

CLEE ST. MARGARET PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the PARISH COUNCIL MEETING held on MONDAY 12th APRIL 2021 at 7.30 pm in the VILLAGE HALL

Present: Councillors Mike Hardingham, David Palmer, Shalynn Pearson, Bob Day, Tamsin Osler, Paul Blewitt, John Heighway

Clerk: Joan Palmer

A minute's silence in respect and appreciation for the life of Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, was held before the meeting began.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There was none

2. OFFICIAL APPROVAL of the ACTIVITIES of the PARISH COUNCIL between NOVEMBER 2020 and APRIL 2021 and MATTERS ARISING.

The activities were approved unanimously and there were no matters arising that were not already on the agenda.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

Having reviewed the agenda Councillors were of the opinion that there were no anticipated conflicts of interest.

4. CORRESPONDENCE and REPORTS

- i) Climate Change Declaration - to be discussed at the next meeting**
- ii) Possible Boundary Changes - to be discussed at the next meeting**
- iii) Police Charter - concerns to be discussed at the next council meeting**

5. PATCH COTTAGE and the application to claim ownership of land in front of the house

The owner of Patch Cottage, Steve Allen, was trying to sort out the registration of what he considered was his land. It had emerged from the land registry that the council owned a small section of his front garden. This was surrounded by a fence and the owner was claiming adverse possession because the fence had been there in excess of the required period of ten years. The fence, however, was of a light nature, and probably not adequate to justify adverse possession. The land did not matter to the council and it seemed pointless to enter into a legal battle over this issue. A further complication was that this land may be part of the Common but the map of the Common had poorly drawn boundaries and the issue was not totally clear. Who owned the land did not affect whether it was Common or not and to alter the Common boundary incurred a fee of approximately £5,000. Because the land did not really matter to the council, it was proposed that an offer be made to sell the land to Mr. Allen for a nominal fee of £100 plus him paying any legal fees incurred. The vote was carried by a majority and the clerk would inform Mr. Allen accordingly.

N.B. This proposal would not solve the Common boundary issue, it would just become Mr. Allen's problem.

6. FINANCE

i) The current financial position

There was £1,500.63 in the current account.

There was £24,143.96 in the savings account

ii) Approval of the accounts

These had been audited by the internal auditor, Mr. J. Kail, who had signed them off as an accurate account of the council's income and expenditure during the financial year 2020 - 21.

ACTION: Clerk to write a letter of thanks to Mr. Kail for his sterling work as internal auditor.

iii) Approval of the budget for 2021 - 2022

A preliminary budget for the current financial year had been tabled but not yet approved as it was understood that the council may need to spend money on the notice board in the centre of the village. It was agreed that councillor Palmer would look into this issue and revise the budget if necessary, which would then be given for approval to the new council.

ACTION: Councillor Palmer to investigate the condition of the notice board in the centre of the village.

7. THE COMMON

i) Sheep scrapes - to be put on the agenda for the next meeting.

ii) Removal of gorse

Thanks were expressed for the work done by Mr. G. Cholmeley and Mr. R. Woods, aided by Mr. A. Hunt, to remove two thirds of the gorse bushes from the ramparts of Nordy Bank in accordance with the wishes of Historic England. They had requested advice as to what to do with the cut gorse and had complied with the council's wishes to burn it in a controlled manner, the reason being that to leave the gorse to rot in a hollow near Nordy Bank risked an uncontrolled fire, seeing that there was evidence of visitors to the Common starting fires (assumed to be for barbeque purposes). This had been done but objections had been raised by some parishioners that this procedure was dangerous to wildlife and the wider community and produced unnecessary greenhouse gas emissions. The council thought it might be wiser, when the gorse removal was continued during the winter of 2021, to consider other methods of disposal.

iii) Spraying of gorse during 2020

This activity had not been started until the very end of the season when it would have the greatest impact and, as the weather had deteriorated badly the following day, the spraying had not had the planned effect and needed to be repeated. Councillor Palmer stressed that no records had been kept of the amount of spray used and where spraying had been done. This needed to be put right.

iv) The track to The Sands and Thornwell

Mr. Maddox, the owner of Thornwell, had applied to the Land Registry for permission to stone the track that led from the Yeld/Bryn Tirion track up to The Sands and further on towards Thornwell. The council unanimously supported the application.

The Open Spaces Society had asked whether the track would be used by multiple properties and the Council expressed the hope that, if the application were to be successful, the residents of Hill Houses would use it rather than the (unstoned) bridleway that runs from Nordy Bank to the Thornwell Gate, and which suffers frequent damage from their usage.

v) Tree planting on The Common

Some 200 trees had been planted both on the Common and nearby by groups of enthusiastic environmentalists. Thanks were expressed for their efforts.

vi) Access to Yew Tree Cottage

The owners of Yew Tree Cottage had asked for a gate to be installed next to where they park their cars so that they could have occasional vehicular access to the rear of their property. This would involve driving over a short (30m) section of Common, then up the track running between their house and fields belonging to Burnt House. This track, due to what appeared to be a mapping error, was not registered as part of the Common and hence was also not registered as being owned by the Parish Council. (Currently it is not registered as being owned by anyone.) The adjacent land owners had no objection in principle to this land being treated as Common but, once again, it had become a complicated issue to add land to the Common. There was an alternative route to the boundary of Yew Tree Cottage via the track from the Yeld Gate and cutting across the Common to the property. After much discussion it was felt that the resolution of this issue was not absolutely vital now and that a site visit be made to look at the issue in detail.

8. THE VILLAGE

i) Renewal of the Notice Board in the centre of the village

This issue was to be discussed at a future meeting after councillors had investigated the present board's condition.

ii) Road Repairs

The council was grateful that some road repairs had been completed along Fishmore Road but there were still repairs to be done along the Cockshutford Road, the Heath Road, the road towards Abdon and Scirmidge Lane. The clerk would continue to write to ask that these repairs be done soon.

ACTION: Clerk to write to Shropshire Council to ask that these repairs be done soon.

9. PLANNING

i) Scirmidge Cottage application to erect a garden office

Councillors agreed to support the construction of a garden office. There had been no adverse comments about the application.

ACTION: Clerk to send the council's support for the development.

ii) Quarry Cottage extension application

After much discussion six councillors agreed that the application to extend Quarry Cottage be approved with one abstention.

ACTION: Clerk to send the council's support for the extension to county.

iii) Church Farm application to convert barns into two houses for the open market.

Councillors heard that the barns at Church House had been renovated extensively and to a high standard about fifteen years ago. An application had now been made to convert two of the barns into open market houses. The application also included modification to church house garage and this was regarded as non-controversial.

After much discussion a vote was taken on whether or not the council should support the application and it was decided by 4 to 3 not to do so. However, it was agreed that the clerk should send comments covering the main issues which the council had considered to be unsatisfactory. These included the problem of the external staircase overlooking the property across the road, and the position of the access gates which were felt to be too near the corner for additional vehicle use. There were some concerns about increasing traffic numbers in the village which was happening anyway with increased use of online shopping

ACTION: Clerk to send the council's rejection and comments to county.

10. REVIEW of DECLARATIONS of INTEREST

Councillors reviewed proceedings and agreed that, to the best of their knowledge, the Council had acted in accordance with procedure.

11. POSSIBLE ITEMS FOR INCLUSION IN NEXT MEETING'S AGENDA

- i) Climate change declaration
- ii) Possible boundary changes
- iii) Police charter
- iv) Access to Yew Tree Cottage
- v) Batteries for the defibrillators
- vi) Sheep Scrapes

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 17th May 2021 at 7.30 pm in the VILLAGE HALL for the ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

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