

## SEMINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

### Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 10 February 2021 at 7.30pm – Virtual/Remote Zoom Meeting (as a result of COVID-19 ‘Lockdown’ restrictions).

#### Present.

Councillors P Smith (Vice-Chairman and Acting Chairman for the meeting), V Bodman, M Kasasian, R Oglesby, W Scott, C Wade, R Bruges, S Chown 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. Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on 6 January 2021 and Decisions taken remotely (post-Lockdown).**

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

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

#### **4. Wiltshire Council Report.**

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

**Wiltshire Council Local Development Plan** – He arranged and attended a meeting at Wiltshire Council offices with Head of Spatial Planning, Chairman of Semington Parish Council and Cllr. Scott to discuss the Local Plan. Cllr. Seed stated that he would continue to support the local villages.

**A350 Melksham Bypass Consultation** – This initial consultation has ended and the responses and possible routes will now be assessed. He added that further consultations will ensue with the next one likely to be in the late summer.

**Wiltshire Council Budget FY2021/22** - Wiltshire Council has produced a balanced budget totalling some £412m which will be presented, in due course, to the full Wiltshire Council on 23 February for approval. He commented that the proposed increase in Council Tax was 1.99% plus a 3% levy for Social Care.

**Westbury Bypass** – In answer to a question from the Council he commented that the Westbury Bypass project was likely to be implemented but after the construction of the new A350 Melksham Bypass. The intention of the DoT was to progressively improve the heavy goods vehicle route from the M4 motorway to Poole/Southampton starting from the M4 motorway.

#### **5. Chairman’s Report.**

The Chairman reported that the following issues had arisen during the preceding month:

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Littlemarsh – Speeding traffic and Anti-Social Behaviour.

Fly tipping.

High Street – Anti-Social Behaviour.

He stated that these matters may be addressed during the remainder of the meeting.

### 6. Planning and Development

a. The Clerk reported that there were no planning applications received after 3 February 2021.

#### b. Wiltshire Council Local Development Plan.

The Chairman reported that Cllr. Scott had attended the Wiltshire Council webinar addressing the Melksham and Rural elements of the plan, Cllr. Bodman had attended the webinar addressing the Rural element and that he, Cllr. Smith, had attended the webinar that concentrated on Trowbridge and the Rural elements. The Chairman gave details of the webinars to the Council and explained that Semington and some other local villages, such as Keevil and Great Hinton were now in the Trowbridge Housing Market Area (HMA) having been transferred from the Chippenham HMA – a transfer that was implemented with very little overt consultation with the villages involved and, according to Cllr. Scott a proposal that was ‘buried’ in the plethora of documentation that accompanied the formal Strategic Plan consultation in 2019. Cllr. Smith added that in his view it was a move of HMA designed solely to meet Trowbridge Town Council’s housing and expansion ambitions and housing targets.

Cllr. Wade stated that Wiltshire Council should have advised the villages affected directly, through their respective Parish Councils, of this proposed change of HMA and the Council should make their objections to the manner in which this change was effected known to Wiltshire Council. Cllr. Bruges lamented that fact that despite representations on various issues the Parish Council’s view appears usually to be ignored and he questioned whether there was a better way of influencing the views and decisions of Wiltshire Council. The Chairman commented that the Parish Council must strive to change this decision regarding the move of Semington to the Trowbridge HMA.

Councillors expressed the view that the implications of the Draft Local Development Plan, if adopted, could have serious consequences for Semington and that the views of parishioners should also be sought. The Chairman stated that he would convene an ExtraOrdinary Parish Council meeting to discuss this Plan with a view to drafting a possible response to the formal Consultation that would be sent to Wiltshire Council. The Chairman stated that the ExtraOrdinary Parish Council meeting would be held on 24 February, commencing at 7.30pm. Meanwhile it was agreed that notice of the meeting would be advertised on the Website and in the Newsletter.

Cllr. Oglesby stated that irrespective of the HMA issue, it was essential that Semington Parish Council remained in the Melksham Community Area.

#### c. Neighbourhood Plans.

Cllr. Scott stated he did not consider that the Parish Council should develop a Neighbourhood Plan and that his reasons for this view were expressed in the paper that accompanied the Agenda for this meeting. Cllr. Oglesby also stated his opposition to the development of a plan based on his experience with a nearby Parish Council. He commented that it would involve a huge amount of work, a large expense, a prolonged timescale and the need for the local community to be supportive and fully involved throughout the exercise – the latter would prove impossible to achieve based on his own experience. Initial enthusiasm soon waned. He added that such a plan would quickly become out of date. Cllr. Bodman stated that Neighbourhood Plans can be very useful particularly in defining possible development areas and protecting other areas, such as green spaces, in the villages. She suggested that a ‘scoping exercise’ be undertaken to help examine the usefulness of such a plan. This was a view supported by Cllr. Bruges.

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Cllr. Scott queried whether the absence of such a plan would inhibit or disadvantage Semington. The Chairman commented that a Neighbourhood Plan could be advantageous by helping to control the development of the village but that it was essential that there was community support for its development and implementation. He suggested that Wiltshire Council be consulted. Cllrs. Bodman agreed to make enquiries of Wiltshire Council and others who have been contracted to develop such plans and Cllrs. Chown and Bruges agreed to make enquiries of those villages that have already developed such Neighbourhood Plans. Cllrs. Smith, Scott and Bodman agreed to meet with Wiltshire Council officers who have direct experience of such plans.

The Chairman commented that it was evident that more information was required before deciding whether to develop a Neighbourhood Plan for Semington and he invited all parties to research the subject in more detail. The Council **resolved** not to make a decision at this time regarding developing a Neighbourhood Plan.

Cllr. Oglesby added that if a decision was made to develop such a plan it was essential that it was a project managed by the community with involvement from parish councillors and not left to the Parish Council to manage it alone.

d. Council for the Preservation of Rural England (CPRE).

The Council **resolved** to become a member of CPRE and to pay the £36 Annual Membership Fee.

e. Future Village Development.

The Council **resolved** to adopt the following text (shown in italics) as a statement of the approach of Semington Parish Council to Village Development:

### **Planning Applications**

*Information and updates on planning applications and related issues affecting the parish are discussed at Parish Council meetings in open session. Details of all applications can be found on the Wiltshire Council [Planning Portal](#).*

*Semington Parish Council never holds formal meetings with developers or landowners that the public are excluded from. Where major developments are proposed, the Parish Council invites the developer to present their proposals to villagers. Sometimes these are part of scheduled Parish Council meetings, or meetings can be specially convened."*

*The proposal is that the following new text is placed immediately after this:*

*"Our stance towards development in the village is that we will*

- always resist disproportionately large developments, and while*
- not actively support any development, unless it address an objectively identified housing need within the parish,*
- engage with appropriate proposals to ensure developers understand the actively rural character of the village and its needs, so that if their application is successful, it has a positive impact on the village.*

*By disproportionately large, we mean any that would increase the housing stock by more than about 5%. By character, we mean the village's heritage and cultural legacies, the nature of its existing housing stock, and its environmental assets. By needs, we mean infrastructure and facilities that will enhance the lives of people living and working in the community."*

Cllr. Scott requested that this statement is placed on the Website and in the Newsletter and that parishioners are requested to advise the Parish Council on their views regarding this approach.

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### f. Development North of St Georges Road.

The discussion and decision in respect of how best to influence the development of this land for the benefit of the community – especially in relation to the s106 Agreement – was deferred until a subsequent meeting because of the pending Appeal by the developer regarding the number and types of dwellings to be constructed there.

g. The request from Ashford Homes for a meeting with the Parish Council to discuss the possible development of land off Church Street was noted by the Council. The Chairman reiterated the Parish Council's approach to such meetings stating that any such meeting would be held in public with the public also invited to attend. The Clerk stated that the meeting would not be a Parish Council meeting and it should be termed a 'Community Meeting', designed to attract interested parishioners of Semington and widely advertised as such.

Councillors agreed that Thursday 18 March was a suitable date and the Clerk was asked to contact Ashford Homes to arrange the meeting.

Cllr. Bruges reported that he had received a letter from Michelle Donnelan supporting the recreation of the Wilts/Berks Canal and the link through Melksham. Councillors expressed mixed views regarding this project and the motive(s) behind this letter.

### 7. **Environment and Streetscene.**

Cllr. Bruges proposed that a meeting of this Group be held on Tuesday 16 February at 7.30pm. The other members of the group – Cllrs. Scott and Kasasian - confirmed their attendance.

Cllr. Oglesby implored councillors to be vigilant regarding grass-cutting by Wiltshire Council to ensure that the operatives did not damage the many daffodils that had been planted.

Cllr. Smith stated that the Littlemarsh residents had requested that the Parish Council provides them with three sets of Litter Picking equipment to allow them to undertake litter picking in their immediate area. The Council **resolved** to provide three sets of equipment not exceeding in total £50. The Clerk suggested that the residents purchase the equipment and to send the invoice to him for payment.

### 8. **Transport and Traffic.**

The Chairman commented that he had sent the missive from a Littlemarsh resident to all councillors and that a number of areas of concern had been listed and these areas related to the 'Gate', speeding traffic and Anti-Social behaviour.

Cllr. Wade stated that the Gate at Littlemarsh had been very seriously damaged by a car and that, as a matter of process, any highway related matter, including speed limit changes, must in the first instance be raised at the Wiltshire Council CATG meeting for its support. He added that Parish Councils now had to pay two thirds of the cost of any work endorsed by the CATG and that it would have to go on a CATG priority list for work in FY2021/22 as there was no money left in the CATG Budget for FY20/21. He was not convinced that it would be seen as a priority.

Cllr. Smith stated that there was strong support for a cycleway between Hilperton and Melksham vis Semington and Wiltshire Council is now taking the project to the next stage.

### 9. **Recreation and Wellbeing.**

Cllr. Chown stated that the 'Wellbeing' initiative is fairly quiet at the moment and the network is working well. She added that she had been in touch with all 'Road Leads'.

The contacts for the improvement of the Wessex Close Play Area continue to be active.

Cllr. Chown stated that a Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator is still being sought and that she will advertise the post in the Newsletter.

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### 10. Community and Communication.

Cllr. Bodman stated that the Valentine Day's window dressing Project is progressing well. She added that there have been some entries for the Website competition and she has decided to extend the deadline for entries until 14 February.

### 11. Finance.

a. The Clerk reported that the current financial position at 10 February 2021 was as follows:

#### Lloyds A/C 2149025

Bank Statement	£	32,532.04
31 December 2021		

	Total:	£ 32,532.04
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#### Credits (1 January 2021 to 31 January 2021):

None	£	-
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	Total:	£ -
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#### Debits (1 January 2021 to 31 January 2021):

Clerk's Salary (December 2020) (Paid 4 January 2021)	£	374.92
Clerk's Expenses (October)	£	7.71
Clerk's Expenses (November)	£	17.56
Clerk's Expenses (December)	£	50.72
Clerk's Salary (Back Pay) - 1/10/2020 to 31/1/2021	£	245.14
Southview Nurseries	£	185.00
Dominic Muns (Website)	£	1,240.00

	Total:	£ 2,121.05
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#### Balance at 31 January 2021:

	£	30,410.99
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#### Credits (1 February 2021 to 10 February 2021):

None	£	-
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	Total:	£ -
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#### Debits (1 February 2021 to 10 February 2021):

Clerk's Salary (January 2021) (Paid 1 February 2021)	£	374.92
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	Total:	£ 374.92
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#### Balance at 10 February 2021:

	£	30,036.07
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#### Lloyds A/C 7754288

Bank Statement	£	7,676.83
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31-Jan-21

**Credits**

None	£	-
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**Debits**

None	£	-
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	£	-
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**Balance at 10 February 2021:**

	£	7,676.83
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**Total Balance in Hand at 10 February 2021:**

	£	37,712.90
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**Payments to be authorised (10 February 2021).**

Clerk's Salary (February) To be paid 1 March 2021	£	437.40
Clerk's Expenses (January)	£	5.23
	<b>£</b>	<b>442.63</b>

b. The Council **resolved** to make the payments shown under 'Payments to be authorised' above at Agenda item 11a. including the payment of £5.86 for the September Clerk's Expenses which had not been paid previously.

**12. Website.**

a. The Chairman requested that councillors who had not yet submitted their thirty-word pen picture for the Website do so as soon as possible.

b. The subject of the Website Competition was addressed under Agenda item 10 above.

**13. Date of the next meeting.**

The date for the ExtraOrdinary Parish Council meeting was agreed to be Wednesday 24 February 2021 and that it would be a remote/virtual (Zoom) meeting and would commence at 7.30pm.

The date for the next Ordinary Parish Council meeting was agreed to be Wednesday 10 March 2021 and that it would be a remote/virtual (Zoom) meeting and would commence at 7.30pm.

The Meeting ended at 9.55pm.

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 10 February 2021.**

1. Payment of £1240 to. D Muns (Website).
2. Payment of £120 to Codewater Solutions.

R P Coleman  
10 February 2021