

AVETON GIFFORD PARISH COUNCIL

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MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD BY E-MAIL ON 11th MAY 2020

Compiled from e-mailed responses to an agenda

Contributing	Cllr Sarah Harcus	SH	In the chair
	Cllr Ros Brousson	RB	
	Cllr Susan Cherry	SC	
	Cllr David Davis-Berry	DDB	
	Cllr Josie-Alice Kirby	JK	
	Cllr James Reina	JR	
	Cllr Peter Smith	PS	
	Cllr Rosie Warrillow	RW	
	Cllr Dominic Webb	DW	
	County Cllr Rufus Gilbert	RG	
	District Cllr Kate Kemp	KK	
	Peter Javes	Clerk	

70/20 REPORTS

70.1 PARISH PATHS PARTNERSHIP

Penny Schroeter (PS) has now taken over the role of PPP coordinator.
The DCC grant of £800 for the year 2020-21 has now been received.

70.2 SHOP

Councillors agreed that the shop is providing a great service to the village in these difficult times. It is well stocked and very clean and tidy. The PC expressed thanks to all involved in running the shop.

71/20 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLUTION: THAT the minutes of the virtual meeting held on 6th April 2020 be accepted as a correct record. **Motion carried unanimously.**

72/20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

DDB re Neighbourhood Plan minute 84/20
PS re low wall on Fore Street, minute 01.82/20

73/20 CO-OPTION OF COUNCILLOR

RESOLUTION: THAT Susan Cherry be co-opted back on the council.
Motion carried unanimously.

74/20 AUDIT

The annual internal audit had taken place by e-mail and the full report is attached at Annex A. The meeting felt that because there had been no opportunity to explain some points the report was over-critical and in some cases incorrect. Councillors had discussed the report by e-mail and their responses are summarised in Annex A. Where appropriate the PC would take action to address points raised.

75/20 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

RESOLVED THAT the annual governance statement for the year ended 31st March 2020 be approved and the Chair and Clerk be authorised to sign it and submit to the external auditor.

76/20 ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS

RESOLVED THAT the accounting statement for the year ended 31st March 2020 be approved and the Chair and Clerk be authorised to sign it and submit to the external auditor. A letter would be sent to PKF Littlejohn LLP refuting the internal auditor's findings on VAT and the quote for the mooring posts.

77/20 COUNTY COUNCILLOR

RG had kept the PC updated on DCC Covid-19 matters and also advised that Fore Street was now scheduled to be resurfaced.

78/20 DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

It was noted that KK was now at home convalescing and the PC sent best wishes for a

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speedy recovery.

District councillor Julian Brazil was covering for KK and had reported that SHDC would not meet to consider planning applications until safe to do so.

79/20 FLOODING AND SEWAGE

A plan for the route of the new sewage pipe was awaited.

The stream gauge maintenance contract had been renewed. DDB questioned its usefulness since it would not stop flooding, however it does give early warning of such an event.

80/20 PLANNING

01.80 New applications: SHDC asked to advise if cannot visit by comments date.

- o **0681/20/FUL Babland Farm Modbury PL21**

Conversion of barns to four self-catering holiday units with associated car parking and landscaping and

0688/20/LBC0 Babland Farm Modbury PL21

Listed Building as above

Comments by 1-May-20

0979/20/FUL Oak Park Farm, Aveton Gifford, TQ7 4LE

Erection of new agricultural building to house livestock and storage (Barn 1)

Comments by: 4 June 2020

- o **0980/20/FUL Oak Park Farm, Aveton Gifford, TQ7 4LE**

Erection of new agricultural building to house livestock and storage (Barn 2)

02.80 SHDC PLANNING DECISIONS SINCE THE LAST MEETING

- o **3123/19/ARC: The Old Walled Garden, Aveton Gifford**

Application for approval of details reserved by conditions 3, 4, 6, 7,8 and 10 of planning consent 0302/17/FUL (Appeal ref. APP/K1128/W/17/3177770))

DECISION: Discharge of condition approved

- o **0399/20/ARC: Little Efford Farm, Aveton Gifford TQ7 4PA**

Application for approval of details reserved by conditions 12 (roofing spec), 13 (rooflights), 14 doors/windows), and 18 (bat licence) of planning consent 0467/19/FUL

