**NORTON FITZWARREN PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on 6th December, 2023 in the village hall.**

**Present:**

Mike Palmer, Chairman, Paula Knott, Vice Chair, Graham Withnell, Dee Childs, Phil Bareham,

Adrian Jones, Tom Catherall. Clerk: Janet Gobey.

Also present: Taunton Town Cllr. Ed Firmin and 7 members of the public.

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

1. The closure of Boots pharmacy in February 2024. The Chairman, Mike Palmer and a member of the public have written to MP Rebecca Pow. She has been in contact with Boots, they are not willing to reconsider their decision and the pharmacy will not be sold to another provider. The NHS could assess whether local provision is adequate and could issue a new contract to another provider. Rebecca Pow will continue to monitor the situation.

The Parish Council has written to Healthcare South West to object to the closure.

1. Flooding on the B3227 at Ford Farm. Crest Nicholson now own the land for the Ford Farm development and have been contacted regarding the need for maintenance on the site.

The Parish Council will write to Crest Nicholson regarding maintenance.

**1.12.23 Apologies**

 Cllrs. Nita Wyatt and Edwin Norton are unwell.

**2.12.23 Declarations of interest**

Graham Withnell declared a personal interest in item 9.

**3.12.23 To approve the minutes of the meeting held on the 1st November, 2023**

The minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman.

**4.12.23 Police matters**

Sheds at the allotment site were broken into, PCSO Marshall Bernhardt will carry out

patrols on the site. An update will be requested for the January meeting.

**5.12.23 Actions from the last meeting.**

Dee attended the meeting regarding buses on the 5th December. An increase in

passenger numbers is needed on the 25 and 28 routes to prevent them being

discontinued. The grant from Somerset Council will expire in February 2024.

Agreed to support in principle the cycle/footpath proposed to run along the line

of the old canal from Wellington to Taunton.

**6.12.23 To consider approval of the ‘Licence to use’ the new playing field from**

**Somerset Council.**

Council agreed not to sign considering the current financial situation with Somerset

Council. Agreed to request a meeting to establish options. Enquiries to be made

regarding progress of the Lease of the land to the Parish Council.

**7.12.23 To consider request from Somerset Council for Parish Councils to take**

 **responsibility for the maintenance of assets currently maintained by Somerset**

 **Council e.g., play areas, parks and other open spaces, sports pitches, street**

**cleaning and tree work.**

-1-

Property currently owned by Somerset Council in the parish, is the Hill Fort and flood

alleviation land and wall in Station Road. The large play area in Great Western Way

has also been adopted by Somerset Council. Discussed and agreed the parish council

would take-over maintenance of the large play area in Great Western Way if

requested. Proposed Adrian Jones, seconded Paula Knott.

**8.12.23 To consider precept requirement for 2024/25.**

Following discussion, it was agreed that the precept would have to be

 increased for 2024/25. The parish council has been advised by Somerset

 Council that due to their difficult financial circumstances, parish councils will be

requested to take on more of the costs of running the parish.

A sum for maintenance of the new field and play area on the Langford Mead estate

has been included. It was therefore proposed by Cllr. Mike Palmer that the precept is set at £41,637.00 for the 2024/25 financial year as laid out in the Clerk’s draft, seconded Paula Knott, carried. This will increase the precept for 2024/25 by £3,637.00. To be submitted to Somerset Council in January 2024.

**9.12.23 To consider renting a storage container for the recreation ground.**

 Additional storage is needed for equipment for emergency use, the container

 would be situated in the recreation ground. A container size 20ft x 8ft is

 £547.50 per year + VAT. Proposed to rent the container Phil Bareham,

 seconded Dee Childs, carried. A suitable base will be needed.

**10.12.23 To approve costs relating to the installation of a defibrillator at the football and**

 **sports ground, Stembridge Way.**

A defibrillator has been offered by London Hearts for £750.00, which is half price.

A quote for the installation was agreed at £245.00. It was also agreed to have a

sensor light installed above the machine at an additional cost. The defibrillator

must be installed within 4 weeks of delivery. Proposed Paula Knott to agree costs,

seconded Adrian Jones, carried. Cllr. Paula Knott volunteered to carry out the

maintenance for the defibrillator.

**11.12.23 Reports:**

 **a) Somerset Council** – report circulated electronically before the meeting, no

 discussion.

 **b) Taunton Town Council**

Cllr. Ed Firmin reported. A ‘pop-up’ shop is being opened in the in the Pig Market

 for small businesses to hire for short periods. A sum is being set aside to improve

 the town, including Goodlands Gardens and £50,000 for youth services. The ‘Knife

Angel’ a statue which is made from knives is coming to Taunton to encourage the

surrender of knifes in the town. Taunton Town Council is also looking to take over some responsibilities from Somerset Council. The town council’s finances are healthy and they are looking to employ more staff.

**c) Speedwatch**

The speedwatch volunteers have been out and caught 27 speeding motorists in 30

minutes, they had a PCSO with them who will contact the motorists concerned.

**d) Footpaths -**  no report.

**e) Flood Warden**

-2-

A presentation for an emergency plan will be held in the January meeting by the

Flood Warden. Proposed to buy 4 ‘Flood’ warning signs which the Flood Warden will hold. Proposed Tom Catherall, seconded Mike Palmer. When the container is in place in the recreation ground ‘flood packs’ and any other necessary equipment will be purchased.

**f) Clerk**

The Parish Council’s public footpath contractor Adam Burnett will take on the grass and hedge cutting in the village as the existing contractor R. Chiplin cannot be contacted. The cost is only £2 more per hour, agreed unanimously.

 **g) Health and safety and environmental –** no report.**ealth**

**12.12.23 Planning:**

 **a)** 25/23/0017 Commercial vehicle storage yard – application withdrawn.

1. **Applications received since issue of agenda**  - none received.
2. **Approvals and refusals –** none listed.

**13.12.23 Finance:**

 **Invoices for approval and any subsequently received:**

Complete Weed Control (Zizania Ltd.) for one treatment as quoted £600.00.

 Grant awarded for Norton School food hub £600.00.

 Somerset Playing Fields Association – annual subscription £15

 London Hearts for defibrillator and cabinet £750.00 and installation £245.00.

 Somerset Council for new dog/litter bin in Station Road £600.00.

 Proposed to approve payments Paula Knott, seconded Phil Bareham, carried.

**14.12.23 Correspondence for discussion**

Circulated electronically before the meeting – no discussion.

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

3rd January, 2024 at 7.30pm in the village hall.

 The meeting closed at 9.30pm.

-3-