

SEMINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 23 September 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, V Bodman, M Kasasian, R Oglesby, W Scott, C Wade, R Bruges, S Chown (from Agenda item 3b) and the Clerk Roger Coleman.

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

There were no members of the public present.

1. Apologies.

There were no apologies. All councillors were present.

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 Siobhan Chown as a member of Semington Parish Council.

Siobhan Chown signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office Form in the sight of the Clerk who stated that he would then countersign it when it was received via Royal Mail. The Clerk explained to Cllr. Chown the need to Register Interests and that instructions how to do this would be sent to her via email.

4. Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on 19 August 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.

The Chairman commented that the purchase of two replacement barrel planters is on hold whilst an alternative option of raised beds is investigated. He added that replenishment of the existing nine concrete planters was to be undertaken on 3 October by the newly formed ‘Village Planters Group’ and this would also include clearing unwanted vegetation.

5. Wiltshire Council Report.

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

Wiltshire Council Update Meeting (P Whitehead).

Cllr. Seed had attended this meeting.

Clerk’s Note.

A report of the matters addressed at this meeting had previously been circulated by Wiltshire Council and the Clerk had sent this to all parish councillors.

SEMINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Finance.

The financial position is looking healthier than originally predicted because of the beneficial effect of some cost-saving measures that had been introduced by Wiltshire Council.

Melksham Campus.

This project is moving forward, and some other capital projects are also progressing.

COVID-19 Marshalls.

Wiltshire Council is not introducing the COVID Marshall scheme because the population has been generally responsive to the COVID-19 restrictions imposed and the current rate of infections in Wiltshire is very low.

Electoral Boundary Review.

A brief history of the origin of the Summerham and Seend Division was given and it was confirmed that the Draft Recommendations of the Boundary Commission indicated that Semington will now be contained within the Melksham Rural West Electoral Division – a Division that will also include Bowerhill Industrial Estate. He added that Semington will remain in the Melksham Community Area.

Elections – 2021.

In response to a query from Cllr. Oglesby he stated that the local elections will be held on 6 May 2021 and that elections for Parish Councils, Wiltshire Council and for the Police and Crime Commissioner will be held on that day.

Whadden Lane Cycleway.

Cllr Smith enquired whether any progress had been made in developing this cycleway. Cllr. Seed replied that he would make those enquiries at the 'virtual' CATG meeting that he was attending the following day. Cllr. Wade added that he would also be attending that meeting.

6. Chairman's Report.

a. The Chairman stated that he had sent all councillors a copy of his report – attached to these minutes – and he gave a brief update on existing matters thus:

Daffodil bulbs have now been obtained by Cllr. Oglesby and the 'Village Planters Group' is to be requested to undertake the planting of the bulbs.

The Tornado play equipment at Wessex Close is broken and Wiltshire Council has taken steps – though largely ineffective – to prevent its use pending a decision on its future. He added that the newly formed Wessex Close Group is now operating and that its meeting is to be held on 10 October to undertake a site inspection and to propose a possible programme for the development (and improvement) of that area.

7. Highways and Environment.

Cllr. Scott proposed that it would be timely for the Parish Council to write a polite note to the landowners reminding them of their legal obligations to maintain and protect Rights of Way (RoW) crossing their land. The Council agreed with this proposal and Cllr. Scott offered to draft a suitably worded letter for the Clerk to send to the two landowners concerned. The RoW in question were SEMI14/20 and SEMI13/10.

Cllr. Bruges commented that RoW SEMI 39/20 was blocked and although designated a bridleway it was impossible to pass along it if riding a horse. The Chairman added that clearance work had been undertaken on that RoW but clearly further work was needed and he would investigate the matter further.

SEMINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Cllr. Smith stated that the hedge that runs alongside RoW SEMI 41/10 and borders the (assumed) unadopted road needs attention as it is very overgrown including the presence of brambles and other vegetation. Councillors commented that the ownership of this hedge had always been a disputed matter and in the past, the Parish Council has taken the initiative to cut back the hedge having informed the neighbouring residents of the intended action. It was noted that more recently the local residents – one in particular - had taken the necessary action. The Council **resolved** that the Parish Council writes again to the local residents requesting them to take the necessary action and the Clerk was asked to provide copies of a suitable note to be delivered to each household including recognising the co-operation previously received from residents.

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 etc	Appeal Pending – APP/Y3940/W/20/3253180 (21 October 2020)
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Cllr. Scott confirmed that he would be attending this Appeal Hearing and that he would read out a prepared statement, on behalf of the Parish Council, to the Appeal Inspector. He added that he would circulate the proposed statement beforehand to all councillors for comment. He confirmed that he would give the Clerk contact details for the Appeal Inspectorate to enable him to advise the Inspectorate that he (Cllr. Scott) would be attending the Appeal and that he would be representing Semington Parish Council and would be making a statement on behalf of the Council.

