

# SISTON

## PARISH COUNCIL

### **Minutes of the proceedings of the Siston Parish Council Meeting held at Warmley Community Centre, on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> September 2023 commencing at 7.30pm**

**Present** – Parish Councillors Andrew Stacey (Chair), Alan Bryant (arrived 20:00), James Hackett, Aled Rees and Stephen Reade.

**112. Apologies for Absence:** Councillor Nathan Reed, Ward Councillors Marilyn Palmer and Sandie Davies.

**113. Declarations of Interests under the Code of Conduct adopted May 2023**

Councillor James Hackett – Chair of Friends of Siston Common, Trustee of Warmley Community Centre and Chairman of East Bristol Cycling Group.

**114. Minutes Approved**

Full Council Meeting – 17<sup>th</sup> August 2023.

**Resolved:** The minutes were passed and signed as a correct record.

**115. Public Participation**

None present.

**116. Ward Councillor Update**

None present.

**117. Active Travel Grant (closes 28<sup>th</sup> September 2023)**

Ward Councillor Ben Stokes was not present to discuss the grant as planned.

The Clerk advised that Councillor Stokes wished to propose to the Council that they made an application to provide cycle racks at Warmley Community Centre. An illustrative quotation was obtained due to the timescale between the Parish Council meeting and the grant application expiry date.

Councillors agreed they wished to apply for an Active Travel Grant to provide spaces for three bicycles at Warmley Community Centre and three at the Signal Box Warmley, along with the cost of installation. The amount will be based on the quotations obtained. The maximum grant was advised as £1000.

**Resolved: All Agreed**

**118. Library Inductions Presentation by Neil Weston**

Neil Weston introduced himself as the Group Librarian for Emersons Green, Downend, Staple Hill Libraries and Digital Information and gave a presentation advising on the attendance numbers and numbers accessing the various services offered by the library. Services include: Issuing of books, access to computers and support to use them, scanning, printing (for a small fee), access to the website Ancestry (free of charge), IT classes, free WIFI, preschool events (which are beneficial to local parents), summer reading challenges, sessions for schools (with year 1 and year 6 getting a library card issued to them), health on prescription books, downloadable audios, men's mental health groups and e-resources.

Neil advised that they have open access – which means once registered, library users can access the library from 8am to 6pm, every day, except Christmas Day, when the library has no staff.

Councillor Reade asked if there is bus from which runs from Siston Parish to Emersons Green. Neil advised he will find out this information. Neil will also send to the Clerk posters for the Parish Council noticeboards.

**119. Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group**

Councillor Reade confirmed that the neighbourhood area designation application had been received by South Glos. Council. There were some formalities that need to be undertaken, but as the whole parish is being designated, he did not foresee any issues.

Councillor Reade also confirmed that he would incorporate the Local Nature Action Plan into the Neighbourhood Plan, which would include aspects of the some of the work already completed by Friends of

Siston Commons. He advised he had received links to examples of existing plans from Matthew Lipton – Commons and Biodiversity Manager of South Glos. Council.

#### **120. Finance Committee**

The Clerk read through the draft minutes of the meeting held on the 20<sup>th</sup> September 2023.

Clarification was given that Friends of Siston Commons would need to submit a full grant application to obtain a grant in the 2024.25 budget and that allowance had been made in the draft budget for £5000 for grant provision for all applications received during the forthcoming year.

A discussion took place regarding a project for restoration of the bridle way on Goose Green in 2024.25 and the recommendation to defer it for one year, due to the impact on the overall precept required.

Councillor Bryant reminded everyone that this year that Siston Parish acquired a further 119 properties and so residents will see a smaller increase in the precept, due to the amount being split across more residences.

Councillor Stacey informed everyone that they proposed budget and precept would be discussed and approved in the October meeting of the Full Council.

#### **121. Environmental Officer**

Councillor Hackett proposed an approach should be made to Emerson Green Town Council to share the resource of the Environmental Officer they are recruiting. The Clerk explained the Finance Committee had considered this in the budget planning for 2024.25 and set aside a sum for five days of consultation and travel in the planned budget. The exact specification to be decided in the forthcoming year.

**Resolved: All Agreed**

#### **122. Lane adjacent to St Barnabas Community Garden**

Councillor Hackett proposed a development of the land adjacent to St Barnabas Community Garden in collaboration with Oldland Parish Council.

It was clarified that the land was within Bitton Parish Council area.

Consideration would be given to some development of this land in the future and that potentially this is something that Councillor Hackett may wish to take forward in his role as Chairman as Friends of Siston Commons. It was agreed no action would be taken at this time.

**Resolved: All Agreed**

#### **123. New Allotment Site (Land behind 114 Tower Road North)**

Councillor Bryant proposed that the Council consider the piece of land in this development, that cannot be used for housing as a new allotment site managed by the Parish Council.

The Clerk confirmed that the Finance Committee had considered the allotments as part of their discussion and set aside an amount in the reserves for proceeding with this project, recognising there may be a need to employ a solicitor.

