

WEST CREWKERNE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 8th November 2016 at Clapton & Wayford Village Hall

Members Present

Mrs Julia Borland

Mr Don Yeomans

Mr Frank Freeman

Mr Barrie Carter

Mrs Sue Osborne (South Somerset District Councillor)

Mr John Dyke (Somerset County Councillor)

Also present

Miss Jackie Parsons (Parish Clerk)

6 Members of the Public

Meeting commenced at 7.00pm

1. Apologies for Absence

Mrs Caroline Broom

Mr & Mrs M Wilson

2. Public Open Forum

Mr John Wyatt brought up that a British Lorry had got stuck in the lane from above his property going towards Woolminstone. However the lorry was making his way to Coombe Farm Roundham. The Parish Clerk stated that Mr G Coleman needed to be contacted again regarding this latest incident regarding lorries delivering to Coombe Farm and ending up in the lanes around West Crewkerne Parish.

Mr John Wyatt also stated that the mobile home at Roundham has been moved. Mr Barrie Carter stated he thought that it was because the new owners of the property had now moved into the property.

Mr Henryk Ploszeck who maintains the West Crewkerne Parish Council website stated that the website had suffered a cyber-attack. The address is coming up as Roundham Parish Council. The matter had been reported to South Somerset District Council.

3. Declarations of Interest in items on the agenda (Pecuniary or non-statutory interests).

None from any of the Parish Councillors present.

4. To approve the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 13TH September 2016.

The Parish Clerk stated that it had been brought to her attention that the draft minutes of the Parish Council Meeting on the 13th September were inaccurate and needed to be amended. The Clerk apologised for the errors that had been made. Mr Don Yeomans read out the passages from the minutes that need to be amended. Mr D Yeomans proposed the amendments to the minutes and Mr F Freeman seconded the motion.

5. **Matters arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere on the Agenda.**

The Parish Clerk had written to South Somerset District Council regarding the activity on a strip of land at Stakers Cross. The Clerk had received a reply from the planning department of South Somerset District Council stating that a planning officer had visited the site and the current level of activity does not require planning permission.

6. **Planning Matters.**

West Crewkerne Parish Council is a Statutory Consultee for Planning Applications and as such does not make the final decision on any application. Any decisions and comments made by the Parish Council will be fed into the planning process and added to the report by the Planning Officer. South Somerset District Council is the Planning Authority and will issue the final decision notice (Planning Determination) once their investigations into the application, consultation period and decision making process has been completed.

A): 16/02780/FUL, 9 Lily Court, Clapton Road, Clapton Crewkerne Somerset TA18 8RA. Change of use of land from agricultural to residential and erection of a single storey rear extension (part retrospective).

Application permitted with conditions.

B): 16/04505/FUL, Hewish Mill Farm Hewish Crewkerne Somerset TA18 8QX. To re-roof, clad and replace doors to garage.

The Chairman Mrs J Borland stated that this was another planning application that had come in between meetings and the response had to be in by the 4th November 2016. The Chairman had subsequently sent an e-mail to all the West Crewkerne Parish Councillors and had received a reply from Mr D Yeomans, Mr F Freeman and Mr B Carter. Mr Freeman's reply had been received after the response date and Mr B Carter had replied to the wrong planning application. Mrs Borland asked Mr D Yeomans to reiterate his comments to the planning application for the purposes of the Parish Council Meeting;

Mr D Yeomans had no comments to make on the application.

Mrs J Borland also stated that she had no comments to make on the application.

The Chairman sent a reply to the planning department of South Somerset District Council stating that the West Crewkerne Parish Council had no comments or observations to make on the planning application at Hewish Mill Farm.

7. **Highway Matters.**

The Ditches and Drains around Farm Lane Woolminstone. Letter received from Somerset Highways.

