

EAST BRENT PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the East Brent Parish Council held at the Village Hall on 3rd September 2012 and commenced at 7.30pm, when the following business was transacted.

Present: Councillor Cllr E. Champion, (Chairman) Cllr J. Bowden, Cllr W. Walker, Cllr A. Gilling, Cllr J. Webb, Cllr B. Woodward, Cllr V. Clapp, Cllr Y. Roscorla, Cllr S. McGreavy and the Clerk to the Council, Mr Martin Shobbrook; in the public area, Mr. Peter Briggs, Mr Nigel Lloyd-Jones, Mr Bob Bees, Mrs Thelma Vowles, and Mr David Maund.

“Members are reminded that the Council has a general duty to consider the following matters in the exercise of any of its functions: Equal opportunities (race, gender, sexual orientation, marital status and any disability) Crime disorder and Human Rights”

There was one representation from the public, after the Chairman had invited those present, the opportunity to address the meeting.

Mr David Maund addressed the meeting and introduced himself as Chairman of the Lights for Life Campaign. He said that his address was linked with item 32/12 on the Agenda, the installation of V.A.S. signs at Rooksbridge.

He has campaigned for a long time for the introduction of these lights at Rooksbridge and he was pleased to say that funding in the sum of £8000.00 (being the installation costs) had been agreed by Somerset County Council. The lights were to be solar powered, needing no mains electric supply at all. They will be sited at each end of the straight stretch at Rooksbridge and would be activated when any vehicle passes by, exceeding the 30mph speed limit. This type of light had been preferred to the S.I.D. lights (Speed Indicator Lights) also available, as the later lights were often used by “rouge” motorists to see just how fast they could record speeds on these lights. They will be maintained by S.C.C. and will not incur the residents of Rooksbridge facing any servicing fees. Any repairs necessary (including vandalism) will be cover by S.C.C.

He urged the Committee to support the proposal when they deal with the matter later in the meeting.

He thanked the Chairman for giving him the opportunity to address the meeting.

01/12: TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted from Mr R. Filmer and Cllr Barbara Woodward.

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

04/12: The minutes of the meetings held at the Village Hall on 2nd July 2012 were signed as a true reflection of the meeting held by this Parish Council. Cllr J. Webb kindly amending the name of Fabrice Muamba in minute 24/12.

As the four candidates for the election of two Committee members had been invited to attend the meeting, the Chairman Cllr E. Champion decided to bring forward item 28/12 on the Agenda, so that the candidates would not have to sit through the first stages of the meeting unnecessarily.

He therefore turned to the election of the new Committee members and advised the Committee that he had received four applications. Their names were, Mr Nigel Lloyd-Jones, Mr Bob Bees, Mr Peter Briggs and Mrs Thelma Vowles.

He then read out the voting procedure to be adopted (taken from the Local Government Association Guidance Handbook) and asked all the applicants to confirm they were happy with that voting procedure. They all confirmed that they were.

The Chairman invited the Committee members to put forward proposals.

Cllr J. Bowden proposed that Mr Bob Bees should be elected. This was seconded by Cllr Andrew Gilling.

Cllr V. Clapp proposed that Mrs Thelma Vowles should be elected. This was seconded by Cllr Y. Roscorla.

Cllr S. McGreavy proposed that Mr Nigel Lloyd-Jones should be elected. This was seconded by Cllr E. Champion.

Cllr W. Walker proposed that Mr Peter Briggs should be elected. This was seconded by Cllr J. Webb.

As there were four applicants for the two positions, the Chairman invited the Committee members to take part in a secret voting process, rather than a show of hands.

The Clerk issued voting slips to each of the Committee members after he had duly been appointed by the Chairman, to act as the Returning Officer.

After collecting the voting slips, the Clerk announced the result of the first ballot.

The voting figures were:-

Mr Bob Bees	3 votes
Mrs Thelma Vowles	2 votes
Mr Nigel Lloyd-Jones	2 votes
Mr Peter Briggs	1 vote

In accordance with the voting procedure the Chairman had referred to earlier, Mr Peter Briggs was eliminated from the election having been the runner-up in the first ballot.

The Chairman then invited the Committee members to vote again for the three remaining candidates. The Clerk issued future voting slips and then counted the results.

The voting figures for round two were:-

Mr Bob Bees 2 votes

Mrs Thelma Vowles 2 votes

Mr Nigel Lloyd-Jones 3 votes

As Mr Nigel Lloyd-Jones had a majority over the other two candidates he was co-opted a one of the new Committee members.

