

Sampford Brett Annual Parish Meeting

Wednesday 13th March 2024

Minutes of the Sampford Brett Annual Parish Meeting which took place on Wednesday 13th March 2024 at Sampford Brett Village Hall, beginning at 6.30pm.

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

In Attendance: Neighbourhood PCSO Zack Howe 6551, Avon & Somerset Police.
Mr D Croxton, Chair of the West Somerset Community Car Schemes Partnership.
16 Members of the Public and Mrs T-A Biss (Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer)

The meeting began at 6:30pm

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and Councillors introduced themselves.

2. COMMUNITY SPEED WATCH SCHEME - NEIGHBOURHOOD PCSO ZACK HOWE 6551, AVON & SOMERSET POLICE

- 2.1 Cllr Swan welcomed Zack Howe who is one of the Neighbourhood PCSO's based at Williton Police Station.
- 2.2 PCSO Zack gave an outline of Community Speedwatch (CSW) which is a national initiative where, in partnership with the police, members of communities use detection devices to check local vehicle speeds. The volunteers report drivers exceeding the speed limit to the police with the aim of educating drivers to slow down.
- 2.3 Williton Parish Council have initiated CSW schemes at Danesborough, Long Street and one sited within the Parish of Sampford Brett at the top of Tower Hill (near to the entrance lane to the houses set back off the road from 50/48 Tower Hill). This site will check traffic entering Williton from Taunton.
- 2.4 The location of monitoring sites require approval from the Police and includes the principle that motorist should have clear visibility of the CSW volunteers; the selected highway must be within a 20, 30 or 40mph speed limit; and there must be no obstruction of the footpath during monitoring.
- 2.5 There is a local co-ordinator for the Williton CSW volunteers. The co-ordinator holds the equipment e.g. monitoring camera, high-viz jackets etc., and is responsible for organising the monitoring rota.
- 2.6 Traffic awareness training is given by PCSOs to CSW volunteers before they can undertake their role. There are strict rules to follow e.g. there must be a minimum of two volunteers; high viz jackets must be worn and no monitoring to take place if raining or after dusk.
- 2.7 Drivers who are recorded travelling at 10% above the speed limit i.e. 33 mph for Tower Hill, will receive a warning letter from the Police Citizen Policy team. If drivers are recorded more than three

times travelling above the speed limit, the address for the registered vehicle will be visited by the Police or a PCSO to speak with the vehicle's driver.

- 2.8 If the CSW volunteers observations show evidence of repeat offenders, police will patrol the area to monitor traffic speeds.
- 2.9 If CSW volunteers receive abuse from drivers, a letter will be handed out giving full details of the scheme.
- 2.10 If any Parishioners are interested in joining the Williton CSW scheme please contact the Williton Parish Clerk or go on-line to CommunitySpeedWatch@avonandsomerset.police.uk.
- 2.11 Questions from the floor:
- How long is the duration of monitoring? *No set time but would advise no more than one hour but this will be scheduled by the CSW co-ordinator. It must not be at night or in the rain.*
 - There is a post for a Speed Indicator Device (SID) at the Sampford Brett end of Tower Hill do you know when that will be installed? *PCSO Zack unable to answer this question, but the Clerk will request information from Williton Parish Council.*
 - Why can't the traffic exiting Williton along Tower Hill be checked? *PCSO Zack fully understood the concerns, but the site selected to check exiting traffic was rejected.*
 - How do you get the equipment? *The local co-ordinator holds the equipment and will issue it to you when needed.*

2.1 Cllr Swan thank PCSO Zack Howe for an informative presentation on the Community Speedwatch scheme.

3. UPDATE ON COMMUNITY TRANSPORT, EVIE AND BICKLIFTS, BY DAVID CROXTON, CHAIR OF THE WEST SOMERSET COMMUNITY CAR SCHEMES PARTNERSHIP

3.1 Cllr Swan welcomed David Croxton, the Chair of the West Somerset Community Car Schemes Partnership.

3.2 The partnership currently is the umbrella for sixteen schemes across Somerset which are delivered through the Volunteer Section and are "not for profit" organisations. Prior to Covid there were twenty schemes.

3.3 The Bicklifts scheme has a pool of volunteer drivers who use their own vehicles to supply transport for residents. Volunteer drivers are always welcome. The scheme pays drivers 35p per mile and provides vehicle insurance for these trips. Residents must register with Bicklifts and two days' notice for the journey is asked (journeys are usually local to the area).

3.4 The "Evie" scheme covers Bicknoller, Sampford Brett and Watchet. This scheme has one electric vehicle which is based at Bicknoller and is also dependent on volunteer drivers. This vehicle can carry four passengers and one wheelchair.

3.5 Questions from the floor:

- *Does the scheme pay parking charges?* No, the person booking the transport pays for any parking charges, however Musgrove Park Hospital do allow those using the scheme to park for free for a limit period.

3.6 Cllr Swan thanked David for the update on the services provided by the Bicklifts and Evie schemes.

4. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE & APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 8th MARCH 2023

Apologies received from Somerset Cllrs H Davies and R Woods.

Resolution:

The minutes of the Sampford Brett Annual Parish Meeting held on 8th March 2023 approved as being a true and correct record and signed as such.