The Clerk had received a reply from Somerset Highways stating that when Hewish Gates had the drains cleaned out it was not requested that Farm Lane Woolminstone be included in the programme. The next planned programme of gully cleaning for West Crewkerne is 2017/18 and will cover the whole of the parish. The Clerk stated she had not received any reply from Mr R E Newman and did the meeting wish her

to pursue this matter in view of Somerset Highways' comments. Mr L Graham-Gleed stated that Mr R E Newman had no ditches on his land running down Farm Lane. The ditch that needs clearing is around the corner going down towards Hewish. It needs to be cleared as water does go over the road from this ditch. Mr D Yeomans stated that clarification was needed on the issue of ditches and drains. He felt that if there were no drains running alongside the ditches bordering a farmer's land and the ditches were used by Somerset Highways to divert the surface water into the stream, then surely the clearance of the ditches should be a Somerset Highways' matter. However if water is running off the farmer's field and the ditches are being used to take away the water, then the clearance of those ditches should be the farmer's responsibility. The meeting asked the Clerk to obtain clarification from Somerset County Council. Mr B Carter also asked the Clerk to clarify the situation regarding Venners Lane in Roundham as up to three years ago the ditches were cleared by Somerset Highways but for the last three years nothing has been done.

Coombe Farm, any more incidents of lorries not going the right way to the farm. This matter has been highlighted in the public open forum with a large English lorry getting stuck around the lanes of West Crewkerne. The meeting felt that there should be a large sign at the T-Junction with the A30 directing lorries to the next turning for Coombe Farm. The sign should also incorporate reference to supplying the Yeo Valley group. Mr H Ploszek also stated that the sign for the turning for Coombe Dairy Farm opposite the Equestrian Centre should be larger because even when Lorries are directed to this turning, they do not believe it is the turning into Coombe Farm and continue on into the lanes and then get stuck. The Clerk to write to Mr G Coleman estate manager at Coombe Farm regarding the above matters.

Winter Service for 2016/17 in respect of the Parish.

Somerset District Council had sent a memo regarding bags of salt and grit bins. The Council have asked the Parish Council if they need any bags of salt, the Parish would be entitled to 10 bags of 20kgs. Mr L Graham-Gleed stated that he would collect the bags of salt from the depot at Mead Avenue Houndstone business park Yeovil on behalf of the Parish. A copy of the memo needed to be taken by Mr L Graham-Gleed as proof when collecting the bags of salt. The Clerk understood that West Crewkerne Parish had no grit bins in the Parish? This was confirmed by the Chairman. The Clerk asked if there were any areas where a grit bin would be useful. Members of the Parish felt a grit bin would be useful on the B3165 where it meets the Woolminstone road, water comes across that road on the bend and freezes when the weather is cold. The Clerk stated she would write to Somerset County Council and request information regarding locating a grit bin there.

8. Reports from Councillors, including District and County Councillors.

The Chairman asked Mr J Dyke Somerset County Councillor if he had anything to report. Mr J Dyke stated that there was no further information on the progress of the Roundham small improvement scheme. Mr B Carter West Crewkerne Parish Councillor stated he was annoyed at the lack of information after a year. Mr B Carter understood that the residents of Roundham were a special case because

there is a lack of Community Cohesion within the community. Residents are unable to visit other residents because of the lack of pavements and lighting and the speed of the traffic going through Roundham. The Clerk will write to Somerset County Council regarding the small improvement scheme and asked what progress has been made on the scheme. Mr D Yeomans Parish Councillor asked Mr J Dyke if there was not a timescale on these feasibility studies Mr J Dyke could not state whether there was a time limit. All he could say was that the Roundham scheme was one of a number of schemes being considered and the staff in the office dealing with these schemes you can count on one hand. Mr D Yeomans stated that until the feasibility scheme had been carried out he presumed that no monies therefore could be allocated to the scheme? Mr J Dyke confirmed that this was correct. Mr J Dyke stated that as soon as he had something to bring to the Parish Council regarding the scheme he would do so. The Chairman thanked Mr J Dyke for all his efforts on behalf of the Roundham residents on the small improvement scheme.