The Chairman then invited the Committee members to vote again for the appointment of the other new Committee member.

Voting slips were issued again by the Clerk to the Committee members and the votes cast by them, were as follows:-

Mr Bob Bees 5 votes

Mrs Thelma Vowles 3 votes

As Mr Bob Bees had secured a majority of the votes in the third round of voting, he was duly co-opted onto the Committee.

The Chairman thanked all the candidates for putting themselves forward for election and said that he was very sorry there had to be two losers as there were only two places available.

He welcomed the new Committee members to the Council and the Clerk gave them the Register of Interests forms they are required to sign.

ONGOING ISSUES

07/12: Village Sign: As the appropriate person within the Council has not been available to meet with and to discuss this issue, it was decided to postpone further discussion until the next Committee meeting in October.

16/12: Play Area next to the village Green: Cllr A. Gilling suggested that the possible reason why “official representatives” had been seen at the play area was to carry out an inspection of the equipment by ROSPA. The Clerk was asked to contact S.D.C. to ascertain the latest position and to report back to the Committee in the October meeting.

17/12: Pond Adjacent to Rossholme: The Chairman has been unable so far to ascertain the ownership of the Pond and therefore who is responsible for remedying the problem. It was thought that it might be on Glebe land. He will endeavour to find out the information needed and report to the next Committee meeting.

23/12 Bus Stop Location issues: The Chairman advised that this matter has not been resolved. It was suggested that County Councillor, John Denbee should be approached in order to enlist his help in attempting to address the issues following the re-siting of the bus stop. The Chairman, together with the Clerk, will make contact with Cllr. Denbee and a further report will be given at the next Committee meeting.

24/12: Defibrillator: This matter has been discussed at length during several previous Committee meetings. The Chairman advised the Committee that the whole project had not formally been adopted and he invited someone to propose it. Cllr. V. Clapp did so and Cllr. Gilling seconded the motion. The plan to install a Defibrillator in the Red telephone kiosk adjacent to the playing field was therefore formally adopted. The Phone Box belongs to the Parish Council and the electricity running costs will be met by BT Plc. under an agreed scheme. Cllr. J. Webb said that a letter had been drafted to be sent to businesses within the parish advising of this plan and seeking financial support for the scheme. She and Cllr. S. McGreavy will continue to work on that letter and make any amendments they consider necessary, before it is sent out. Investigations will also be made to see if a similar siting of a Defibrillator can be made at Rooksbridge, possibly at the Post Office.

26/12 The Parish Council's Website: Cllr. W. Walker introduced to the Committee Mr Ron Champion, who has been responsible for the technical side of setting up the Parish Council's Website.

Mr Champion addressed the meeting and explained that he had created three main sections on the Website.

The first was primarily for the Parish Councils usage and will contain all official data and information about the Council and its members, workings and reports.

The second section was called the Community Portal and was designed to accommodate other organisations, businesses and societies.

The third section is intended to incorporate the local history group and to enable them to use it as a "building site" for local historical details.

Mr Champion said that the Website would "go live" during the early part of Tuesday 4th September 2012. The historical portal referred to above would be updated later. He said that the intension was that the Community portal would be an amalgam with the Parish Magazine and duplicate information available to the public. There were still many residents within the Parish who did not have access to the internet and the traditional form of conveying news, i.e. via a newspaper was still important. However, the younger generation would look to the internet

for Parish news and details and almost all Parishes were developing their own Websites, in order to “keep up with the times”.

Mr Champion advised that the Clerk now has an email address linked from the Website, enabling the public to make direct communication with him. In addition, Cllr. W. Walker has an email address as the Parish Council’s Website Administrator.

Mr Champion said that over night (3/4th September 2012) he would install a link onto the Website providing details of the weather forecast for the area. The Google widget was no longer available and so he would adopt another provider such as a Yahoo widget perhaps.

A discussion followed regarding the proposed close working relationship between the newspaper and the Website, with contributions from Cllr’s. J. Web; W. Walker and the Chairman, Cllr. E. Champion. They agreed that their negotiations with the newspaper had not advanced as much as they had hoped. They hoped that the public would approach them with their views on the running of the Website and its content. Any organisation can approach the Council for inclusion on the Website and it is not intended to undermine, or work in opposition to the newspaper and take business away from it. The intention is that businesses purchasing advertising space in the newspaper will be able to have their advert put on the Website at no extra cost.

