

LUXBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Luxborough Parish Council held on 23 November at Luxborough Village Hall at 7.30 pm

Present: Cllrs D Powell (Chair), C Henson, R O'Hare A Sparling, F Nicholson, S Pugsley (Somerset District/county). Clerk: J Grenville

Public Question Time. No members of the public were present.

22/59 The Chairman opened the meeting at 730 pm.

22/60 Apologies for absence. Received from Cllrs Bolland and Waller.

22/61 Declarations of Interest. No interests were declared.

22/62 Minutes of the meeting of 12 October 2022 and actions to report. Cllrs resolved to accept the minutes as a true and accurate record of the meeting. (P: Cllr Powell, S: Cllr Henson)¹.

22/63 Chairman's Report. Cllr Powell reported noticeable improvement to traffic queues on the Minehead Road and hoped that lessons had been learned after the significant disruption from poor planning of the works. Regarding free Airband for village halls, Cllrs Pugsley and Nicholson agreed to research this and report back; it is possible that must be a minimum number of households using it in the village to qualify. Cllr Powell had contacted the lessee at Druid's Combe to request that hazardous overhanging foliage was cut back from the roadside; the Clerk had made the same request to Lady Gass's land agent. It was noted that the bridleway near Westcott Farm would remain closed for now with works progressing slowly as Exmoor National Park Authority (ENPA) are still attending to damage following storm Eunice.

22/64 Update from Somerset Councillors. Cllr Nicolson and Pugsley noted budget pressures for ENPA arising from the pending unitary reforms. The park owns a lot of land giving rise to considerable maintenance costs. The harmonisation of authorities is causing complexities regarding the setting of Council tax and rural rate relief, particularly in the poorer areas which score high on deprivation markers. It was likely that council tax on second homes will be doubled and it is hoped that this revenue will be ring-fenced to spend on social housing for areas with the greatest need. Cllr Pugsley reported the positive news that additional trained Planners and administrative support have been recruited to ENPA.

22/65 Planning. There were no new applications for consideration. The Clerk is to contact Planning Enforcement for an update on the three open cases within the Parish.

22/66 Highways 1) LCN Pilot. It was reported that there had been a high number of responses to the consultation. There was no further news about where the LCN areas will be delineated. Cllrs noted that the works requested to remediate the recurrent flooding on the road near Hill Cottage were not listed on the LCN schedule for devolved funding requests. Cllr Sparling will follow up on this at the Exmoor Panel meeting on 24 November. 2) No other Highway matters were raised.

22/67 Finance 1) Q2 Financial Statement. Cllrs resolved to accept the financial statement prepared for the year to date after noting that the budget was on track. Additional costs for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee have been offset to an extent by Jubilee donations and VAT of around £110 would be recouped in 2023-24. Cllrs noted a balance of £4,301.42 at the bank at the 31/9/2022 with a year- end projection balance of around £1,624. (P: Cllr O'Hare, S: Cllr Henson) 2) Clerk backdated pay rise. Cllrs resolved to agree an uplift of 99p p/hour to the Clerk's hourly

¹ P- Proposed. S - Seconded

rate in accordance with the agreement reached by the National Joint Councils. This will be backdated to 1/4/2022 and will be paid in the Q3 salary. The Clerk noted that from 1/4/2023 Clerks will be entitled to 23 days paid leave per year, pro-rated. (P: Cllr Powell, S: Cllr Sparling) 3) November Schedule of Payments. The Clerk reported two payments made to HMRC and the Clerk since the previous meeting relating to underpaid income tax and laptop costs respectively. Cllrs resolved to agree the Schedule of Payments (P: Cllr Powell, S: Cllr Sparling) 4. First draft of 2023/24 budget. Cllrs reviewed the budget recording their intention to keep costs to a minimum in the current financial environment to maintain the precept at the same amount next year. The draft budget was agreed by resolution. (P: Cllr O'Hare, S: Cllr Henson). Parishioners will be now be consulted with the budget to be finalised at the next PC meeting and submitted by an absolute deadline of 20/1/2023.

22/68 Correspondence and Meetings 1) The Clerk noted that Cllr Powell had agreed to continue as the emergency contact for the Parish for the Somerset Local Authorities Civil Contingencies Partnership. As a result of the LCN, the PC now has free access to Parish Online. 2) Councillors advised that the Boundary Commission has published proposals for new constituency boundaries with some considerable changes.

Date of next meeting: 11 January 2023 at 7.30pm.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 8.25pm.

Schedule of Payments: HMRC £18.40, Clerk £677, Function 28 £12.
