

The Meeting of Sampford Brett Parish Council

Wednesday 13th March 2024

Minutes of the Meeting of Sampford Brett Parish Council which took place on Wednesday 13th March 2023 and was held at Sampford Brett Village Hall, commencing at 7.15pm.

Parish Councillors Present: J Swan (Chair), N Brodrick (Vice Chair), B Martin, S Miles, J Russell, T Skinner, and S Voller

In Attendance: Mrs T-A Biss (Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer)

6.30pm - PRIOR TO THE START OF THE MEETING:

- a) **Question and comments from members of the public.**
No request had been received from members of the public.
- b) **Request to address the Parish Council from members of the public.**
No request had been received from members of the public.
- c) **Reports from Somerset County Councillors**
Apologies received from Cllrs H Davies & R Woods.
Both Cllrs Davies and Woods had sent reports of Somerset Council issues and projects which had been circulated to Members prior to the meeting.

The meeting was then formally opened.

1. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TO APPROVE THE REASONS GIVEN (LGA 1972 s85 (1))

None received.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Members to declare any interests, including Disclosable Pecuniary Interests they may have in agenda items that accord with the requirements of the Parish Council's Code of Conduct and to consider any prior requests from members for Dispensations that accord with Localism Act 2011 s33(b-e). (NB this does not preclude any later declarations)

2.1 None received.

3. TO APPROVE AND SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY 13th December 2023 (LGA 1972 sch 12, para 41(1))

- 3.1 Points of accuracy: Page 578 - Clerk in attendance – Miss D Dennis
 Page 578 - Haye answered questions.....
 Page 580 - Precept Demand

Resolution:

That following the "points of accuracy" amendments the minutes of the meeting of Sampford Brett Parish Council held on 13th December 2023 were approved as being a true and accurate record and signed as such.

4. ACTIONS FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

- 4.1 Item 4.2 (page 570) – Clerk to source Telephone kiosk paint.
- 4.2 Item 8.6.1 (page 572) – Phone flood alerts – additional volunteers to be added.
- 4.3 Item 8.6.4 (page 572) – Clerk to purchase Interior light for flood equipment store.
- 4.4 Item 8.2 (page 579) – Erosion to path near Aller Farm has been reported to Somerset Council, but Parish to monitor progress of repair as potential health & safety issue. Cllr Brodrick to follow-up with RoW Area Warden, Sarah Cresswell.
- 4.5 Emergency Plan (Item 9.1) – This has been uploaded to the village website.

5. ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIR

- 5.1 None

6. CLERK AND RFO TO THE COUNCIL – VACANCY UPDATE

- 6.1 The Clerk and RFO position has been vacant since 23 February 2024. Currently the position is being held by a Locum Clerk. The position is currently being advertised with a closing date of the 15th March 2024.

7. UPDATE ON PLANNING APPLICATIONS AND PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT RELEVANT TO THE PARISH

- 7.1 No Planning Applications within Sampford Brett Parish (or relevant applications at adjoining Parish boundaries), have been received to date for the year 2024.

8. UPDATES FROM COUNCILLORS

- 8.1 **Defibrillator – Cllr S Miles** – Still issues with amending Sampford Brett Parish Council contact information with the “The Circuit” website.

Resolution:

Chair to continue to contact “The Circuit” to clarify Parish Council Contact Details.

- 8.2 **Footpaths and Rights of Way – Cllr N Brodrick** – A broken sign near the Aller Farm path has been reported on-line. No action as of the date of this meeting, has been taken to repair the erosion to the path near Aller Farm. The Parish Council has concerns regarding Health & Safety due to the poor state of this path.

Resolution:

Cllr Brodrick to follow-up with RoW Area Warden, Sarah Cresswell repair of the erosion to the path near Aller Farm.

- 8.3 **Liaison with SBAG & Village Hall - Cllr S Voller**

- 8.3.1 Sampford Brett Parish Council notes that this Council has the right for a Councillor to be a non-elected trustee of the Village Hall. At present no Councillor is available to fulfil this role.

- 8.4 **Flood Warden – Cllr B Martin** – Cllr Martin reiterated his report from 13th December 2023 meeting.

- 8.4.1 Flash flood on 17th September 2023 (A full report of this event has been sent to all councillors):

- Over a period of about 3 hours in the morning, some 72mm (2.8 inches) or rain fell, and the upstream telemetry gauge outside Sampford House recorded a 0.5-meter rise in the stream level.
- Rivers of muddy water came down the hill on the Capton road to the junction outside Sampford House and down the road from Manor Farm to the same junction.
- The turnout by flood response volunteers was excellent.
- The equipment bought by Somerset Prepared grant fund was used, including using all 40 sandless sandbags.
- No significant water entered the vulnerable properties. (Most of the vulnerable properties have now put in measures to be more resilient to such flash flood events).
- Somerset Council should be commended for responding to a call to clean up the road, which they did within 24 hours.

