

Minutes of the Meeting of Othery Parish Council
Monday 12nd December 2023 7:30 pm in Othery Village Hall

- 1 **Apologies:** None
- 2 **Present:** Cllrs Tizzard: Jennings: Jones: Selway: Atherton: Betty: Wright:
- 3 **Declarations of Interest:** These will always be declared at the agenda item when appropriate.
- 4 **Certifying the minutes of the meeting held on 13th November 2023:** Agreed as a true record with one minor name change.
- 5 **Public question time and Neighbourhood Watch/Crime report and an update from Cllr Matthew Martin or Harry Munt:** Updates emailed: Very pleased with the support from Cllr M Martin but still no contact at all from Cllr H Munt and if this continues we will lodge a complaint.
- 6 **Matters Arising:** **Somerset Council's budget proposals:** Somerset Council are saying that to put forward a balanced budget for 2024/25 they would need to increase Council Tax by a large margin to be on a par with other authorities. The problem with this approach is that it is not a viable comparison i.e. not like for like. To enable Somerset Council (SC) to balance their budget they desire to devolve services to Town and Parish Councils which would require Parish and Town Councils to increase their precept to cover the cost of running devolved services. Othery would not support this move but have asked to purchase the playing field from SC but as yet no comment has been received from SC. Somerset will outline their proposals after their meeting on the 20th December and if they cannot set a balanced budget they may have to invoke a section 114. Therefore, Othery PC will wait to see their proposals before setting their precept. One member was against that proposal as he felt that nothing would change for Othery.

Highways Issues: North lane potholes have been filled but it is a poor job and already breaking up. There is still a parking issue in the layby outside the village hall with one vehicle parking too close to the road junction restricting visibility. This is a matter for the village hall committee, but they are urged to take action.

20mph project: The CIL funding will pay for this project which has been put forward by Somerset which will be in the centre of the village. Cllr Tizzard will make contact with SC to get clarification of the final area to be covered by the scheme and email it to all. The feeling of the meeting was that we go ahead as it promotes safety, noise pollution and is good for the village.

Community Speed Watch and new SID: The new SID is already having an impact on drivers through the village coming in the other direction, but poor weather has restricted any speed watch operations.

Cemetery boundary trees and hedge: February half term would be a good time to plant the trees and hedging material and the clerk will see if he can get any more free hedging material, but the council will fund £500 worth of hedging material.

CIL Funds: Noted and some allocated to the 20mph project.

Taking control of the playing field: Application has been formally submitted and supported by Cllr M Martin but no further comment from Somerset.

Affordable Housing: Next meeting.

- 7 **Playing Field:** Handrail and safety chain and lock: The handrail has been fixed by Mr L Notaro and thanks to him from the Council. Since the meeting the chain and padlock have been purchased for the gate. Cllr Selway would like a couple more seats and will get quotes for the next meeting.
- 8 **Cemetery:** Tim Burbidge to repair the cemetery wall. Cllr Betty is still waiting for a response from Mr Burbidge,
- 9 **Planning notice:** **Planning application number:** 38/23/00016/ **Proposal:** Reduce spread of Atlas Cedar (T4) (TPO Ref T4) on southern side by up to 2m maximum to provide 2m clearance from building and reduce spread on eastern side by 1.5m. **Location:** The Cedars, High Street, Othery, Bridgwater, Somerset, TA7 0QA. The Parish Council have no expertise in these matters and see no reason to disagree with the advice from the tree officer.
- 10 **Financial Matters:** **Set precept for next financial year: Next Month**
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| <u>Expenditure:</u> | Salary | £ 268.24 |
| | Josephine Star | £ 25.00 |
| | Slashdotdash | £ 31.20 |
| <u>Income:</u> | Headstone | £ 150.00 |
- Charity Crisis for Christmas. All financial matters agreed.
- 11 **Correspondence:**
- 12 **Correspondence for Circulation:** Already circulated by email:
- 13 **Urgent Matters at the discretion of the Chairman:** The Parish Council acknowledge the passing away of a former Parish Councillor Tony Gange Harris. Apparently in the Leveler there are free litter picking kits available.

Date and time of the next meeting: Monday 22 January 2024 7:30 Parish Council Meeting.