

East Coker Parish Council Minutes 8th November 2023

Attendees: Cllr Cowen, Cllr Hodge, Cllr Hall, Cllr Wakely, Cllr Sugg, Cllr Carter- Uren, Cllr Comstive, Cllr Walker, Cllr Wintersgill, Cllr Warwick-Mortimer, Cllr Mead & Clerk J. Heggarty.

Public Attendance: 2 members of the public.

Meeting commenced at 7.00pm at East Coker Pavilion.

Cllr Comstive called to say he would be a bit delayed, so Cllr Hodge stood in as Vice Chair.

23/156 To receive apologies and reasons for non-attendance

Apologies were received from UC Oliver Partick for not attending.

23/157 There were no declarations of interest in items on this agenda.

23/158 To receive and approve the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 11th October 2023

Meeting minutes for the 11th October 2023 were approved. **Proposed:** Cllr Walker **Seconded:** Cllr Wakely **Vote:** 8 in favour, 2 abstentions due to non-attendance. **Action:** The minutes were agreed and signed by the Chair.

23/159 Chairs Report: Cllr Cowen delivered his monthly report.

1. He advised that the PC would be receiving £3,264 CIL payment for the approved planning application 19/03405/FUL Land Rear of Furzy Knapp, West Coker Road.
2. Cllr Cowen advised that he had had a meeting the Chairperson of the Village Hall and they had agreed that they would have a monthly meeting to discuss any issues or forthcoming plans.
3. He advised that application 17/03320/OUT Land West of Bunford Hollow had had plans amended. Although out of our Parish he just wanted to make Councillors aware.
4. Now that all the originally ordered stones have been delivered and erected Cllr Cowen thanked Councillors Sugg and Mead for persevering with the village stones project. Cllr Sugg advised that the replacement stone for Yeovil Road is already ordered and she hoped it would not take as long to arrive.
5. Cllr Cowen advised that the Clerk had received a poster from Devon & Somerset Fire Service, asking communities about the amount of council tax precept monies paid to the fire and rescue service. Clerk advised that this had been put out on parish communications and on the website so that parishioners can take part in the survey if they so wish.
6. Cllr Cowen advised that an email had been received from Somerset Council regarding Asset & Services Devolution. He was hoping to speak to UC Hewitson about the content however he was not present so this has been moved to the December meeting. Clerk will distribute the email to all ECPC Councillors.
7. Cllr Cowen noted that despite the extraordinary amount of rain of the last few weeks most of the drains in the parish had coped well and resulted in little flooding, thanks largely to the clearance work of Cllrs Mead and Sugg. The drains will need to be cleared again now that large volumes of earth and silt had been washed into them.
8. He also noted that the Government plans for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) will be applied to all new planning applications for new developments or new-builds from the beginning of 2024.

23/159 Public Question Time

- (1) Members of the Public. One member of the public spoke in support of agenda item 23/160.B
- (2) UC No Unitary Councillors were present.

23/160 To discuss and make observations on SC - Planning Applications

A **15/01000/OUT Location:** Keyford. Nothing to report.

B **23/02205/HOU Location:** Oakdene Long Furlong Lane East Coker Yeovil Somerset BA22 9LQ

Application: New roof with front and rear dormers to accommodate first floor.

Cllr Cowen advised an email had been received prior to the meeting mentioning this application and that the content had been circulated with all Cllrs. Cllr Cowen opened the floor up for discussion. Cllr Mead said that the current plans had been vastly improved from the previous ones. He said that the applicant had tried to address previous concerns in changing materials. Cllr Sugg said that she would support this application as it was future proofing and making it into a family home. Cllr Hodge questioned the roof height but diagrams and pictures shown by the applicant showed that it was largely in keeping with the neighbouring properties. Cllr Cowen questioned whether the dormer windows located on the north side of the roof would overlook the neighbouring property (which, he noted, had registered an objection against the application on this basis). The applicant stated that it would be very difficult to locate the dormers on the south side and that there was over 20 metres between the two houses.

Proposal: Due to the changes made in the plans the ECPC are now happy to support this application. It adheres to ECNP policy ECH2 General Housing Consideration.

