meeting began by the Chair.

Mr P White asked that if training was being done collectively for councillors whether any Bleadon resident can be invited along to see how the council works – can the training be advertised openly to residents? The Chair responded that council was waiting for a suitable date and this would be published on the website.

Mr C Morris commented on the “eyesore” on Bleadon Road which he believed was owned by Cllr Sheppard. He stated that the site was being occupied against planning conditions. The site was now occupied and the caravan should be removed as it was letting Bleadon down. The Chair responded that the matter had been referred to the North Somerset Council monitoring officer and the appropriate form completed. The Scrutiny Officer has replied and the matter is under consideration so it is sub-judice. Once a response has been received, the council would deal with it as a whole. Mr Morris felt that the referral had been done on another matter not this. The Chair responded that the referral had been done for non-declaration of interest and a blatant disregard for the planning application. It has gone to the Scrutiny Officer and the matter is under investigation so the Chair had no other comment to make. Mr Morris said he would take the matter up with North Somerset then. Cllr Hartree commented that no further comment could be made until the matter had been brought back to Bleadon Parish Council.

The Chair invited Cllr Terry Porter to update the meeting. Cllr Porter started by stating that North Somerset Council is under pressure to provide more houses. Site and policies were being proposed to the Executive Committee on the 2nd February. This Wednesday coming there were two applications being considered – 141 houses in Pudding Pie Lane in Churchill which the officers had recommended be approved and 155 at Banwell which is recommended to be refused due to location, sustainability etc. He said that things have started to move, the piece of land had been designated but they still had to approve the style, number etc. The 79 houses recommended for Bleadon had been recommended to be refused due to landscaping issues, sustainability criteria, shops, schools, cycle lanes. The recommendation has not come through yet as a bat survey is awaited which will be another reason for refusal. If enough sites for approval are included, it will weaken the case for these houses. Regarding the planning application on Wentworth Drive, the issue is less clear cut as it is closer to the shops etc but there are still walk issues and a bat survey is awaited. Even if it did come in, there would need to be a considerable reduction in number. Cllr Clarke commented that there would be a lot of resistance on the second one. Cllr Porter said that NSC had to be very careful when refusing applications as this information goes to appeal. There are issues also with drainage but there are usually ways of mitigating this even though these can be expensive. Archaeology is another potential issue.

Cllr Porter talked about the tax support grant of £300k that NSC pays to parish and town councils. No decision has been made but it will be reviewed early in 2016 and Bleadon PC should be prepared for it to be removed – it affects the council by over £1k. The grant is discretionary but no decision has been taken yet.

Cllr Porter also announced the new NSC website and stated that the council is moving towards digital first as it only costs 7 pence per customer whereas it costs £12-£13 per visit. More will be done online but the council recognises that it needs to be digital inclusive and to pick up those who cannot access services on line even if not at home. This is a concern for a lot of people and there must be care taken not to exclude people if they have no online access.

Cllr Gibson asked if there would be a consultation and time to reply to the community tax. He felt it was sly on the part of NSC in terms of the dates because it left no time for the matter to be considered properly. Cllr Porter commented that a number of things had come out but that he did not know anything about it yet. The budget must be approved by 12th February. NSC was still receiving information from central government on 19th/20th December and the council was still under pressure to make more savings. The Living Wage affects a lot of people eg the care industry as do NI changes. No decision has been made on the council budget yet but there were three or four meetings coming up.

The Chair asked Cllr Porter if he foresaw any major issues being devolved to the parish council? Cllr Clarke also asked which others may be? Cllr Porter suggested that town and parish councils can ask but he could not think of

any that could or would be devolved. Weed killing is done just once a year now – in Hutton, the village orderlies have been trained and equipped by NSC. NSC did not say to Hutton to take the job on but they asked whether they wanted the job done or not.

The Chair asked about gully clearing. Cllr Porter said that the schedule won't change - £400k extra was put into this last year – it is a serious issue but not like others.

Cllr Clarke raised a query regarding wheelie bins for garden waste. Cllr Porter said that no decision had been made yet. No contractors were prepared to pick up bags any more and most companies won't quote for this so the council is stuck with going for bins but it will not charge for collection. Cllr Clarke commented that many people do not have room for wheelie bins. Cllr Porter said that NSC was the only utility not charging for green waste. Cllr Clarke asked how practical another bin would be but Cllr Porter said that the council had no choice if a contractor won't pick up green bags. The costs would be £2-3mn that what we pay now – the council tried to extend the contract but they won't. The finer details are still to be worked out. Cllr Hartree commented that there was always the option to compost your waste. Cllr Porter commented that the NSC was committed to not charging for green waste collection but there may be a charge for the bin initially. Cllr Hartree asked if there was a consultation on the green bags. Cllr Porter replied that if you had a situation that worked, why change it?