Lessons Learned

- i) A second, larger dirty water pump should be purchased, along with a large diameter (32mm) hose to expel the dirty water (a 20m hose and a 10m hose would be useful).
- ii) Funds should be sought to purchase replacement sandless sand bags – the Parish would require 40 of these and Cllr Martin proposed that they should be FloodSax brand. *(Both have now been achieved thanks to a grant fund of £400 from the Sampford Brett Activities Group, with a contribution from the parish council).*

Resolution:

Councillors had agreed at the 13th December 2023 meeting for the purchase of a larger dirty water pump and hoses (32mm x 20m and 32mm x 10m) and replacement FloodSax and other equipment used in the emergencies.

8.4.2 Flash flood on 13th October 2023:

- Overnight rain caused muddy water to flow down the hill on the Capton road to the junction outside Sampford House.
- There was no muddy flow elsewhere, and no threat to properties.
- The mud was cleared, but by the afternoon the water had built up in the field on the west of the Capton Road a couple of hundred meters up the road from the junction (which had just harvested some of the potato crop).
- The field water then burst through the bank on the corner of the field and a large quantity of muddy water flowed down to the junction, depositing additional mud to that which had been cleared in the morning.
- Thanks to Adrian Bagg for help cleaning up the road with his tractor, and to the flood response volunteers who on receiving the WhatsApp group alert very quickly turnout to again support in the clearance.
- The two telemetry gauges in the stream by the main street are now fully operational and send text and email alerts to the flood warden and the chair of the parish council, triggered when designated stream water levels are reached.

8.4.3 Cllr Martin then reported that there were no significant incidents within the Village since the meeting of 13th December 2023. There was however some flooding on roads on 25th February 2024 including muddy water affecting Manor Farm Road and on the lower part of the Capton Road at the crossroads. Also, on 1st March 2024 minor flooding on the Manor Farm Lane due to a large amount of debris from a felled tree on Manor Farm, blocking the trash grid in the stream outside Sampford House. The telemetry gauge at this location shot up through all the alarm levels almost instantly - a sure sign of a sudden blockage.

- 8.4.4 Cllr Martin attended the West Somerset Flood Group Meeting on 24th January 2024 at Carhampton. The guest speaker was Bel Deering from the Somerset River Authority who made the request to see the work carried out by parishes. Cllr Martin invited Bel to Sampford Brett on 27th February 2024 to view the flood gauges, trash screens and equipment/storage. Also discussed on Bel's visit was the Parish's Community Flood Plan and the organisation of volunteers.
- 8.4.5 On February 27th, Cllr Martin attended a meeting in Williton hosted by Williton Parish Council to discuss flooding preparedness in the area. There were guest speakers from the Environment Agency, Somerset River Authority, Somerset Council, and the West Somerset Flood Group.
- 8.4.6 The stream telemetry gauges have now been in place for 6 months. Texts and email gauge alerts are received by Cllrs Swan and Martin. At an on-site meeting Cllrs Swan and Martin shared their experiences with Gareth Varney of the Environment Agency (who set the system up). From the discussion it was agreed to tweak some of the alert levels and remove some of the alerts as the levels drop back to normal. The Parish Council are seeking two additional members of the flood response volunteers to receive these alerts which will increase the chance of immediate response if an emergency arises.
- 8.4.7 It was noted that the two drains outside "Nutcombe" have become blocked due to the ongoing wet weather and mud draining from fields.

Resolution:

Cllr Martin to report blocked surface water drains outside "Nutcombe" to Highways.

- 8.4.8 It was reported to the Parish Council that at the steep hill leading from the Village to "the Rocks" boulders have fallen into the road due to being dislodge following the recent wet conditions. Cllr Swan has reported this to Highways.
- 8.4.9 Members also commented that due to the wet conditions the boundary bank at "Thatched Cottage" had deteriorated. Members requested that the Clerk sends a polite letter to the property informing the residents of the boundary bank's erosion and its subsidence onto the highway, in the event they are unaware of the situation.

Resolution:

That the Clerk sends a polite letter to "Thatched Cottage" informing the residents of the boundary bank's erosion and its subsidence onto the highway, in the event they are unaware of the situation.