Proposed: Cllr Sugg **Seconded:** Cllr Mead **Vote:** All in favour **Action:** Clerk to update Somerset Planning.

23/161 Finance. To approve the following items of expenditure and those paid under delegated powers. Clerk advised that the following invoices had arrived since agenda publication.

KM Dike £1,017 Harvey Stone £8,102 Viking £51 Clare's Cleaning £225 EDF £158 Xero £30 and Hellis Tree Solutions £613. Cllr Hodge advised that, to reduce costs, as of the 1st December we would be using the Xero basic package at a cost of £15pm.

Proposal: Approve invoices and proceed with payment **Proposed:** Cllr Carter-Uren **Seconded:** Cll Warwick-Mortimer **Vote:** All in favour **Action:** Finance accounts approved for the month and Clerk to pay all invoices.

23/162 Memorial Requests:

1. No requests received.

23/163 Matters for discussion and resolution:

1. Play Area Surface

Cllr Sugg advised that the wet-pour surface under the roundabout in the play area was split and needed replacing. Clerk said that she had emailed Somerset Council to find out if they offered any replacement service for these sorts of issues but was yet to get a response. Cllr Walker said that it may be a good idea to get the tree surgeon to take a look when he comes to reduce the size of the tree at the recreation ground, to advise as to whether the roots were the cause of the damage. Cllr Sugg also advised that one of the fence posts had rotted out on the border of the play area, and it was in need of repairing.

Action: Clerk to contact Somerset Council again and also contact a contractor to replace the fence post. Cllr Cowen to ask the Tree Surgeon to advise on possible tree roots under roundabout.

2. Pincushion Corner

Cllr Wintersgill said that she had been asked by the Action Group to enquire if anyone would be willing to join the committee to try and future-proof the Wood at Pincushion Corner. This would involve a very small monetary donation and attending working parties when able. Several Cllrs and the Clerk said they would be willing to join. It was suggested that Cllr Wintersgill put a communication out on the Coker Post, asking for parishioner's support and she would also send this to the Clerk to put on the website.

Action: Cllr Wintersgill to make a poster and send out on parish communications and Clerk to update website with this information.

3. SIDS

Cllr Cowen advised that he had submitted the signed Memorandum of Understanding to Somerset Council. Once this has been signed by SC, we can move to the next stage of the project to arrange posts to be put up ready for the SID and to order the SID itself.

4. Christmas Lights

Cllr Cowen advised that he had met the new electrician at The Paddock to discuss the wiring of the Christmas lights. He also advised that he had managed to get a 20% discount for the purchase of a 18 foot tree. The cost of this would be £320.00. He is going to try and arrangement for the delivery during the first week of December.

23/164 To receive the Clerk's report. Nothing to report as everything had been mentioned in Chairs Report.

23/165 Correspondence from the Somerset Council.

Clerk circulated an email with all Councillors prior to the meeting from Citizens Advice regarding possible funding. It was noted that the only way to help the CAB financially would be a one-off grant which would probably be of limited value to them. Cllr Wakely said that he would bring this up at the next LCN meeting. It will also go on the December meeting agenda and we hope that UC Hewiston will be present so that we can ask what the SC plans are regarding future funding of the CAB.

23/166 Parishioner Correspondence

1. Email received regarding using recreation ground for dog training. It was felt that this request could be granted, but Cllrs requested a bit more information. It would need to avoid clashes with football training and also a fee would need to be discussed **Proposal:** To agree in principle with the request to use the recreation ground for dog training but more information would be required before it could

be formally accepted. **Proposed:** Cllr Wakely **Seconded:** Cllr Wintersgill **Vote:** All in favour. **Action:** Clerk to contact trainer and request more information and report back to Cllrs.

2. Email received regarding footpath and road surface on Mill Close. Clerk advised that she had contacted Somerset Highways already and they had been out to assess the road surface and they agreed that it needs work. They have advised that this has been added to their list of works but could not give a frame as to when it would be completed.

8.45pm 2 members of the public left meeting

23/167 Discuss Working Groups

1. The Pavilion Modernisation

Cllr Hodge advised that the working group had had a meeting on the 6th November. She reported that the feasibility of the project needed to be revisited. This is due to soaring cost of materials, inflation rates, and interest rates of small business loans.