5. ANNUAL REPORT – by Cllr J Swan (Parish Chair)

5.1 Local Government Reorganisation

On 4th April 2023 Somerset District Councils and the Somerset County Council were disbanded and replaced by a single Unitary Authority – Somerset Council. To allay fears that such a large authority would be remote and cut off from local communities, a series of 18 Local Community Networks (LCNs) were set up to provide face-to-face contact between Somerset Council and town and parish councils.

Each LCN meets every 2 months, and town and parish councils were initially asked to prioritise key local issues. For this area –which stretches from East Quantoxhead to Minehead and Ash Priors – the priorities found were public transport, highways, health & well-being, and flood alleviation. Addressing these issues has barely begun and has been overshadowed by the financial problems that Somerset Council is now facing. In December 2023 it was reported at LCN meetings that the Somerset Council was facing a £100m shortfall in their budget; they have now managed to produce a balanced budget but only by cutting back drastically on services. Town and Parish Councils are expected to pick up delivery of some of these services, but how this will affect Parishes directly is still unknown. It is however looking likely that the Parish will be expected to fund activities such as verge maintenance, drain and ditch clearing, sign cleaning and cutting back vegetation.

It is too early to know if the LCNs will be an effective voice, but the meetings have provided parishes with the opportunity to make it clear that axing the no. 28 bus service was completely unacceptable as is the proposed closure of the Williton recycling centre.

- a. A deal has been reached between the bus operating company and Somerset Council whereby the 28 service will continue, but with changes to the frequency. There will be fewer buses outside peak hours but more buses at Butlins arrival and departure times.
- b. With regards to Williton recycling centre – all that is known is that ‘discussions are ongoing, and closure may not be the only option.’

5.2 Flood Management

- a. Cllr Brian Martin has had a busy year as Flood Warden improving flood resilience across the Parish.
- b. The Parish Council received a £1,685 grant at the end of 2022/2023 from Somerset Prepared and during 2023/2024 the funding has been used to provide the flood store (erected in the village hall car park by a team of volunteers) and the purchase of flood defence equipment including flood sacks and pumps.
- c. The Parish Council have formalised the flood response group as a sub-committee of the Parish Council (which means volunteers are covered by the Parish Council’s insurance) and training

sessions have been held for volunteers. (*Parishioners wishing to join the volunteer group please contact Cllr Martin*).

- d. The Environment Agency have installed two flood gauges in the village stream. These send automatic alerts to nominated people if the stream level starts to rise. One is found by the grill outside Sampford House and the other at the bottom of Brett Close.
- e. The flood response group have a WhatsApp group for the flood volunteers which alerts them when the risk of flooding is increasing and when action is needed.
- f. The location of surface water drains has been marked with small, white-painted triangles so they can be found when the road is flooded.
- g. After repeated request over several months, the drains on Tower Hill were cleared by Somerset Council. Wessex Water have cleared some in the central part of the village.
- h. The flood response measures have been summarised in a flood response plan and this has been incorporated into our updated Emergency Plan. These documents are available on the village website: www.sampfordbrett.org
- i. There have been two incidents of flooding since last year's meeting: 17th September and 13th October 2023 and a couple of near misses. All these incidents would undoubtedly have been worse had the Parish not been well prepared.
- j. The Chair thanked Cllr Martin and the flood response volunteers for all their work this year.

Other issues that the Parish Council has addressed during the year:

5.3 Planning has been minimal with three applications, two of which were granted:

- The erection of car port at Glencoe (72A Tower Hill), and
- The demolition of Cloverfields Barn in Weacombe and replacement with a new house using the Class Q fallback position.

The application to demolish Tremont (33 Tower Hill) and build three new houses on that plot was refused.

5.4 The village noticeboards in the main street were refurbished during the year, but that job is not finished; the cork pin-board is unsatisfactory, and we hope to replace it soon. A commemorative plaque was added to one of the boards in memory of HM Queen Elizabeth and celebration of King Charles' coronation.

5.5 At the Parish Council's December meeting there was a presentation from Airband who have been contracted to bring fibre broadband to the village. Airband have not yet determined if this will be overground or buried so the Parish cannot report on how disruptive installation is likely to be. Various packages will be available ranging from 150 – 900Mbps and will cost £30-65/month. Funding will be available to buy subscribers out from their existing broadband contracts.

5.6 The Chair thanked Cllr Nick Brodrick for continuing to consult with the council's footpaths officer:

- The handrail on the footpath by "Providence" has been replaced.
- The erosion on Church Path, close to Aller Farm, has been reported but not yet repaired. This will be discussed at the following Parish meeting to consider how to increase pressure on the Somerset council. The Parish Council appreciates the current financial climate but not only is the issue a serious health and safety hazard, but the path is also part of the Coleridge Way and MacMillan Way.

5.7 Questions from the floor:

- *Concerns were raised about the possibility of disruption of the Airband cabling installation. The Parish Council will continue to check the situation.*
- *The recent hedge cutting by contractors around the village which left a dangerous level of debris on the roads raise health and safety/flooding concerns. The Chair will discuss with local land owners the concerns raised.*

4. The Chair thanked all those in attendance and the meeting closed at 7.15pm.

Chairman's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Awaiting Approval