8.5 Local Community Network (Area 13) – Cllr J Swan

- 8.5.1 Cllrs Swan and Skinner attended the LCN meeting held on the 7th February 2024 held at West Somerset House Council Chamber, Williton - items discussed:
- **Update on the No28 Bus Service.** It was proposed to reduce the No28 service to a frequency of every 45 minutes, and to incorporate Cotford St Luke on some journeys (as the No25 service will be withdrawn). In addition, it was planned to introduce a x28 direct fast service for the summer months. This would run directly from Taunton to Butlins and would be specifically to cater for holiday makers. The Exmoor Coaster Bus service would be re-introduced to cover the tourist season. (31 March – 28 September).
 - **Update on Somerset Council's Financial Position.** A £600k budget has been proposed to finance the Somerset Council asset devolution process, and this would be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

- **Closure of the Williton Recycling Centre** – Somerset Councillor, Cllr Dixie Darch advised that following the Executive meeting that day, part of the budget proposals to close 5 household recycling centres (including Williton) was being re-assessed. Somerset Council were in consultation with the contractor to look at how savings could be made on the existing contract and reduce costs. There were £960K savings required, and the service was being thoroughly examined right across the board. If a decision was made to proceed with the closures, then a county wide consultation would take place.
- **Update on the Highway Steward Scheme and Highways Working Subgroup** - The annual cost of the Highway Steward including transport is £50k and this could be shared across 2 LCN areas. (This would lessen the cost impact on individual parishes). In addition, it was also proposed that a Highway Working group be established to progress the concerns of the Minehead and Watchet LCN parishes. This would be held between the main LCN meetings and would be made up of parish representatives and staff from the Somerset Council Highways Team.
- **Dates and Agendas for the next meeting**
Future draft meeting dates for the Minehead and Watchet LCN proposed as follows:
 - Tuesday 30 April 2024 at 6:30pm
 - Wednesday 17 July 2024 at 6:30pm

Cllr Swan asked if another member could also attend' (i.e. two Councillors to represent Sampford Brett at LCN meetings when possible); Cllrs Russell and Skinner agreed to share this between them. The Meetings are scheduled to be held at the West Somerset House Council Chamber.

Resolution:

That Cllrs Russell and Skinner support Cllr Swan in the attendance of LCN meetings.

- **The inaugural meeting of the Highway Subgroup** – this is to be held on Friday 22 March at 10:00 in the West Somerset House Council Chamber. Cllr Skinner agreed to attend future meetings but was unable to attend the inaugural meeting due to prior commitments.

Resolution:

That Cllr Skinner represents the Parish Council at the Highways Subgroup.

Information regarding LCN (Area 13) can be found at:

<https://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CommitteeId=898>

9. FINANCIAL BUSINESS

9.1 Financial Report 2023-2024 as of 10th March 2024

INCOME		
Brought Forward	£5,623	<i>Net Banked Balance as 31st March 2023</i>
Precept - Received 24 April 2023	£3,700	<i>AGAR Section 2 (2) – Current Gross Income</i>
Sampford Brett Act SBAG Donation	£400	
HMRC Vat Return 29 February 2024	£799	
	£10,523	
EXPENDITURE		
Staff	£2,170	<i>AGAR Section 2 (4)</i>
Other	£2,858	<i>AGAR Section 2 (6)</i>
	£5,028	<i>Current Gross Expenditure</i>
INCOME MINUS EXPENDITURE		
	£5,494	<i>Net Banked Balance as 10th March 2024</i>
BANK RECONCILIATION		
	£5,494	<i>Actual bank balance</i>
Less any unrepresented cheques	£0	
Less: Petty cash float (if applicable)	£0	
Add: any un-banked cash	£0	
Net Banked Balance	£5,494	<i>AGAR Section 2 (8)</i>

9.2 Expenditure Category Breakdown as of 10th March 2024

Category	Actual	Budget	Remaining	Comments
Election Expenses	-	£100.00	£100.00	<i>5th May 2022 Elections</i>
Emergency Provision	£1,017.13	£500.00	-£517.13	<i>Upgrade/replacement of emergency provisions</i>
Grants	£5.00	£50.00	£45.00	
Hall Hire	£20.00	£100.00	£80.00	
Insurance	£351.90	£350.00	-£1.90	
Internal Audit	£30.00	£30.00	£0.00	
Maintenance of Assets	-	£250.00	£250.00	<i>Bus Shelter, Noticeboard, telephone kiosk</i>
Membership	£88.11	£90.00	£1.89	<i>SALC & NALC Membership</i>
Office Equipment/Stationery	-	£50.00	£50.00	
HM Land Registry	-	£0.00	£0.00	<i>HM Land Registry re: footpath</i>
Service Agreements	£662.40	£660.00	£2.40	<i>Website & Dog Waste Bin</i>
Staff Wages	£2,170.35	£2,200.00	£29.65	<i>Average 3hrs 45m per week</i>
Clerk Vacancy	£240.00	£0.00	-£240.00	
Training	£90.00	£200.00	£110.00	<i>Councillors & Clerk - average £30/40 each</i>
Queen's Platinum Jubilee	£46.20	£150.00	£103.00	<i>Event</i>
Safe South West Resilience Funding	£307.08	£299.70	-£7.38	<i>Small Grant Fund £1,685 received 2022-23 balance</i>
TOTAL	£5,028.17	£5,029.70	£1.53	