The Chair thanked Cllr Porter for his contribution. Cllr Porter left the meeting.

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of Bleadon Parish Council that was held in the **Coronation Hall Coronation Road Bleadon on Monday 11th January 2016** that commenced at **7.30 pm** when the following business was transacted.

PRESENT Mr I Gibson (Chairman) together with Councillors Mesdames I D Clarke, C Findlay, M Sheppard, C Gutsell, Mr S Hartree and the clerk Miss H Brinton

In addition there were a number of members of the public present and a reporter from the Weston Mercury

280.1 To receive any apologies for non attendance

None

280.2 To receive any declarations of interest

Cllr Clarke and the Chair declared an interest in the Coronation Hall matter. Cllr Findlay stated that she was married to the Village Ranger.

280.3 To receive and approve the Minutes of the Meeting of Bleadon Parish Council that was held on Monday 14th December 2015

Cllr Clarke asked for an amendment to be made to 279.15.3. The Chair asked Cllr Clarke to propose alternative wording. Cllr Clarke felt unable to do so. Cllr Hartree felt the minutes accurately reflected what was said and proposed they be approved. Cllr Findlay seconded. Approved 3:2.

Resolved that Minutes of the Meeting of Bleadon Parish Council that was held on Monday 11th January 2016 as previously circulated be approved.

280.4 Past Subject Matters - For the purpose of report only

- (1) Item 73 was noted as now being entered in the minutes 278.17
- (2) Payment to Webglu – the clerk reported that the second payment was the last for the new website and that the new site was now up and running and she would update as and when she had time but new minutes and agendas were being posted 279.10
- (3) Youth club lease – the clerk confirmed the lease actually ran until 2018. Cllr Hartree asked if there was a break clause. The clerk referred to the lease but could find no break clause written into the current lease 279.13.2

280.5 Resolutions

1) The Financial Accounts for the financial period 01/04/2015 to 31/12/2015 were received and noted

2) To resolve the budget for 2016/17

Cllr Hartree reported that the F&P Committee recommended for 2016/17 that the budget be £37,195 expenditure; income of £1,795 was expected leaving a net requirement of £35,400. Included are reductions in administration costs and new items primarily relating to the Open Spaces Committee and the improvement of facilities.

Cllr Hartree proposed the budget requirements; Cllr Sheppard seconded.

Resolved unanimously to set the budget at an expenditure of £37,195 for 2016/17

3) To resolve the precept for 2016/17

Cllr Hartree stated that the F&P Committee were recommending a precept of £38,000 to remain the same as last year noting that under 280.6.1 that a guarantee for £20,000 to the Coronation Hall Management Committee was to be met from reserves.

Cllr Hartree proposed the precept at £38,000; Cllr Gutsell seconded.

Resolved unanimously to set the precept at £38,000 for the year 2016/17

280.6

1) The minutes of the Finance and Personnel Committee meeting held 4th January 2016 were received and noted.

Cllr Hartree noted that at the next meeting the contracts for both the clerk and the village ranger would be reviewed but there was nothing sinister to be read into this. He noted that the £20,000 guarantee to the Hall Management Committee was in addition to the precept.

Cllr Gutsell said that she had no issue with the £20,000 support but before the money was given out, council should ensure that grants are followed up and sought as a condition of the guarantee.

The Chair said that it had been suggested to the Hall Management Committee that grants be applied for and a member has been designated to do just that.

Cllr Clarke said that the suggestion had indeed filtered through. The Chair noted that applicants have to jump through hoops but they will press for grants.

Cllr Gutsell asked if the Management Committee would undertake a guarantee of the refurbishment condition?

Cllr Hartree said that the works should be undertaken provided the council was satisfied that all grants be sought. He noted that there is a lot of work involved in grant applications – hundreds of hours' worth.

2) To approve the monthly expenditure as noted on the agenda

Cllr Clarke asked that training be marked who for. The clerk replied she would do so in future and this training was her initial clerk training before progressing onto CiLCA as per her condition of employment.

Resolved unanimously that all expenditure be approved.

280.7

The minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting held on Monday 14th December 2015 were received and the decisions noted therein

280.8

1) Reports from brief holders

a) Allotments

Nothing to report

b) Churchyard

Cllr Sheppard said there was a dead tree that can be taken down and that Rev Erridge should be contacted via email about it. Cllr Clarke will contact the vicar regarding the time and date. The Chair noted that the churchyard was in a mess and it was much more work than first thought. Cllr Hartree asked who was attending the meeting with the PCC. Cllr Clarke as Chair of Open Spaces and Cllr Gibson as Chair. The protocol was that if a member of the congregation went there should also be another. The Chair said that this would generate liaison between the PC and PCC.