**Resolved: All Agreed**

#### **124. Parking issues – Chapel Road and Chapel Lane**

An email to Councillor Stacey received from a resident was circulated before the meeting.

The resident was concerned about a local business using Chapel Road and Chapel Lane for additional parking and workspace.

Councillor Stacey had made several visits to the area over a few days and gave a summary of the findings, that at the times of visiting, all vehicles were in appropriate spaces.

Councillor Reade had spoken to the business to find out some information and advised the business was renting between 18/19 parking spaces in the Chapel car park.

The Clerk had written to Park Legally at South Glos. Council highlighting the residents' concerns.

The Clerk was asked to write to the resident to advise them of the action taken and to advise that South Glos. Council take responsibility for parking issues.

**Resolved: All Agreed**

#### **125. Warmley Forest Sluice Gate Repair**

The Clerk explained that a resident had put in a freedom of information request to the Environment Agency and as a result was concerned that the agreed repair was a low priority and planned funding may not be spent on the repair. Councillor Stacey advised that a meeting with MP Chris Skidmore to further discuss this matter, that was planned on the 11<sup>th</sup> October 2023 at the sluice gate had been cancelled.

Councillor Stephen Reade advised that he had a meeting planned with MP Chris Skidmore, so he would highlight this issue at this meeting.

**Resolved: All Agreed**

#### **126. Letter to Bridgegate Engineering**

Councillors agreed a letter from the Parish Council should be sent to Bridgegate Engineering to ask for natural screening to be planted prior to commencement of the planned building work.

**Resolved: All Agreed**

#### **127. Allotments**

Councillor Bryant proposed an increase in the amount set aside for allotment prizes for 2024.25. The Clerk confirmed this was implemented in the 2023.24 budget, but not utilised.

An email was received from a resident concerned about local property occupiers using the allotment site for fly tipping. Councillor Rees reported he had visited the site and agrees with the concerns. He reported that some properties bordering the allotment also appear to be using land behind their properties for personal storage, encroaching on the land owned by the Parish Council.

The Clerk was asked to write to the owners of the bordering properties to remind them the land is owned by Siston Parish Council and politely remind them not to use the areas for waste.

**Resolved: All Agreed**

#### **128. External Financial Audit 2022.23**

The Councillors confirmed receipt and noted the contents of:

1. External Auditors Report
2. Conclusion of Audit notice – published on the 7<sup>th</sup> of September 2023 on the website and notice boards.

**Resolved: All Agreed**

#### **129. Finance**

a) Members received statement of accounts (receipts and payments inc. v budget) to the 29<sup>th</sup> August 2023

b) Members received and approved the bank statements to 29<sup>th</sup> August 2023.

c) Members received the Bank Reconciliation to 29<sup>th</sup> August 2023.

**Resolved - All agreed.**

#### **130. Accounts for Payment**

The on-line payment of the following items for September 2023 were approved:

1. S Thomas – Salary - £840.11
2. HMRC - £250.84
3. S Thomas – Expenses - £85.47
4. Warmley Community Centre – Meeting Room Aug 2023 - £29
5. BDO LLP – External Audit for year 2022.23 - £378
6. South Glos Council – Localism Charge - £457.81
7. South Glos Council – Non contested election fees - £525
8. Alan Bryant – Expenses – Numbered brass plaques for benches - £300
9. D&M Property Maintenance – Emergency repair of panel on Anchor Road bus shelter - £100
10. Warmley Community Centre – Meeting Rooms x 2 Sept 2023- £58.00

**Resolved – All Agreed**

#### **131. Clerks Update and Correspondence**

##### Update

- The Clerk has written to the Environment Agency to ask for an update on the reported incidents at Warmley Brook. A response has been received that the report 2150592 was simply closed without any action, as it was felt that it was only minor. The Clerk responded to advise how disappointing this was and asked if they have taken any action from the collective reports about Warmley Brook. A gentleman from the Environment Agency then got in touch. He advised that none of the reports regarding Warmley Brook from the Parish Council or residents were investigated and all closed as minor reports. He advised it was unclear why but confirmed that this was probably not what should have happened. He has looked at their own information and the Wessex Water maps and confirms there are lots of

sources which empty into the brook. He said he will attend the site and have a look. This will be approximately 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2023. The Clerk provided the contact of the Commons and Biodiversity Manager of South Glos. Council to the gentleman, as it was noted that he has already walked the route of the brook and has a possible source. It was advised that if a business was at fault, then the Environment Agency would take action. The Commons Manager has also made contact with the Clerk and advised it is likely water samples will get taken when the site visit takes place.

