

Henstridge Parish Council

Clerk: Rachel Walker, Westcombe House, 48, Bowden Road, Templecombe,
Somerset, BA8 0LF, Tel/Fax: 01963 370388
e-mail HenstridgePC@aol.com

Approved minutes of the Parish Council meeting held at the Henstridge Village
Hall Lounge on Monday 12th February 07.

Present:

Councillors: Mrs Barton (Chair), Mr Crocker, Mr Davis, Mr Heath, Mr Hill, Mrs
Moody, Mr Vincent

Clerk: Mrs Walker

There were 2 members of the public in attendance. PCSO Dave Travers attended the open forum session to introduce himself to the Council and inform them that he is soon to be carrying out speedwatch sessions around the village with the use of a radar gun. The Council also reminded him of concerns regarding the jumping of lights at Ash End.

1. Apologies and to approve the reason for any apology as thought fit.

Apologies had been received from Mr Stobart due to a prior engagement, Mrs Courtenay due to ill health, and Mr Symcox due to family commitments. An e-mail with apologies was also received from Mr Brighten but not reported as not picked up prior to the meeting.

2. Declarations of Interest.

Mr Crocker declared personal interests in items 6b, 6g(i) and (ii) and also in the letter from Charlotte Jones as he works for the Royal Mail.

Mrs Moody and Mr Vincent declared personal interests in item 6a.

3. To approve as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 08.01.07.

RESOLVED: It was proposed and agreed to approve the minutes of the previous meeting.

4. Matters deferred from previous meetings:

- a. **To receive a report back from the working group set up to review the Clerks terms and conditions of employment, including hours and remuneration, with regard to the impact of the “Guide to Good Employment Practice in Local Councils” (SALC and SLCC) in relation to this, to receive and agree any proposed amendments to the conditions and a proposed salary scale and to agree any further action arising.**

It was reported that the group had met but that they would make their recommendations to the March meeting after the Chairman had had a chance to discuss this with the Clerks.

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b. Correspondence item - 15.12.06, Tim Cook – SSDC

**To agree whether the Council wish a representative to attend the Parish
Plan workshop – 15th February**

Mrs Barton agreed to attend on behalf of the Council if possible.

**c. To receive a report back and decide any action arising from the SALC
Area meeting held on 11.12.06.**

Mrs Barton

Mrs Barton confirmed that Councillors had seen the minutes and explained that the meeting was dominated by discussion of the white paper and its effects. There were no comments from the Council.

5. Correspondence

11.01.07	SCC	Letter from Chief executive re Somerset's Business Case to Create a Unitary Council for Somerset
<p>The letter was discussed and concerns were raised as to the amount of work which is likely to be delegated to Parish Councils, how local issues will be addressed with greater centralisation. It was pointed out that an opportunity for consultation is likely to arise when the Government have decided which model they wish to approve.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> It was proposed and agreed that the papers for this item and the letters from Phil Dolan and Tim Carroll should be re-circulated and an item be included on the next agenda for the Council to consider and formulate a response to the information received in relation to the likely re-organisation.</p>		
11.01.07	SALC	Election Promotional pack – for the Council to instruct the Clerk as to what action they wish to be taken in relation to the forthcoming elections
<p>It was agreed that posters should be put up on the noticeboards and in other local facilities if possible advertising the elections and who to contact for further information.</p>		
17.01.07	Mark Stone – SCC	Area Working Panels update and invitation to initial meeting to be held on 21.02.07, Ilchester Town Hall, 6-8.30pm
<p>There was a feeling that this was of little value with the likelihood of an imminent re-organisation but Mr Hill said that he would try and attend on behalf of the Council.</p>		

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25.01.07	Phil Dolan - SSDC	Local Government Re-organisation and South Somerset – Minutes of Area Meetings – to provide an opportunity for the Council to discuss and agree any appropriate actions arising.
It was agreed to recirculate the documents and discuss this further at the March meeting.		
25.01.07	Tim Carroll – SSDC	Results of consultation re Local Government Re-organisation and update on SSDC’s intentions– to provide an opportunity for the Council to discuss and agree any appropriate actions arising.
It was agreed to recirculate the documents and discuss this further at the March meeting.		
02.02.07	Charlotte Jones – SSDC	To agree any response which the Council wish to make to the survey on Local shop and Post Office Provision and to agree whether a representative is to attend the meeting on Thursday 22 nd February 2007, Long Sutton Golf Club, 7pm.
Mr Crocker left the meeting.		
There was a feeling that it is important for the Parish Council to support the Post Office. The survey was filled in accordingly but no-one was available to attend the meeting although it was agreed that if anyone was able to attend that they should do so on the Council’s behalf.		

Other correspondence not requiring discussion by the council will not be reported as it has been circulated to councillors. (As advised by SALC – 18.06.03).