In respect of the churchyard wall, the Chair noted that the Church architect was to contact three builders and at least one had attended who had said that he found it difficult to understand the report requirements.

Cllr Findlay said that the architect seemed to suggest that areas needed to be redone but that they didn't actually seem to need to be which was an unnecessary expense so should a second opinion be sought?

The Chair said was there a commitment to using the church architect. Cllr Hartree said that we did not have to but it makes sense to do so. If the council is dissatisfied, it can appoint another- DACs list of approved architects could be referred to but the fees would be doubled. The Chair commented that it was easy to spend other people's money. Cllr Clarke said that she had inspected the wall with the architect and Rev Erridge so the PCC and the rector should see the specification.

The Chair said that the PC should meet with the PCC and the specification should be sent to them. Cllr Clarke will forward this to the PCC. Cllr Sheppard said that they should have been told a long time ago.

Cllr Findlay said that another part of the wall at the back of the old Post Office was also unstable and that she felt it was not entirely the responsibility of the PC as it had been made unstable with the work going on in that plot. The Chair commented that it was a drain on expenditure. Cllr Hartree commented that householders also had a part to play.

c) Footpaths and Bridleways

Nothing to report

d) Roads and Transport

Cllr Clarke reported that the clerk had contacted Cllr Ap Rees who assured that there was to be no reduction in bus service but the issue was that it was taking 40 minutes to get into town. Cllr Clarke suggested a community bus as everyone uses it but most are free – it is what we pay our taxes for. The Chair commented that a community bus was out of the question. Cllr Hartree commented that on "Countryfile" substantial cuts to rural transport subsidy were being recommended – unless residents use the bus it will go – use it or lose it.

The Chair commented whether the number of journeys could be reduced but made more direct? Cllr Clarke stated that the start times had been altered also. She further said that the council should argue for the service it once had and a service for the Veale. The Chair commented that there was some suggestion it was illegal to reverse. Cllr Sheppard said she could not see why a double decker bus was needed. Cllr Clarke concurred and said other areas had small mini buses. The Chair asked what they were proposing the council do? Cllr Sheppard felt that Cllr Ap Rees should do something. The Chair asked for suggestions about what to do –write to Cllr Ap Rees? Cllr Gutsell said that the bus took too long so people don't use it – a more direct route is needed. Cllr Clarke said that the buses were actually hanging around at the bus stop as no one was getting on. Cllr Hartree felt any letter should be copied to the Chief Executive of North Somerset and Cllr Clarke suggested copying in John Penrose.

e) Children's playground

Cllr Findlay reported that the sand pit has been dug out; the rocker is back and will be installed. The digger was noted by the village ranger in the village and it was suggested that the work could be done so Cllr Findlay, Cllr Gutsell, the village ranger and Andy Harper did the work. It is now ready to fill in and it was agreed to fit the work in whilst the digger was around – the new sand pit would be dug out and the old one backfilled. Cllr Findlay has prices for the new sand and bark and the orders are ready to go – it was being done as cheaply as possible because the council was doing it themselves. Cllr Clarke asked for a vote of thanks to all those who had helped from the Open Spaces Committee. Cllr Findlay said thanks were due to the village ranger for organising the digger so speedily.

f) Newsletter

Nothing to report but the Chair commented that he had a neighbour who is in management at the College so he will speak with him re student production of future copies

g) Website

Cllr Findlay commented that the website was much more user friendly and it looked very efficient and professional. She thanked the clerk for the hours spend of her own time in sorting out the matter.

h) Neighbourhood Watch and Community Safety

Dave Jones had resigned due to family commitments. Cllr Findlay reported that all the streets now had a co-ordinator and due to magistrate commitments she must now take a step back. The village

ranger will step forward to help but a co-ordinator is needed to look after the village. The Chair commented that the scheme was running due to Dave Jones' enthusiasm.

2) The minutes of the Open Spaces Committee meeting held on Monday 14th December 2015 were received and the decisions noted therein

280.8

Reports

1) Coronation Hall

Cllr Clarke said there was nothing of consequence to report. The Chair noted except the disable ramp had been sorted out. The ranger and Tony Derrick had made it safe and secure and offered the council's thanks to both.

2) Youth Club

Cllr Findlay reported that they had made £780 in the Christmas raffle which had been made up to £1530 by Santander.

