

Trull Parish Council

Minutes of a Meeting held in the Pearce Suite, Memorial Hall, Trull
on Monday 18th June 2007 at 7.15 pm.

Present: Mr. G. Hewett (Chairman)

Mr. S. French, Mr. D. Archer, Mr. Colin Ralph, Mr. Simon Jeffery,
Mrs. Fiona Drew, Mrs. J. Wooldridge, Mrs. A. Hudson and
Mr. P. Parris, together with 22 Members of the Public.

In attendance: Mr. S. Martin-Scott – County Councillor
Mr. D. Greig – TDBC Parish Liaison Officer
Mr. S. Watts - Clerk

Prior to the commencement of the Meeting, the Chairman invited questions from the Public on matters that were not related to the Agenda.

Mr. John Webb raised the following: -

- Vegetation and saplings at the waterfall at Staplehay required cutting back to avoid potential damage to the stonework,
- The wooden gates at the bottom of the playing field required maintenance,
- The introduction of the Local Area Working Boards represented another tier of bureaucracy and was therefore likely to cost more in terms of Council Tax. He asked if the Council supported the initiative and, if so, what would be the potential benefits?

The Chairman advised that the maintenance issues would be put in hand; and that there was an Agenda item regarding the Local Area Working Boards.

38/07 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. N. Hancock.

39/07 Declarations of Interest

The following declarations of interest were advised: -

Name	Minute No:	Personal/Prejudicial	Reason and Action Taken
Mr. G. Hewett	045/07 07/024	Personal & Prejudicial	Applicant is a neighbour. Absent from room during voting.
Mr. S. French	045/07 07/026	Personal & Prejudicial	Farms adjacent field. Absent from room during voting.
Mrs. J. Wooldridge	045/07 07/027	Personal & Prejudicial	Employee of School. Absent from room during voting.
Mrs. A. Hudson	045/07 07/016	Personal & Prejudicial	Owner of property being considered. Absent from room during voting.

40/07 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 14th May 2007 were agreed, and signed by the Chairman.

41/07 Matters of Report

There were no matters for report.

42/07 Co-option of Council Members

The Chairman stated that the Council currently had three vacancies following the recent Elections, and had advertised for replacements under the co-option scheme. He introduced Mr. Colin Ralph, Mr. Simon Jeffery, Mr. Neil Allen and Mrs. Fiona Drew, who had all expressed an interest in joining the Council. The applicants were asked to address the Council, and Councillors raised a variety of questions with the applicants.

A ballot was then held, and the Clerk and Parish Liaison Officer verified the completed ballot papers. The Chairman advised that Mr. Ralph, Mr. Jeffery and Mrs. Drew had been duly elected.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Allen for his application, and stated that his details would be retained for any future vacancies.

Resolved: That Mr. Colin Ralph, Mr. Simon Jeffery and Mrs. Fiona Drew be appointed as co-opted members of the Council with immediate effect.

43/07 **Chairman's Report**

The Chairman advised on the financial position of the Parish Lands Charity as at 5th April 2007, since the report had not been available at the Annual Parish Meeting on 16th April. It was noted that received income after expenses was £19,091.30, and the appropriate proportions had been paid to Trull School and Trull Church. Of the 50% payable to relief in need, £7,737.66 had been distributed to 34 separate beneficiaries, many of whom were students. There was a carry forward balance of £7,737.66, which would be distributed for relief in need at a later date. The capital sum is primarily invested in stocks and shares, with a current market value of £513,429.00. Mr. Parris queried the source of the initial funding, and it was advised that it was the proceeds from the sale of land for the Ladylawn site, originally donated to a pre-Reformation chantry chapel at All Saints Church.

It was noted that the lock to the notice board adjacent to the Post Office had recently failed, and had required replacement.

44/07 **Report on the Regional Spatial Strategy by Mr. Ralph Willoughby-Foster**

The Chairman introduced Mr. Ralph Willoughby-Foster, TDBC Forward Planning Unit Manager, who was to give a progress report on the Regional Spatial Strategy (Minute 037/06 refers).

Mr. Willoughby-Foster gave an overview of the growth projections for new dwellings that could be allocated to the South West in future years. The panel of Government planning inspectors was currently holding an Examination in Public of the draft RSS in Exeter, and the Taunton area proposals had been considered on 6th June.

TDBC, along with other district, county and unitary authorities, had been invited to address the panel in support of its written evidence. The case was made that any development should be directly related to sustainability, with housing numbers reflecting employment opportunities, in order to retain a high proportion of people living and working in the same area. Housing developers present at the meeting had pressed for development in excess of that process and had identified a number of areas that were suitable, notably Comeytrowe. However, it was noted that Mr. Willoughby-Foster had emphasised that Comeytrowe was not appropriate at the present time due to the lack of infrastructure, whereas alternatives such as Monkton Heathfield already had these facilities in place. Emphasis had also been placed on the TDBC policy of green wedges, with the preservation of the Vivary wedge an important priority.

