

ODCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF ODCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY, 21ST MARCH 2011 AT THE VILLAGE HALL, ODCOMBE

PRESENT:

Mr B Savill-Daw (Chairman)

Mr P Cooper

Mr A Hiscock (7.30 p.m. – 8.50 p.m.)

Mrs D Rennie

Mr R West

Mrs B Langdon (Vice-Chairman)

Mr C Francis

Mrs S Hunt

Mr B Spearing

Mrs C Bakewell (County & District Councillor)

Mrs E James (Clerk)

Mrs L Boucher (District Councillor)

182. TO RECEIVE ANY APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TO CONSIDER ACCEPTANCE OF THE REASONS

None

183. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mr Hiscock declared a personal interest in planning application 11/00777/FUL and 11/00779/LBC as the applicant is a customer.

184. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27th FEBRUARY 2011

The minutes of the meeting held on 23rd February 2011 were confirmed as a true record.

185. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr Savill-Daw advised that, following a meeting of South Somerset Together, an invitation had been received from Yeovil Without Parish Council to attend a meeting of those Parish Councils surrounding Yeovil Town. It was agreed that Mr Savill-Daw & Mrs Hunt, together with the Clerk, would attend.

186. REPORTS FROM:

(a) **SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCILLOR** – Mrs Bakewell had received concerns regarding anti-social behaviour in Ham Hill Road/Broadway area, Mrs Bakewell will raise the matter with PC Justin Pitman.

(b) **DISTRICT COUNCILLORS** – Mrs Boucher sought information on whether the cuts to bus service provision would affect Odcombe. Mrs Boucher was advised that there was only one bus service per day from Monday – Saturday with no Sunday provision for Odcombe.

(c) **PARISH COUNCILLORS WHO HAVE ATTENDED MEETINGS/WORKSHOPS SINCE THE LAST MEETING**

SALC- Mr Savill-Daw advised that he had attended a SALC meeting with Mrs Rennie, items discussed had included the Localism Bill.

It was RESOLVED to bring forward agenda item 8 – Planning

187. PLANNING

(a) RESULTS OF APPLICATIONS

Members were asked to note the approval, with conditions of planning applications **10/03493/FUL**, **11/00216/FUL**, **11/00223/FUL**, **11/00252/FUL**, and the refusal of planning application **10/05030/FUL**

(b) APPLICATIONS CONSIDERED UNDER STANDING ORDER NO. 79 BEFORE THE MEETING

In accordance with Standing Order no. 79, Councillors noted and APPROVED the recommendation made for the following application:

11/00435/FUL – change of use of land from agricultural to residential curtilage, formation of a tennis court, erection of associated fencing and landscaping (GR 350030/115708)

Pitt Plain Farm House, Ham Hill Road – Approved now that the residential curtilage has been confirmed

(c) APPLICATIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

11/00777/FUL – the erection of a timber stable and triple garage and the carrying out of alterations to outbuilding to include replacement roof (GR 350956/115933)

Townsend, Lower Odcombe

RECOMMENDATION: Approval

11/00779/LBC – the carrying out of alterations to outbuilding to include replacement roof (GR 350956/115933)

Townsend, Lower Odcombe

RECOMMENDATION: Approval

(c) PLANNING UPDATES

It was AGREED to delegate the Clerk, in conjunction with Mr Savill-Daw, Mrs Hunt, Mrs Rennie and Mr West to respond to the raft Core Strategy - Yeovil Traffic Modelling Report February 2011, a hard copy to be purchased by the Clerk from SSDC.

188. CLERK'S REPORT [MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES]

(a) The Pound – following further investigation of the minutes the Clerk has spoken with Mr Ian Clarke, SSDC Solicitor regarding lack of evidence. It was agreed that no further action would be taken at this time.

(b) Odcombe Meeting Point – to note that satisfactory references, method statements, risk assessment & protective/preventive measures and a copy of the public liability certificate have been received for Parsons Landscapes Ltd. At a site meeting it was agreed to allow the contractor an additional week to complete the contract – the finishing date now to be 22nd April 2011. Contracts have been exchanged for the work. Yarlinton Housing Group has advised that £1000 has been paid into the Parish Council account on 3rd March 2011. A grant application for £1,000, made to the Wellbeing of Yeovil charity, will be considered at its meeting to be held on 31st March. The contents of a letter received through David Laws MP and the response from the Clerk was noted and APPROVED.

(c) Noticeboard – it was NOTED that due to time constraints the planning application has yet to be submitted. The style of noticeboard had been approved in accordance with min. no. 103 of 20th September 2010.