6. Council Matters

- a. To discuss the matter of the field at Common Lane, Yenston in relation to Mr Hunt’s enquiry regarding the possibility of selling the land and instruct the Clerk as to how to instruct the Land Agent to respond and proceed.**

The Clerk explained that Mr Hunt’s Land Agent had enquired whether the Council would be prepared to sell the land rather than proceeding with the tenancy agreement. The Council’s land agent had visited the field and reported that

1. The field is accessed via Common Lane - about 1 mile of un-metalled track in various states of repair.
2. The field is very wet. Clearly it’s a wet time of year but on the eastern side of the field a large area has been taken over by reeds which suggests that it is continually water-logged.
3. The boundary hedges and fences are in good condition.

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He had expressed the opinion as to the worth of the land with vacant possession, but given that it is effectively subject to a life tenancy (perhaps for another 30 years?) had explained that this would be discounted significantly if sold on the open market, and had suggested a maximum figure that the Council could expect Richard Hunt to pay.

The possible options for the land were discussed at some length as was the issue of whether the money that the Council would be likely to make was needed for any specific purpose at the current time. It was felt that if sale of the land was to be agreed upon, then this would have to be done through the open market to ensure gaining the best price.

RESOLVED: It was proposed and agreed that the Council were not interested in selling the land at the current time and that they would like to go ahead with setting up an agreement with Mr Hunt.

Mr Vincent and Mrs Moody declined from voting having made a declaration of personal interest.

b. To report responses received from the office of David Heath and the Royal Mail regarding a possible change of postal address.

The Clerk explained that the Royal Mail would not be prepared to remove Templecombe from the postal address as this remains the postal town for Henstridge, but that they would be prepared to consider ensuring the inclusion of Henstridge in all addresses.

The Clerk explained to the Council, the next stages in the procedure.

RESOLVED: It was proposed and agreed that the Clerk should write to the relevant bodies to move the issue forward, and that thanks be sent to Mr Heath for helping to elicit a response from the Royal Mail. The Clerk was also thanked for continuing to pursue the matter.

c. To agree the appointed hedge cutting contractor for trimming the recreation ground hedge adjacent to the A30 and A357 up to the car park gate for the years 2007-9 inclusive.

The quotes from the three contractors were provided and it was explained that the idea of appointing a contractor for a three year period was to try and overcome the issue of needing to repeatedly seek quotes from people who were not likely to get the job. The issue was discussed at some length as the Council agreed in principal that appointing a contractor for a period was a positive step and that Ben Stretton had repeatedly provided the most competitive quotes. However, there was some debate as to how a contract could be drawn up which would allow the Council to control any possible increases in prices while at the same time not tying Mr Stretton in to a price which may become unworkable due to outside influences such as fuel prices and so on.

RESOLVED: It was proposed and agreed to accept Mr Stretton's price for this year and invite him to submit a quote for undertaking the contract in the

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subsequent three years to be brought back to the Council for approval.

Mr Crocker left the meeting.

d. To review the contents of the Councillor's Information Packs and agree any amendments necessary.

The Chairman explained that the item had arisen for two reasons, firstly because the Clerk had asked for the return of the packs from Councillors who had left the Council but had received none of these back, meaning a large cost and time implication, and secondly because, with the imminent local Council elections, it seemed an appropriate time to review the contents of the pack prior to possibly gaining new Councillors.

Mr Davis left the meeting.

The list of documents included in the pack was read out and the possibility of having one pack, which could be loaned out to new Councillors to look through and return was discussed.

Mr Davis returned to the meeting.

It was felt that the document on Quality Councils was not relevant and that possibly planning information was only relevant to members of the planning committee, although there was some debate regarding this. There was a feeling that by providing new Councillors with all of the information that the Council are protecting themselves and the individual. It was also felt that it may be helpful to provide copies of recent minutes to allow new Councillors to inform themselves of recent events and outstanding business.

RESOLVED: It was proposed and agreed that the packs should include the last three months minutes, that the guide to becoming a quality Council should be removed and that the pack should continue to be provided to all new Councillors but in a ring binder format.

e. To report back on the responses received regarding the Furge Lane play area and agree any action arising.

The Clerk reported that only three responses had been received in response to the article in the newsletter with regard to the Furge Lane Play area. Of these, only one was written, the other two were by telephone and all three were negative in their feelings towards the play area. There was a feeling that the equipment should be removed to avoid having to maintain it to current Health and Safety standards, but that the area should be kept as an open space area. It was pointed out that the Design Statement had stated that every housing development should make provision for play but that none of them had done so.

RESOLVED: It was agreed that a proposal be put forward for the next agenda that based on the responses received, that Pip's playground be retained as an open space with the equipment other than the goalposts being removed.