Mrs S Osborne South Somerset District Councillor stated that she was disappointed that the last Social Housing property in the West Crewkerne Parish had been sold. Although the District Council had put in objections they do not have any say in the final decision. Mrs S Osborne stated that the rate of rural housing that Yarlington Housing group are getting rid of is beginning to ring alarm bells as to what their long term strategy is for rural housing. Co-incidentally the District Council does have a project team looking at social housing in rural areas, so it will be interesting to see what this study highlights.

South Somerset District Council has agreed their senior management structure. Mrs S Osborne also stated that there is something called Community Infrastructure going through at present whereby instead of a Section 106 notice there now will be a charge per square metre on new builds. The District Council is looking to implement this in April 2017. South Somerset District Council has reluctantly agreed to accept Central Government four year settlement plan in place of Council Support grant. This gives them financial stability until 2020 but at the end of 2020 they have to pay the Government back £300000 but no reasons have been given for this payment even though a delegation from the council went up to London to see the Minister. There are various groups within South Somerset District Council looking at various projects. Universal Credit is coming in for anybody living the TA19 area. There is a policy group in South Somerset District Council looking at Rates policy as central government has deemed that Post Offices in towns can have a 100% exemption on their rates but Community shops in rural areas are not being offered the same terms and in some cases is causing hardship.

Mrs S Osborne had received a call from a resident of West Crewkerne Parish regarding fly tipping. Somebody is throwing carrier bags of incontinence pads on to his land over a hedge from a pull in outside his field. Mrs S Osborne advised him to contact the Police and report the matter. Mrs S Osborne stated that as the fly tipping is on private land the landowner has to bear the cost of cleaning up. If the fly tipping had been in the pull in then the District Council would have had to bear the cost of the clean-up operation. The District Councillor asked if people could be vigilante around the lay-bys in the Parish and if they see any suspicious behaviour to jot down the car registration number and report the matter. Mrs S Osborne also

stated that there is a possibility that a mobile camera could be sited in this pull-in but she would have to check with the person responsible for these cameras within the District Council. Mr D Yeomans felt that something should be done for this resident as it was unfair on him to have to clear up this particular fly tipping and maybe a mobile camera in the pull-in would be the answer especially if it happens again. Mr D Yeomans also asked whether fly-tipping is a criminal offence? Mr F Freeman stated that if fly tipping is on private land it is considered as a nuisance, if it happens more than once then it is classed as harassment and that is a serious crime. Mrs S Osborne stated lastly that in view of the arson attack that burnt down the village hall at Dowlish Wake could people who have wooden sheds or outbuildings especially if they are in an isolated area be vigilant and report any suspicious activity to the police.

The Chairman asked Mr B Carter if he had anything to report, he had nothing to report. Similarly Mr F Freeman had nothing to report. Mr D Yeomans felt that in view of the errors that had arisen on the September meeting minutes it would be a good idea to purchase audio recording equipment to assist the Councillors and the Clerk so that there was an audio recording to refer back to when writing up the minutes. The recording device needs to be one that is designed specifically for meetings. Mr D Yeomans has found a device on the internet that is a 360 degree voice recorder unit which comes out at approximately £120.00. Mr D Yeomans proposed that this device be purchased to assist in the recording of the Parish Council meetings and Mrs J Borland seconded the motion. All Councillors present agreed the proposal.

Mrs J Borland gave a belated report on the open day at Crewkerne cemetery. The open day was attended by approximately 30 members of the public along with 3 Burial board members. The day was both informative and successful and Mrs J Borland felt the cemetery was an asset to this Parish.

Mrs J Borland also stated that Somerset Highways had come back and resurfaced the road in Clapton and although better than it was she felt they had not gone quite far enough. However, realistically she knew they would not come back and resurface that small area.

