

# SEMINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

## Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 13 July 2009 at 8.00 pm in the Village Hall

### Present.

Councillor R Oglesby (Chairman) and Councillors P Bowyer, F Dobbyn, K Lockwood, S Rimmer, P Vooght and the Clerk, Roger Coleman.

Wiltshire Councillor Jonathon Seed attend (Part-time)

There were two members of the public present.

### 1. Declaration of Interests.

There were no interests to declare in accordance with the Revised Model Code of Conduct.

### 2. Apologies.

Apologies for non-attendance were received from Parish Councillors R Robinson, B Smyth and C Wade.

### 3. Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on 17 June 2009.

The minutes were agreed and signed as a true and accurate record.

### 4. Adjournment.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting to give members of the public the opportunity to speak. The Chairman then reconvened the meeting.

At the invitation of the Chairman Wiltshire Council Cllr. Seed provided a report that addressed current issues, including the steps being taken by Wiltshire Council to establish 'official travellers' sites in Wiltshire. Cllr. Seed also agreed to progress a reply from Wiltshire Council in respect of the availability of land for allotment gardens.

### 5. Neighbourhood Policing.

In the absence of a member of the Neighbourhood Policing Team, no report was given.

### 7. Planning.

a. The Clerk gave the following report on the status of extant planning applications:

09/00407 Littleton Stables Mobile Home/Day Room **Refused.**

The Council noted that an appeal had been lodged against the Enforcement Notice and asked the Clerk to send the original comments objecting to the development to the Planning Inspector.

09/00814	Aidan's Field Farm	Car Boot Sales	<b>PC Observations.</b>
09/00826	Stourton Farm	Barn Extension	<b>No PC Objections.</b>
09/01664	St George's Church	Replacement	<b>Decision Pending.</b>
09/01401	21 St George's Place	Conservatory	<b>Permission.</b>

b. The following planning application was received after 6 July 2009:

09/01983	15 The Orchard	Conservatory	<b>No PC Objections.</b>
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The Clerk reported that the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) had contacted him to advise him that the ICO had requested Wiltshire Council (WC) to provide additional information relating to planning application 08/03870 to the Parish Council and to enquire whether a full investigation was now required. The ICO had stated that in its preliminary investigation of the case it considered that

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Clerk to Semington Parish Council

Chairman's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

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the information now released was reasonable and that any remaining information was protected as 'personal data' and could not be released. The Council noted that the Clerk had placed this additional information on circulation and concluded that there was nothing further to be gained by a full investigation. The Clerk was asked to thank the ICO for ensuring that WC did release the additional information and to express concern that the Parish Council had to involve the ICO in obtaining information from WC that should have been released in the first place. The Clerk was asked to request the ICO to ensure that WC recognises its responsibilities in respect of releasing information in future, especially as many of the officers involved in the original 'restricted' release of information now occupy the same, or similar, posts within Wiltshire Council.

c. Cllr. Dobbyn tabled his proposed letter to the Wiltshire Times newspaper entitled 'The Rule of Law' and explained the rationale behind the sentiments expressed in the letter. He stated that this letter had been sent to all councillors prior to the Parish Council meeting and that he had noted that the Clerk had commented on the contents of this letter and that the Clerk had forward his own comments to all councillors. He challenged the comments made by the Clerk, stating that he believed that his letter covered a number of key points directly relevant to the unauthorised establishment of travellers' sites in the area and that those points were based on established facts. Cllr. Dobbyn also expressed concern that the Clerk could be seen to be attempting to influence the Council on important matters and that the Clerk may be confusing offering advice to the Council with expressing his own opinion on a matter. The Clerk replied stating that he had a duty to ensure that the Council was not brought into disrepute or subject to adverse and unjustified criticism. He stated that the letter was, in his view, inflammatory and that some statements could not be substantiated and, if published, would present the Council in a very unfavourable light. He added that he was also concerned that if subject to some injudicious editing by the Wiltshire Times, the letter could be damaging to the Council. The Clerk stated that the main thrust of the letter should be to pressurise Wiltshire Council to meet its legislative duty to provide 'official' traveller sites in Wiltshire, thereby avoiding 'unofficial' sites from being created. He added that he considered that 'advice' and 'opinion' were inseparable insofar as any advice he offered to the Council had to be based on his own opinion on a particular matter. He commented that the Council was at liberty to ignore any advice offered by the Clerk or to terminate the employment of the Clerk if the Council resolved that the Clerk was acting improperly.

