**DRAFT**

**BERRY POMEROY PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of Berry Pomeroy Parish Council Meeting**

**held on Tuesday 6th February 2024 at Berry Pomeroy Village Hall**

**PRESENT:** Cllr. John Mills. Cllr. Martin Fletcher. Cllr. Marie Flay. Cllr. David Hooper. Cllr Sam Penfold. Cllr. Graham Bennett.

County Cllr. Jacqui Hodgson.

Clerk: Mrs S Watt

No members of the Public or press were present

Cllr Hodgson’s report was distributed prior to the meeting.

Cllr Penfold’s Ward/District report had been distributed prior to the meeting.

Cllr Penfold gave an update from the Cllr Advocate meeting – there were no issues relating to Berry Pomeroy Parish save for the recent theft of artifacts via metal detectorists from Berry Pomeroy Castle.

The Clerk read out a brief Report from the Police Neighbourhood Manager – again, no issues within the Berry Pomeroy Parish.

There were no members of the public present and there had been no questions received.

 **STANDING ORDERS**

**1.06.02.24 Apologies:** Cllr Hawkins.

**2.06.02.24 Declarations of Interest**: Cllr.Fletcher – Item 7 & No.5 of the Clerk’s Report last item Late Planning Application.

**3.06.02.24 Approve Minutes of:** The Parish Council meeting held on 14th November 2023 – were agreed and signed by the Chair as a true record of the meeting.

**4.06.02.24 Clerk’s Report**..

**1. Monthly Finance sheet:** Circulated prior to meeting. Approved by all present and signed by the Chair.

**BERRY POMEROY FINANCIAL STATEMENT AND PAYMENTS**

**10th January 2024 to 6th February 2024**

**Bank Account Balances as at : 24th January 2024** (from statement)

Santander Main Account £38,480.63

Santander Reserve Account to 5th June 2023 £ 4,289.25

Berry Pomeroy Parish Council total balance as at 24.01.24: **£42,769.88**

**INCOME:** Nil

**EXPENDITURE**

**January/February 2024**

20.01.24 Clerk’s Monthly Salary paid by Standing Order £422.10

06.02.24 Chq.No. 741 Lengthsman £37.00

06.02.24 Chq.No. 742 DALC annual subscription £388.99

06.02.24 Chq. No. 743 HMRC £84.60

06.02.24 Chq. No. 744 Stationery £10.00

NOTE: One further cheque to be raised once discussed and agreed( Chq No. 745 Berry Pomeroy Village Hall £160.00)

The Village Hall invoice was discussed in full. Members expressed concern that there had been a 100% increase in the hire charge which was effective from January 2023 to which we had received no notification and, therefore, not accounted for in the budget for 2023/23 or indeed, our current budget for 2024/2025 as we have had no notification of any increases. It is requested that the Clerk also check the dates the Village Hall was used and to also write to the Village Hall Committee stating the Parish Council’s concerns. The Parish Council understands that there have been increase in costs such as electricity and heating, however, it was also acknowledged that the Parish Council had given Berry Pomeroy Village Hall a grant of £500 in November 2023 to assist with ongoing costs and maintenance. Chq 745 was not raised or signed off – this payment will be deferred until the next meeting.

Santander New Signatory forms – unfortunately, Santander has provided the wrong forms. The Parish Council agreed unanimously that the Clerk obtain new forms and meet each Councillor individually over the next month to get the forms and required ID completed, the current signatories will then sign the authorisation form at the next meeting.

 2. Confirmation of Precept: The Clerk confirmed the Precept had been submitted in good time and had been confirmed as being received.

 3**.** It was unanimously agreed to appoint Devon Audit Partnership as our ongoing Internal Auditors. The Clerk confirmed there would be no requirement for an External Audit for the last Year. The Clerk was given authorisation to sign the Letter of Engagement from Devon Audit Partnership.

 4. Correspondence – Jo Yeo from Food For Children Totnes, has written to thank the Parish Council for their very kind donation. The Clerk stated that she had spoken to Jo and that to date there had been no response from Berry Pomeroy Primary School regarding any families requiring assistance from Food For Children. It was agreed that the Clerk write to the school asking them to support the organisation as children could be missing out on being provided with free meals during the holidays which the school voucher system does not cover in full.

Email had been received by the new Chair of Bridgetown Alive requesting he attend a meeting to inform the Parish Council of what Bridgetown Alive does. It was explained that we are aware of what BA does as one of our former Cllrs is a Trustee, we have also funded them substantially during the last couple of years. It was agreed that Mr O’Connell be invited as a guest speaker at the Annual PARISH Meeting in May. The Clerk to write and offer the invite.

A further email had been received regarding the condition of the Sluice Gate at Longmarsh, the Clerk explained that she had previously explainded to the author of the email that Longmarsh was managed by SHDC, having said that, the Clerk had contacted Rob Sekula who has responded stating that there are ongoing meetings and consultations with the River Dart Saltmarsh Restoration Project to regenerate the whole area together with providing an upgrade of the broadwalk, both renewing existing as well as extending where necessary which will also assist wheelchair access etc. There is also funding available to SHDC to progress this project. The Clerk will write to the person who emailed their concerns and give them an update.