9. Finance

A) To pay:-

1. Clerk Salary of £155.75 Cheque no.257
2. HMRC of £39.00 Cheque no. 258

B) To consider small grants to two individual groups who use the village hall.

The Clerk stated that she had received two letters from users of the village hall, one from a lady who ran a yoga class at the Clapton and Wayford Village Hall looking to purchase additional yoga supplies for people who came without mats, yoga blocks and straps. The second letter was from the Clapton and Wayford film society looking to upgrade their equipment for the next season. They are looking to purchase a DVD/Blu-ray player which will cost in the region of £500. They are also looking to the National Lottery fund for assistance but it would further their case if they could show that they had received funding from elsewhere. They have asked the Parish Council for a grant in the region of £100-£200.

The Chairman then asked the Parish Councillors for their comments. All the Parish Councillors felt that the grants should only be paid to non-profit making societies or clubs that used the village hall. They agreed to make a grant of £200.00 to the Clapton and Wayford film society. This was proposed by Mr F Freeman and seconded by Mr B Carter. However as the lady running the Yoga class at the village hall was presumably a profit making venture they felt that no grant should be paid to her. All Parish Councillors were in agreement. Mrs S Osborne (District Councillor) and Mr J Dyke (County Councillor) both stated that the letter sent out by the Clerk to the Parish Council should set out the criteria for applying for grants in the future. The Clerk stated that this had been the first year that a letter had been sent out to users of the hall inviting them to apply for a grant. However she will take their comments on board.

C) Presentation of the receipts and payments for the half year to the 30th September 2016.

The Parish Clerk presented the receipts and payments for the half year to the 30th September 2016 to the Parish Councillors. The Chairman stated that the statement was self-explanatory and all the major items of expenditure such as insurance, rent for the village hall, burial board and grant to the village hall were included. No comments on the half yearly statement.

D) To consider draft proposals for the precept for 2017/18.

The Parish Clerk had put together proposals for the Parish Council precept for 2017/18. At this stage the Council Support Grant is not known but the Clerk is going to a Precept meeting on the 14th November and may know some more from that meeting. The final proposals on the precept will have to be agreed at the January 2017 Parish Council meeting. Mrs S Osborne stated that the Council Support Grant will be less this year and will diminish to Nil in the next two years. There are also suggestions that Central Government may consider capping town and parish councils as well as District and County Councils. So that maybe something to bring up at the meeting on the 14th November as to whether anything has come down from Central Government on this proposal. Mr D Yeomans queried the amount in the precept for the Burial Board as this equates to a rise of 15% over the 2016/17 figure. Mrs J Borland stated that she did not think the final figure would be as high as in the provisional precept figures. At the last meeting of the joint Crewkerne and West Crewkerne Burial Board it was stated that as the Cemetery grows so does the maintenance of the Cemetery. The Cemetery has grown by approximately a third in size. There is a meeting of the Burial Board on the 4th December where the precept will be discussed. Once Mrs J Borland knows the actual precept that has been set by the Crewkerne and West Crewkerne Joint Burial Board for West Crewkerne Parish Council she will inform the meeting.

E) The Audit Report for the Parish Council Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2016.

The Clerk stated that the external auditor Grant Thornton had agreed the West Crewkerne Parish Council Accounts for 2015/16. There were a couple of minor points they queried where the Clerk had not put Not Applicable in

two boxes on the form. Grant Thornton will also be the external auditor for 2016/17 accounts but after that nobody is sure what is happening to small parishes under £25000. Mr J Dyke asked what fee the Parish Council paid to Grant Thornton external auditor and the internal auditor Mr M Wilson. The Clerk stated that we paid neither of them. The external auditor because our turnover was under £25000 we did not have to pay an audit fee and our internal auditor does not charge the Parish Council.