189. CORRESPONDENCE

- (a) Hastoe Group – vacant house at Long Run – NOTED.
- (b) SSDC – Reaching Communities Big Lottery Grant Application - It was NOTED that SSDC is making a grant application to the Big Lottery's Reaching Communities programme to fund 3 years of community development work in rural areas through the delivery of play equipment. SSDC has identified Odcombe as a potential participant in this grant application, which would involve around 36 other parishes working together in clusters of 3 or 4 to deliver play and community related projects. It was AGREED to notify SSDC that the Parish Council is interested in participating in this project, in a cluster group comprising North Coker, East Coker, West Coker and Odcombe.
- (c) SCC – update on budget cuts received from Sheila Wheeler, Chief Executive – NOTED.
- (d) Somerset Rural Youth Project – voluntary youth club support –NOTED.
- (e) SCC –details of changes to bus services are available on the County Council web site - NOTED..
- (f) Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service - Draft Corporate Plan for 2011/12 – 2013/14 –it was AGREED no corporate response would be made.
- (g) Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service – invitation to visit Yeovil Fire Station – invitation declined.
- (h) SSDC – It was NOTED that notices publishing the Parish & District Councils are displayed on the parish noticeboard & telephone box.
- (i) Royal Wedding – a letter will be brought to the next meeting regarding funding for a village celebration.
- (j) Bus Cuts – notices regarding bus cuts to be put on the noticeboards.
- (k) SCC – Mineral & Waste Policy consultation – it was noted that the consultation will run until 11th May and a hard copy requested.

190. COUNCIL LOGO

A Council logo was agreed, Mr Cooper was thanked for his assistance.

191. SOMERSET ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

Mrs Hunt proposed, Mrs Langdon seconded and it was RESOLVED to renew membership with the Somerset Association of Local Councils at a cost of £171.35 for 2011-2012.

192. COMMUNITY COUNCIL FOR SOMERSET

Mrs Langdon proposed, Mr Savill-Daw seconded and it was RESOLVED to renew membership with the Community Council for Somerset at a cost of £35 for 2011-2012.

193. ODCOMBE RECREATION GROUND

- (a) Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge – it was agreed not to take any further action.
- (b) Following the recent site meeting at the recreation ground, an inspection was carried out of the car parking area. It was realised that the car park and access road needs to be cleared of rubbish and vegetation to maintain the tarmac surface. A quotation had been sought from R T Services to carry out these works. The quotation received was in the sum of £250 and members agreed not to accept this quotation but to arrange a village working party to carry out the works.

194. SOUTH SOMERSET STRIMMER PROJECT

It was AGREED to take no action on this project.

195. CRIME, DISORDER AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

It was NOTED that Mrs Denise Dunford will shortly be leaving SSDC, an email of thanks had been sent by the Clerk.

196. HIGHWAY MATTERS

- (a) SCC – reinstatement of the Speed Indicator Device – It was NOTED that following the annual review of the Speed Indicator Device, Somerset County Council has decided to reinstate both the east and west bound SID locations. This decision will be reviewed annually.
- (b) Cherry Lane – it was NOTED that the "no through road" has now been replaced with a "not suitable for vehicles" road sign.
- (c) Old Preston Road – the comments by Mr Fletcher, County Highways, explaining that it was very unlikely that the old Preston Road could be re-opened, were NOTED.

197. ASSET REGISTER

It was NOTED that the asset register had been amended to include 3 plastic seats and grit bins. It was AGREED that the replacement value of items should be added to the asset register. The Meeting Point will be added to the list on completion.

198. REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL AUDIT

Following a review on the effectiveness of internal audit, it was AGREED that the system is sufficiently effective, A report is attached to the minutes

199. REVIEW ON INTERNAL CONTROL AS AT 21st MARCH 2011

Following a review on the effectiveness of internal control, it was AGREED that the system is sufficiently effective, A report is attached to the minutes

200. CLERK'S SALARY

Mr Savill-Daw proposed, Mrs Rennie seconded and it was RESOLVED to approve the setting up of a standing order for payment of the Clerk's Salary.

201. FINANCE

- (a) The bank reconciliation statement as at 28th February 2011 was NOTED and APPROVED.
- (b) It was NOTED that a direct debit in the sum of £13.82 would be taken on 24th March 2011 by E-On, for electricity supplied.
- (c) It was RESOLVED to approve the following schedule of payments:
- (d) The receipt of £1000 from Yarlinton Homes was NOTED.
- (e) It was NOTED that a VAT reclaim in the sum of £408.85 was made up to 28th Feb 2011.
- (f) It was NOTED that the audit return for 2010-2011 had been received.

202. COUNCILLORS QUESTION TIME – SUCH MATTERS ARE FOR NOTING OR DEFERRAL TO A FUTURE MEETING

Consideration was requested to the supply of more grit bins within the village. It was NOTED that the provision of grit bins will be discussed in September.

203. TO BRING FORWARD ANY MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION AT THE NEXT MEETING

Purchase of replacement dog sign
Royal Wedding Grant
Adoption of Accounts for 2010-2011

204. ITEMS FOR DISTRIBUTION

Clerks & Councils Direct
Came & Company – Parish Matters Spring 2011

205. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held at 7.30 p.m. on Monday, 18th April 2011 at the Village Hall. The meeting will close at 8 p.m. for the Annual Parish Meeting to take place.

Min. No. 198

REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL AUDIT

1.0 **Overview**

1.1 Regulation 6 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 as amended imposes a duty on local councils to “maintain an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records and of its system of internal control.”

1.2 Internal audit is a key component of the system of internal control. The purpose of internal audit is to review whether the systems of financial and other controls over a council's activities and operating procedures are effective.