81/20 FINANCE

01.81 BANK BALANCES as at 4th May

£37,210.35

Cash held on behalf of:-

Play Park Project	13,878
Parish Paths Partnership	1,574
Hall project, balance of Lottery grant	6,500
Neighbourhood Plan	-310
Pool liner replacement fund	2,000

02.81 PAYMENTS APPROVED (these include VAT where applicable)

Folio	Payee	Reason	£
03	Greenspace	Grass cutting	328.00
04	HMRC	Clerk's income tax –January to March	228.80
05	DALC	Annual subscription	199.85
06	Hydro-Logic Services	Flood warning contract	858.00
07	Greenspace	Grass cutting	370.00
08	Peter Javes	Administration	333.48
09	Alison Marshall	Internal audit	200.00
TOTAL PAYMENTS SINCE LAST MEETING			<u>2,518.13</u>

03.81 RECEIPTS

Lloyds Bank	Interest	£ 0.76
SHDC	Precept and CTSG	13,037.00
DCC	Grant for PPP	800.00

TOTAL RECEIPTS SINCE LAST MEETING

13,837.76

82/20 PARISH ISSUES

01.82 Low wall on Fore Street by Matford

PS commented that In the 33 years he had lived at Matford there have been several people fall over the edge but no serious injuries to his knowledge. In context with other highway safety issues such as surface water flooding & fatal road accidents, this is a low priority.

The issue was discussed with the DCC County Councillor who said that DCC would not do any safety improvement work & has left any improvements to the PC. PS had discussed with a neighbour, and it was felt that that it is clearly a highways issue to resolve.

The wall is constructed from soft local stone & lime mortar would not be strong enough to attach a wood or metal barrier to the top of the wall as it was never intended for that purpose. Securing a structure to the back of the wall would provide a much stronger fixing but would result in the very narrow vehicular access at the top of Townswell Lane to become impractically narrow. The lane is used by motor vehicles. Boring the tarmac to fix the structure to the road would provide a much stronger anchor but involves working on the highway. This would require a temporary road closure & a trained contractor with specialist equipment. This would be very costly & working on the highway is not something the PC should get involved in.

Having considered the above very carefully & in view of the very infrequent occurrence of accidents I think resolving this issue is not a priority for the PC.

PS felt tha the PC should write to the DCC Highways Neighbourhood officer to make him aware of the hazard the low wall presents to pedestrians using Fore Street & placing the responsibility with DCC for resolving the issue.

02.82 Electric Car charging point: no progress on the car charge points.

03.82 Customizing Road Signs in the village: JK suggested that the children having to attend school (key workers children) may like to design one of the signs. The other three would still be in the competition

04.82 Fore St Traffic: Ongoing.

83/20 COMMUNITY POOL & SWOOSH

The pool remained closed and PS was continuing the winter maintenance regime.

84/20 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

DDB reported no change from last month; final questions from the examiner were awaited together with a date for the vote on the plan. .

85/20 TREE WARDEN

DDB reported that monitoring of Ash tree dieback (ADB) would continue all summer, comparing this year's growth to last year's. There are some press reports that there may be more Ash trees resistant to ADB than was previously thought. 'Stand alone' trees v. 'hedgerow' trees. Be good if it proves to be right but, it might just be a time lag in picking it up. The PC would try not to remove any Ash until it was sure that they would become a danger. The cost of removing any tree is down to the landowner and the PC has quite a few trees.

George Seager Berry has offered his help to the PC to set up a tree cataloguing/monitoring system of all our trees, for maintenance, health and safety which he feels the PC should have. DDB would meet him as soon as Covid 19 allows.

86/20 NEW VILLAGE HALL PROJECT

The architect's design statement should be available soon.

87/20 PLAY PARK PARENTS' GROUP

The play park remained closed on Government orders.

JK reported that the group had not been able to meet to discuss the play park. The PC would try to organise weeding the park areas over the next few weeks so they don't become too

overgrown.

Date of next meeting: 1st June 2020.

