



## **OVER STOWEY ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on  
16<sup>th</sup> May 2016 in the Village Hall

*Please note that these minutes are draft until approved  
at the 20<sup>th</sup> June 2016 Meeting*

*Members are reminded that the Council has a general duty to consider the following matters in the exercise of any of its functions: Equal Opportunities (race, gender, sexual orientation, marital status and any disability), Crime & Disorder, Health & Safety and Human Rights*

Present:	Parish Councillor	R Curtis (Chairman) K Barrow M Cavill P Tully J White
	District Councillor	J Pay
	County Councillor	J Edney

Members of the Public:

Phil Rich - Chairman of Over Stowey Village Hall/Recreation  
Ground Committee

Alison Hoare – Village Hall

### **1. Apologies**

**Councillor D Peaster**  
**Councillor B Bartlett**  
**District Councillor M Caswell**

### **2. Matters arising from the last meeting:**

**To be discussed in the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council**

### **3. Chairman's Report**

**Chairman – Councillor Richard Curtis stated that the Parish Council continue to have a good team spirit which was particularly evident when everyone pulled together during the elections last year.**

**Strimming activities have been undertaken by Parish Council members and the areas covered look better for it.**

**The Parish Council has been able to help several local projects financially through donations from the Parish Council and also from the Downing Legacy:**

- Nether Stowey School received an amount towards the kiln for the new pottery room.**
- The Church will receive funding towards their meeting room and new gates for the cemetery are ready at Grandfields.**
- Funds have been allocated to the Cricket Club recreation ground project, as well as payments already made for the solicitors fees incurred to purchase the additional piece of land. Once completed, this will be a great asset to the village allowing children to be able to play safely whilst the cricket ground is in use.**

**Councillor Curtis took this opportunity to thank Councillors Barrow and Tully for their help and support with this initiative. He also commented that positive relationships with the Village Hall/Recreation Ground Committee are being made and this is also the case with the Church.**

**Councillor Ben Bartlett has been attending meetings held by the Forestry Commission regarding the mountain biking in the local area and this has helped everyone to understand how they can work together.**

**Councillor Morley Cavill has highlighted which footpaths needed clearing and actions have been taken to address this in most cases. Councillor Cavill explained there is still work to do, but the necessary information has been communicated.**

**Councillors Patrick Tully and Duncan Peaster have been involved in planning and have made visits where applications are made.**

**The new Parish Clerk was appointed as of January 1<sup>st</sup> 2016 and with support from the outgoing clerk, a smooth handover was achieved.**

**Councillor Curtis thanked the District Councillors for their continued support and advice and in particular when it was needed during the elections last year.**

**At this point Vice-Chairman Councillor Keith Barrow thanked the Chairman for his input during the last year and felt that despite the issues with the election last year, actually there had been a very positive outcome. Councillor Barrow commented that having John White voted on had also been a positive step and that he was an asset to the Parish Council and thanked him for the input into the Messenger.**

**Councillor Barrow concluded by again thanking Councillor Curtis for all the work he had done.**

#### **4. Somerset County Council Report**

**County Councillor John Edney stated that he was delighted to hear the report and on behalf of district wanted to convey his thanks as this Parish Council is one of those that “get things done by themselves and that is to be commended”.**

**County Councillor Edney took the opportunity to highlight the recent communication for environmental maintenance and responsibilities of the council and landowners.**

**With regards to roads, Lawrence Hackling had communicated that all roads are inspected at least 4 times per annum for defects such as potholes etc. There is a reasonable pot of money to assist**

**with repairs and within next year's budget the County Council are hoping that the repair of crumbling road edges (haunching) can also take place.**

**It would be helpful if whenever a problem (as described above) is found on a road, the exact location could be reported directly to Lawrence Hackling and he will undertake to get something done about it.**

**Councillor Curtis responded by saying that notes will be made when any problems are reported and maps used to pinpoint where they are. This information will then be sent to Lawrence Hackling.**

## **5. Sedgemoor District Council Report**

**District Councillor Julie Pay explained that a two-page report has been produced:**

### **A brief review of the last year (2015/16) in Sedgemoor.**

Now more than ever, people are turning to their local authority for support and Sedgemoor District Council is working hard to ensure we continue to deliver value for money services for our residents.