She said that the modernisation project may now have to be delayed or built in stages. The Working group will have a meeting in the coming month and discuss the best way forward for this project. An Extraordinary General Meeting of the ECPC will then be held in early 2024.

2. Parish Communications

Cllr Wintersgill will be making and distributing posters for the Christmas Nativity play and 100 Club (see below.)

3. Cemetery Working Group

a Tree survey findings

Cllr Comstive spoke about the tree survey report findings which ECPC had undertaken. This document had been circulated prior to the meeting. He said that it was clear that there are a number of trees that it would be possible to remove and this would then free up valuable burial space. He said that it would be possible to replace some of the trees with native, smaller, and prettier trees, and it was suggested that these could be memorial trees which could possibly be purchased by families. He requested the Clerk get 3 quotes for the tree removal. Cllr Comstive said that he would write a notice to advise users of the Cemetery about the plans and work to be carried out and send to the Clerk so she could then laminate and put up at the lychgate. **Action:** Clerk to obtain 3 quotes for tree removal and report back to Council. Cllr Comstive to write wording for sign and send to Clerk.

b. Cemetery Policy

Cllr Wakely distributed his first draft of the new cemetery policy prior to the meeting. He said that he thought that the fees for all grave purchases and interment needed to be raised in line with other cemeteries. Clerk suggested that this should be done when the next Cemetery Fee Increase is due in April 2024. He also said that the tenure is reduced to 75 years from 100 and, due to demand for spaces, only East Coker Parishioners or those who had moved into Care Homes within 2 years would be allowed to be interred at the Cemetery. Also, no plots are to be purchased prior to interment. **Proposal:** To adopt the new policy with minor changes. **Proposed:** Cllr Hodge **Seconded:** Cllr Mead **Vote:** All agreed **Action:** Cllr Wakely will make some small adjustments to the document and send to the Clerk, and this will then be added to the web site. Clerk will also make a note to raise all fees in April 2024.

4. Wellbeing

a. 100 Club. Cllr Wintersgill had drawn up a list of rules for participants. This had been circulated with Councillors prior to the meeting. Cllr Hodge advised that the Pavilion Modernisation bank account would be used for all participants standing order payments and said that a standing order form would need to be created. Cllr Carter-Uren would reconcile draw numbers every month to make sure payments had been received. Cllr Mead said that all Councillors would need to try and sell numbers

Proposal: Cllr Wintersgill proposed that the setup of the 100-club moved forward and that the first draw would take place on the 8th February 2024 **Proposed:** Cllr Hodge **Seconded:** Cllr Hall **Vote:** All Agreed **Action:** Cllr Wintersgill and Cllr Carter-Uren continue setting up the 100 club for a target start date of the 8th Feb 2024 and all councillors to sell numbers.

b. Christmas Nativity

Cllr Mead advised that she was just finishing off the script and a rehearsal would be held on the 10th December. She has found a volunteer who has kindly offered to make all the costumes and that Cllr Comstive has agreed to narrate. She said that she would need all Councillors to be involved on the day. Clerk has printed 100 tickets. These would be sold by Cllr Sugg & Cllr Wintersgill and also at the Village café. Cllr Wintersgill will make posters to put up around the village to promote the event. It

was agreed that the Clerk would transfer £200 into the Events bank account for purchasing supplies.
Clerk to check that we have a card for that bank account.

c. Pumpkin Competition. The winners of the Pumpkin competition were chosen by the councillors and Cllr Wintersgill will deliver the prizes.

23/168 Group Representative Reports

Primary School – Cllr Warwick-Mortimer had nothing to report.

LCN - Cllr Wakely. Advised that he was unable to attend the November meeting but would circulate the minutes when he received them.

23/169 Highways Issues

23/170 Identified works for the Village Ranger

23/171 To discuss and resolve the following topics;

Resolution sought to exclude the public (*Non Parish Council Members*)

23/172 Agenda items for the 13th December meeting.

Curb stones beside East Coker village stream

Maintenance and Ranger

Somerset Asset and Services Devolution email

Funding for the Citizens Advice Bureau

It was decided that the December meeting would start at 6.30pm.

Meeting ended at 9.35 pm

Clerk..... Chair

Date.....