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f. To agree the date of the Annual Parish meeting for 2007

The Clerk clarified that the Annual Parish Meeting must be held between 1st March and 1st June inclusive. There was some debate as to the possible effect of the elections and who would take the meeting. The Clerk explained that as the Chairman's report is for the previous year, it would make sense for the current Chair to provide the report even if he was no longer Chair, or even Councillor at the time. It was felt that if the meeting was held after the elections then it would be a good opportunity for new Councillors to introduce themselves.

RESOLVED: It was proposed and agreed that the meeting should be held on 21st May with the Planning meeting to be held at the earlier time of 6.45pm and the Parish meeting to be held at 7.30 for 8.00.

g. Playground:

i. Inspection reports

The Clerk explained that Mr Edwards no longer felt happy to carry out the inspections and that she was therefore doing this at the current time although felt that this should be reviewed when committees and representatives were reviewed.

ii. To instruct the Clerk as to how the Council wish her to proceed with addressing the matter of the Pedestrian gate at Ash Walk.

The Clerk explained that she had been advised by the contractor that the manufacturer had been out to look at the gate and that they had advised that the gate had been vandalised and as well as the damage to the gate, that the post had also been bent and that this was a major factor in the gate not closing. The manufacturer had apparently offered to replace the gate as a gesture of goodwill but would want the Council to pay for the replacement of the post for a cost of £80 +VAT, although the Clerk had still not received this in writing. However, the Clerk informed the Council that she had met the District Council's playground inspector, Steve Boarder, on site and discussed the problem with him and he felt the gate to be of a substandard quality and that we would continue to experience problems with this in the future. He had therefore advised that the gate be replaced with a Wicksteed gate rather than spending more money on repairing the existing gate.

RESOLVED: It was proposed and agreed that a new gate be installed and that compensation be sought from the contractor via a letter from the Clerk.

iii. To instruct the Clerk as to action that the Council wish to be taken in relation to the seat at Ash Walk.

The Clerk explained that the old seat in the play area had a bent top bar and that while Mr Edwards had tried to rectify this, straightening of one bar tended to mean damaging another. There was a belief that it had been intended to remove this seat when the new seat was installed.

RESOLVED: It was proposed and agreed that Mr Edwards be requested to remove and dispose of the seat.

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h. To agree any items that the Council wish to be covered as part of the next newsletter.

The following issues were put forward as relevant for inclusion in the newsletter:

- Advertising the importance and value of voting in the local elections;
- Date of the Annual Parish Meeting and an explanation of what it is;
- Information on the possible postal address change;
- A report on the responses regarding Pip's playground and that the Council is now considering it's future in the light of these;
- The fact that the PCSO had attended the Council meeting and that speedwatch operations would be occurring within the Parish;
- The fact that the Council are awaiting further information on the new government re-organisation.

i. Report from VHMC rep

Mrs Moody reported that at the most recent meeting the Committee had discussed putting in for a grant for conversion of the gents' toilet into a disabled toilet at a cost of approximately £6000.00 which they are hoping to achieve partially through match funding from District. She explained that they will be approaching the Parish Council for funds towards this.

7. Finance

a. To approve the following accounts paid under SO 51 b

Zurich Municipal

Insurance	Additional items & amendments to schedule	£155.45
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b. To approve the following accounts for payment:

T Watson	Salary January	£272.58
R Walker	Salary January	£212.74
T Pulling	Salary Sept - Nov 06	£24.96
Inland Revenue	NI & Tax Contributions	£66.88
VHMC	Hall rental 10/07-11/12/06	£125.13
AOL	DD Internet January	£12.99
T Watson	Telephone 28/12-30/01/07	£10.42
T Watson	Postage	£6.51
Somerset Playing fields association	Subscription	£10.00
D A Young Mower repairs	Mower & Strimmer service	£96.67
Car Phone warehouse	DDTelephone line rental & calls	£19.12
Henstridge CC	Grasscutting	£635.00

RESOLVED: The above accounts were approved for payment.

c. Income –

S Folkes Memorials	Additional ins. Re. Phyllis Andrews	£35.59
Appleby & Childs	Memorial ref. Ferrari	£82.61
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L Eastment	Allotment rent plot 14 comm 01/04/07	£10.00
Peter Jackson Funeral Services	Plot purchase re Paulley	£173.65
Wessex Memorials	Memorial fee re Rowland	£82.61
HM Revenue & Customs	Duty/VAT repayment	£138.93

8. Date of Next meeting – In line with the standing orders, the next Parish Council meeting will be held on **Monday 12th March 2007**. All items for inclusion on the agenda and all items to be listed under issues arising from previous meetings must be received by the Acting Clerk by 9.00am on **Thursday 1st March 2007**.

The meeting closed at 8.47pm.