The Chairman stated that he believed that the proposed letter was too general and covered too many issues for it to have the impact that he thought was necessary in order to resolve the issue of 'unofficial' travellers' sites. He recommended that the letter would be most effective if it challenged Wiltshire Council to take immediate action to provide 'official' travellers' sites. A general discussion ensued on the merits, or otherwise, of redrafting the letter along the lines proposed by the Chairman, during which councillors expressed their own views on the possible content of such a letter to the Wiltshire Times. At the conclusion of this discussion, Cllr. Dobbyn offered to redraft the letter to address many of the comments made by the councillors, especially in relation to a warning to elected representatives to note the wish of the electors or to face their wrath at the ballot box and to require Wiltshire Council to take action. The Council thanked Cllr. Dobbyn and accepted his offer. It was also agreed that the same, or similar, letter should be sent directly to Wiltshire Council. Cllr. Rimmer stated that a plan of action for establishing 'official' sites should be obtained from WC in order to be confident that appropriate action is being taken and proposed that the matter is taken further if the response from WC is unsatisfactory.

### **7. Highways.**

There were no matters to report.

### **8. Sports and Social Facilities in Semington – St George's Fund.**

a. There were no new projects to report.

b. The Council reviewed the following projects:

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## Sports/Recreation Field.

Cllr. Lockwood stated this project is progressing well.

## Village Hall Ceiling.

There was nothing to report.

## Wessex Close Play Equipment.

In reply to a question from the Chairman, the Clerk stated that he was awaiting a response from Wiltshire Council on completion of its 'Play Areas' Survey'.

## 9. Finance.

a. The Clerk reported that the current financial position was as follows:

### Semington Parish Council - Financial Statement - 13 July 2009

#### Lloyds TSB A/C 2149025

Bank Statement	£	8,054.85
31-May-09		

Total:	£	<b>8,054.85</b>
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#### **Credits (1 June 2009 to 30 June 2009):**

None	£	-
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Total:	£	-
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#### **Debits (1 June 2009 to 30 June 2009):**

STO	Clerk's Salary (May)	£	255.16
505	Community First	£	36.00
509	Office Expenses (May)	£	31.33
510	A Weston	£	34.95
	Transfer to A/C 7754288 (St Georges Fund)	£	771.26
	Transfer to A/C 7754288 (General Reserve)	£	5,728.74

Total:	£	<b>6,857.44</b>
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#### **Balance at 30 June 2009:**

£	<b>1,197.41</b>
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#### **Credits (1 July 2009 to 13 July 2009)**

None	£	-
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Total:	£	-
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#### **Debits (1 July 2009 to 13 July 2009):**

01-Jul	Clerk's Salary (June)	£	255.16
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Total:	£	<b>255.16</b>
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#### **Balance at 13 July 2009:**

£	<b>942.25</b>
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#### Lloyds TSB A/C 7754288

Bank Statement	£	28,341.45
30-Apr-09		

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Clerk to Semington Parish Council

Chairman's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

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<b>Credits</b>			
11-May	Interest	£	1.34
10-Jun	Interest	£	1.21
10-Jul	Interest	£	2.00
10-Jun	Transfer from A/C2149025	£	771.26
10-Jun	Transfer from A/C2149025	£	5,728.74
		£	<b>6,504.55</b>
<b>Debits</b>			
None		£	-
		£	-
		£	-
Total:		£	<b>34,846.00</b>
<b>Balance at 13 July 2009:</b>		£	<b>34,846.00</b>
<b>Total Balance in hand at 13 July 2009:</b>		£	<b>35,788.25</b>

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### Payments to be authorised (13 July 2009).