20/05482/FUL	Former Poultry Building, Paxcroft Farm, Devizes Road, Trowbridge	Conversion of agricultural building to General B Uses (B1, B2 and B8) and extension of car parking and associated works.	Approved
20/05710/FUL	17 Pound Close Semington BA14 6JP	4m single storey rear extension	Pending (23/9/20)
20/06902/TPO	The Old Coach House Church Street Semington	TG1 – 2 x Lime trees (previously pollarded as part of their ongoing management. Repollarded at approx.. 3" above the previous pollard points.	Pending (8/10/20)

b. The Parish Council examined the following planning applications and **resolved** to send comments to Wiltshire Council as shown (in italics):

20/07304/FUL	Entrance Hall, St Georges Court BA14 6GA	Proposed Conversion of Entrance Lobby into New Dwelling	New
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The Council objects to this proposed development. The proposed development will detract from the setting of the existing building and will be contrary to maintaining the integrity of this historic listed building.

20/07850/LBC	Entrance Hall, St Georges Court BA14 6GA	Proposed Conversion of Entrance Lobby into New Dwelling	New
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The Council recommends that this application is passed to the Conservation Officer for comment.

SEMINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

d. 'Planning for the Future' Government White Paper Consultation

The Parish Council noted the proposed White Paper and individual councillors thanked Cllrs. Bodman and Scott for preparing a possible Semington Parish Council response to the proposals contained within the White Paper. Councillors commented that the proposed response was detailed and well-argued and that it comprehensively addressed the key points that related to villages, such as Semington. The Council noted the additional paragraph proposed by Cllr. Bruges and agreed that it should be included in the main text. The Council **resolved** to send this response, with the addition proposed by Cllr. Bruges, as the formal Parish Council response.

Cllr. Scott agreed to send the Clerk the address to which the response is to be sent and a 'final' version of the consultation response for him to also send (via email) to the following recipients:

Michelle Donnellan MP – Member of Parliament for Chippenham.

George Eustice MP - Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Christopher Pincher MP – Minister of State for Housing.

Philip Whitehead – Leader of Wiltshire Council.

Vanessa Fiorelli – Leader of Melksham Town Council

Lance Allan – Chief Executive Trowbridge Town Council.

Jonathon Seed – Wiltshire Council, Summerham & Seend.

Peter Dunford – Melksham Area Board Community Engagement Officer.

e. The Council noted the Draft recommendations of the Electoral Review Committee for new Area Board boundaries. This was also briefly addressed under Agenda item 5 above. The Council **resolved** that the Parish Council supports these recommendations especially in respect of remaining within the Melksham Area Board and writes formally to Wiltshire Council confirming this fact.

9. Finance.

a. The Clerk reported that the current financial position at 23 September 2020 was as follows:

Lloyds A/C 2149025

Bank Statement	£	29,157.83
31 July 2020		

	Total: £	28,433.88
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Credits (1 August 2020 to 31 August 2020):

None	£	-
	Total: £	-

Debits (1 August 2020 to 31 August 2020):

Clerk's Salary July) (Paid 1 August 2020)	£	364.78
Clerk's Expenses	£	24.37
	Total: £	389.15

Balance at 31 August 2020:

	£	28,044.73
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SEMINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Credits (1 September 2020 to 23 September 2020):

Wiltshire Council Precept (Part)	£	6,750.00
		Total: £ 6,750.00

Debits (1 September 2020 to 23 September 2020):

Clerk's Salary (August) (Paid 1 September 2020)	£	364.78
St Georges PCC	£	550.00
Information Commission Fee	£	40.00
		Total: £ 954.78

Balance at 23 September 2020:

	£	33,839.95
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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
09-Jul-20	Interest (Approx)	£	0.30
09-Aug-20	Interest (Approx)	£	0.28
09-Sep-20	Interest (Approx)	£	0.26
		£	1.16

Debits

None	£	-	
		£	-

Balance at 23 September 2020:

	£	7,651.24
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Total Balance in Hand at 23 September 2020:

	£	41,491.19
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Payments to be authorised (23 September 2020).

