

MINUTES OF NORTON SUB HAMDON PARISH COUNCIL
MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 5th SEPTEMBER 2022
AT 7.30 P.M. IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM, NORTON VILLAGE HALL

22/18014 PRESENT:

Cllr. S. More (Chairman), Cllr. B. Matraves (Vice Chair), Cllr. S. Maunder, Cllr. P. Biddle, Cllr. J Cole, Cllr. R. Cumberbatch, Mrs L. Brooks (Clerk), and 5 members of the public.

22/1815 APOLOGIES:

Cllr L Holt (personal reasons)

Oliver Patrick (County Councillor)

Mike Hewitson (District Councillor & County Councillor) – no apologies received

22/1816 PUBLIC TIME

22/1816/a Public Time

A member of the public asked what was happening with the trees alongside the footpath that run down the side of the school. Many are overhanging and it is now becoming more difficult to walk down there. Clerk to report to Footpath Liaison Officer Austin Harding. Clerk to also thank Austin for all his hard work.

The Chairman asked the Clerk if a ‘thank you’ could be sent to John and Elizabeth Forrest for keeping Norton clean with all their litter picking they do every week. **Action: Clerk**

22/1816/b P.C.S.O. Report:

Nothing to report

22/1816/c District Councillor report & County Councillor report:

A report was received from Councillors Oliver Patrick and Mike Hewitson which included the following (report received via email):

Energy Crisis hits Coker Division: At July's Full Council meeting in Yeovil, Somerset Lib Dems declared a Cost-of-Living Emergency. We urged the Government to do more to tackle the looming crisis but at time of writing they have failed to release any plans that meet the scale of the challenge. Sadly, a number of local businesses have been in touch to explain how soaring energy prices are affecting them. From pubs to independent shops, many are being hit hard and face closure in the coming months.

Bus cuts... some success! Unfortunately, another round of bus cuts is coming our way in October as the Government withdraws more Covid-related support. At time of printing, the Government has pledged extra support but we don't know if it's enough or where it will land. Somerset Liberal Democrats are working hard to save our buses, enjoying some success in saving the no.173 between Wells and Bath and the no.30 in Frome. The cost of a joined-up, modern service right across Somerset is £163 million, but the Government saw fit to award just £11.9m earlier this year (7% of what is required). What does all this mean for Coker? As far as we can tell, Coker hasn't been greatly affected by bus cuts. In fact the changes to the no.68 in Barwick & Stoford are an improvement as they align better with the train timetable at Yeovil Junction. We will continue to monitor the situation.

Somerset's Mobile library: Somerset County Council's mobile library travels through the Coker Division once every 4 weeks. The mobile library is fully accessible to wheelchair users, and serves areas without a static library - areas like ours. What's more, the mobile library doesn't just do novels - it also stocks audio books and DVDs.

22/1816/d CLT Update:

Mrs Liz Maunder, secretary of the CLT read out a report which gave a brief history of their work as well as an update on recent events concerning the shop and post office. Chairman Cllr. More, asked how much in pledges they had now received. Mrs Maunder replied that it was now in the region of £20,000. However, she explained that there were no guarantees that all the pledges would be fulfilled as some people's position may well have changed due to the rise in living costs, since offering their pledge. She explained they were now working on trying to set up a way to set these payments up with the bank, which wasn't straightforward. She also explained that both she and Adrian Pipe were very busy as they now had to absorb all the finance work that Jim Gray had previously done. The Chairman asked how many new volunteers had come forward since the public meeting. Mrs Maunder replied that only 3 had come forward since then and one of those was for doing a limited amount of hours once a

month only. When the shop was first taken over by the CLT they had in the region of 90 volunteers and now that number was down to 31. A member of the public present at the meeting said that the main reason for the drop in numbers was due to many of the elderly volunteers stopping due to Covid. Another member of the public said her job was admin and accounting and she offered her help to the CLT. Mrs Maunder reported that there had been many new shareholders apply to join and as long as any further applications were in by the 15th September then they would become shareholders in time for the next meeting. AGM is on the 12th October. Mrs Maunder asked if the Parish Council could possibly help to support the shop financially in any way, this would be very gratefully received. The Clerk reported that she had been in touch with SALC on how the Parish Council could legally support the shop. SALC had informed the Clerk that the PC are restricted to the spend cap of S137 as there is no other power for a spend of this nature. The S137 payment for Norton PC is currently budgeted at £200.00 per year. This amount could significantly rise if the Parish Council agreed to it in the next budget (amount is worked out to a specific formula/amount per elector), but this wouldn't come into effect until the next financial year which would start in April 2023. Applications to be considered for this year's S137 are received in January '23 for a decision at the February '23 PC meeting. The CLT would be more than welcome to put in their application letter in January if they would like to be considered for this. (Copy of the report will be available with the minutes on the website)

The Clerk asked the Chair if she could speak, of which she was granted permission. The Clerk asked Mrs Maunder for an apology following the emails she had received from both herself and Adrian Pipe that were both defamatory and slanderous as well as questioning her integrity and ability as Clerk. The Clerk had received these emails after sending an email to the Parish Councillors' and the Clerks' of both Chiselborough and West Chinnock to inform them of the shocking news regarding the shop's proposed closure by the CLT board, that would have a huge impact on the community that Norton sub Hamdon Parish Council serve. The email the Clerk had sent informing the PC had been sent at the Chairman's request. The Clerk also confirmed to Mrs Maunder that the Parish Council had financially supported the shop in 2014 with the sum of £1,000.00 to enable them to apply for a grant from SSDC in the first place. The Chairman asked for the Clerk to stop and said this would be discussed further after the meeting had been closed.

