



NETHER STOWEY PARISH

The Annual Parish Meeting is a meeting of the Parish electorate. It is not a Parish Council meeting. The Parish Council Chairman calls and Chairs the meeting. The Annual Parish Meeting must be held between March 1st and June 1st (LGA 1972, sch 12, para 14). There is no prescribed format for this meeting and its recommendations are not binding on the Parish Council.

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

HELD ON MONDAY 23 MAY 2016 AT 7.00pm IN THE VILLAGE HALL

Present:*	Residents	
	John Roberts (Chairman)	Pat Pardoe
	Lynn Abbott	Colin Penny
	Ian Clarke	Sharon Mayell
	Colin Falla	Barbara Rich
	Kevin Ferriday	Mary Roberts
	Judith Greig	Roger Stacey
	Peter Greig	Stephen Taylor
		Michelle Thomas
Others	John Edney	Somerset County Council
	Michael Caswell	Sedgemoor District Council
	Alison Hoare	Village Agent
	Ray Brooks	Nether Stowey Village Hall
	Mel Catchpole	Nether Stowey Parish Council
In Attendance:	Caro Slaymaker	Clerk to the Parish Council

**There may be others who attended but did not sign the attendance sheet!*

1. Welcome

John Roberts, Chairman of the Parish Council, welcomed all attending to the meeting. He went on to give his report, a copy of which is appended to these Minutes

2. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Malcolm and Margaret Hogg, Wendy Hobbs and Cllr Julie Pay.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

There was some doubt as to the cost of the MUGA stated in the minutes, but no-one present could confirm the correct figure. It was agreed that the minutes would be corrected* or reflect this doubt and were otherwise **approved** as a true record and could then be signed by the Chairman.

**Note: The issue of the cost of the MUGA was not resolved so this was omitted and the corrected version signed by the Chairman. Revised minutes are available on the Parish Council website at <http://netherstowey-pc.gov.uk/about/annual-parish-meetings>.*

4. Items for discussion

No issues were raised.

5. Reports from Other Organisations

Cllr Edney, Somerset County Council: Cllr Edney said that he was sorry that the Lime Street/Mill Lane Safety Project had suffered following the project designer's long period of sick leave. Unfortunately the Council do not have the spare staff capacity to cover such absences.



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Highways had been given a budget specifically to repair potholes and it was intended that next year's budget would include an element to repair damage to the edges of roads alongside verges.

Cllr Edney announced that he would retire from the County Council at the election in May 2017.

Cllr Caswell, Sedgemoor District Council: Cllr Caswell said that the District Council had recently held its own AGM. He would continue on the Executive with the Business and Development portfolio, and Cllr Pay would continue to chair the Governance and Audit Committee.

The Local Development Framework Review continued and are at present analysing the consultation responses. It was expected that, assuming all went to plan, the review would be submitted to the Inspectorate in September and would then be adopted by SDC in November.

He said that he did not know what was happening with Hinkley Point C, though some level of preliminary work was continuing.

Councillor Pay provided a written report received after the meeting which is included in the annex.

Alison Hoare, Village Agent: Alison gave a brief summary of her role as Village Agent. Rural transport has been a big issue even before the recent collapse of Webberbus. She was working with members of the community to help set up a car scheme. The "Stowey Shuttle" was intended as a door-to-door car service for errands that cannot be done by bus. Initially it would cover medical and personal care appointments but she hoped it could grow to cover other needs. An organising committee had been formed and they had a list of potential volunteer drivers to be registered and given DBS clearance. They hoped to have the scheme running by October. Concession fares eg for bus pass holders would be honoured. Information leaflets were available at the meeting and at the Parish Office and elsewhere. She asked everyone to spread the word.

Sharon Mayell, Playing Field: Sharon presented the Playing Field report, a copy of the report is to be found in the Annex to these Minutes.

Ray Brooks, Village Hall: Ray presented the Village Hall report, a copy of the report is to be found in the Annex to these Minutes.

