

LOXTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON MONDAY 8th January 2024 AT 7.00PM

In attendance: Chairman Shipton, Cllr Bassett, Cllr Davies, Cllr Eden, Unitary Cllr Tristram and 4 Members of the Public.

The Minutes were taken by Clerk Sally Ferguson. The meeting opened at 7.00pm

53/23 The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

54/23 Apologies for absence- There were no apologies.

55/23 Declaration of Interests – None declared.

56/23 Minutes of Last Meeting – The minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council on 14th November 2023 were resolved as accurate and signed by the Chairman.

The Chairman closed the meeting for Public Speaking at 7.08pm for Public Speaking.

57/23 Public Speaking-

A representative of the Church mentioned at the last meeting that there had been no grant to the churchyard maintenance at both Loxton and Christon Churches. The Clerk investigated this and was able to shed some light on the past grants which she shared with the Church representative and all present. All grants will, in future, require a Grant form to be submitted and a formal resolution made by the Council. Two forms were given out for Christon and Loxton Churches and the request will be an item on the March Agenda. The Chairman spoke about the pressing issues of the trees in the Parish Acre and the need to be aware of prioritising spending of public money.

There was a discussion about the continued state of the potholes and water damage on the Village roads, and the frustration of residents that this has continued for so long. The Clerk was asked to also follow up on a hedge that needed cutting between Loxton and Christon.

A MOP then asked about the change of use of a property from a business unit to a residential dwelling, when originally it has been a barn. It was explained that everyone had a right to ask for change of use using the relevant planning application system, but not every application would succeed, and that ultimately the decision would be made by a Planning Officer based on the Planning regulations and constraints at that time.

The meeting reopened at 7.38pm.

58/23 Planning:

- 23/P/2668/FUL Loxton Lea, Sevier Road, Loxton.BS26 2XE. Proposed change of use of existing beauty salon to 1no. dwelling, works to include the installation of 1no. window and 1no.door to the South elevation alongside the erection of a bike store at the West elevation It was resolved to offer a neutral No Comment and let the Planning Officers at North Somerset decide this application.

59/23 Clerk's hours review-The Clerk had advised that 10 hours per month is often not adequate to complete tasks and manage workload. A document produced by the SLCC (Advice Note: Working Hours) made recommendations that a Council with one meeting every two months and minimal services should have minimum hours of 17.5 per month. It was resolved to increase Budget for 2024-25 to allow the Clerk to be paid a minimum of 10 hours up to a maximum of 17.5 hours depending on her workload each month. The clerk will keep a record of hours worked to reflect this change.

60/23 Loxton Caves Access Agreement with Cerberus Speleological Society – It was resolved to sign the agreement with the proviso that the Clerk would hold a copy of the Society’s Insurance document, and that there would be no access to the caves on days of tree surgery for safety reasons.

61/23 Correspondence- The Clerk advised the Members that she had ordered 250 flowering bedding plants from North Somerset which are FOC but would need collecting when ready.

62/23 Finance and to approve payments since last meeting-It was resolved to approve the payments since last meeting and acknowledge those due before the next meeting in March 2024.

- Clerk salary November (including back pay) = £210.70 +£20.00 expenses=£230.70
- Clerk salary December =£124.00+£20.00 expenses = £144.00
- N.I./Tax HMRC November =£52.80
- N.I./ Tax HMRC December = £30.80
- Scribe (Accounts package) = £207.36

63/23 The Clerk presented the Budget for 2024-25 which was discussed, and one alteration made. The consensus was that reserves still need building, and it was resolved that the Precept would need to be increased to £7,000.00 which would mean an increase to a Band D property of £1.19 per month or £14.32 per annum.

64/23 Reports:

1. **District Councillor** –Cllr Tristram had no reports for the Council.
2. **Highways/Footpaths** - None
3. **Parish Acre** – One of the benches was in disrepair and needed to be marked as out of use.
4. **Parish Orderly** -Nothing to report.
5. **Community Hub** –The Hub was continuing to do well, and an funding application to UKSP Fund at North Somerset Council for had been made. The Community bus was increasingly busy, and the Chef had received 38 positive reviews, 36 were 5* and the other 2 were 4*.

65/23 Items not covered elsewhere plus items for the next agenda- To consider grant request towards Grounds Maintenance from Loxton and Christon Churches.

Next meeting: Monday 11th March 2024 at 7.00pm.

Meeting closed at 8.19pm