

# AVETON GIFFORD PARISH COUNCIL

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## MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN THE FISHERMAN'S REST ON WEDNESDAY 28th FEBRUARY 2024

<b>Present</b>	Cllr Ros Brousson Cllr David Davis-Berry Cllr Mark Smith Cllr Peter Smith Cllr Peter Wade Cllr Louis Bodmer Cllr Niki Harrop	RB in the Chair DDB MS PS PW LB NH
<b>In attendance</b>	Amy Clayton	Clerk
<b>Apologies</b>	Cllr Rosie Warrilow Cllr Rufus Gilbert Cllr Lee Bonham	RW RG (County Councillor) LBon (District Councillor)
<b>Members of the public</b>	0	

**42/24 TO RECEIVE AND ACCEPT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**  
Cllr Warillow, Cllr Bonham & Cllr Gilbert sent apologies.

**43/24 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM COUNCILLORS**  
None

**44/24 OPEN FORUM**  
No discussion

**45/24 TREES**

**a) To receive an update on the Pittens Barns trees and communication received**

Cllr Davis-Berry, Tree Warden gave an update:

The trees in question have been a longstanding topic, with the aim to recover the hedge row alongside the path. Ownership of the hedgerow was transferred to the PC in 2018 from SHDC. Eighteen months ago the owner of the barn notified the Council that overhanging branches were touching the barn roof and had already caused a small amount of damage. The Council needs to prevent further damage and it seemed sensible to combine the two items of work.

The Council have been advised to coppice the sycamore trees because a properly maintained hedge would provide a much improved habitat for bird nesting and wildlife. In addition, concerns have been raised about the danger posed by the tall trees. This proposed scheme is no different to the management plan that SHDC have stipulated for the owner of the new house adjacent to the barn as a required condition of the planning agreement.

Councillors have met with a qualified arborist and South Hams District Tree Marshall has been communicated with and no permission is needed for work on the trees as they are not protected. Cllr P Smith established several years ago that the trees alongside the playing field do not qualify for a Tree Protection Order because they are overgrown shoots of a Devon hedge line rather than individual trees of any particular merit.

The initial stage proposed involves restoring a small section of the hedgerow. And if the hedgerow has a replanting plan, which includes a variety of native species, it would be of a far greater benefit to the wildlife. Doing this initial small section would then allow the council to determine whether restoring the hedge line was a viable project for further areas along Parson's Green

Cllr P Smith expressed concern about the lack of communication with residents, suggesting instead of commencing with the work immediately it would be better received if a longer communication period was allowed for over the summer. Cllr Harrop stated that although it is a small section visually it is an impactful section and therefore communication with the community is important.

Cllr Wade suggested that before any decision is made an alternative professional opinion should be sought and alternative methods of management researched.

As an alternative, it was suggested that the branches hanging over the roof of the barn are initially addressed and restoring the hedge line is delayed until more research can be done and time allowed for communication to the village.

**b) To discuss the quotes received for the potential tree work at Pittens Barn**

The quotes for the work to amend the barn trees and restore the hedge line by coppicing the sycamore trees were presented to the Council as follows:

Company A: £4,100.00

Company B: £5,784.00

**c) To decide and agree on the work to commence and if required who to instruct**

The council voted on proceeding with the quotes obtained in order to address both the overhanging branches and the sycamore coppicing to restore the hedge line and **RESOLVED** that the combined work **SHOULD NOT BE APPROVED** at this time.

Instead the Council **AGREED** to the following:

- 1) To address the branches overhanging the barn by getting them removed, in order to reduce the risk of damage to barn. Cllr Davis-Berry will ask a tree surgeon to provide a quote. .
- 2) To obtain an independent opinion from an additional qualified arborist on how the sycamore trees can be managed and advice on re-planting plans if required.
- 3) Any work that the Council decides to do to address the Sycamore trees is to be completed after the beginning of September when the bird nesting season is over and weather conditions permit, which will allow time for a communication plan with residents.

**46/24 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION OR NEXT AGENDA**

The following items were requested to be placed on the Agenda for the next meeting:

- Update on a replacement pool manager.
- Timbers car park revenue opportunity.

The meeting closed at 19.32pm

Signed.....Date..... Mrs R Brousson (Chair)

**NEXT MEETING** Thursday 7th March at 7.30pm in the Memorial Hall