



OVER STOWEY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Minutes of the Parish council meeting held on the 16th June 2014 in the village hall.

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

1.APOLOGIES

Parish Councillor	J Rees
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2.MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC SESSION

Reverend Marshall, Mrs Alison Hoare and Mr Peter Higginson joined us tonight.

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

There were no declarations of members interest.

4.MINUTES OF MAY MEETING

The minutes of the May meeting were approved by Cllr Tully and seconded by Cllr Peaster.

5. New Items for Discussion

Maintenance of the Closed Churchyard from 2015

Cllr Curtis opened the discussion by thanking Rev Marshall, Mrs Hoare and Mr Higginson for joining us and noted that the Parish Council is trying to organise a meeting where all relevant Committees that support Over Stowey could meet together to discuss the following years projects. The fact this has never happened yet seems a shame, so he took the opportunity to mention that maybe this should be an idea for the Parish Councils January meeting. Cllr Curtis then handed over to Rev Marshall.

Rev Marshall started off by explaining that Over Stowey's Churchyard was closed for burials on 1st June 1882. When a churchyard is legally closed it is normal practice for the Parochial Church Council to formally notify the local Parish Council of its intention to pass the maintenance over, this is in accordance with section 215 of the Local Government Act 1972. It is then usually passed from the Parish Council to the local District Council, again this has to be done formally in writing.

Mr Higginson, when he was Chairman of Over Stowey Parish Council thought that the responsibilities had already been handed over to the Parish Council. This was not the case as no minutes documenting this could be found in the archives.

Mrs Hoare thanked the Parish Council for the maintenance of the grass cutting over the years. The fact that we did this had caused the misunderstanding that we had already taking over the responsibility of the maintenance of the churchyard.

A few questions were then aired.

Q. A question was asked as to why none of the maintenance requirements were listed in the letter of 16/5/14 that the Parish Council had received from the PCC, giving advance notice that the PC would be required to take the graveyard over?

A. The letter was the formal request, they wanted to explain all the details in person at this meeting.

Q. Therefore could they clarify what the maintenance is for.

A. Cutting of the grass, pollarding trees and maintenance and repair of the boundary wall and associated ironwork. The pollarding of the trees is usually undertaken every 10 years and recent works cost around £1000. The grass cutting the Parish council already undertakes. It does not include anything structural to the main building. It is purely maintenance of the grounds.

Q. If the Parish Council took on the maintenance the precept would have to be increased to allow for this extra responsibility but if the Parish Council then handed the responsibility over to the local District Council would the council Tax increase thus charging local parishioners more in any case?

A. Mrs Hoare thought that this would be the case. However currently the financial responsibility lies with the Church which only has 28 active members to support this cost. Mrs Hoare viewed the church as a public amenity so thought that the cost should be borne by all Over Stowey residents.

Q. Two trees at the entrance to the church look like the roots are growing under the boundary wall, are they undermining it?

A. The last survey that was done came back clear but the date of the survey is unknown.

Q. When was the last time work needed to be done on the boundary wall?

A. None in the last 35 years, Spaxton has had to do major work on the boundary walls but have managed to get a grant from the lottery. This is always useful to know and bear in mind. However the railings have had to be repaired on numerous occasions over the last few years.

Q. After 100 years is it true that a churchyard that has been closed can be reopened for burials?

A. Rev Marshall said absolutely not.

There was concern that if the District Council do take responsibility for the maintenance we do not know how many cuts they would do a year? It was asked if it was possible that if the District Council do take over the responsibility, could the Parish Council carry on with the grass cutting and then bill the DC?

This is a matter that would have to be discussed with the District Council.

Mr Higginson mentioned that he would be more than happy to attend an annual Parish Meeting (which was suggested could be our January meeting).

Cllr Curtis thanked Rev Marshall, Mrs Hoare and Mr Higginson for coming. They left the meeting at 8.10pm.

6.Matters Arising

Fly Tipping

Cllr Cavil had dealt with the fly tipping that had occurred in Nutcommon Lane and it has now been cleared.

There seems to be an increase of litter, particularly MacDonald wrappers up at Great Wood. There is a worry about the lack of police presence to deter litter louts. PC Jacobs is the Local Beat Manager and our local Community Support Officer is Georgina Long, they can both be contacted with any worries or concerns.

Purchase of Land update

Councillors and members of the Village Hall & Recreational Committee met with Mr Meletiou and County Councillor Edney on site to discuss the purchase of the small strip of extra land by the Cricket grounds. It all went well and we were advised to send a letter to Mr Stubbs, Property Manager at Somerset County Council with our offer.

Adoption of Financial Regulations and Internal Control Documents

Clerk handed out a copy of the Financial Regulations and Internal Control Documents to be adopted.

Proposed by Cllr Curtis, seconded by all Cllrs present.

7.Any Other Business

Update from Highways about the verge work repairs by Bincombe, the work should be carried out in June.

The pot holes in Aley have still not been done, Clerk to get back onto Highways.

It was mentioned about having an action list to record all the matters that needed dealing with. We did have one but over time have stopped producing it, Clerk will start one again.

8.PLANNING

There were no new planning applications

9.CORRESPONDENCE

SDC
Somerset Community Foundation
SDC
SDC

LDF Newsletter
Newsletter
Quantock Cluster Minutes March 2014
Cluster Meeting 24th June 2014

10.FINANCIAL MATTERS

Statement of accounts -
Current account - £1635.41,
Reserve account - £9290.03
Graveyard Account - £2134.31

<u>Payments:</u>	Clerks wages	120.48
	Photocopies	8.50

TOTAL OF JUNE 2014 BILLS 128 pounds and 98 pence

Cllr Barrow 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
14th July **2014 at 7.30PM** IN THE VILLAGE HALL. THIS WILL INCLUDE
THE AGM.