10. **Planning Applications and Councillors re-familiarising themselves with the Statutory Code of Conduct for West Crewkerne Parish Council.**

The above had been included on the Agenda in light of the recent planning application. The Chairman Mrs J Borland asked Mr D Yeomans to speak on this matter as she was aware that he had been researching Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary interests. Mr D Yeomans stated that he had looked on the internet and the rules governing Pecuniary interests are clear cut. If there is any financial gain to the Councillor or any member of his immediate family then there is an interest that they need to declare at a meeting. However when it comes to Non-Pecuniary interests this is a grey area, it comes down to the individual Councillor to decide if they have an interest that needs to be declared at a meeting. They can seek advice from the Parish Clerk but in the end it is the individual councillor's decision to declare an interest or not. Mrs J Borland stated that because it is the individual's decision she cannot compel them to declare an interest. Mr D Yeomans stated that if the Councillor declares an interest they can still make comments as an individual but not as a member of a council. Mrs S Osborne pointed out that not declaring a Pecuniary interest is a criminal offence. Mr J Dyke stated that if any Councillor has any doubts as to whether he or she has an interest in an item on the agenda being discussed, declare an interest and when the point is being discussed then the Councillor can leave the room.

Mrs J Borland stated that as a Parish Council they had never sat down and discussed Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary interests so that every Councillor was aware of their responsibilities.

Mrs Alcock as a parishioner of West Crewkerne Parish rightfully expected transparency, honesty and integrity from her Parish Councillors. Mrs J Borland reiterated that it is down to the individual councillor to declare an interest. Both Mrs J Borland and Mr D Yeomans stated that no Non-Pecuniary interest was declared at the meeting of the 13th September 2016 by any of the Parish Councillors present. Mrs Alcock stated that she had a mass of paperwork at home from solicitors showing that one Parish Councillor did have a conflict of interest that should have been declared and that this has cemented the belief of the residents of Lily Court that Parish Councillors are corrupt and they do not wish to associate with the Parish Council meetings or the village hall. Mrs J Borland stated that the response to the planning application was not made on the word of one councillor. Mr and Mrs Alcock said that they had asked at the last meeting who had made the comments and all the councillors there had denied making any comments, so they can only assume it was the councillor who is not present at this meeting that made the comments. The councillor who should have declared an interest in this planning application. Mr Alcock pointed out that she had stated that she had not discussed

this application with anyone. Mrs J Borland confirmed that all councillors are invited to make comments on all planning applications.

Mr D Yeomans then intervened in the proceedings and addressed Mr and Mrs Alcock stating that he could understand their frustration and that he was not trying to excuse anything but he felt there were two issues here. The first issue was the planning application, no comments were made about your planning application and it therefore did not put Mr and Mrs Alcock at a disadvantage. Mrs Alcock then stated that that was not the issue it was the fact that a Parish Councillor had sat there at the meeting of the 13th September and not declared an interest and Mr Alcock stated that it was not minute. The Chairman Mrs J Borland stated that the response to the planning application would have been the same. Mr and Mrs Alcock stated that nowhere is it minuted that the councillor did not declare an interest and nowhere are the comments that were submitted on the planning application noted in any of the minutes. Mr D Yeomans and Mrs J Borland both said that the procedures obviously needs to change and Mrs J Borland stated that is why she had asked the Parish Councillors to reiterate their comments on the planning application (16/04505/FUL) tonight, so that those comments could be in the minutes. Mrs J Borland then asked Mr D Yeomans what he felt the second point on Mr and Mrs Alcock's planning application was. The comment made that you were contravening the planning laws, to use the legal jargon "you were illegally using a piece of land". Mr Alcock felt that the comment should have been made on the first planning application for 9 Lily Court and it was not. Mrs J Borland clarified that the first planning application was for the building of an orangery within the boundaries of your property. The second planning application had the retrospective planning application for the use of a strip of land from agricultural to residential. Mrs J Borland had sort clarification from Mrs S Osborne in her capacity as District Councillor and from the planning case officer as to whether the comment made concerning the apparent garden in the field could be entered on the planning application. The case officer stated that it could. The planning procedure is about making comments and observations on a given application. Mrs Alcock said that when they purchased 9 Lily Court the strip of land that she was using as a garden, they were told was residential land but they have subsequently found out that as the field attached to the property has not been built on the land has reverted to agricultural use. Mrs J Borland asked if they had considered putting in for planning application on the field. Mr Alcock stated that it has an uplift clause on it and they have chosen not to seek planning permission as Mrs Alcock keeps her livestock on the land. Mrs J Borland said that she was personally aware of the use of the land as an apparent garden because of walking by there when she was doing speed watch in the Parish. Mrs Alcock said that for forty years the land had been residential but that because of this planning application they had found the land had reverted back to agricultural land. Mrs Alcock stated that for all intent and purpose she thought she was planting on residential land. With regard to the individual councillor there are numerous incidents that have taken place and she should have declared an interest in the planning application and no comments should have been made by her in her capacity as a Parish Councillor. Mr Alcock stated that as the research by the Parish Councillors has identified no comments should be made by a Parish Councillor if they have an interest in the planning application whether it be an advantage or a