There are further substantial reductions in our funding from Central Government, which has been challenging for us as a Council, but has given us the opportunity to refocus on the important issues for local people and businesses. It is anticipated that all funding from Central Government will cease by 2019/20.

The recent budget consultation results show that 86% of customers are satisfied with the overall service provided by the Council.

Sedgemoor's priority services are Customers and Efficiency; Growth and Infrastructure and Housing, Health and Wellbeing - which is where we direct our funding, efforts and resources.

We are proud to have the lowest council tax in the LGA's nearest neighbours group, whilst still delivering jobs and growth into Sedgemoor.

## **Just a few of our recent successes in the past year:**

158 affordable homes delivered

570 New homes delivered

51% of all new homes were located on previously developed land – brownfield sites.

261 empty properties bought back into use over three years

The Number of empty homes in Sedgemoor is at an all-time low of 274

Prevented over 1,000 households becoming homeless

Last year we assisted over 10,000 people housing and Council Tax benefit claims.

10,500 calls answered per month by Sedgemoor Direct

46% of household waste recycled

2 Green Flags for our parks and 2 Seaside Awards for our beaches

1,234 fly tips removed – removed within 2 days

100% of graffiti removed within 5 days of being reported – 100% of offensive graffiti removed within 24 hours.

600 food hygiene inspections carried out.

Sedgemoor ranks 4<sup>th</sup> in the Country for the speed with which it processes benefit claims (six days)

100% of Lifeline callouts arrived at the property within 45 minutes

Sickness rates within the Council were 5.39 days, that compares well with the private sector and well below that in the public sector

Planning performance ranks Sedgemoor within the top 25% of Councils

In Sedgemoor we have seen a net birth rate for new enterprises of 115 – this increase is much higher than the national or regional averages

The past 8 years has seen the skill level at NVQ2 or equivalent in Sedgemoor rise significantly from 59.7% to 75.8%

In the last year we saw a nett increase in new job creation (in new enterprises) of 250

Long term unemployment is at its lowest ever level in Sedgemoor; currently standing at 238.

The Sedgemoor population continued to increase by (1.2%), 1500 people in the last year.

During the Summer months we have seen a resurgence of visitors to the area with approximately 620,000 staying visitors.

Significant sums of money have been invested in our parks and play areas during the past year

£56,000 of grant funding was distributed to support the work of local community groups.

The Clean Surroundings Service supported 20 'community clean-up' events by supplying litter pickers, bags, gloves, and arranging collection of the waste

£80,000 was allocated to a number of small flood relief schemes across Sedgemoor, which will make a difference where there is localised flooding caused by heavy rain or high tides.

We continue to train all Staff to the highest levels of customer care – SDC was re-accredited to the Gold standard by 'Investors in People'

I hope you will agree that the **9p in the £** that SDC keeps from your council tax is well spent

Sedgemoor District Council services cost you around **38p** per day

### **And by the way**

In Sedgemoor, there is a consortium of The Parrett and Axe/Brue Drainage Boards.

They are long established bodies who maintain certain watercourses around Sedgemoor via a complex system for flood defence and land drainage. Drainage rates are collected from agricultural businesses, along with a levy from SDC. The total levy that Sedgemoor will have to pay in 2016/17 will be £1.3 million. This amounts to 23% of a band D householder's bill.

### **A few additional facts from the last year:**

Helped **126,000** customers who called Sedgemoor Direct

Supported over **7,200** people by providing a 24/7 Careline

Processed **2,300** new Housing Benefit claims and **18,100** changes of circumstance

Own and maintain **37** play areas, parks and public open spaces within Sedgemoor including **2** Green Flag accredited parks, management of **3** Sedgemoor District Council skate parks and **2** beaches with Seaside Awards

Responded to **32** investment enquiries in the first nine months of 2015 and helped to facilitate **£20m** investment in the district

Planted **85,000** spring bedding plants and **72,000** summer bedding plants

Responded to **420** reports of stray dogs and maintained around **200** dog waste bins across the district.

Operated **157** CCTV cameras in Sedgemoor, Taunton and Yeovil.

