

## PORLOCK PARISH COUNCIL

### Minutes of the Meeting held at Porlock Village Hall on Wednesday, 12<sup>th</sup>. December 2007

**Members Present:** Cllr. M. Jones, Chairman  
Cllr. A. Wright, Vice-Chairman  
Cllr. Britnell, Cllr. Edward, Cllr. Jacobs, Cllr. Latham,  
Cllr. McCoy, Cllr. Mrs. Rowe, Cllr. Mrs. Russell and Cllr.  
Sage.

**1. Apologies** were received from Cllr. Mrs. Palmer and Cllr. Stenner.  
Cllr. John Edwards (SCC/ENP) and Cllr. Jon Freeman (WSC) had also sent  
apologies.

#### **2. Declarations of Interest**

None were declared.

**3. The Minutes** as previously circulated of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup>. November were  
confirmed and signed with amendments to the Item numbering after Item 11.  
Also : Page 7 – reports from outside bodies – Recreation Ground.  
Ref: Picnic benches – the word “matter” changed to “location”.

#### **4. Items for Report not on the Agenda**

##### Old School – lead on roof

There had been a possible attempt to remove lead from the flat roof on top of the  
dormer window at the Old School. The police had been notified and had suggested  
increased security at the building in the form of additional lighting, and no vehicle  
access after closing time. The Clerk will notify the Library and Visitor Centre of this.

##### Japanese Knotweed

Cllr. Britnell informed the Council that some of the reported areas in Redway had not  
been sprayed. He will monitor the situation.

The meeting was adjourned for Public Participation.

#### **5. Public Participation**

Mr. Allen, who had written to the Council some months previously concerning  
parking at the Village Hall, asked for clarification on the future position of permit  
holders using the Village Hall Car Park. The Chairman outlined the discussions  
which had taken place with the Village Hall Committee, which had resulted in the  
decision that permits would in future be priced at the same level as the District  
Council permits for the Central Car Park.

Mr. Allen felt that the course of action which had been adopted would not solve the parking problems and that permit holders had been treated with a lack of consideration.

The meeting was re-convened.

## **6. Somerset County Council and District Councillors' Reports**

None of the Councillors were present owing to conflicting duties, but all had provided brief reports.

**Cllr. John Edwards(SCC/ENP)** had confirmed that progress on Villes Lane is very satisfactory but that, as yet, there is nothing specific to report. Highways had confirmed with Cllr. Edwards that the bridge at the top of the Horseshoe between Hawkcombe and Doverhay is in a very weakened condition. The materials used in the construction are very mixed and the site is challenging. There will also be a need to divert a drainage pipe. Highways are co-ordinating the project with the Environment Agency and the weight restriction will be in place for at least 18 months. School funding is set to change and Cllr. Edwards asked the Council to consider sending a letter to the Education Authority supporting the retention of the small hill schools.

**Cllr. Mrs. Angela Palmer (WSC)** had reported that as from 10<sup>th</sup>. December contractors will be installing electricity cables to the new offices in Killick Way and part of the Car Park will be coned off. Grant aid is available to community businesses through GRANTnet. The site contains the full range of UK and EU support provision on one database and can be viewed on the WSC website [www.westsomersetonline](http://www.westsomersetonline). The recommendation to Cabinet that Aquasplash be closed has been withdrawn. A partnership agreement between SCC and Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership may allow the pool and gym to remain open. Warm and Well grants are available to residents fulfilling certain criteria. Leaflets are available from WSC. Somerset Strategic Partnership will be holding two consultations in January at either West Camel or Cheddon Fitzpaine.

**Cllr. Jon Freeman (WSC)** reported that the planning issues between the Doverly Manor Committee and ENP Planners are gradually being resolved, and that outstanding applications will be delegated to officers to avoid further delays.