1.3 Local councils are required, at least once a year, to conduct, in accordance with proper practices, a review of the effectiveness of internal audit. The council is required to sign the annual governance statement (on the annual return submitted to the external auditor) to evidence that this review has been undertaken.

2.0 **Review of effectiveness of internal audit**

2.1 Mr R Fox has agreed to act as internal auditor for the Parish Council for 2010-2011.

2.2 For internal audit to be considered effective, the following criteria must be satisfied:

- that the internal auditor is independent of the other financial controls and procedures of the council which are subject of review;
- that they are competent to carry out the role in a way that will meet the business needs of the council;
- that consideration is made to how many times in a year the systems and records should be subject to internal audit;
- that the scope of internal audit is sufficient;
- that any internal audit report is considered in full by a meeting of the parish council; and
- that appropriate action is taken on any recommendations contained in the internal audit report.
- The council must also satisfy itself that the quality of delivery of the internal audit service provides reliable assurance about the council's internal controls and its management of risk.

2.3 Considering these requirements for internal audit for Odcombe Parish Council, Mr Fox recommended that he carry out one full internal audit per year. Bank statements have been checked monthly throughout the year, bank statements being initialled and dated.

2.4 **Independence**

Mr Fox has no involvement in the Council's financial controls, procedures or decision making. He is not related to, nor associated with, any member of the Council or the Clerk. The internal auditor has direct access to the Council should he think this necessary.

5 **Competence**

Mr Fox formerly worked for the South Somerset District Council and operates as an individual. He has built up knowledge of local council finance over many years. He has a copy of “Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – a Practitioner's Guide 2010” which he will use as a reference tool for his audit work.

His past and current employment suggests that there is no more capable or competent person to carry out this task.

There is no evidence/reason to believe that the internal audit will not be carried out competently, ethically and with integrity and objectivity.

2.6 **Frequency of Internal Audit**

An internal audit, undertaken once a year, by Mr Fox.

2.7 **Scope of Work**

The scope of the internal audit work carried out by Mr Fox will follow the suggested approach to internal audit provided by Appendix 9 of the “Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – a Practitioner's Guide 2010.”

2.8 **Audit Report**

Mr Fox will prepare a report in his own name and addressed to the council following his completion of the internal audit. It will be presented in full to the Council at the next meeting after it has been issued. Any actions to be taken on the recommendations made will be minuted.

MIN. NO. 199

REVIEW ON INTERNAL CONTROL AS AT 21st MARCH 2011

1. SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY

Odcombe Parish Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

In discharging this overall responsibility, the Council is also responsible for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the Council's functions and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

2. THE PURPOSE OF THE SYSTEM OF INTERNAL CONTROL

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives; it can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Council's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

The system of internal control has been in place at the Council for the year ended 31 March 2010 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and accounts accords with proper practice.

3. THE INTERNAL CONTROL ENVIRONMENT

The Council:

The Council has appointed a Chairman who is responsible for the smooth running of meetings and for ensuring that all Council decisions are lawful.

The Council reviews its obligations and objectives and approves budgets for the following year at its November meeting. The November or December meeting of the Council approves the level of precept for the following financial year.

The full Council usually meets 12 times each year and monitors its progress at each meeting.

The Council carries out regular reviews of its internal controls, systems and procedures.

Clerk to the Council / Responsible Financial Officer:

The Council has appointed a Clerk to the Council who acts as the Council's advisor and administrator. The Clerk is the Council's Responsible Financial Officer and is responsible for administering the Council's finances. The Clerk is responsible for the day to day compliance with laws and regulations that the Council is subject to and for managing risks. The Clerk also ensures that the Council's procedures, control systems and policies are adhered to.

Payments:

All payments are reported to the Council for approval. Two Members of the Council must authorise every cheque.

Risk Assessments / Risk Management:

The Council carries out appropriate risk assessments in respect of actions and regularly reviews its systems and controls.

Internal Audit:

The Council has appointed an Independent Internal Auditor who will report to the Council on the adequacy of its:

- Records
- procedures
- systems
- internal control
- regulations
- risk management
- reviews

The effectiveness of the internal audit is reviewed annually.

External Audit:

The Council's External Auditors, Moore Stephens submit an annual Certificate of Audit, which is presented to the Council.

4. REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS

The Council has responsibility for conducting an annual review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control. The review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control is informed by the by the work of:

- the full Council or a Working Party if appropriate;
- the Clerk to the Council / Responsible Financial Officer who has responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control environment and managing risks;
- the independent Internal Auditor who reviews the Council's system of internal control;
- the Audit Commission, the Council's external auditors, who make the final check using the Annual Return, a form completed and signed by the Responsible Financial Officer, the Chairman and the Internal Auditor. The Audit Commission issue an annual audit certificate;
- the number of significant issues that are raised during the year.

5. SIGNIFICANT INTERNAL CONTROL ISSUES

No significant internal control issues have been identified during the 2010-2011 financial year to date.

Whilst no significant internal control issues have been identified during the year to date, the Council strives for the continuous improvement of the system it has adopted for internal control.