Since the draft RSS had been completed, the government had revised its estimate of future housing needs upwards by 30%. This reflected people living longer, more cohabitations breaking up, and inward migration into the south-west. TDBC had commissioned Bakers Associates, which had done the initial work on future housing needs in the Taunton area, to submit a technical report on the implications of this.

The public examination was scheduled over the next three months, but the Planning Inspectors' report was not expected until the end of the current year, after consultation with the Government Office for the South West. The report was likely to recommend

that previously published growth rates would be increased to exceed 32,000 dwellings per annum for the South West region.

Mr. French stated that he had also attended the public examination meeting. He fully supported the views of Mr. Willoughby-Foster that the sustainability and economic well-being of Taunton as a whole had to be paramount in any future planning decisions. Mr. Parris queried the availability of suitable land to generate employment, and the Taunton Firepool development was cited as an example.

Mr. Willoughby-Foster answered a series of questions from members of the public that included: -

- How the SWRA was originally formed and its constitution,
- The distinction between a green wedge and a green belt,
- If the panel would have the power to override any future appeals process,
- The current growth rate being in line with the provision in the existing Local Plan,
- That migration to the area was primarily due to the quality of life factors such as good housing and the safe environment that exists within the west country,
- That the outcome of the Local Government Review was unlikely to influence the final RSS policy.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Willoughby-Foster for an excellent presentation, and it was agreed that the Council and members of the public now had a good understanding of the current position of the RSS.

045/07 **Formal Adoption of Revision to Code of Conduct – Paragraph 12 (2)**

(This item was taken earlier in the meeting and is a variation from the published Agenda).

The Clerk reported that a new Code of Conduct had come into force on 3rd May 2007. The primary change was the addition of paragraph 12(2), which now permits a member with a personal or prejudicial interest to speak, make representations or answer questions and give evidence on the matter, provided the public have the same opportunity. This is only permitted where the clause has been formally adopted. Although it is not mandatory to accept the condition at this stage, it will be compulsory from 1st October 2007. It was noted the TDBC Parish Liaison Officer and SALC recommend adoption of the requirement at the earliest opportunity.

Resolved: To formally adopt, without revision and with immediate effect, the revised Code of Conduct with the specific inclusion of paragraph 12(2).

46/07 **Planning**

Mr. Archer, Mrs. Hudson and Mr. Parris gave an overview of the applications received from TDBC for the Council to consider: -

- 07/016 - The Briar, Amberd Lane, Staplehay, Trull.
Full Conversion of barn for use as a holiday let.
Mr. Archer advised that the application contained a typographical error and should read 'The Byre'.
Mrs. Hudson, having previously declared an interest, spoke on the application but was absent from the room during the voting.

Resolved - To support the application.

- 07/019 - Cutsey Farm House, Cutsey, Trull.
Full Erection of single storey extension and conversion of garage to annex.
Mr. Archer advised that the Council had previously considered and supported the application, which had now been re-submitted with a number of minor amendments.

Resolved - To support the application.

- 07/020 - Sunnyside, Wild Oak Lane, Trull.
Full Erection of single storey extension.
Resolved - To support the application.
- 07/022T - The Old Rectory, Wild Oak Lane, Trull.
Application to fell one Lombardy Poplar tree included in TDBC (Trull No. 1) Tree Preservation Order 1990.
Mr. Parris summarised the situation and stated that he had difficulty in supporting the application. Additional information was requested from the applicant, Mr. Martin-Scot, and it was explained that felling the tree was primarily due to concerns raised by the immediate neighbours and the ongoing costs in keeping the tree to a manageable height. A site meeting had been held with the TDBC Tree Officer and it was noted that he was in agreement with the application.
Mr. Keith Sanders stated that damage was occurring to the recently resurfaced Carter's Way footpath due to root growth from the tree.
Mr. Archer advised that due to the nature of the application and the fact that the tree was subject to a TPO, further specialised advice was necessary and it was therefore beyond the ability of the Council to comment.
Resolved - To make no comment to TDBC, but refer to the difficulties associated with the application.
- 07/023 - 4, Orchard Close, Trull.
Full Erection of single storey extension.
Resolved - To support the application.
- 07/024 - Portland House, Dipford Road, Trull.
Full Erection of conservatory and porch.
Mr. Parris queried why the conservatory could not be considered as permitted development. The applicants advised that, as the dwelling is within the designated Trull conservation area, an application was required.
Mr. Hewett, having declared an interest, was absent from the room during the voting and Mr. French temporarily chaired the meeting.
Resolved - To support the application.
- 07/025 - Oakwood House, Dipford Lane, Trull.
Full Erection of detached double garage.
Resolved - To support the application.
- 07/026 - Canonsgrove Lodge, Canonsgrove, Trull.
Full Erection of first floor extensions.
Mr. French, having declared an interest, was absent from the room during the voting.
Resolved - To support the application.
- 07/027 - Trull C of E VA Primary School, Church Road, Trull.
Car parking lay by with access gate to new playing fields.
Mrs. Wooldridge, having declared an interest, was absent from the room during the voting.
Mr. French abstained from voting.
Resolved - To support the application.

