



OVER STOWEY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Minutes of the Parish council meeting held on the 18th February 2013 in the village hall.

Present:	Parish Councillor	R Curtis (Chairman) B Bartlett (Vice Chairman) D Peaster K Barrow P Tully M Cavill
	County Councillor	J Edney
	District Councillor	J Pay
	District Councillor	M Caswell

1. Apologies for Absence

Parish Councillor	S Morgan
Parish Councillor	K Barrow

2. Members of Public

Mr Andrew Turner, Highways Service Manager joined us tonight.

3. Declarations of Members Interest in Respect of Items on the Agenda

4. Minutes of the Meeting 21st January 2013

The minutes of the January meeting were approved by Cllr Bartlett and seconded by Cllr Cavill.

5. New Items for Discussion

There were no new items for discussion.

6. Matters Arising from Minutes

Highways - Mr Andrew Turner

Cllr Curtis introduced Mr Turner to the Parish Council.

Mr Turner started by explaining that he is the Highways Service Manager for the Mendip and Sedgemoor area.

Potholes

Mr Turner explained that potholes are a hot topic this year. There are different levels to a pothole and this determines what the response time is. Attached is the information that Mr Turner kindly printed out for us detailing this.

At the moment the Highways department is dealing with at least 1000 potholes a week. Weather conditions have a major impact on potholes, snow and floods causes the freeze thaw action.

Q. How many staff do they have in the County.

A. 120 staff for the whole of the County so that would be 20 for each district. 40 for Mr Turners Mendip and Sedgemoor area.

Q. When potholes are filled in, around the edges it does not look like they are sealed anymore.

A. They should be sealing them but any potholes that are not sealed properly the Contractor will be doing remedial work on these and this will not cost County anymore.

Q. Some roads that are being resurfaced after the first rain storm it is being washed away. This is obvious that the work hasn't been done right, who pays for them to come back out and re-do the work?

A. Surface dressing was a real problem last year as the Contractors did it later on in the year. The work needs to be done earlier when the weather is drier. The Contractors have to ensure that this happens. Again this comes under remedial work and the Contractor pays for this not County.

Ditches

The budget for ditches etc has reduced massively from £750,000 to only £30,000.00 for the whole of the County.

Q. What happens if the Landowner does not maintain their ditches etc?

A. The County Council has a Statutory Function to enforce the Landowner to sort the problems out and to maintain their ditches and hedges. This is called an enforcement order. If it has caused flooding Somerset County Council now have a Flood Risk Team and they can serve notices to Landowners if they have not maintained this.

Cllr Edney wanted to point out that although SCC has the authority to do this it is only as a last resort.

Cllr Edney asked if there was a definitive map of Over Stowey showing what ditches the County are responsible for and which ones the Landowners are responsible for. Mr Turner will send a copy to the Clerk.

Q. What is the policy on checking areas?

A. The checks are on a risk based approach. Towns and “A” roads are checked more. Rural areas are generally once a year.

If any member of the public sees anything that they think is a risk they can ring 0845 345 9155 or e-mail with photos and information countyroads-sedgemoor@somerset.gov.uk

Hedge Cutting

Q. Last year when the Contractors were cutting back the hedges Cllr Barrow asked them if they could cut them back some more, he was told that they had been told only to “tickle” the hedges. This is no good as the hedges are still sticking out everywhere.

A. A hedge defines the edge of the Landowners field therefore it is the Landowners obligation to maintain the hedges. Once again if the hedges are not maintained and pose a safety risk County Council can serve notice to the Landowner, they can also do the work and then send the bill to the Landowner. This is of course the last resort.

Landowners do need to maintain their hedges more.

Q. Why do we pay council tax? What do we in a rural location get from it?

A. Only a small % of council tax actually goes to Highways.

Q. Could Parishes have the money that is allocated to cut the hedges etc and find their own contractors to do the work?

A. There were a number of schemes that have been started up recently. Community Warden Scheme is one of these and Mr Turner said he will send the information to the Clerk.

At the moment Contractors bid for the work through County Council and then they Sub-Contract out the work they can't do. Highways only pay the Contractors and then any work the Sub-Contractors do are paid from the original Contractor.

Mr Turner could not stress enough if a member of the public sees anything they are not happy with please contact Highways and they will deal with it. All safety defects Town Centres or Rural are all treated the same.

The Council asked Mr Turner if it would be possible to have Policy Statements which states the statutory requirements for what are the Landowners responsibilities.

Cllr Curtis thanked Mr Turner for coming to the meeting and answering our questions.

Cllr Edney, Cllr Caswell & Mr Turner left the meeting at 8.30pm.

Rubbish at Hack Lane

Clerk to write a letter to ask for the rubbish that was left by the builders to be removed at the earliest opportunity.

7. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

8. Planning

Application: 40/13/00001/STH

Proposal: Change of use and conversion of redundant agricultural buildings to dwelling and relocation of barn to form carport/store.

Location: Pepperhill Farm, Over Stowey, Bridgwater, TA5 1HL

Applicant: Somerset County Council

Application: 40/13/00002/STH

Proposal: Change of use and conversion of redundant agricultural buildings into a single dwelling

Location: Pepperhill Farm, Over Stowey, Bridgwater, TA5 1HL

Applicant: Somerset County

Cllr Cavill & Cllr Barrow will go and have a look at the proposed planning. No objections from Councillors. There is a bridle way that runs along the side of the buildings. Clerk to find out what is going to be done about this, will it be re-routed.

9. Correspondence

SDC
Nether Stowey Playing Field
Committee
SDC

Cluster minutes 27th November 2012
Construction of Multi-Use Games
Area at Nether Stowey
Somerset West Public Consultation
Day - 30 January 2013

10. Financial Matters

Clerks wages September	120.48
Photocopies	6.00
Telephone Calls	2.50
Grandfields	17.89
Garden Waste Renewal	45.00

Total of February 2013 BILLS 191 pounds and 87 pence

Cllr Peaster proposed the above bills be paid, seconded by Cllr Bartlett.

11. Date of Next Meeting

THE DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING IS DUE TO TAKE PLACE ON
18th March 2013 IN THE VILLAGE HALL.