As the Parish Council partly sponsors the running costs of the newspaper, it wishes to see it succeed, but equally, it wants its own Website to succeed. It is planned that the December edition of the newspaper will be distributed free of charge to all local residents and the Chairman will endeavour to set up a meeting with the Editor to discuss the way forward of both promotions. In addition, efforts will be made to ensure that there are sufficient volunteers to deliver the newspaper in December.

Cllr. W. Walker proposed a profound vote of thanks to Mr Ron Champion for the very extensive help and guidance he has given to the creation of the Parish Council’s Website. He has undertaken this work without payment and had spent a considerable period of his own time in setting it up.

29/12: The ownership of Common Open Spaces with the Parish of East Brent. Cllr. W. Walker addressed the meeting and said that establishing the legal ownership of many of the parcels of land in the Parish was not an easy task. He said that in order to establish legal ownership of areas such as the War Memorial triangle, it would be necessary to expend money in Land Registry search fees. He asked if he could be given a budget to pursue this task. The Clerk asked the Chairman if he could interject at this point. He explained that until his recent retirement, he had for many years been a property lawyer and he would be very pleased to work with Cllr. W. Walker to establish the legal ownership of the land in question. The difficulty faced, was that if the land in question is not already registered at the Land Registry, details of its ownership is very difficult to establish. Nevertheless the Clerk will liaise with Cllr. W. Walker to

obtain as much information as possible. A combined report will be presented to the Committee in the near future.

30/12: The untidy building site near the Village Hall. Discussion on this item was postponed until later in the meeting as it arises under the Planning issues.

31/12 The contract of Employment of the Clerk to the Council. The Chairman, Cllr. E. Champion advised the Committee that a sub-committee meeting had taken place earlier, when they had discussed the format and wording of the Clerk's contract. It was recommended that the standard form of contract produced by the Association of Council Secretaries and Solicitors, together with the Society of Local Council Clerks, should be used. Mr Shobbrook had been asked if he was happy with that arrangement and he confirmed that he was. The Chairman said that the sub-committee felt that the normal weekly hours worked by the Clerk should be set at 15 hours and if there was an exceptionally high work load due to major undertakings, then this might need to be extended. The sub-committee felt that a clause should be included within the contract providing that upon the retirement of the incumbent Clerk, he should work closely for a month or so with the incoming Clerk so as to ensure a smooth transition period. It was hoped that the inherent problems faced by the present Clerk upon his take-over, should be avoided in the future.

A proposal that the draft contract of employment of the Clerk be implemented was made by Cllr. J. Bowden and it was seconded by Cllr. V. Clapp.

The appropriate contract will therefore be drawn up and signed by all parties.

The Chairman took the opportunity to thank Mr Shobbrook for his work so far and he acknowledged the difficulties he had faced since his appointment in June 2012.

Mr Shobbrook then thanked all the Committee members for the help and support they had given to him and reaffirmed his commitment to provide the best service he could to the Parish Council throughout his period of office.

32/12: The installation of V.A.S. signs at Rooksbridge The Chairman referred to the address given at the beginning of the meeting by Mr David Maund and he reminded the meeting that this proposal was not seeking any financial aid from the Parish Council, only its support. It was unanimously agreed that the scheme was a good idea and as it will be run by S.C.C. requiring no input from the Council, he invited a proposal for adoption. This was proposed by Cllr. W. Walker and seconded by Cllr. S. McGreavy.

The Clerk was instructed to convey the Parish Council's support for this project to S.C.C. Cllr J. Bowden recommended that the Clerk copies these details to Cllr. J. Denbee as well. This will be done.

33/12: S.D.C. - Consultation on the Role of East Brent in the Sedgemoor Core Strategy. A copy of the report had previously been submitted to all Committee members for them to study and the Chairman read to the meeting extracts from the Email received from Mr Stuart Houlet at S.D.C. dated 2nd

August 2012. It was agreed that the report was correct and fair and would be beneficial to the Parish if it was implemented. A proposal for adoption was then offered by Cllr. J. Webb and this was seconded by Cllr. Y. Roscorla.

34/12: Preparation of a Code of Conduct for the Parish Council and Members...as directed by S.D.C This item was deferred for further discussion at the next Committee meeting.

PLANNING

Ref No 24/12/0019/CA

Proposal: Application for erection of agricultural workers dwelling, West Road
Brent Knoll, Highbridge
Mr Mrs Y. Hopkins

The Chairman outlined to the Committee the history of planning applications on this site and explained that this application involved the “moving” of the farm house (more correctly, new construction of) to a different location on the site. He said that this was generally thought to be an application which the Parish Council could support, as it would improve the animal welfare issues and provide better security at the site.