Issued **1,242** licenses, including **398** temporary event licenses and **308** taxi/private hire vehicle licenses

**District Councillor Pay stated that no cuts to any services have been made.**

## **6. Reports from other groups:**

### **Village Agent**

**Alison Hoare reported on the Voluntary Community Car Scheme which is close to starting within Nether Stowey and Over Stowey.**

**Volunteer drivers using their own cars will be able to give *registered* users lifts. Passenger must be registered as part of the scheme – to avoid any problems with taxi firms and other transport services.**

**The scheme is due to go live at the end of this summer.**

**The Village Agent will be promoting the scheme throughout both parishes.**

**Somerset County Council have an online tool kit which has been used and a donation from Nether Stowey Parish Council has helped with the set up costs.**

**Councillor John White suggested that Over Stowey Parish Council consider a donation to the community transport – Alison Hoare replied that enough funding was in place and not needed at this time, but would bear it in mind.**

**Once the necessary information is able for registration, Alison Hoare will e-mail the forms to the Clerk to put on the Parish website.**

**Alison Hoare commented that since becoming the Village Agent, most of the queries she had received had been about transport and by getting the scheme organised, a major objective had been achieved.**

**Another area to consider is a community resilience/emergency plan in the event of an event that would affect the parish e.g. heavy snow, people being cut off and vulnerable people needing support. The information was passed to the Clerk to review.**

**Alison Hoare also agrees that cohesion has come a long way and “it was brilliant that the councilors had been re-elected”.**

**The Community Coffee Morning have been really successful in bringing people together and are a really good ice breaker.**

### **Village Hall and Cricket Club**

**Phil Rich the Chairman attended the meeting and expressed his thanks regarding how all are working together and how effective Councillors Barrow and Tully have been.**

**Meeting face to face has helped build positive relationships and it has been a very successful year.**

**The Village Hall has also done well over the past year.**

**With regards to the recreation ground, Somerset County Council have asked for an additional £500, now wanting to charge £2000 instead of £1500**

**Phil Rich has spoken to Sandra Carleton who will speak to the council’s legal representative and find out why there is an additional fee.**

**He is hoping to hear the outcome by the end of the week (20/05/16). County Councillor John Edney was asked if he could help and he replied that he would see if he could find out why the additional amount is required.**

**Councillor K Barrow also wanted to extend his thanks to Bridget Tully for her help and input since taking on the role.**

**Along with a new Chairman in place, actions have been taken already that have made positive changes.**

**In other areas, Phil Rich went on to say that the STOP signs on the road from Keenthorne adjacent to the Cricket ground are not very clear and that he doesn't think the stop sign can be seen.**

**The Councillors responded by saying that they will look at the signs and it may be necessary to speak to the landowner about cutting the hedge back.**

**Councillors Curtis and Barrow will inspect this as soon as possible.**

### **Nether Stowey Primary School**

**An e-mail was received:**

#### **Nether Stowey School Pottery Club**

Since we received the Over Stowey Parish Council grant, as well as grants from some other sources, we have managed to clear and refurbish a small unused brick building on the school site to use as a pottery room. New windows were installed, together with sink, purpose-made workbenches and the floor was painted to create a lovely, light environment in which to work. Over Stowey Parish Council donated money towards the new kiln which is of a generous size and allows a lot of products to be fired in one firing session.

Each term we have a group of six different children who attend weekly to explore and create interesting clay items. These can then be fired, glazed and glaze fired, producing durable items for presents or for use in the home. (See pictures).

We also have a group of adults who have formed their own pottery group. The pottery teacher who was working with them is no longer available and we would welcome the help of another experienced helper. We are also hoping that it might be possible to set up some pottery classes for the elderly so our next appeal for funds will be to allow us to purchase some adjustable stools for the pottery room.

We sincerely thank the Parish Council for their support and would appreciate consideration being given to a further donation for stools at some time in the future.

Thank you from all our young potters - they absolutely love their clay.

**The meeting adjourned at 7.40pm**

To: Members of the Parish Council

Cllr B Bartlett, Cllr D Peaster, Cllr K Barrow, Cllr M Cavill, Cllr J White, Cllr P Tully, County Cllr J Edney, District Cllr M Caswell, District Cllr J Pay

CC Amanda McMurren (Clerk to Over Stowey Parish Council)