

SEMINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 1 July 2020 at 8.00pm – Virtual/Remote Zoom Meeting (as a result of COVID-19 ‘Lockdown’ restrictions).

Present.

Councillors P Smith (Vice -Chairman and Acting Chairman for the meeting), R Blake, M Kasasian, R Oglesby, S Rimmer, W Scott, C Wade and the Clerk Roger Coleman.

Wiltshire Council Cllr. J Seed attended (part-time).

There were two members of the public present.

The Chairman and councillors noted that Cllr. Rimmer had confirmed that he would be resigning from the Parish Council immediately following this meeting. The Chairman, on behalf of the Parish Council and the parishioners, thanked Cllr. Rimmer for his contribution to the Council and to the village over the years and made particular reference to his various initiatives, such as tree planting in the village. The Chairman commented that his unfailing cheerfulness and undying good humour together with his drive and enthusiasm to take projects forward would be missed and the Chairman and councillors wished him well for the future.

1. Apologies.

There were no apologies for non-attendance.

2. Declaration of Interests.

No interests were declared by councillors.

3. Co-option of a New Member.

- a. The Council **resolved** to co-opt a new member.
- b. The Council **resolved** to co-opt Victoria Bodman as a member of Semington Parish Council.

The Clerk explained that to become a parish councillor she would have to sign the Declaration of Office Form in the sight of the Clerk who would then countersign it. The Clerk stated that he would make the necessary arrangements using ‘Zoom technology’ for this to happen and at the same time he would explain the need to Register Interests and other procedural matters.

4. Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on 20 May 2020.

The Council **resolved** that the minutes were a true and accurate record. The Chairman agreed to sign the minutes.

The Council **resolved** to endorse the decisions made following email consent from councillors and these decisions are shown appended to these minutes.

5. Wiltshire Council Report.

Wiltshire Council, Cllr. J Seed gave a brief report on the following topics:

- Wiltshire Council financial position in the light of COVID-19 Lockdown and the misleading publicity that has arisen regarding both the subject and the increased incidence of the pandemic in Wiltshire.

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- Changes to the Management Structure for the Cabinet and Officers at Wiltshire Council.
- The Appeal by Greystoke Land Ltd in respect of the proposed development at Land North of St Georges Road and the intention to couple this with a similar Appeal elsewhere in the County.
- Area Board and Cabinet meetings are taking place, albeit remotely and in a different format to usual.
- In reply to a question from Cllr. Blake, he commented that current shortcomings regarding the number of dwellings required in the 5-year Housing Plan

6. Chairman's Report.

a. The Chairman updated the Council on developments since the last meeting. A Summary of the matters raised by the Chairman is appended to these minutes. The following notes (in italics) summarise the discussions/decisions on these matters that took place at the Parish Council meeting:

Rights of Way: *The Chairman stated that he had been very impressed with the enthusiasm and level of support from parishioners in clearing and restoring local Rights of Way. He added that the Working Group had, in recent weeks, met three times and cleared several overgrown footpaths.. Cllr. Smith commented that this subject would be discussed further at Agenda item 10.*

What post-lockdown initiatives should Semington pursue?:

The Chairman commented that this subject would be discussed further at Agenda item 6.

Village Celebrations:

The Chairman commented that this subject would be discussed further at Agenda item 11.

Litter Picking: *The Chairman commented that this subject would be discussed further at Agenda item 7.*

Gutters and Pavements: *The Chairman commented that this subject would be discussed further at Agenda item.*

b. The Chairman stated that it was important to capture the village initiatives and enthusiasm that surfaced and continues to be evident during this COVID-19 Lockdown – it was heartening to witness the village 'pulling together'. Cllr. Smith congratulated the Semington, Little Marsh and Littleton Support Group for their central role in supporting the village, especially the more vulnerable in the community. Cllr. Rimmer suggested that a key project could be the Wessex Close Play Area whereas Cllr. Oglesby offered the creation of a Nursery School or Youth Club as possibilities, commenting that these had proved successful in the past. The Chairman stated that an article had been published in the Village Magazine inviting parishioners to suggest possible projects and he was pleased to note that some responses had been received. The Chairman asked that this subject is placed on the Agenda for the next meeting – especially in relation to examining the various responses.