The Clerk advised of the following decisions that had been received from TDBC: -

- 07/013 - 4, Patricks Way, Staplehay.
Permission granted for the erection of dwelling on adjacent land.
- 07/014 - Cutsey Grange, Cutsey, Trull.
Permission granted for the conversion of garage to private gym.
- 07/015 - Lower Kibbear Farm, Kibbear, Trull.
Permission granted for erection of porch.
- 07/020 - Sunnyside, Wild Oak Lane, Trull.
Permission granted for the erection of a single storey extension.
- 07/023 - 4, Orchard Close, Trull.
Permission granted for the erection of a single storey extension.

47/07 **Playing Field**

The Chairman referred to the previously circulated draft constitution for the 2008 Party in the Park Committee, and asked if the Council were in agreement with the proposal.
Resolved: That the draft constitution for the Party in the Park Committee be approved.

The Chairman advised that he would be standing down as the Council's representative on the Party in the Park committee. He asked if Mr. Ralph would continue with the role and this was agreed.

The Chairman requested that the Clerk ascertain the current requirements for the Party in the Park event from Zurich Insurance at the earliest opportunity.

The Clerk referred to a revised quotation received from Mr. Pepperell (Minute 05/07 refers) regarding maintenance of the wooden gates at the bottom of the playing field. The quotation listed the works necessary as the preparation and application of a base coat, plus two applications of Sikksens Filter 7 light oak stain. The rate would be £386 to include labour and materials. It was noted that VAT was not applicable in this instance.

Resolved: That approval be given to Mr. Pepperell to proceed with maintenance work to the gates at a cost of £386.00.

48/07 **Footpaths**

Mr. White advised that he had now had the opportunity to speak to Mr. Guy and had reported a number of maintenance issues to Somerset County Council. A request was made for information from footpath users, so that a better understanding of the condition of the footpaths could be gained. It was agreed that an article should be placed in the next Newsletter.

The Clerk reported that a response had now been received from Mr. Sam Jones of the SCC ROW Team regarding the improvement works to the footpath across Trull Meadow (Minute 26/07 refers). Although his predecessor had previously agreed the scheme, the current revenue budget situation meant that it was now unlikely that the work would commence. It was noted that Mr. Jones had given an undertaking to make enquiries with the SCC 'Route to Schools' budget holder and to advise of the outcome.

49/07

Highways

The Chairman advised that recently laid flooring at Trull Stores had been damaged due to customers walking on the deteriorating road surface outside the shop. The problem was directly related to the surface dressing breaking up, and Somerset Highways had been called to a site inspection. The situation had been agreed, but a specific date for the remedial work was to be confirmed.

Mr. French advised that he had now spoken to the proprietor of the Crown Garage (Minute 153/06 refers) regarding parked vehicles at the junction with Sweethay Lane, and the situation had shown some improvement. However, there remained the issue of employee's of the garage parking on the main road at or near the garage, and this was more difficult to address. As this aspect was related to the initial planning consent for the garage, the problem now required a sympathetic but authoritative approach.

Resolved: That the Clerk will request the CPSO to liaise with the garage.

50/07

Allotments

The Clerk advised that a tenant had recently given up their plot, and that arrangements had been made with the next in line on the waiting list to take it over.

Mr. Chairman advised that Veolia Ltd would be requested to remove the discarded metal items (Minute 08/07 refers).

51/07

Trull Village Memorial Halls

The Chairman advised that a recent discussion with the Chairman of the Trull Community Centre Development Group had proven very useful, and it was evident that progress was being made. He reiterated the proposal to replace or refurbish the Memorial Hall. Mr. Jeffery was asked if he would undertake the role of representing the Council on the Group, and this was agreed.

52/07

Trull School

Mrs. Wooldridge advised that the School fete was being held on 24th June.

Mr. Archer reported that the School had recently received an outstanding OFSTED report, and was one of only five in the county to achieve this standard. It was agreed that the Clerk write a letter of congratulation.