9.3 Schedule of Payments dated 10th March 2024

9.3.1 Invoices Signed Off

PO No.	Invoice No.	Payee	Description of Goods	Total	Cheque/ FPO	Signatories
PO23001	23006 (82761)	CRS Building Supplies Limited	Flood Storage Shed Base Material	£224.77	FPO	DJS/SV
PO23004	82761	CRS Building Supplies Limited	Flood Storage Shed Base Material	£53.46	FPO	DJS/SV
PO23005	n/a	Mrs M Francis	Internal Audit 2022-2023	£30.00	Cheque	DJS/SV
PO23007	10893910	Idverde Limited	Dog Waste Bin 2023-2024	£299.52	FPO	DJS/SV
PO23008	1038	Sampford Brett Village Hall	Hire of Village Hall 08 Mar 2023 & 10 May 2023	£20.00	FPO	DJS/SV
PO23009	May-23	West Somerset Flood Group	Contribution to the West Somerset Flood Group Website	£5.00	FPO	DJS/SV
PO23010	INV-2529	The Somerset Association	Affiliation 2023/24	£88.11	FPO	DJS/SV
PO23011	600028175	West Somerset Free Press	Advert for Vacant Parish Clerk Position	£240.00	FPO	DJS/SV
PO23013	361447 & 362331	Lones (UK) Direct2U	TUFF Shelving - 300kg- 5 level – H1760 x W900 x D450mm	£155.27	FPO	DJS/SV
PO23015	11143	Locks Direct	Squire CP505 Combination Padlock (blue)	£28.85	FPO	DJS/SV
PO23016	Pro-forma invoice	AOS online	Equipment for Volunteer Flood Group	£237.72	FPO	DJS/SV
PO23017	2023-0283	Turtle Engineering Limited	iPAD Electrode Pads for SP1 Defibrillator	£134.16	FPO	DJS/SV
PO23018	8989903	The Safety Supply Company	Parish Emergency Flood Equipment	£41.69	FPO	DJS/SV
PO23019	INV-2870	The Somerset Association	Essential Clerk Training – Part 1, 2 & 3	£90.00	FPO	DJS/SV
Wages	n/a	Mrs T-A Biss	Apr-Jul 2023 NJC Salary Award	£77.50	Cheque	DJS/SV
Total:				£1,726.04		

Resolution:

That all invoices, as set-out in the “Invoices Signed Off” dated 10th March 2024, are signed. Proposed by Cllr Swan and seconded by Cllr Russell. All in agreement.

9.3.2 Ratification of Purchase

PO No.	Invoice No.	Payee	Description of Goods	Total	Cheque/ FPO	Signatories
PO23014	#2023-15- 06 HN	Active Signs & Print	Noticeboard Plaque	£46.20	FPO	DJS/NJB
PO23020	X02493073 311	Toolstation	Parish Emergency Flood Equipment	£89.26	FPO	DJS/NJB
PO23021	616282	Flowtech Water Solution (Complete Pump Supplies)	Parish Emergency Flood Equipment	£47.94	FPO	DJS/NJB
PO23022	9102189	The Safety Supply Company	Parish Emergency Flood Equipment	£311.10	FPO	DJS/NJB
Total:				£448.30		

Resolution:

That purchases, as set-out in the “Ratification of Purchase” dated 10th March 2024, are authorized. Proposed by Cllr Swan and seconded by Cllr Brodrick. All in agreement.

9.3.3 Authorised for Payment

PO No.	Invoice No.	Payee	Description of Goods	Total	Cheque/ FPO	Signatories
PO23012	1049, 1060 &1072	Sampford Brett Village Hall	Hire of Village Hall for Parish Council Meeting Nov 2023 – Mar 2024	£50	FPO	DJS/NJB
Wages	n/a	Miss D J Dennis	Clerk's Wages Dec 2023 – Feb 2024	£344.29	Cheque	DJS/NJB
Total:				£394.29		

Resolution:

That payment is made as set-out in the "Authorised for Payment" dated 10th March 2024. Proposed by Cllr Swan and seconded by Cllr Brodrick. All in agreement.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

- The Annual Meeting 8th May 2024 *(to include Election of Chair & review documentation)*
- Parish Meeting 12th June 2024 *(to include End of Year Accounts)*
- Parish Meeting 11th September 2024
- Parish Meeting 11th December 2024 *(to include Setting of Budget and Precept)*
- Annual Parish Meeting 12th March 2025 *(Local societies and groups welcomed to present items)*
- Parish Meeting 12th March 2025

Chairman's
Signature: _____

Date: _____