

WOOLAVINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

A Meeting of Woolavington Parish Council was held in the Village Hall, Higher Road, Woolavington on Tuesday, 12th March 2024 at 7.30 p.m.

Present:- A. Sharp (Chairman), R. Darch, A. Edney, N. Frith, Mrs J. Knight, E. Marsh, S. Smith, R. Young (Clerk) Somerset Councillor Suria Aujla and 6 members of the public.

Apology for absence received from A.J. Chidgey, B.J. Galloway, Mrs C Galloway and Somerset Councillor M. Healey.

74. Disclosures of Interest

Mr Darch disclosed an interest in matters relating to the Gravity Site.

75. Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 23rd January 2024 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

76. Gravity Site

Paul Lowndes gave an update on matters relating to the Gravity Site. 305 acres had now been sold to Agratas to manufacture battery cells. 100 developable acres remained in the southern portion of the site. In the south west corner, a hotel, a new 37 club and a gym would be built. Ground preparation work had already started. Mr Lowndes answered question raised by residents.

The Village Enhancement Scheme had to commence within six months of the contractual completion of the link road which was likely by early April. Work on the VES was hoped to start in May and finish in September. There would be some disruption with road closures during the work. No other road closures were planned.

Construction traffic would use the link road not Higher Road. Any transgressors could be reported to Gravity.

Communication would be available through joint newsletters, websites, social media and Agratas would be appointing a liaison officer and there was likely to be a community forum.

Health and well-being would be achieved through high value jobs and training for young people.

Light pollution would be addressed through the LDO – there would be bat corridors and extensive tree planting.

The land near the Newlands Estate was unlikely to be used for residential purposes being too close to the T-Pylons.

An issue regarding the relocation of the football pitches to Bridgwater would be further considered.

It was agreed to invite Felix Mann, Corporate Director of Communications with Agratas to a future Meeting of the Parish Council.

Paul Lowndes was thanked for his interesting update.

77. Report of the Somerset Councillors

Somerset Councillor Suria Aujla reported that Somerset Council had agreed a budget for 2024/25 and outline matters concerning the Local Community Network.

78. Anti-Social Behaviour

PCSO Tom Russell reported upon his work in Woolavington and reference was made to anti-social behaviour in the disused garage block at Knowle End and criminal damage to a gate in the playing field.

79. Maintenance and Highway Issues

Members considered an update on maintenance and highway issues since the last Meeting.

The culvert which had given rise to the long outstanding drainage issue affecting Crancombe Lane had overflowed again during periods of prolonged rain. Somerset Council's Flood Team had been contacted again with a view to them taking enforcement action to ensure that the owners of the blocked ditch clear it to allow surface water to flow northwards. It was agreed to seek a meeting with appropriate agencies to compile a comprehensive plan for the drainage system in the area. County Highways had cut back the overgrown vegetation at the rear of the school

The culvert under Combe Lane near 7 Woolavington Hill would be cleared in the next financial year. Numerous potholes had been reported and filled. Combe Lane was being monitored – the road edges had been damaged by large vehicles. The worst defects had now been filled. The owners of a property at the Causeway had been requested to cut back vegetation overhanging the path.

Gary Bickers had nearly completed the list of winter maintenance work and had started grass cutting including the two village greens.

A & H Plant & Construction had installed the extra drain and manhole in the playing field prior to the main drainage improvements which were scheduled to commence in April. The perimeter path had been repaired where necessary prior to the Junior Fun Runs commencing. The guttering and a downpipe to the pavilion had been replaced.

80. Biodiversity Policy

It was agreed to defer consideration of an updated model policy until the next Meeting.

81. Financial Issues

The following payments were authorised

DD	Total Energies	pavilion electricity	£115.07
DD	Telecoms Consortium	pavilion line	£44.99
001366	A & H Plant & Construction	drainage work	£5,527.87
DD	Total Energies	pavilion electricity	£166.94
001367	GWB Services	maintenance work	£1,875.00
001368	Greenslades	grass cutting	£313.99
DD	Telecoms Consortium	pavilion line	£44.99
001369	GWB Services	grass cutting	£1,258.68
001370	K. Jackson	honourarium	£100.00
001371	Parish Clerk	payroll & sundry payment reimbursement	£1,723.03

82. Planning

The following planning applications were considered

002 – Retention of construction access for an additional 15 years in line with the Gravity Local Development Order, north of Higher Road – This is Gravity Ltd – recommend permission;

003 – Variation of conditions 20 & 41 of application 54/19/00008 to amend the wording and amendment of the S106 agreement regarding the affordable housing obligation, Woolavington Hill – Wain Homes – recommend refusal.

83. Reports from Voluntary Organisations

Mr Marsh reported that the village hall was currently being well used. A grant of £28,000 had been agreed by the Valencia Communities Fund to enable the decarbonisation project to be progressed and it was agreed that the third party funding held by the Parish Council be released when required.

Mr Smith reported that Flare was continuing to operate satisfactorily.

The Meeting closed at 9.25 p.m.

Chairman