Peter Greig, Playing Field/Village Hall Task Force: Peter has been involved in the project for the last 3-4 months. It was a proving a difficult task. They had had a great success in forming a Fund Raising Committee of around 19 volunteers, but there were legal difficulties on the contractual side as the two committees' governance documents making merger very complex. A local solicitor has taken the matter up with the Charity Commission. The protection of trustees was a particular concern. A different legal status might provide the solution, and it was hoped that once this difficulty was resolved the project could go forward.

Lynn Abbott, Stowey Walkers: Information about Stowey Walkers was available at the meeting and is provided in the Annex to these Minutes. Lynn explained that Stowey Walkers are formed from a group of local businesses who hope for accreditation with the Walkers are Welcome organisation to attract more visitors and tourism in the village. They were grateful for grants from Nether Stowey and Over Stowey Parish Councils and had been promised a grant from Sedgemoor DC. There had been a local consultation with a response rate of more than 11% from the two parishes. They would be setting up a website which will link to details of local walks etc. She added that there would a walking festival on 11 and 12 June organised by Sedgemoor Ramblers.

Colin Falla, Footpaths Liaison Officer: Colin had provided a report, but said he walks the paths regularly so that he could report any faults to the Public Rights of Way officer at Somerset County Council. At present there were six faults logged but only one fault actually prevents the use of the path, which required SCC to intervene with the landowner. Colin also carried out



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some maintenance around stiles. In general however, only one of the landowners was difficult and the others usually met at least the minimum requirements. Path users should recognise that there were limitations as to what they could expect. A public footpath was permitted access to a defined route. Landowners could not obstruct a path or deliberately restrict access – eg with electric fencing or a crop, and had to leave a minimum width but they were not required to do more. They were not expected to cut back naturally growing surface vegetation on the path, and were certainly not required to provide a manicured grassy park-like path. Walkers should expect to be able to walk a path in boots and trousers, but not necessarily less.

The footpath from South Lane to Over Stowey was a particular problem because of the effect of water running off the hill and wrecking the surface. Although the Parish Council had tried a couple of times to repair the surface at the start of the path at South Lane, the repair did not last and the parish could not afford to repair it every time there was heavy rain.

The Chairman thanked Colin for all the maintenance work he did for the parish on behalf of the County Council.

Roger Stacey, FONSL: Roger gave a report on FONSL, an organisation which is thriving, with a variety of activities, interesting speakers and a very successful fund-raising operation. The Library's opening hours were being reduced from the beginning of June and details would be available shortly.

6. Reports from Other Organisations

Other Organisations Written reports (as mentioned above) and from local organisations who had no representative at the meeting are provided as a separate annex to these minutes. These are:

- Community Action Nether Stowey
- Friends of Coleridge
- Nether Stowey Village Hall
- Stowey Gardeners
- Footpaths Liaison Officer
- Friends of Nether Stowey Library
- Quantock Players
- Books for Life

Reports that had been received were available to anyone who wished to take one. They, and any others received after the meeting, are included as a separate annex to the minutes and would be available from the Parish Office or by e-mail and on the Parish Council website at www.netherstowey-pc.gov.uk.

There were no other matters raised. The Chairman said that he had intended to say a few words about the need for volunteers to support village organisations and activities but was conscious that he was preaching to the converted since everyone who attended this evening was doing a lot already. He knew how groups that struggled to get support and how dispiriting it was for those who were doing so much. He was concerned that the benefits of these groups and activities, which made such a vital contribution to the life of the village, would be lost. He assumed those attending were already doing everything they could to encourage others and wonder if there were new ways that could be tried.

There was some discussion about this and about co-ordinating efforts, possibly using social media etc. The Clerk said that she had tried to encourage organisations to promote themselves and their activities through the Parish Council's website which had an events diary and local organisations pages, with only limited success. She also wondered if another Facebook group etc would just add to the multitude: how could it be stand out as the "central single place" to go which some had suggested was needed. she would welcome any suggestions and/or contributions to the website – and for anything else the Parish Office could do.

The Chairman thanked the Quantock Tea Rooms for the refreshments and the meeting closed at 8.45pm.