**NORTON FITZWARREN PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the meeting of the parish council held on Wednesday, 6th September, 2023 in the village hall.**

**Present:** Mike Palmer, Chairman, Paula Knott, Vice Chairman, Adrian Jones, Nita Wyatt,

Graham Withnell, Dee Childs, Tom Catherall, Edwin Norton. Clerk: Janet Gobey

Also present: Somerset Cllr. Mike Rigby, Cllr. Ed Firmin, Taunton Town Council, Jolyon Webber, Norton

Trailblazers, Don Wyatt, Chairman, Village Hall and 6 members of the public.

The meeting started at 7.30pm with 15 minutes open discussion for the public, matters raised were:

1. Jo Webber came to talk to Councillors about the Norton Trailblazers, a group for young

people over 10. The group encourages youngsters to enjoy the outdoors by hiking, rock

climbing, camping etc. He requested the Parish Council’s assistance to purchase helmets and harnesses for the rock climbing. Councillors were very keen to help and requested

he submit a grant application form for our next meeting.

1. Don and Nita Wyatt are standing down as managers of the village hall in June 2023 they have been running the village hall for 10 years. They are advertising for a manager(s) to take over.

The intention is that they will take over running the Coffee Shop.

1. West Somerset Steam Rally – unfortunately the weather on the Saturday was very wet and

attendance was down, but Sunday the weather improved and attendance was good. Profits

were slightly down and costs have increased. The free bus service was well used, it is hoped

that vintage buses can be used next year.

The stone operation at the Norton site will cease when the temporary planning permission

expires and WSR are looking to build a carriage shed on the site.

**1.09.23 Apologies** – Phil Bareham is away.

**2.09.23 Declarations of interest –** none declared.

**3.09.23 To approve the minutes of the meeting held on the 5th July, 2023**

The minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman.

**4.09.23 Police matters**

There have been increased reports of anti-social driving, including along Great

Western Way, the police have asked the public for video evidence to be sent to them

and as a result several drivers have been identified and spoke to.

 Cllr. Dee Childs is attending the meeting with PCC Mark Shelford at Trull village hall.

**5.09.23 Actions from last meeting**

Covered by the agenda.

**6.09.23 New playing field**

 **(a) Update from on-site meeting with Somerset Council**

 Various faults were noted, there are scratches to the paintwork of the fencing

around the MUGA and tennis court, damage to the tarmac in several places and

weeds have begun growing on the path to the MUGA and tennis court.

 A dog/litter bin should be installed and a defibrillator at the pavilion.

 Unused materials need to be removed, the gate repaired, the remaining brick

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 pillar to be re-built and the notice board reinstated.

 **(b) Amendments to draft Lease**

 The parish council have been informed that the original S106 Agreement prohibits

 leasing the new playing field to the parish council and this needs to be addressed by

Somerset Council before the field can be transferred.

**7.09.23 To consider purchase of a defibrillator for the new playing field.**

 Council agreed to purchase a defibrillator similar to the one in the village.

Cllr. Withnell will contact the installers them and ask them for a quote.

**8.09.23 Revised quote for repairs to the matting at Vilberie play area.**

The revised quote was still very expensive, it was agreed to ask if Council’s

contractors could carry out repairs.

**9.09.23 Weed spraying in the village**

The Clerk will make enquiries with other parish councils to see if they can

recommend a contractor. Cllr. Mike Rigby has asked for weed killing to be reinstated

into the budget of Somerset Council.

**10.09.23 Communications with the public.**

Cllr. Dee Childs has volunteered to manage an information facebook page for the

 parish council. Agreed to go ahead on a trial basis.

**11.09.23 Reports**

 **(a) Somerset Council**

Cllr. Rigby reported that Somerset Council receive no funding now from central

Government, 63% of their budget is required for vulnerable adults and children.

All other services must be covered by the 37% remaining funds. Highways is

underfunded. Additional funding will need to be obtained as Council tax can only rise

by 3%. Several Councils in other parts of the country have already become bankrupt.

 Seven Council buses at the park and ride were set alight over the weekend.

 The Government is to amend the EU law regarding phosphate removal to allow

 house building to continue. Wessex Water are building facilities which will remove

 large amounts of phosphates from the water in two year’s time.

 The no. 25 and 28 bus subsidy will continue until March 2024, more passengers

 are needed for it to continue after that. The £1 fare will continue until the three

 years are up. The bus station will become a mobility station next year.

 **b) LCN Meeting** – there will be a meeting at the end of September.

 **c) Clerk -** The bench at the playing field has been repaired.

 **d) Footpaths**

The fence along side the first part of footpath T18/12 has been removed by the

 Farmer, he has given assurances that crops will not be grown over the footpath.

**e) Health & Safety**  - nothing to report.

**f) Environment** – no report.

**12.09.23 Planning:**

 **a) Relaxation of phosphate requirements and implications to the Ford Farm**

 **development.**

Cllr. Graham Withnell is making enquiries with Planning Dept and Cllr. Andy Sully.

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1. **Applications received since issue of agenda** – none received
2. **Approvals and refusals –**  no report.

**13.09.23 Finance:**

 **a) Closure of audit**

The Clerk reported that the external audit had now been closed without

 any issues of concern being raised.

 **b) To consider increase of daily payment limit.**

The daily payment limit is currently set at £2,500, due to rising costs the

 Clerk requested that it is raised to £5,000. Proposed Nita Wyatt,

 Seconded Paula Knott to increase the limit to £5,000, carried.

 **c)**  **Income received (for notification only):**

 VAT refund for 2022/23 £1311.62

 Precept for 2023/24 £38,000.00

 Norton Allotments for tree cutting £50.00

 Interest £318.30

1. **Invoices and payments for approval and any subsequently received:**

 R. Chiplin, grass maintenance June/July/August £764.20

 SC Dog bins quarter April to June £457.39

 Midgard Forester footpaths June/July/August £678.50

 Fox Cubs room rental June & July £204.00

 Grant for fete £2248.00

 Grant for Church Benefice Office £756.00

 Website quarter July to October £54.00

 ROSPA play inspections £240.00

 Wicksteed Ltd. Parts for play equipment £11.21

 PKF Littlejohn – external audit £252.00

 Norton News grant for 2023/24 £3,500.00

 Proposed Mike Palmer to approve the above payments, seconded

 Adrian Jones, carried.

**14.09.23 Correspondence for discussion**

Circulated electronically prior to the meeting – no discussion.

**15.09.23 Date, time and place of next meeting.**

Wednesday, 4th October, 2023 at 7.30pm in the village hall.

 The meeting closed at 9.20pm.

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