## **7. Planning**

There were no applications for consideration. The minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on Wednesday, 21<sup>st</sup>. November were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

## **8. Finance**

8.1 The minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup>. November were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

**Precept:** on a proposal from the Chairman seconded by Cllr. Wright it was **RESOLVED** to accept the suggestions concerning the use of certain earmarked funds to reduce the overall level of precept required. A precept figure of **£36,321** was unanimously approved.

**Cemetery Charges:** On a proposal from Cllr. Latham seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Rowe it was **RESOLVED** to adopt the new level of charges as recommended by the Finance Committee.

**Banking System:** The Council fully approved the Finance Committee's recommendation that an automatic transfer system be set up between the Current and Reserve Accounts, and that a daily balance of £100 be kept in the Current Account.

**Clerk's Contract of Employment:** Cllr. Mrs. Russell proposed, and was seconded by Cllr. McCoy, that the Council accept the terms and conditions as negotiated and agreed by the Finance Committee and this was unanimously approved. The recommendations made by Cllr. Sage and Cllr. Latham concerning leave entitlement and back pay were also approved. Cllr. Sage was thanked for undertaking the considerable work involved in the revision of the Contract.

**Discipline and Grievance Procedure:** The Finance Committee had considered and approved the Model procedure and following the Committee's recommendation it was **RESOLVED** that this be adopted. In the event of a dispute a Panel consisting of Members not involved in the dispute would be appointed at a Council meeting. A copy of the Discipline & Grievance Procedure will be kept in the Parish Council office for reference purposes.

It was **RESOLVED** that all other Committee recommendations be adopted.

The following accounts were approved and passed for payment:-

Mr. A. Binding, winter maintenance at Cemetery & War Memorial	380.00
Brightside Cleaning, window cleaning at Old School	9.00
BT, internet services for Parish Room	105.71
JMF Property Services, repair to lead on Old School window	49.94
Soc.of Local Council Clerks, renewal of subscription	129.00
Cllr. Britnell, travel costs to Dulverton on shared basis	8.00
Cllr. McCoy, travel costs to Env.Agency meeting at Bridgwater	27.20
Mrs. C. Fitzgerald, Clerk's salary (revised) and backpay less tax	1128.14
Mrs. C. Fitzgerald, Clerk's expenses	2.04
HM Revenue & Customs, tax and NIC due	487.74
Mr. B. Hammett, Caretaker's wages	60.66
Recreation Ground Committee, WSC Amenity Grant	1138.00
Veolia Environmental Services, refuse collection at Cemetery	5.99
Total:	<b>3531.42</b>

## **9. Matters Arising**

### **9.1 Doverhay Car Park**

A letter had been received from the District Council Car Parks Officer confirming the future arrangements for permits for Doverhay residents.

### **9.2 Youth Achievement Award**

A letter confirming the details of the proposed scheme had been received from Mrs. Pinnington. The Council were in agreement that there should be a tangible gift to the winner of the Award i.e. a book token, in addition to their name being inscribed on the wall plaque.

Cllr. Wright agreed to act as liaison Councillor for the project and report back at the next meeting.

### **9.3 Hawkcombe Stream – flood prevention**

Cllr. McCoy had attended a workshop arranged by the Environment Agency. The aim of the Agency is to have a flood prevention scheme in place for Hawkcombe should the need arise. Cllr. McCoy had written a detailed report outlining the Agency's proposals and each Councillor had received a copy for information.

Cllr. Sage felt that the Parish Council should look at the stream system within the village and possibly identify and mark culverts. It was agreed that residents should be made aware of the dangers of flooding from these streams, and the fact that they had a responsibility to be vigilant and clear blocked ditches etc. on or near their properties. The possibility of the Council arranging for an annual clearance of some of the ditches and culverts, possibly as part of the Parish Emergency Plan, was briefly discussed.

Cllr. Britnell stated that since the bridleway behind the ex-public toilets in Parsons Street is no longer negotiable because of flood works, there is no bridlepath from Porlock up Parsons Hill to connect with the main bridleway. Cllr. Britnell agreed to draft a report on which to base a letter to Rights of Way and present this for discussion at the next meeting.

