

# Witham Friary Parish Council

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Clerk: Joseph Leach | 1a Harewell Walk, Wells, Somerset, BA5 2EZ  
[withamfriary.parishcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:withamfriary.parishcouncil@gmail.com)

## Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> June

**Present:** Cllr. W Sheppard (Chair), Cllr. M Ferrari (Vice-Chair), Cllr. J Knowles, Cllr. S Coate, Cllr. L Sewell, Cllr. F Nicholls.

**Also Present:** J Leach (Clerk to the Council and Responsible Financial Officer), and 8 members of the public.

### 1. Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

### 2. Declarations of Interest

Cllr. M Ferrari and Cllr. L Sewell declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Item 7.4 as members of the Village Fields committee.

### 3. Approve the minutes of the last annual meeting and last meeting

The Minutes were agreed and signed by the Chairman as a true and accurate record.

### 4. Matters Arising

No Matters Arising

### 5. Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/2024 – Exemption

Agreed and signed.

### 6. Risk Assessment and approval of Annual Governance Statement

#### 6.1. Internal Audit

#### 6.2. Annual Governance Statement

The internal audit was carried out by Andrew Liggatt.  
The annual Governance Statement was read out and agreed.  
Items agreed and signed.

### 7. Finance:

#### 7.1 Approval of Accounting Statement for 2023/2024

The Clerk presented the final accounts which had been completed and audited.  
Agreed and signed.

#### 7.2 To confirm signatories for council bank account

Councillors agreed to remove the former clerk and replace with the new clerk. It was also agreed that the Chairman of the Council should be a signatory. All Agreed.

Signed by Chairman of Council ..... Date ...../...../.....

### 7.3 To Consider a grant application from the Village fields

The request was for the following;

*"[£500.00] to replace the dangerous metal vehicle gate with a combined pedestrian/vehicle gate that enables users to safely access the fields."*

Cllrs M Ferrari & L Sewell declared a personal & prejudicial interest in this item, as members of the Village Fields committee. They were therefore unable to vote on the matter but contributed to the discussion as permitted by standing orders as members of the public.

The council felt that the amount requested for the purpose of the grant was excessive, with Cllr Nicholls feeling unhappy with supplying a grant to a private enterprise. Cllr Ferrari, in her capacity as a member of the public, pointed out that the applicant is a registered charity.

Cllr J Knowles stated he did not object to replacement of a gate which is often used by members of the community and grants public access.

Cllrs Sheppard and Coate believed this was an issue that should be handled and paid for by the applicant.

The council voted one (1) for, and three (3) against the application.  
The application was therefore declined by the council.

### 7.4 To approve the schedule of payments below

|                                    |         |
|------------------------------------|---------|
| Steve Orr (Invoice 3)              | £272.00 |
| Steve Orr (invoice 6)              | £407.00 |
| J Leach (Clerk) April Wages        | £146.00 |
| J Leach (Clerk) May Wages          | £504.00 |
| J Leach (Xero Refund INV 19187005) | £9.00   |
| J Leach (Xero Refund INV 19528405) | £9.00   |

All were agreed.

## 8. Reports:

### 10.1 Chairman's Report

Nothing new to report.

### 10.2 Highways

Cllr Nicholls reported that a number of ditches were overgrown and blocked, causing some flooding issues, but these will be sorted after nesting season.

There were questions arising over a bridge which was hit by a vehicle, and who owns it. A number of verges require cutting, and brief discussion was held as to whether the parish council may have to take on the service in the near future, due to the long periods of time between cuts, which cause traffic concerns.

### 10.3 Witham Water

Witham Water new meter installation has not been well received, with some getting little to no notice at all before fitting. Cllr Sheppard to write to Witham Water to clarify their position and processes.

Signed by Chairman of Council ..... Date ...../...../.....

#### **10.4 Network Rail**

Cllr Ferrari informed the council of a proposal concerning a path at Kerrycroft field is being considered.

#### **10.5 Recreation Ground**

Cllr Coate presented a proposal for prices for the new signs for the recreation ground, for no dogs or motor vehicles, following several incidents on the fields involving motorised quads. The council unanimously agreed the purchase of three new signs up to a maximum cost of £500.00. Some discussion was also held around the lighting of the car park, with Cllr Knowles reminding the council that it was originally agreed to only replace three lights in the car park due to damage. Members noted that the ditch at the bottom of the field seems blocked, and quotes for it's clearance should be obtained.

#### **10.6 Play Patch**

An inspection is due in July. A part of the play equipment has been noted as rotten, and that there is money in the budget to replace this. Steve Orr to replace the rotten parts as well the noticeboard. Cllr Coate raised the matter of replacing the gate as well, but it was suggested refurbishment might be more cost effective.

#### **10.7 Footpaths**

Cllr Sewell is to look into the footpaths which were raised at the public time.

#### **10.8 Biodiversity & Environment**

Cllr Sewell reported that Long Ham have an interpretation board, and Cllr Ferrari reported the removal of Himalayan Balsam in Long Ham.

#### **10.9 Dovecote**

Following a letter from the Churchwarden, George Pritchard, Cllr Ferrari will supply the requested information. Licenses to begin being issued, with advertising for tenants to start on social media and the website.

#### **10.10 Contingency Planning**

Cllr Knowles reported the final details are being collated with the help of Cllr Ferrari and the Clerk.

#### **10.11 Village Groups/Organisations**

Village Hall grant application is required for the coronation breakfast.

#### **10.12 Future Events**

A number of future events were discussed and will be updated.

#### **10.13 Somerset Councillors**

Cllr Barry Clarke provided a written update, with particular note that gas cannisters used for barbeques and camping should not be put out for kerbside recycling, but instead taken to a household recycling centre.

Signed by Chairman of Council ..... Date ...../...../.....

**9. A.O.B.**

Following the public open discussion, it was requested that businesses be written to regarding helping with traffic management in the parish, due to a number of people visiting and using excessive or inappropriate speed on the country lanes in particular. It is hoped local businesses can raise awareness and help towards reducing the amount of accidents.

It was noted that the dog waste bins have now been emptied.

**10. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of Witham Friary Parish Council will be held on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> July 2024 at 7:30pm

With no further business, the meeting closed at 21:30

Signed



Parish Clerk  
On behalf of the Council

Signed by Chairman of Council ..... Date ...../...../.....