ANNEX A INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2019/2020 FOR AVETON GIFFORD PARISH COUNCIL

1.0	STANDARD DOCUMENTATION	
	Auditor's points	Response
1.1	<u>Financial Regulations</u> - in place, dated April 2015, but the document requires updating. I recommend that the document is reviewed and updated as a matter of priority.	OK – Clerk to review and produce update
1.2	<u>Standing Orders</u> - in place, not dated, and the document requires updating. I recommend that the document is reviewed and updated as a matter of priority. The statutory requirements should be listed in bold type.	OK– Clerk to review and produce update
1.3	<u>Code of Conduct</u> - in place, dated July 2012, and appears to be in order.	
1.4	<u>Website</u> - the Council currently uses the community website to publish its meeting minutes and agendas. There are no other Council documents on the site for public view which is highly unusual. Whilst the Council's current annual turnover figures are above £25,000., meaning that it does not, by law, have to publish more documents than this, I would question as to why it would not want to? A Council's aim is to serve the community and the funding it spends comes largely from the public purse. I recommend that the Council considers being more transparent with documentation and that it considers a website of its own or, alternatively, that more documents are uploaded to the current site and as a matter of priority. The Clerk should be given the ability to upload documents to the chosen site, on behalf of the Council, to ensure that statutory timescales are adhered to.	Councillors to consider, generally not in favour of a separate website.
1.5	<u>Council membership</u> — the Council is not currently at full membership which, I understand, will be corrected at the next full meeting of the Council. I recommend that the Council oversees this matter to ensure full numbers are met as soon as possible.	Done
1.6	<u>Petty cash</u> — not used.	No action needed
1.7	<u>Trusts</u> — not applicable.	No action needed
2.0	PUBLIC FUNDS	
2.1	<u>Payment controls</u> - in place and appear to work well. Receipts and payments are recorded within monthly minutes but do not appear on monthly agendas. I recommend that this matter is addressed in order that the public can view the payments in advance of the meeting, as would be usual.	Clerk to action
2.2	<u>Purchase and payment documentation</u> — items cross checked to the Accounts appeared to be in order.	No action needed
2.3	VAT re-claims have been evidenced. It was noted, however, that the Council has purchased a new pavilion for the local tennis club and that the tennis club has repaid the Council the net value of the purchase, less VAT. The Council has then re-claimed the VAT. Whilst the land is owned by the Council the pavilion is not and so, in my opinion, the VAT rules and regulations have not been adhered to. I recommend that the Council reviews the VAT rules and regulations, seeks advise if felt necessary, and corrects any mis-claim.	Not agreed – the tennis pavilion is clearly a council asset and is recorded as such
2.4	<u>The Accounts</u> - kept up to date and attended to regularly. A separate column for Section 137 spending is evident.	No action needed
2.5	<u>Section 137</u> - used by the Council and it is evident that spending has taken place where Section 137 should have been used but	This a little obscure, Clerk to investigate.