3) ALCA

Nothing to report

4) District Councillor

The meeting heard from Cllr Porter earlier on

5) Village Beat Officer

Cllr Findlay reported that she had given up writing to them. The Chair said they should prepare a report for this meeting and that the council should go higher to the Neighbourhood Inspector and write to the Divisional Commander, he had yet to see them on a walkabout.

6) Review of policing priorities

Cllr Findlay said that this was for the Community Response Team. She had asked if anything needed to be addressed but had received nothing in response. She had put out leaflets at the Christmas market – there had been no follow up since they came. Cllr Findlay said there were a lot of problems at the time but that this does seem to have quietened down. The Chair said they seemed to be spending their time in town rather than the villages. He felt the Community Response Team should be mentioned in the letter – the Chair will let the clerk know who to write to. There was only one crime reported in the last month.

7) Chairman

The Chair noted that the council had a communication from Bleadon Bob which suggested they were not liaising with the parish. Cllr Findlay asked if she could elaborate. She noted that Bleadon Bob did not seem satisfied whatever was done. The website was up and running now and the only response had been more criticism and problems of the clerk, website and council – long correspondence had been received. Cllr Findlay noted that the clerk does not have time to deal with lengthy correspondence and she would end up spending less time on parish council matters and more of her time dealing with complaints – how was she expected to deal with the volume? She felt that if it carried on the clerk will feel so bullied and harassed that the council will lose her. Cllr Findlay noted that the council had a Vexatious Policy and that council should explore invoking the policy.

Cllr Gutsell suggested that the Chair and someone else email Bleadon Bob and that it would be lovely to resolve the issue amicably

The Chair said that it was possibly advantageous to meet – this whole thing is historical. The relationship between Bruce Poole and Chris Butler was nil. Cllr Clarke commented that there had been warm emails between the two and felt it was solvable. The Chair said it was solvable if both sides gave but this was now akin to being vexatious. The clerk is the council's employee and it is therefore responsible for her welfare. She would be entitled to take action if this continues and it could involve considerable costs to the council – the council must be careful if costs are incurred.

The Chair suggested that the full council meet with Bleadon Bob without the clerk – he is now browbeating the clerk and the Chair took exception to this on behalf of the clerk. He felt they should meet and see if bridges can be built. If this fails, the council needs to decide how to respond to communication.

Cllr Findlay suggested that it would be very costly to keep answering emails – the clerk had already done 20 hours this month that the council is not paying for – there could be repercussions regarding stress and counselling and legal cost – it could end up as a lot of money so it would be good to meet with him

The Chair expressed the wish for harmony and this issue will not go away so he will arrange to meet with Bleadon Bob

Cllr Sheppard asked whether it was not better for the Chair to meet him alone

The Chair said this criticism was aimed at the whole council although he was happy to meet him alone – he suggested he would talk to Bleadon Bob and see what he prefers

Cllr Clarke suggested the clerk was in a front line position and some of it goes with the job

Cllr Sheppard said that this situation had been going on for years

The Chair said that the clerk is the council's employee and this had now gone beyond what was reasonable

Cllr Clarke suggested that it was not personal but just as a result of what the council was doing

The Chair commented that there are people who wish to see the council fail

Cllr Clarke proposed that the Chair and one other go to see him

Cllr Hartree suggested that before the meeting, it would be useful to get some advice from ALCA to give the meeting some steer? As Chair of F&P and therefore responsible for the welfare of the clerk, he was happy to accompany the Chair.

Cllr Clarke proposed that the Chair and Cllr Gutsell go to the meeting. **Cllr Hartree counter proposed that he and the Chair go. Cllr Findlay seconded this proposal which was carried on a vote.**

The Chair said he would arrange to meet with Bleadon Bob and Cllr Hartree accompany

The Chair mentioned the Mendip Marauders doing a race over the Mendip Way on 6th August. It was suggested that stewards be provided for them to guide them through the village throughout the day. Cllr Hartree said that there were parishioners who were members of Weston Athletic Club so volunteers would probably be forthcoming. The Chair suggested this was put on the council website.

The Chair also noted that a couple of people had been concerned about the flooding. Bristol Water had been contacted and the Project Director of Bleadon Sluice has been invited to address the council. The second sluice is taking the pressure and any overtopping shouldn't reach the village. The Chair will write to Rachael Weston to invite her along.

8) The Clerk

Nothing to report

280.9

Correspondence
Noted

280.10

Other business referred to the clerk

Cllr Clarke said she was waiting on a response from the WI as to how much they would be willing to contribute to the defibrillator

280.11

Date of next meeting – 8th February 2016

Meeting closed 21.00