disadvantage to the planning applicant. Mrs J Borland said that was why she wanted to make the individual Parish Councillors aware of their responsibilities.

Mrs Alcock asked who had taped the last meeting. Mr D Yeomans advised her that it was Mr Henryk Ploszek. Mrs Alcock thought that you had to declare at the start of the meeting that the meeting was being recorded. Mr H Ploszek said that you no longer needed to inform the meeting the rules changed a couple of years ago. Mr H Ploszek stated that you are not allowed to film young children or vulnerable adults. Mrs J Borland said that going forward that is why the Parish Council are going to purchase audio recording equipment so that meetings can be recorded. Mrs J Borland commented that the Parish Council could ask for an extension on a planning application but this only served to delay the application.

11. **Correspondence**

The Chairman Mrs J Borland asked the Clerk to explain how she deals with the correspondence. The Clerk explained that she goes through the e-mails, publications etc. that come through to her and then if she feels that the correspondence is something that should be forwarded on to the Councillors she will forward it to all the Parish Councillors. Mr D Yeomans stated he could not remember receiving the rural broadband correspondence. Mrs J Borland stated she had received it, the Clerk stated it was included in the Rural Network publication. Mrs S Osborne stated that there was a scheme whereby you could receive £500 to help with a broadband set up. Mr H Ploszek stated that he had registered for the scheme but that he was the only one in Woolminstone. Coombe Farm was willing to site a mast on their farm and then the signal would be transmitted down to Woolminstone residents. However Mr D Yeomans said that residents of Woolminstone could not afford the cost of the investment into that scheme, if Hewish residents had come in with Woolminstone then that would have brought the cost down. Hewish residents are near to the Broadband box and are therefore getting good speeds on their broadband but with Woolminstone being at the end of the line to the box, the speeds are slow. Mr D Yeomans had written to British Telecom regarding the roll out of Broadband and every community supposed to have faster broadband by the end of this Parliament. The reply he had received that Woolminstone was off the loop and they did not propose to do anything further to improve the broadband. Mr H Ploszek said that British Telecom had developed a system of broadband that can go along copper wiring underground but until British Telecom and Open Reach become two separate companies British Telecom are not willing to proceed with it.

12. **To confirm that the next meeting of the West Crewkerne Parish Council will be held on Tuesday 10TH January 2017 at Clapton & Wayford Village Hall at 7.00pm.**

The Chairman confirmed that the next West Crewkerne Parish Council meeting will be held on Tuesday 10TH January 2017 at Clapton & Wayford village hall at 7.00pm. The Chairman wished everybody who had attended a Happy Christmas and New Year and thanked everybody for coming.

Meeting closed at 8.45pm.

Chairman