The Chairman also wished to pass on the Parish Council's sympathies to Rose on the passing of Jim Gray who used to be the Parish Council internal auditor for many years. Clerk to send a card on the Parish Council's behalf.

Action: Clerk

22/1816/e Hamdon Youth Group:

The AGM is to be held on 22nd September. All the Parish Councillors were invited to join.

22/1817 MINUTES

The Minutes from the July meeting have been circulated. They were agreed and signed.

Proposed: Cllr. Biddle

Seconded: Cllr. Cole

Agreed unanimously.

22/1818 MATTERS ARISING

22/1818/a Village Shop: See above, under CLT update

22/1818/b Finger post refurb update: Following the previous request from the Parish Council to Highways to ask if Highways could remove the finger post signs so the Parish Council could get them refurbished, the Clerk informed the Parish Council that Highways had responded to say this was not possible as they were not in a position to be able to offer highway operative resource to remove and refix finger arms. All Highways works are undertaken by their Service Provider via their Highways Term Maintenance Contract. Therefore, works undertaken would be charged back to Somerset County Council and impact their maintenance budgets.

22/1818/c Play area update: The Clerk reported that the play area had all been successfully completed and it was hoped that the turf will come back to life after the drought. The Clerk reported that the annual safety checks had just been carried out and everything had passed. The Clerk will keep looking for a suitably priced plaque to mark the upgrade of the Jubilee Play Park.

22/1819 PLANNING:

22/1819/a Matters for report:

Breach in Little Street: This matter is still currently with the SSDC Planning Team Leader and Listed building specialist.

22/1819/b Decisions Notified:

Nothing to report

22/1819/c Applications for consideration.

Nothing to report

22/1820 FINANCE:

22/1820/a Matters for report:

1. VAT : The Clerk reported that the VAT return would be carried out sooner than it was normally carried out in the year due to the VAT to claim for the play area.
2. Grant received from SSDC for play equipment: The Clerk reported that the Parish Council were now in receipt of the grant from SSDC towards the play area. She had emailed SSDC to thank them for their support.

22/1820/b Matters for resolution

The Clerk asked to attend training on ‘Successful Budgeting’ that SALC is holding. The cost of the training would be £25.00. The Parish Council were in full agreement and a resolution was made to finance this.

Action: Clerk

Proposed: Cllr. More

Seconded: Cllr. Cole

Agreed unanimously.

22/1820/c Cheques Payable

AUGUST INVOICES PAID 08.08.22			Chq no:
Louise Brooks	Salary – July 2022	£ 493.93	1607
HMRC	NI & PAYE July 2022	£ 4.40	1608
Louise Brooks	Expenses & home office Allowance – July 22	£ 70.00	1609
HAGS	New play equipment & playground upgrade	£ 37,919.51	1610
Steve Collier	New pedestrian gate added to existing kissing gate by church (£350 paid in advance – remaining £350 due now on completion)	£ 350.00	1611
SEPTEMBER INVOICES DUE FOR PAYMENT			
Louise Brooks	Salary – August 2022	£ 493.93	1612
HMRC	NI & PAYE August 2022	£ 4.40	1613
Louise Brooks	Expenses & home office Allowance – August 22	£ 70.00	1614
Somerset Landscapes Ltd	Grounds Maintenance April, May & June 22	£ 857.81	1615
PKF Littlejohn LLP	External audit for 2022	£ 240.00	1616
The Playground Inspection Company Ltd	Annual playground inspection	£ 102.00	1617

Proposed: Cllr. Cole

Seconded: Cllr. Maunder

Agreed unanimously.

22/1821 VILLAGE HALL:

Cllr Cole reported that the floor in the main hall was about to be refurbished and it would therefore be shut for a week whilst the work was being carried out.

22/1822 RECREATION GROUND:

Nothing to report.

22/1823 CORRESPONDENCE:

Grit Bins: The Clerk reported that Highways had been in touch regarding the filling of grit bins for this winter. The Clerk had asked Matt Orchard to go and check the condition of each bin in the village. He reported that all the bins apart from New Road bins were fine and the grit inside perfect. The New Road grit bins needed refilling. Clerk to inform Highways.

Action: Clerk

22/1824 FOOTPATHS:

The Chairman reported that most footpaths had now been cleared by SCC, thanks to the organisation from both our Rights of Way Warden Debbie and our Footpaths Liaison Officer, Austin. The Parish Council commented on what a fabulous job Austin is doing since very kindly taking on the role.

22/1825 MEMBERS' REPORTS.

Nothing to report.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.10pm

The next monthly meeting will be held on Monday 10th October 2022 starting at 7.30pm.