He invited Cllr. J. Webb to address the meeting as she had along with other members of the Planning sub-committee, visited the site. She explained that an application to divert the public footpath on the site many years ago had been unsuccessful. She advised the Committee that ordinarily it would not be possible to obtain planning permission of this nature but as it was an agricultural application, it involved special measures.

She said that the Planning sub-committee could find no reasons why this application should be rejected. It would have no impact on surrounding properties, nor be contrary to the planning aspects which the Parish Council were permitted to comment upon. She did ask the Clerk to convey to the Planning Department at S.D.C. the need for them to show contact telephone numbers on all applications as arranging site visits by the Parish Council's sub-committee is often very difficult.

It was then proposed by Cllr. W. Walker and seconded by Cllr. V. Clapp that the Parish Council's approval of this application be sent to S.D.C.

Ref No 24/12/00021/LE

Proposal: Application for erection of detached garage at plot 2 The Laurels, Old
Bristol Rd, East Brent
Pemberley New Homes Ltd.

This application was linked with item 30/12 on the Agenda. The Chairman outlined the history of this development to the Committee and the urgent need for

progress to be made on the site for health and safety reasons as well as the general poor appearance of the site.

He pointed out that it was an amendment only, of the original planning application, in that this was for a single garage instead of a double garage. In principal, the Parish Council had no objection to this application, but various aspects need to be addressed and conveyed to S.D.C. planning dept. In particular, the materials used. The use of Shiplap timber cladding was not felt to be appropriate. The adjacent footpath is very dangerous to pedestrians at night as the drain hole covers are many inches above the level of the pavement. Nevertheless, it was felt that if the Parish Council supported the planning application, the issues it was primarily concerned with, would be addressed and resolved. He therefore recommended that the Council approve the application subject to the comments mentioned above. This was proposed by Cllr. V. Clapp and seconded by Cllr. A. Gilling. The appropriate response will be conveyed to S.D.C. by the Clerk.

The Chairman further suggested that a meeting should be arranged with the site owner to discuss the tidying up of the site and the Health and Safety issues. This group will include the Chairman, Cllr. J. Webb and Cllr. S. McGreavy.

FINANCIAL MATTERS AND TO APPROVE PAYMENTS

26/12: The payment of the following amounts from the Councils current account was discussed:-

1. Moore Stephens, Chartered Accountants, Annual Audit fee.....	£162.00
2. Somerset Playing fields Association, Annual fee....	£10.00
3. The Information Commissioner (change of details of Clerk)....	£35.00
4. East Brent Village Hall Committee.....hire of hall.....	£25.00
5. Clerk's out of pocket expenses: Postages, paper, telephone costs, new printer, files...as per attached sheet.....	£206.38
6. All Signs and Design Ltd.....	£204.00

It was proposed by Cllr. J. Bowden and seconded by Cllr. J. Webb and then unanimously agreed to make all of the above payments in full and cheques for these amounts were issued and signed by the Chairman and Councillor Val Clapp.

In addition, the transfer of £3,000.00 from the Capital Reserve Account to the Current Account was proposed by Cllr. W. Walker and seconded by Cllr. V. Clapp.

27/12: CORRESPONDENCE: The following matters were circulated to the Committee members for them to read and study.

- (a) Letter from the Local Government Boundary Commission dated 26th June 2012.
- (b) Letter from Somerset Playing Fields Association + booklet
- (c) RSN online weekly news digest for 16th July 2012 and 13th Aug. 2012.
- (d) Update from Hinkley Point “C” consultation meetings.
- (e) Email from S.C.C. re the appointment of a VILLAGE AGENT for Berrow: Brean: Brent Knoll: and Lympsham.
- (f) Email from S.D.C. re:- Declaration of Acceptance of Office form to be completed by new Councillors elected after July 2012.
- (g) Letter from S.D.C. re proposed new Community Infrastructure Levy on new planning applications.
- (h) Letter from S.C.C. re:-Temporary road closure, Burton Row, Brent Knoll, from 13th Nov. for 15 days.
- (i) Notification of Waste Prevention Conference 29th Sept. 2012 by Somerset Waste Partnership.
- (j) Leaflet from S.D.C. re Council Tax benefit changes. Please keep a copy if you would like to do so, to circulate to Parishioners.

MATTERS OF REPORT:

The Chairman, Cllr. E. Champion raised the point that the “Happy Circle” is closing. This will be a loss to the community and he wondered if it would be possible for volunteer support to be found to try to continue with their work.

