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Minutes of a Meeting of South Petherton Parish Council held at William Blake Memorial Hall, South Petherton on Monday 03 March 2025 at 7.30pm where the following business was conducted.

PRESENT: Councillors N Wakely (Chairman), C Bragg, R Brown, S Carp, D Hodson-Wright, R Killen, T New, S Spiers, B Swainson along with the Clerk.
15 members of the public were in attendance.

Public Session (prior to the start of the meeting)

Several members of the public spoke regarding the library, the Blake Hall, TA13, community flood group and blocked drains. Dan from Reach gave a verbal report on their work within South Petherton.

Report from Somerset Councillor

Councillor Jo Roundell-Greene noted that Somerset Highways were walking the network in and around SP to assess the many blocked drains and gullies. It was noted that most had been attended to in 2023 and this was not acceptable. The next Full Council meeting of Somerset Council would be dealing with their finances/budget including car parking charges. A lot of work around flooding was currently being looked at and there were potential rebates on council tax for residential homes effected by flooding.

3.1 To receive and agree any apologies for absence.

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr A Dance, L Baker, B Chitty, K Jones and D Steel.

3.2 To receive any declarations of interest.

Councillor R Killen noted that although he had no pecuniary or beneficial interest in the folk festival application, he was spouse to the festival's grant applicant.

3.3 To receive and approve the minutes of the meeting of 3rd February 2025.

The minutes were unanimously approved as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

3.4 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman informed members that unfortunately Councillor Bidy Elliott had resigned from the Council for personal reasons. The Chairman thanked Bidy for all her public service, wished her well for the future and members joined the Chairman with their gratitude for the work Bidy had done.

3.5 Reports:

- (a) Allotment Processes update - The Clerk gave a verbal update that moving forward the Council would ensure all allotment holders had signed a tenancy agreement, a terms and conditions and would work to ensure every allotment holder had paid a deposit and this was accurately recorded.

3.6 Items for decision which may require action:

- (a) TA13 options given lack of contract/memorandum of understanding
Councillors engaged in a thorough debate covering a number of topics including adverts to be explored to potentially offset costs, articles must be from TA13 area to be relevant and potential setting of amount of pages for each publication. Council agreed to task the Clerk with producing a

memorandum of understanding for the current and any future editors of the TA13 encompassing the final edited draft will be sent to Clerks for approval and there will be production of 3 x quotes annually for printing costs. Proposed and seconded. 9-0-0

- (b) To review and suggest changes if necessary to staffing policies circulated
Adjustments were made to the Annual Leave policy, Bullying policy and Disciplinary policy.
Members agreed the suite of policies with the amendments. Proposed and seconded. 9-0-0
- (c) Blake Hall Committee decisions
Members engaged in a thorough debate and tasked the Clerk with engaging the Council's solicitors to draw up a new lease of the S&SC to include a rent review valuation.
Proposed and seconded. 9-0-0
- (d) Library / South Petherton community Zone options
After hearing from the Library group in public session, Members discussed at length the library building options. It was recognized that the Hub project had not come to fruition and whilst a longer term community zone (encompassing the Library) aspiration stood, the Library was wanted. Whilst some felt the current building was not ideal, it was preferable to no Library at all. Members noted if Somerset Council's finances went badly would the Library partnership stand. Members agreed to accept the offer of a new lease with the current landlord of the Library, with a 5 year lease as sitting tenants starting when the existing lease ended with no break clause, a £1,000 uplift and to accept half the costs of the legal work (circa £600 + VAT). Proposed and seconded. 8-1-0
- (e) To consider and approve verbal request from cricket club regarding access to covers
Members were in agreement in principle and understood the need for access to the crease covers were required. Reservations around workmanship, H&S, insurance were aired. Written assurances were required and Members are then happy to reconsider and formalise the request. Proposed and seconded. 9-0-0
- (f) To approve the Terms of Reference for the South Petherton Community Flood Group
Proposed and seconded. 9-0-0

3.7 Finance & General Purpose Committee

- a) To note & agree the items of expenditure and approve payments for March 2025
- b) To agree Finance Committee recommendations on 2 x grant applications circulated
- c) To agree Finance Committee recommendation on Somerset Council Play Inspections quote 2025/2026 (2.5% increase)
- d) To agree Finance Committee recommendation on reimbursement of electricity to Blake Hall and consideration for Christmas lights
- e) To agree Finance Committee recommendation on Council's insurance and annual tree survey

Taken on block. Proposed and seconded, 9-0-0.

3.8 The Parish Council received reports on the following:

- (a) Allotments and Whitfield Lane – Cllr Jones & Cllr Chitty
- (b) Cemetery – Cllr Wakely & Cllr Jones
- (c) Footpaths and Bridleways – PPLOs Mr Nigel Kinsman & Cllr Wakely
- (d) TWIG – Cllr Jones & Cllr Hodson-Wright
- (e) Roads & Transport – Cllr Swainson
- (f) Recreation Ground/SPRUG – Cllr New, Cllr Swainson, Cllr Steel & Cllr Carp
- (g) TA13 – Cllr Spiers
- (h) Blake Hall – Cllr Carp
- (i) Community Land Trust (CLT) – Cllr Hodson-Wright, Cllr Chitty & Cllr Elliott
- (j) Library / LIC / Community Hub – Cllr Elliott & Cllr Carp
- (k) Mere Lynches – Cllr Jones
- (l) Youth – Cllr New & Cllr Steel
- (m) Patient Participation Group (PPG) – Cllr Steel & Cllr Killen
- (n) Local Community Review updates – Cllr Steel, Cllr Carp & Cllr Chitty
- (o) Community flood group – Cllrs Swainson & Cllr Carp

Updates were provided on

The great work of the Community Flood Group.

The Community Land Trust AGM would be held in the Library – date tbc.

Footpaths - the Clerk to establish if there was a dedicated Somerset Council footpaths officer for SPPC.

The Blake Hall was looking to engage professional services to help with looking at overall projects within, including looking at obtaining grants.

3.9 Exempt session – Exclusion of Press and Public

The Parish Council resolved that under Section 1, paragraph 2 of the Public Bodies (admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business because publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

- Parish Corporate Policies
- Resolved to move to exempt session. Proposed and seconded 9-0-0 Decision proposed and seconded. 8-1-0

3.10 Date of next meeting: Monday 7th April 2025 at 8.00pm in the William Blake Memorial Hall, South Petherton.

Meeting closed at 9.30pm

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Signed:

Date: