

SEMINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 19 August 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, R Bruges (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.

The Chairman and councillors noted that Cllr. Bowyer had confirmed that he had resigned from the Parish Council. The Chairman, on behalf of the Parish Council and the parishioners, thanked Cllr. Bowyer for his contribution to the Council and to the village over the thirteen years or so that he had served as a councillor. He added that his interest in the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme and in matters affecting public safety had benefitted the village in a number of ways. The Chairman and councillors wished him well for the future.

1. Apologies.

Apologies for non-attendance were received and accepted from Parish Cllr. C Wade.

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 Richard Bruges as a member of Semington Parish Council.

Richard Bruges 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. Bruges the need to Register Interests and that instructions how to do this would be sent to him via email.

4. Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on 1 July 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:

- Government Planning Initiative.

In response to a question from Cllr. Scott, Cllr. Seed explained that Wiltshire Council is awaiting further details regarding the proposed changes to the planning legislation before making a response to Central Government. He indicated that the response is unlikely to be supportive for the proposed changes. Cllr. Seed stated that he would make enquiries regarding the likely response from Wiltshire Council. In response to a further question, Cllr. Seed added that Wiltshire Council has a robust and fully defendable ‘Five Year Housing Plan’ for Wiltshire.

SEMINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

- Neighbourhood Plan.

Commenting on the authority of Neighbourhood Plans in the planning process, following a question from Cllr. Oglesby, Cllr. Seed stated that in view of the new, proposed, legislation they are unlikely to have the strength or influence previously anticipated. Cllr. Oglesby responded by adding that the decision by Semington Parish Council not to produce such a plan had been vindicated.

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:

Litter Picking – A village litter pick is scheduled for 18th September.

Anti-social problems in Little Marsh at the old A350 gate – *The vigilance of local residents and the very helpful response from the Wiltshire Police PCSO had significantly reduced the issues associated with the anti-social behaviour, although fly-tipping is again on the increase. Cllr. Blake commented that there had been fly-tipping in Gypsy Lane but Wiltshire Council had responded very promptly when it had been reported. Cllr. Oglesby reported that a caravan had been dumped at the layby on the A361.*

Guttering and Pavements – The Parish Steward has dealt with weed growth along the High Street. *The Chairman commented that it is hoped that the newly formed 'Streetscene Working Group' would include this issue in their list of proposed tasks and added that it would be helpful if any weed growth etc could be removed prior to the main Litter Pick on 18 September 2020.*

Rights of Way – There have been five maintenance outings for this group since last we met. We had seven volunteers on the last work group, all socially distanced, which was excellent and made for swift completion on a hot day. *The Chairman thanked all those involved. Cllr. Scott added that there may be a need to cut back some paths and other areas as preparatory work for the Winter.*

Planning changes – This was discussed under Agenda item 5. *However, the Council **resolved** to respond to the Government in respect of the proposed changes and Cllrs. Scott and Bodman agreed to draft a response that would be tabled at the next Parish Council meeting for approval.*

Village Celebration – To be discussed under Agenda item 11.

b. The Chairman and councillors expressed their thanks to the parishioners who had responded to the questionnaire regarding possible initiatives to improve the facilities and appearance of Semington Village. Improvements to the Streetscene, Traffic Management issues, Wessex Close Play Area and the need for a local shop featured in the responses. The Chairman asked that this subject is placed on the Agenda for the next meeting.

7. Highways and Environment.

a. Cllr. Scott stated that the Melksham News recently published an article regarding a scheme to reallocate road space to prioritise cycling and walking, which includes a link from Hilperton to Melksham via Semington. Additional funding is being sought from Wiltshire Council.

b. The Council noted the date and Meeting Point for the Guttering and Pavement clearance – Saturday 12th September 2020, 10am at the Village Hall.

8. Planning.

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

SEMINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

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)	Approved.
20/05326/FUL	Aidens Field Farm, Devizes Road BA14 6JD	Extension to integral garage to provide a farm office at first floor level.	Pending

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

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.	New
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The Council has no objections to this proposed development.

20/05710/FUL	17 Pound Close Semington BA14 6JP	4m single storey rear extension	New
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The Council has no objections to this proposed development.

c. There were no planning applications received after 12 August 2020.

d. Cllr. Scott stated that he would be attending a Wilts & Berks Canal Group (a Zoom) Meeting on 17 September 2020.

9. Finance.

a. The Clerk reported that the current financial position at 19 August 2020 was as follows:

Lloyds A/C 2149025

Bank Statement 31 May 2020	£ 29,157.83
Total:	£ 29,157.83

Credits (1 June 2020 to 30 June 2020):

HMRC VAT Refund	£ 411.97
Total:	£ 411.97

Debits (1 June 2020 to 30 June 2020):

Clerk's Salary May) (Paid 1 June 2020)	£ 364.78
Wiltshire Wildlife Trust	£ 36.00
	£ 30.00

SEMINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

AM Print & Copy
Internal Audit Fee

	£	120.00
Total:	£	550.78

Balance at 30 June 2020:

	£	29,019.02
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Credits (1 July 2020 to 31 July 2020):

None

	£	0
Total:	£	0

Debits (1 July 2020 to 31 July 2020):

Clerk's Salary (June) (Paid 1 July 2020)
AM Print & Copy
Clerk's Expenses (May)
Clerk's Expenses (June)
P Smith (Bosch Battery)

	£	364.78
	£	45.00
	£	12.75
	£	11.61
	£	151.00
Total:	£	585.14

Balance at 31 July 2020:

	£	28,433.88
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Credits (1 August 2020 to 19 August 2020):

None

	£	-
Total:	£	-

Debits (1 August 2020 to 19 August 2020):

Clerk's Salary (July) (Paid 1 August 2020)

	£	364.78
Total:	£	364.78

Balance at 19 August 2020:

	£	28,069.10
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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)
09-Jul-20 Interest (Approx)
09-Aug-20 Interest (Approx)

	£	0.32
	£	0.30
	£	0.28
	£	0.90

Debits

None

	£	-
	£	-

SEMINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Balance at 19 August 2020:

£	7,650.98
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Total Balance in Hand at 19 August 2020:

£	35720.08
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Payments to be authorised (19 August 2020).

Clerk's Salary (August) To be paid 1 September 2020	£	364.78
Clerk's Expenses (July)	£	24.37
	£	389.15

***HMRC PAYE Month 4 (Due 5 August)
(Paid by the Clerk directly to HMRC)***

	£	146.00
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The Clerk reported that the Contingency Plan for COVID-19 permitted the advance signing of a restricted number of cheques – the approval of which was subject to agreed controls. He commented that the signature of Mr Rimmer (previously a councillor) appeared on the remaining two cheques as an authorised signatory. The Clerk stated that he would make arrangements for a new Bank Mandate thereby removing the names of Messrs. Rimmer and Bowyer but he recommended using the remaining two cheques subject to the Council giving approval for the expenditure. The Council endorsed these proposals.

- b. The Council **resolved** to make a donation to St Georges PCC of £550.
- c. The Council **resolved** to pay the sum of £45 plus VAT for Daffodil bulbs and it further **resolved** to invite the Streetscene Group to propose additional planting schemes to improve the visual appearance of the village. The Chairman asked that this subject is placed on the Agenda for the next meeting.
- d. The Council **resolved** to allocate the sum of £150 for printing Community Newsletters to promote communication within the village over the coming months. The Council unanimously **resolved** to record its thanks to Gilliam Airey for her work in preparing the various community newsletters to inform the parishioners.
- e. The Council **resolved** to make all the payments under 'Payments to be authorised'

10. Rights of Way (RoW).

The Council noted, with thanks, the work of the various Working Groups in clearing the local RoWs. This subject was reported under Agenda item 6a.

11. Village Celebration.

The Chairman reported that the Celebration originally planned had been cancelled because of the continuing restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 Pandemic, although it was hoped that it could take place sometime next Spring. He commented that notwithstanding this, there were to be a number of events taking place on 19 September but they were likely to be of a very local nature and relatively 'low key'. Cllr. Bodman added that she was intending to canvass the 'Street Leads' to inform them of the proposed celebrations and to ask them if they have any plans for taking part and, if so, the nature of their proposed events.

12. Date of the next meeting.

Wednesday 23 September 2020 at 8pm (a Zoom – Virtual/Remote Meeting).

SEMINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Prior to the meeting ending there was a lengthy discussion on the use of the existing website for Parish Council information, especially in relation to meeting current legislative requirements. It was agreed that this subject would be placed on the Agenda for the next meeting.

The Meeting ended at 9.45pm

Acting Chairman
Semington Parish Council

SEMINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Decisions taken remotely by Semington Parish Council – Subsequent to Contingency Plan 17 March 2020 and Post – 1 July 2020.

Pay A&M Print & Copy - £45

Planning application 20/05326/FUL – Aiden's Field (4/8/20).

Pay P Smith (Bosch Battery) - £151 (13/8/20).

Other decisions taken at PC Meeting 1 July 2020 and recorded in those minutes.

The Clerk is to arrange/host a Zoom Virtual/Remote PC Meeting for 8pm, 19 August 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
12 August 2020

SEMINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Vice Chairman's Report, 19th August 2020

Litter Picking – Three informal picks have been done. One, thanks to the enthusiasm of our volunteer parish steward, took us all the way to the roundabout outside Melksham Police station. A village litter pick is scheduled for 18th September.

Anti-social problems in Little Marsh at the old A350 gate – early in July, concerns were raised by a Little Marsh resident about speeding and drug abuse. Throughout the local PCSO has been very helpful and supportive and police visits have been increased. At the time of writing, there had been no incidents for 2 weeks.

Guttering and Pavements – our Parish Steward, during July, has amongst other work, dealt with weed growth along the High Street.

Rights of Way – there have been 5 maintenance outings for this group since last we met. We had 7 volunteers on the last work group, all socially distanced, which was excellent and made for swift completion on a hot day.

Planning changes – Cllr. Scott has written to us all about the government's latest proposals, including the link to the consultation document. Whilst this emerging new framework should be closely monitored, we might also consider what, if anything, we can do to prepare for a scenario which may favour hostile planning applications in villages like Semington.

Village Celebration – at a further meeting, the group organising this event felt that the continuance of Covid restrictions meant it would be better to postpone the big event until Spring 2021. However, a smaller event will still happen on 19th September, which will be similar to the VE day event, with small street parties around the village. The Somerset Arms is likely to have a live band and BBQ later in the day, too.

All other items for report appear elsewhere on the agenda.

Cllr. P Smith (Vice-Chairman)

(Acting Chairman – Semington Parish Council)