	has not. An example of this is the donation to the local shop which, in my opinion, should have been placed under S137. I recommend that the Council revisits the 'powers' under which a Council can spend public funds to ensure that, in future, a 'power' is in place prior to any spending decisions being made. If no 'power' is in place then spending under Section 137 can be considered and, if this route is used, the meeting minutes and Accounts should be noted accordingly. Section 137 funding limits apply. The Accounts should be corrected in this regard.	
2.6	<u>Quotations</u> - not always obtained when required and in accordance with the Council's rules and regulations. An example of this is the spending of funds on the mooring posts where '2 or 3 quotes is required for spending over £1,000.' I strongly recommend that the Council revisits its rules and regulations as a matter of priority and that the number of quotes required, and obtained, is recorded within the meeting minutes going forward so as to evidence compliance.	It is often difficult to get quotes from different contractors because there are simply not the skills available
2.7	<u>Borrowing</u> - ongoing and the paperwork evidenced appears to be in order.	No action needed
2.8	Other <u>income</u> , such as from the allotments, the swimming pool and magazine advertising, has been accounted for.	No action needed
2.9	The Accounts correctly record the <u>Receipts and Payments</u> method.	No action needed
2.10	<u>Car Show funds</u> — there does not appear to be any document in place setting out the terms of this agreement and I would raise a question as to whether the Council should be holding these funds in a separate account, as they are not owned by the Council as I understand it. I recommend that an Agreement is set up, as a matter of priority, and that the Council considers whether these funds should be held in a separate bank account. The Council should also ensure that no VAT is claimed back from purchases made from these funds.	Not agreed. This annual event is run under the auspices of the PC. Car show funds will now be recorded as Play Park refurbishment fund. VAT will be reclaimed on any equipment purchased from the fund.
2.11	<u>Committees</u> — I have been advised that there are no Committees in place at the current time.	
3.0	MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET CONTROL	
3.1	Risk Management Scheme - in place, dated April 2015, and so is in need of a review. This document should be reviewed by the Council annually and the review date noted on the document. I recommend that this takes place as soon as possible.	
3.2	<u>Statement of Internal Control</u> — a document is in place, dated May 2015, and so needs updating. This document should be reviewed by the Council annually and the review date noted on the document. I recommend that this takes place as soon as possible.	Clerk to draft
3.3	A general <u>Insurance policy</u> is in place and I would remind Council that an inclusion for Fireworks may be applicable.	Clerk specifically notifies insurers of fireworks at each renewal
3.4	A <u>budget</u> document is in place and has been used to determine the annual Precept figure. The Precept information has been appropriately documented within the minutes of a full Council meeting.	No action needed
3.5	<u>Reserves</u> - appear to be in order.	No action needed
3.6	<u>Data Protection Privacy Notice, Freedom of Information Scheme, Complaints Policy</u> — none of these documents appear to be in place, as would be expected. I recommend that these documents are put in place as a matter of priority.	Clerk to draft
3.7	<u>IT backup</u> - completed by way of USB sticks kept off site, which is appropriate.	No action needed
3.8	Meeting <u>Agendas</u> - in order and Councillors are correctly summonsed to full meetings. The statutory three days clear	

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	notice, between the issue of the agenda and the meeting, has not always been adhered to. I recommend that the Clerk reviews the rules relating to this area and that the Council oversees the matter going forward.	Not agreed, agenda always go out at least three days before a meeting.
3.9	Meeting <u>Minutes</u> - brief but informative, note that matters arising' is still being used, against the recommendation of the National Association of Local Councils, and I recommend that the Council ceases use of 'matters arising'	Not sure why this is an issue.
3.10	Annual membership of the <u>Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)</u> has been confirmed. •	No action needed
3.11	<u>CCTV</u> — it is noted that dummy CCTV cameras are in place but that there is no CCTV Policy. I recommend that a policy is considered.	Clerk to draft
4.0	EMPLOYMENT	
4.1	The Clerk is the only employee and a <u>Contract of Employment</u> is in place.	No action needed
4.2	<u>PAYE</u> is outsourced and the paperwork viewed appears to be in order. No pension applicable.	No action needed
4.3	<u>Pay reviews</u> take place annually and pay increased have been recorded within the Minutes.	No action needed
5.0	ASSET CONTROL	
5.1	The Councils <u>Asset Register</u> was last reviewed in September 2019 and appears to be in order	No action needed
6.0	BANKING AND BANK RECONCILIATIONS	
6.1	Monthly <u>bank reconciliations</u> have been produced and agreed by the Council.	No action needed
6.2	<u>Authorised signatories</u> currently stand at 4, which appears to be appropriate.	No action needed
6.3	The Clerk oversees the <u>on-line banking process</u> and the Council signs off all monthly payments. This process appears to work well.	No action needed
7.0	YEAR END	
7.1	The <u>2018/2019 External Auditors Report and Certificate</u> raises a point with regards to an historic issue with the transposing of the loan balance figures on the AGAR Section 2 document. The Council needs to address this matter within its records, as has been requested, if not already done.	Obscure, why bother, but can do
7.2	The year-end <u>Accounts, to 31/03/2020</u> , are being prepared and full understanding of the Audit process has been confirmed by the Clerk.	
7.3	Public Rights - in order.	

Summary I can report that, within the areas checked, it is my opinion that Aveton Gifford Parish Council has some good systems of internal control in place, however, there a lot of highlighted areas within this report that require immediate attention. The recommendations listed have been made in order to support the lowering of risk to the Council and also to support future risk and internal control management. It is disappointing to see that recommendations made in previous years have not been addressed or referred to in Council meetings.

Alison Marshall — Local Council Administration Services