 5. Misc Updates: Defibs. Cllr Fletcher confirmed the defib is working correctly and being checked each week. The Clerk stated that we are still looking to see if there is anywhere willing to purchase the 2nd defib we own but cannot site. The Clerk also requested a working party to assist with cleaning the Kiosk and the windows. Cllr. Fletcher will cut the Defib signage to size. Cllr Hooper suggested contacting a residential nursing home. The Clerk will contact them whilst awaiting the results of another option.

The Clerk confirmed she had written to Highways regarding the installation of a mirror to assist pedestrians walking to Totnes from Berry Pomeroy Village, however, this is not possible for various safety reasons for the driving public. There seemed to be no alternative options. The hedge cannot be cut any further as it is already level with the retaining wall. Other options to be looked into.

The Clerk reminded Councillors of their duty to update their Registration of Interests immediately (the Clerk can provide the required forms) as it is a legal requirement to declare any Land or property in the Parish owned by a Councillor or their Spouse. The Monitoring Officer will shortly be contacting those who have not provided the update.

The Clerk stated that the Parish Council needed to confirm the date of the Annual Parish Council Meeting and the Annual Parish Meeting which are held at the same time. It was unanimously agreed that both meetings would be held on TUESDAY 7th MAY 2024.

Late Planning Applications: 3806/23/FUL – SUPPORTED (Cllr. Fletcher declared an interest)

The Chair stated that there was a Settler causing concerns in Bourton Lane, the Police were involved and Cllr Penfold in her Ward/District capacity had also been assisting. However, it was agreed that the Parish Council via the Clerk write a letter of concern to the Police and also to the Duke of Somerset. One of the biggest concerns is that the Settler has dogs running free and the adjacent farm is now starting its lambing season. The Settler also has a ferret and chickens.

6. ICO Complaint - The Clerk confirmed to the Council that all deadlines had been met from requests via the ICO to a complaint and a potential investigation. The Solicitors had been contacted and assisted with the responses. It was confirmed that Berry Pomeroy Parish Council does not hold the information requested. This has been confirmed numerous times to the ICO and indeed, the Complainant. The Complainant then made a further complaint stating the Parish Council had not held an Internal Review – it was confirmed by the Solicitors and the ICO that the Parish Council could not hold a review on information it did not have and would not be party too. It was further explained, that the Complainant did not appear to understand that the Parish Council was not the client in the Court Case to which the Complainant is referring and as such, the Parish Council would not be party to the costs incurred by the Insurance Company to the firm of Solicitors and Barrister which the Insurance Company employed to handle the case. The Clerk confirmed that the final response was given to the ICO on 10th January 2024 one week prior to the deadline. There has been no further response to date from the ICO. The Council were informed that the Complainant had written an article which was circulated to the Cllrs and which had caused much distress. The Solicitor’s and indeed, the Councillors agreed that there would be no response. It was also confirmed that the Parish Council nor its Clerk were being investigated.

Late Planning Applications: 3806/23/FUL – SUPPORTED (Cllr. Fletcher declared an interest)

**5.06.02.24PLANNING**

Application: 0154/23/FUL – NO COMMENT

3995/23/FUL - OBJECT. Comment: concern regarding the visual impact. Road access issues. Increased traffic volume (Cllr. Fletcher declared an interest)

.

**6.06.02.24TRAYE** - DALC had confirmed that a Parish Council without the General Power of Competence could only provide funding under s137 conditions. This meant that only the amount per head of its parishioners could be used and that any amount must be for the benefit of those residents only. It was agreed that no further discussions would take place until May. The Clerk is requested to obtain a report prior to that meeting indicating the attendance at Bridgetown Community Hall of its young parishioners. It was confirmed that the Parish Council is not dismissing funding, it is ensuring it can fund legally and appropriately. It was acknowledged that it is an excellent project.

**7.06.02.24 POLICE ADVOCATE SCHEME:**  Cllr Penfold had stated that her meeting commitments had increased substantially and there were some meetings she could not attend. It was agreed that there were no other Cllrs able to attend as all worked during the day when these meetings were held. It was unanimously agreed that the Clerk would attend when Cllr. Penfold was unable to do so.

**8.06.02.24: Date of Next Meeting:**

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 5th March 2024 at 7.15pm. Venue: Berry Pomeroy Village Hall.

**9.06.02.24: Part 11: Confidential Matters**

**1.** Vote to exclude members of the public & press due to the confidential nature of the business to be discussed and transacted, was unanimously agreed and approved.

**2.** The Parish Council were updated on the Clerk’s current quite major health issue. The Clerk is able to work without restriction currently, but has organised for a fellow Clerk to attend any meeting which becomes due at a time she is not well enough to attend.

The Meeting Closed a 21:05hrs

Signed:………………………………………………….Date: 5th March 2024

Chair: Cllr. John Mills