Cllr. W. Walker raised three matters:-

1. He advised the Committee that members of the Planning sub-committee had met with the “No Pilrow” action group to discuss the Wind farm planning application.

At this point Cllr. A. Gilling volunteered to withdraw from the meeting on the basis that he had a declaration of an interest in this matter.

Cllr. W. Walker then explained that he only wished to advise the Committee of developments in this matter and there would be no contentious issues necessitating Cllr. A. Gilling should withdraw.

He asked Cllr. Gilling to advise the Committee (drawing on his experience as a District Councillor) what was likely to happen next, in the planning application.

Cllr. A. Gilling advised the Committee that the case officer will be consulting with all interested parties before making her recommendations to the full Planning Committee at S.D.C.

Cllr. W. Walker said he had approached the Planning Officer, Rebecca Miller to obtain clarification of four points:-

a. Will the latest information regarding the planning application be sent to the Parish Council?.....answer...Yes.

- b. Will the P.C. be advised of any amendments made to the planning application?.....answer... Yes.
- c. Will the P.C. be advised if S.D.C. ask for any further reports?.....answer... Yes.
- d. What is the timescale of the planning application.....answer...No decision yet made.

2. The second matter raised by Cllr. W. Walker concerned the Clerk's use of his own computer for Parish Council matters. He said that this probably contravened the Data Protection Act. The information should be stored on a Computer belonging to the Parish Council. The Chairman advised the Committee that the Council did own both a laptop and a printer, but they were in the possession of the former Clerk Mr Bob Strachan and were currently located with him in Scotland. Mr Strachan has advised the new Clerk that neither piece of equipment is working and is of no use to the Council. Cllrs. J. Bowden and J. Webb both said that the equipment should be returned to the Parish Council regardless of their condition as they were the property of the Council. Cllr. J. Webb added that the estimated life of such equipment for accountancy purposes was about three years and the "Asset write-off" measures could be used in the preparation of the annual accounts.

Cllr. A. Gilling said that he would approach S.D.C. to see if they could supply the Parish Council with a laptop for its use.

3. The third point raised by Cllr. W. Walker concerned the possibility of the Village Hall having a Wi-Fi. connection facility. Several Committee members thought that the download speed of Broadband at this site might be a problem. Nevertheless, Cllr. W. Walker agreed to investigate this and to report to the Committee at the next meeting.

Cllr. J. Webb raised the following matters.

She had received posters regarding the publicity relating to the "Beat Surgery" and the "Police Team Notice" and she asked where these might be displayed for the public to read. Recommendations for the siting of these notices included:-

The Doctor's surgery

The Post Office

The Pub

And The Methodist Church notice board.

Secondly, The Village Strimmer. It is owned by the Parish Council for use on Parish Council land. It has had the former nylon wire spool replaced with a steel blade to make it more efficient.

It is now intended that a list of areas requiring cutting is given to Mr Gerald Webb for him or another person to deal with.

Thirdly, Land belonging to Cllr. B. Woodward's son. It is thought that a lot of Mr Woodward's land is not being kept in a tidy and satisfactory manner. His building plot in the centre of the village in particular.

At this point the Chairman, Cllr. E. Champion declared an interest, in that he rents some land from Mr Woodward.

Cllr W. Walker asked whether the Parish Council had any authority to intervene and insist the sites are maintained. He said that he was aware that Mr Woodward could not be made to cut the grass over the public right of way as this was natural vegetation and did not constitute an obstruction.

Cllr. A. Gilling responded and advised that as this was private land, there was nothing the Parish Council could do. He said that if there were noxious weeds growing on the land however, there was legislation in place to force the land owner to address it.

Cllr. E. Champion said he was willing to approach Mr Woodward on an informal basis to see if the situation could be resolved.

The Clerk advised the Committee that he had received an Email from Mary Chorley at S.D.C. that afternoon (being too late to include in the correspondence section of the Agenda) asking if she and Mr Phil York could attend the next meeting of the Committee, in order to address it regarding Affordable Housing in East Brent.

She had included a report commissioned by the Housing Needs Survey and copies were made for each Committee member to read.

It was decided that this invitation for them to attend the next meeting should be given and the Clerk was asked to reply to Mary Chorley. The matter will be placed on next months Agenda.

There being no further business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.40pm.

The Next Parish Council Meeting planned for Monday 3rd September 2012 at 7.30pm or earlier if a planning meeting is required.