Clerk's Salary (September) To be paid 1 October 2020	£	364.78
Clerk's Expenses (August)	£	12.45
Groganic (Daffodil Bulbs)	£	48.00
		£ 425.23

HMRC PAYE Month 5 (Due 5 September) **(Paid by the Clerk directly to HMRC)**

	£	145.60
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b. The Council **resolved** to adopt the recently agreed NALC Salary Scale 2020-21 for Clerks and Local Government Employees, applicable from 1 April 2020. The Clerk thanked the Council,

SEMINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

c. The Council **resolved** to make all the payments under 'Payments to be authorised' including payments of £8 to A&M Print and Copy and £10 to Cllr. Bodman in respect of photocopying and miscellaneous expenses incurred for the Village Day. In response to a question from Cllr. Blake, the Chairman said that new authorised signatories for financial matters will be decided at the next meeting.

10. Village Initiatives.

The Chairman gave an introduction to the draft strategic Framework paper that was written by Cllrs Scott, Bruges and Smith to guide the Parish Council in respect of Village Initiative activities. He stated that the ultimate goal must be to invite councillors and parishioners to take the various proposals forward and to allocate tasks according to interests and abilities. A general discussion on the content of the document ensued and at the end of the discussion, the Parish Council **resolved** to adopt the Framework paper. It was agreed to place this subject on the Agenda for further discussion at the next meeting.

Meanwhile, the Parish Council **resolved** to send a copy of the paper – subject to an amendment to the opening paragraph - to each household in Semington to promote better community engagement and to invite comments on its contents from parishioners. It was hoped that such an approach may encourage further involvement from parishioners in community activities and that they would be better informed regarding the role and intended direction of their Parish Council.

11. Semington Website.

The Clerk and Cllr. Scott commented that the Semington website had been refreshed and that the webmaster was now taking an active role in improving its display of Parish Council information. Cllr. Scott added that he was keen to be able to display planning information on the website and there were hopeful signs that he might be in a position to do this soon. It was agreed to take no further action at present and to review the subject at the next meeting.

The Council **resolved** to accept the offer from Cllr. Oglesby for the existing webmaster of the West Lavington website to provide a quotation for developing a similar one for Semington.

12. Village Celebration, the 'Litter Pick' and Gutter/Pavement Clearance and Village Planters.

The Chairman stated that these subjects had been addressed in his Chairman's Report with the exception of the Village Celebrations. In respect of the Village Celebrations he thanked all those involved in organising such a successful event and for the variety of activities and displays that took place. A sentiment also expressed by the councillors present. The Parish Council **resolved** to record its thanks to the Organising Committee and Cllr. Bodman.

The Council **resolved** to extend the meeting from 10.00pm to 10.15pm.

13. Date of the next meeting.

The date for the next Parish Council meeting was agreed to be Wednesday 21 October 2020 and that it would be a remote/virtual (Zoom) meeting.

The Meeting ended at 10.15pm –

Acting Chairman
Semington Parish Council

SEMINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

**Decisions taken remotely by Semington Parish Council – Subsequent to Contingency Plan
17 March 2020 and Post Parish Council Meeting held on 19 August 2020.**

Village Planters/Planting - £150 allocated.

R P Coleman
16 September 2020

SEMINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Vice Chairman's Report, 23rd September 2020

Guttering and Pavement Clearance – a total of 15 parishioners worked hard through the morning of 12th September to clear weeds and soil build-up along several streets in the village. At the time of writing, the clean pavements and edgings are a treat to behold.

Planning Changes – Vicky and Bill wrote a very clear and comprehensive response to the Government's consultation document on proposed planning changes. We have all seen the draft and some of us have written in to approve it. As well as using it to reply to government, it is proposed to share this with our local MP, neighbouring parishes and others.

Wessex Close anti-social behaviour – on 11th September, damage to play equipment and extensive littering at the play area was reported by a parishioner. This was cleared away the following morning by volunteers from the pavement clearance group. It's clear that people with homes in the area have heard noisy gatherings recently, and are keeping an eye on the play area.

Village Celebration – this will have happened by the time we meet, with the theme being "Harvest Festival". A special newsletter was delivered to homes around the parish and, hopefully, the weather will have been kind on 19th September.

Village Litter Pick – parishioners have volunteered to help pick litter on 18th September in preparation for the village celebration. I can report on this at our meeting.

Reviving our village planters – a working budget of £150 was approved by the council under the Covid 19 email approval system. Robert also has the daffodil bulbs for autumn planting. A date will soon be set for work on the 9 concrete planters. Replacement of the two wooden barrels, possibly with raised beds, is under consideration. We also need to set a date for bulb planting.

A Framework for prioritising village initiatives – at our August meeting, we considered how best to respond to the many village initiatives coming forward from the July village questionnaire. It was suggested that we might try to give a parish wide structure to those initiatives and to the ongoing work and responsibilities of the council. This could then be used to guide priorities for working groups to take forward. A document setting this framework is circulated as a separate item.

Cllr. P Smith (Vice-Chairman)

(Acting Chairman – Semington Parish Council)