7. Highways and Environment.

a. The Chairman queried whether the Parish Council should take the lead in clearing the pavements and gutters of weeds. He added that the local residents in Highfield Close had been very proactive in clearing weeds in their road and mused whether such enthusiasm could be captured to encourage others in the village to act in a similar way. Cllr. Scott commented that weeds in the road/gutter were relatively easy to remove but those in the pavement were considerably more difficult to remove. Cllr. Wade added that some parishioners had difficulty accessing parts of the village because of the state of the pavements in High Street; one pavement

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was overgrown in places with overhanging vegetation and the opposite pavement was very cracked and, in places, unsafe. It was agreed to explore whether such weed clearance can be undertaken by the Parish Steward.

b. In the absence of any volunteers, the Chairman agreed to be the Parish Council 'contact point' for the time being but he would contact Brian Smyth to enquire whether he was prepared to take on this role.

c. The Chairman stated that if a Litter Pick was necessary then it should take place before the Village Celebration that had now been proposed for 19 September. It was noted that Brian Smyth was the custodian of the litter picking equipment and it would be helpful to agree a suitable date with him for the Litter Pick – ideally late August/early September.

8. Planning.

a. The Council noted the status of extant planning applications:

20/01306/OUT	Land North of St Georges Road, Semington	Residential development of up to 26no entry-level affordable dwellings with associated car parking, access, internal roads, public open space, landscaping, drainage and other associated infrastructure.	Appeal Pending – APP/Y3940/W/20/3253180
20/02822/FUL	6 High Street	Change to position of parking spaces and garden within plot (Amendment to 17/00921/VAR)	Pending

b. There were no planning applications received after 24 June 2020.

c. The Council noted the publication of the Notice of Regulation 14 Pre-Submission Consultation and Publicity on the Draft Melksham Neighbourhood Plan. Cllr. Scott observed that there was a paucity of information regarding the area nearest to the Semington boundary.

d. Cllr. Rimmer stated that he had noted that the owner of the property adjoining the footpath that runs alongside the Village Hall was planning to remove the existing hedge and to replace it with a wooden fence. Cllr. Rimmer proposed that the part of the hedge that borders the front garden should be replaced with a low fence, around a metre high, whilst the remaining hedge could be replaced with a much higher fence. This solution would, he proposed, provide a far more pleasing visual effect. There ensued a general discussion and it was agreed to refer to published planning literature regarding 'fence heights' before considering the matter further.

9. Finance.

a. The Clerk reported that the current financial position at 20 May 2020 was as follows: provide a more attractive visual amenity.

Lloyds A/C 2149025

Bank Statement 30 April 2020	£	30,572.95
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	Total:	£ 30,572.95
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Credits (1 June 2020 to 30 June 2020):

None	£	-
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	Total:	£ -
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Debits (1 May 2020 to 31 May 2020):

Clerk's Salary April) (Paid 1 May 2020)	£	364.78
Zurich Insurance	£	822.32
AM Print & Copy	£	40.00
Clerk's Office Allowance	£	175.00
Clerk's Expense (March)	£	12.80
Clerk's Expense (April)	£	0.22
Total:	£	1,415.12

Balance at 31 May 2020:

	£	29,157.83
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Credits (1 June 2020 to 30 June 2020):

None	£	-
Total:	£	-

Debits (1 June 2020 to 30 June 2020):

Clerk's Salary (May) (Paid 1 June 2020)	£	364.78
Wiltshire Wildlife Trust	£	36.00
AM Print & Copy	£	30.00
Total:	£	430.78

Balance at 30 June 2020:

	£	28,727.05
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Lloyds A/C 7754288

Bank Statement 31-May-20	£	7,650.08
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Credits

09-Jun-20	Interest (Approx)	£	0.32
			£ 0.32

Debits

None	£	-	
			£ -

Balance at 30 June 2020:

	£	7,650.40
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Total Balance in Hand at 30 June 2020:

	£	36,377.45
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Payments to be authorised (1 July 2020).