Clerks Salary (July 2009)		£	255.16
Clerks Salary (August 2009)		£	255.16
Office Expenses (June 2009)		£	55.59
<b>TOTAL:</b>		£	<b>565.91</b>

### Donations/Subscriptions to be considered (13 July 2009).

None		£	-
<b>TOTAL:</b>		£	-

b. The Council resolved unanimously to make the payments under 'Payments to be authorised' above.

## 10. Environment.

a. The following matters were discussed as shown:

### Littlemarsh – Waste Bins.

The Clerk was asked to obtain details of possible waste-bins from Wiltshire Council and to invite the residents of Littlemarsh to propose a suitable design for installation a Littlemarsh. The Council resolved that a maximum of £170 be spent on a waste-bin and regular emptying.

### Parish Steward.

Cllr. Bowyer agreed to inform Angela Weston of any possible tasks for the Parish Steward. These tasks are to include the hedges etc near to the Turnpike/Littlemarsh that currently impair visibility of the main road and roundabout.

### Parish Noticeboard.

It was agreed that the Parish Noticeboard is to be removed from its present position and is to be

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Clerk to Semington Parish Council

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placed outside the Village Hall.

b. The Clerk stated that he was still awaiting a reply from Wiltshire Council in respect of any possible land owned by Wiltshire Council that could be used for allotment gardens. Councillors remarked on the flurry of e-mails strongly opposing the establishment of allotments at Littlemarsh and agreed that it would be more appropriate to landscape the area in question in such a matter as to prevent the incursion of travellers' caravans. The Clerk was asked to write to Wiltshire Council to request that this action be taken. The Clerk was asked to remind the St George's PCC to place the provision of allotment land on its agenda for its September meeting.

c. The Council noted that information relating to different types of Bench Seats had been circulated to all councillors. The Council resolved to delegate the following task to Cllr. Bowyer:

- To propose two possible types of Bench Seat and the associated purchase and installation costs for both types of seat, noting that the installation cost is to include the provision of any necessary hardstanding and the securing of the seat to that hardstanding.

Cllr. Bowyer was requested to present his proposals to the Parish Council meeting to be held in September.

d. The Council noted the letter from Wessex Water stating that the drain clearance maintenance schedule for the drains affecting Palmer Grove had been revised in the light of the reopening of The Somerset Arms.

### 11. Community Area/Area Boards.

a. Cllr. Bowyer reported that he and Cllr. Smyth had attended the recent Melksham Area Board Meeting. He added that he had raised a 'Semington Community Issues Sheet' following the Area Board meeting and had sent a copy to all councillors for comment. He explained the purpose of such an 'Issues Sheet' and invited councillors to endorse his proposals. The Parish Council resolved to adopt the proposals detailed in the 'Semington Community Issues Sheet'. Cllr. Bowyer stated that the next Area Board Meeting was to be held on 23 September 2009.

b. The Council decided to agree on matters to be raised at the next Area Board Meeting at the Parish Council meeting to be held in September.

### 12. Tennis Court.

Councillors confirmed that the Tennis Court and equipment were in good order.

Cllr. Vooght stated that he had received a request to use the Tennis Court from the leader of a Scout Troop from Paxcroft Mead. The Council consented to the use of the Tennis Court but asked Cllr. Vooght to state that it is used at the sole risk of the persons using it.

### 13. Information Commissioner (IC) – Parish Council Complaint.

This item was dealt with under Agenda item 6b, above.

### 14. Any Other Business.

Exchange of views on matters not requiring a decision:

There were no matters raised.

### 15. Date of the next meeting.

The Council noted the date of the next meeting:

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- Ordinary Parish Council Meeting – **MONDAY 14 September 2009 at 8.00pm.**

***Clerk's Note: This is a change to the date agreed at the Parish Council meeting.***

The meeting concluded at 10.10 pm.

R Oglesby  
Chairman, Semington Parish Council