## **10. Correspondence**

### **Recreation Ground – Replacement Sign**

A copy of a letter from Mr. Rowe to the Recreation Ground Committee had been received for information.

### **Avon and Somerset Constabulary – Exmoor Cluster**

A letter of introduction had been received from Sgt. Andy Whysall, the newly appointed Sergeant for the Exmoor Cluster.

### Somerset Strategic Partnership

Notification of Consultation meetings received.

### WSC – Rural Initiatives Fund (RIF)

Notification received that the RIF has expired for this year and details given of alternative grant options.

### Somerset Highways – Hawkcombe South Bridge

Weight restriction Order received. A copy posted on the Notice Board.  
Also received – A Guide to Winter Services leaflet.

### Ironman Competition 2008

Details received and passed to Cllr. Edward.

### Standards Committee

Minutes and Agenda for the December meeting received.

## **11. Reports from Outside Bodies**

### Village Hall

Cllr. Jones reported that the sanding of the floor in the Small Hall is now complete and it is hoped to sand the Large Hall floor next year.  
The partition in the Ladies' toilet is under construction and washbasins will be installed at a later date.

### Recreation Ground

Cllr. Jacobs reported that the fencing in the top field has been postponed due to pressure of work, but that it is hoped to continue next week. In answer to a question, Dr. Wilton, the Committee Secretary, confirmed from the floor that the Parsons Street hedge has been surveyed and will be layered in due course.

### Doverly Manor

Cllr. Mrs. Russell reported English Heritage had confirmed that, although evidence of an earlier door on the upper floor was inconclusive, to give best use of the building a connecting door would be permitted.  
The Committee are anxious to complete external building works to prevent damage to the fabric of the building.

### School Governors

Cllr. Mrs. Russell elaborated on the concern over funding for rural schools expressed by Cllr. John Edwards(SCC/ENP) in his report. It is proposed that future funding be

on a per capita basis rather than a class basis. This means that any school which drops below a two class level will not be considered viable and federation with other school will not prevent this. These proposals will not affect Porlock School, although the Nursery Class, which is operating at 50% capacity may be vulnerable.

It was **RESOLVED** that a letter in support of small rural hill schools being considered as a special case, on the grounds of hidden rural deprivation, be sent to the Education Authority.

### Highways

Mr. Hammett had reported that the 3 blocked gullies on the Porlock Weir Road have now been located, and Highways have agreed to build a concrete shield around each to protect them from further blockages.

The Porlock Hill sign is in hand and will definitely be replaced.

### Parish Plan

Cllr. Wright gave an update on the progress of the household questionnaire. It is hoped that the final version will be produced in January. It was agreed that it was essential for a representative from Selworthy and Minehead Without Parish Council to attend the next Committee meeting, at which the final draft of the questionnaire will be approved.

## **12. Items for Report**

### 12.1 Street Light – Oak Cottage, Doverhay

This was reported as having been out for 2 months and will be referred for repair.

### 12.2 Cemetery – Laurel Boundary Hedge

Cllr. McCoy felt that as no deeds were available for inspection, the Council should ensure that the proposed new fence was correctly aligned on the centre of the boundary, and that there was as little disturbance as possible to the earth bank on the Cemetery side of the boundary when the roots of the hedge are removed.

### 12.3 Association of Exmoor Parish Councils

Cllr. Sage reported that he had attended the recent meeting at which it had been decided that the Association should continue in being. It was felt that the work of the Association should not conflict with the remit of the local Area Panels and it was therefore agreed that only one topic should be on the agenda for discussion at each meeting. Each Parish Council was asked to send as their representative the portfolio holder for the particular subject under discussion. The subject on the agenda for the next meeting will be local employment.

There being no other business the Meeting closed at 9.25pm