Clerk's Salary (June) To be paid 1 July 2020	£	364.78
Clerk's Salary (July) To be paid 1 August 2020	£	364.78
Information Commissioner	£	40.00
Clerk's Expenses (May)	£	12.75
Clerk's Expenses (June)	£	11.61
	£	793.92

HMRC PAYE Month 3 (Due 5 July) £ **146.00**
(Paid by the Clerk directly to HMRC)

The Clerk stated that he had applied in mid-April to HMRC for a VAT Refund of £411.97 in respect of FY2019/20 but nothing had yet been credited to the Parish Council Bank Account.

b. The Council **resolved** to make all the payments under 'Payments to be authorised'

Cllr. Scott stated that he had noted the Internal Audit Report, recently received, and that everything was in order. He thanked the Clerk for his conscientiousness and thoroughness for his financial management throughout the year. This view was voiced by other councillors.

10. Rights of Way (RoW).

- a. The Council noted, with thanks, the work of the various Working Groups in clearing the local RoWs.
- b. Cllr. Scott gave a report of the work of the RoW Working Groups and agreed to draft a letter to be sent to the local landowners requesting that they keep any RoW on their land clear and unobstructed. The Clerk commented that he would then write to the landowners on behalf of the Parish Council using the draft provided.

11. Village Celebration.

The Council noted that a provisional date of 19 September had been proposed. The Chairman stated that he and Cllr. Scott had recently attended a very useful Zoom meeting with the Semington, Little Marsh and Littleton Support Group and members of village organisations to look at possible Village Celebration activities. He added that there were some sixteen persons present, all representing Clubs/Groups/Societies in the village. He stated that a summary of these discussions is to be published and that it is to be sent to all participants and to the members of the Parish Council.

12. Date of the next meeting.

Wednesday 19 August 2020 at 8pm (a Zoom – Virtual/Remote Meeting).

The Meeting ended at 9.40pm

Acting Chairman
Semington Parish Council

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Decisions taken remotely by Semington Parish Council – Subsequent to Contingency Plan 17 March 2020 and Post – 20 May 2020.

- Payment of Clerk's June Salary.
- Pay Internal Audit Fee (£120).
- Pay A&M Print & Copy - £30.

The Clerk is to arrange/host a Zoom Virtual/Remote PC Meeting for 8pm, 1 July 2020 and to issue the Agenda and to invite all councillors to participate. Arrangements are to be made for members of the public to participate. Provided the meeting is quorate (minimum three members participating) the meeting will proceed.

R P Coleman
24 June 2020

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Vice Chairman's Report, 1 July 2020

Rights of Way – since we last met, the Semington RoW group has met twice to clear overgrown paths. On the second occasion, and in response to increased interest from parishioners on the state of our footpaths, the RoW group put out a message on the Support Group's Facebook page calling for volunteers to help clear a heavily overgrown stretch of SEMI 10. Eight villagers turned up and spent close to 2 hours clearing this long stretch. A wonderful result! An item is in the summer edition of the village magazine encouraging more interest, and Brian Smyth is doing a fine job of coordinating this.

What post-lockdown initiatives should Semington pursue? – at our May meeting, we considered how we might encourage the enthusiasm to help others, especially shown by Support Group volunteers during lockdown, to keep going into the future. I have had a couple of Zoom meetings with the core team of the Support Group. I circulated to you all a draft of a paper aimed at asking villagers to say what things they'd like to see improved and whether they'd be willing to join a group to do this. This will soon be in circulation so that, by the time we next meet, we should be able to see what people are saying.

Village Celebration – also at our May meeting, we shared some thoughts about what we might do, to include the whole community, to celebrate our unity and resilience in coming through the worst of the pandemic. This was also considered at the two meetings with the Support Group. Planning is afoot and includes most, if not all, of the main village organisations. A Zoom meeting of all these participants will have been held on 30th June and I will be able to report the outcome at our 1st July meeting.

Litter Picking – with the reopening of fast food take-aways, and many more cars on the roads, litter is once again making an unwelcome return to our streets. It would be good to set a date soon for a village litter pick.

Gutters and Pavements – we did consider this at our last meeting, but decided to take no further action at present. However, some residents in Highfield Close did their own very good clearance work. As with RoW clearance, I think the community is looking with fresh eyes at where they live and wanting to help get the place in better fettle. I think there is a role for us, as a parish council, to encourage and support these efforts. Like litter picking working parties, in normal times we have had pavement and gutter clearing work groups too. With the easing of some lockdown measures, is this a good time to resume this work?