- The Clerk has written to South Glos. Council, Place – Operations Team, to confirm the design and location of the signing marking Siston Village are satisfactory. Councillor Stacey confirmed the sign marking Siston Village near to the toll house on Siston Lane is now visible and in good condition.
- Councillor Stacey proposed a letter of concern regarding the Development Planning Committee meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup> August and the consideration of South Glos. Councillors of the evidence of the Parish Council, feeling a decision had already been made beforehand. He felt this was not democratic. Approved by three Councillors, so the letter was sent to South Glos. Council on the 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2023. South Glos Council responded to advise they had investigated the complaint and it was not upheld. They advised they will continue to consult the Parish Council on planning applications.
- On 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023 two residents reported (by email and phone) that the back panel of the bus shelter on Anchor Road had been vandalised. An emergency repair was undertaken. Reports have also been made to the police.
- Response received from one of the Neighbourhood Policing Teams to advise they will be patrolling on nights the Warmley area on the weekend of the 8<sup>th</sup> September following our reports. Also confirmed the police have not seen an increase in anti-social behaviour in the Warmley area of the Parish. No trends.
- The Clerk has now updated the new financial system – Scribe – with the Cost Centres and Cost Codes. Payments are currently being input.
- The Clerk approached the New World Business Centre and asked about placing a water butt from their down pipe for the use by allotment holders. The matter is to be discussed with the Managing Director. Response awaited. Councillor Bryant confirmed the second business proposed was not located close enough to the allotment to make it a good source of water.
- The HSBC mandate has been passed to the branch, however a further document is required for identity by Councillor Reade, before it can be processed.
- The Parish Council have been notified that desilting of Felicity Pond will commence in the autumn once a contractor has been selected. It was noted that some of the vegetation will be removed to allow access for machinery. Plans are well under way and progress will be advised in due course.

#### Correspondence

- Email received from a resident asking for grass verges at Webbs Heath to be cut back, by Mounds Farm, due to lack of visibility. A tree branch also fell affecting visibility. The Clerk made reports to South Glos. Council.
- Email received from the resident's group against the Bridgegate Engineering application. They are intending to make a complaint against South Glos Council and South Glos Officers regarding their conduct with this application. Further emails of the complaint and ongoing correspondence also sent to the Clerk and kept for future information.
- Email received from a resident who lives on a cul-de-sac on the Loop Road, Mangotsfield. Despite contacting South Glos. Council, herself, she has been unable to get overgrown ground near her home cut back, which she advises is affecting her ability to sell her home. The Clerk established this was incorrect and liaised with the resident and South Glos. Council to get the area cut back with great results. Nothing heard from the resident, but the Clerk sent a thank you to the team at South Glos.
- Several emails and calls from a resident regarding Suez trucks on Siston Hill and Goose Green in the 7.5 tonne weight limit, not on collection dates, an email escalating the issue was sent to Mark King and Nigel Riglar of South Glos. Council by the Clerk. A response was received from the Waste and Cleansing Manager of South Glos. Council, who has taken all the reports and will be speaking with Suez. He sent his assurances that this will not happen again. Residents

making reports in future should record the date, time and registration number to South Glos. Council.

- Email received from a resident asking when South Glos. Council will remove the bales of grass from the commons. He is fearful that the grass underneath may die from being depressed. I have provided the contact details of South Glos Commons and Greens Team or suggested using the Report It function at South Glos, as the Parish Council are not party to this information. The resident emailed to advise that Matthew Lipton, Commons and Biodiversity Manager of South Glos. Council has assisted him and agreed to be a point of contact for that resident going forward.
- Email received from a resident to advise that you can report bollards being knocked over on the South Glos. Website "Report It" function. The Clerk advised residents should be encouraged to use South Glos Report it site in the first instance to issues that arise, so that it provides data to South Glos on issues and Parish Council emails escalating issues have more impact.
- Councillor Bryant received a report from a resident who has seen anti-social behaviour in Kingsway Park over the weekend of the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> September 2023. Details were sent to the Clerk and the police were asked if they could keep an eye on the area when on duty.

### **132. Friends of Siston Commons**

Report circulated advance of the meeting.

### **133. Other Business**

- Councillor Reade gave an update on the working group in collaboration with Oldland and Bitton Parishes. He advised a bus route from Warmley to Keynsham is being considered. A meeting with the WECA Officer is taking place shortly.
- Councillor Bryant advised that following the national conference of the Association of Industrial Archaeologist in Bath – they made a visit to Brandy Bottom and the Kingswood Heritage Museum.
- Councillor Hackett reported that the Warmley Community Centre now had a surplus of £8000 in their accounts. In response to a question by Councillor Stacey, he confirmed they are fundraising for a repair on the roof.
- Councillor Hackett reported that a representative from Bristol Zoo has been to Webbs Heath to give advice on New Zealand pigmy weed.

### **134. Co-option**

Councillor Stacey asked the candidate and members of the public to leave.

Each Councillor expressed their point of view.

The Councillors approved Justine Davies as a new Parish Councillor. Her office of acceptance was then signed in the presence of the Clerk.

**Resolved: All Agreed**

**Date of next meeting: Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2023 Community Centre**

**Meeting closed at – 21:18**

**Confirmed and signed**

**Chairman..... Date .....**

*Sara Thomas*

**Clerk for Siston Parish Council Email:- [sistonpc@gmail.com](mailto:sistonpc@gmail.com) Tel:- 07946 858048**