53/07

SCC Unitary Authority Application & Local Area Working Board

SCC Unitary Authority Application

The Clerk reported on the meeting regarding the SCC Unitary Council Proposal that he had attended with Mr. French on 21st May (Minute 13/07 refers). It was noted that the SCC Ward Councillor, Mr. Stephen Martin-Scott, had previously provided the majority of information, but the main points of interest centred on: -

- The net revenue budget of the new Authority would be £341M pa (which was exclusive of the schools budget) and would realise potential savings of £27M pa over the existing structure. A comprehensive business case was detailed on the SCC website.
- There would be mechanisms in place to protect the anticipated savings.
- Council tax would be equalised across the County, and rises restricted to 2% pa for the first five years.
- The new Authority would operate with 116 Councillors. Despite the increased workload, it was not envisaged that the role would be full time.
- The existing District based boundaries had been in place for 33 years and were unlikely to change in the short term, but would be subject to review.
- The overall policy for planning matters would be determined centrally, but there would be locally based decisions.
- The District and Borough Councils were not in favour of the proposal, and a poll of the residents across the County was being organised by Electoral Reform Services.

Mr. French stated that he did not consider the meeting to have been particularly well attended or organised. The presentations did not provide sufficient detail on the main issues such as high quality services, and it was now very difficult to access the Officers concerned. Mr. Martin-Scott elaborated on the previous reports, and stated that any potential saving could be artificial as central Government may reduce the annual block grant provision. Mrs. Drew highlighted the fact that the application coincided with a period of significant change within the County Council due to the ISIS (Improving Services In Somerset) project that was progressing in partnership with IBM Ltd; and that no service or function was deemed to be out of scope.

The Clerk advised that the attitude of Parish Councils towards the proposal had been requested by TDBC, SCC and SALC, and queried if the Council were minded to respond.

Resolved: That no action be taken in advising the position of the Council in respect of the SCC Unitary Authority application.

Local Area Working Board

Due to time constraints, a report was not made on this item.

54/07 **Review of Standing Orders**

The Clerk referred to the previously circulated Standing Orders, and explained the changes that had been made to reflect the adoption of the revised version of the Code of Conduct. An attached summary sheet also gave details of other minor changes that tailored the original version to specifically meet the requirements of Trull Parish Council.

Resolved: That the amended version of Standing Orders be agreed and adopted with immediate effect.

55/07 **Approval of 2006/7 Accounts**

The Clerk reported that the Internal Auditor had approved the accounts for 2006/7. Reference was made to the previously circulated statements that detailed income for the period as £16,129.48, with an expenditure of £13,727.44. Adjusted for the £9,846.24 balance carried forward from 2005/6, and £144.00 for two cheques that had yet to be presented, the balance at 31st March 2007 was £12,248.28. It was noted that the accounts would be advertised as being available for public inspection from 19th July, and be submitted to the External Auditors, Moore Stephens of Bath, on 31st August.

Resolved: That the £12,248.28 balance carried forward on 31st March 2007 be agreed and approved.

56/07 **Approval of the Annual Return**

The Clerk referred to the previously circulated copies of section 4 of the Annual Return and advised that each section required consideration and approval prior to submission to the External Auditor.

Resolved: That section 4 of the Annual Return for 2006/7 be agreed.

57/07 **Report from the Internal Auditor and Actions Arising**

The Clerk referred to the previously circulated reports from the Internal Auditor and the Audit Commission. It was apparent that the Audit Commission had raised concerns regarding the effectiveness of the internal audit systems being achieved by some Councils. In respect of Trull, the Internal Auditor had identified the following items that required corrective action: -

<u>Item</u>	<u>Corrective Action</u>
Regular bank reconciliations	- Mr. Hancock to authorise periodic reconciliations.
Review of Standing and Financial Orders.	- Agenda item for June Meeting.
Maintain Asset Schedule	- Agenda item for September Meeting

- Annual review of internal audit system. - Agenda item for October Meeting.
- Treasury Management - Consideration be given to increasing funds held in deposit account.
- Clerk's Contract of Employment - Amend to include hours of employment and inform HM Revenue department.
- Amend insurance policy to provide legal expenses cover. - Amend policy with Zurich Insurance.

Resolved: That the above actions be implemented and the Internal Auditor informed accordingly.

58/07 **Matters of Correspondence for Report**

The Clerk advised of correspondence that was of interest to the Council: -

An invitation received from the Mayor of Taunton Deane to attend a Civic Service on 27th June in support of National Veterans Day.

An invitation to submit nominations to stand as a Parish Representative on the TDBC Standards Committee. Two seats were available and applications, together with an indication of relevant experience, must be submitted to TDBC by 13th July.

A current edition of 'The Thatch' magazine.

59/07 **Accounts**

Resolved: That the following accounts be authorised: -

Mrs. J. Wooldridge – May Newsletter	-	£19.00
Clerk's salary – May	-	£300.00
Zurich 2007/8 Insurance Premium	-	£1,219.26
Mr. Ron Vining – Footpaths & General Works	-	£125.00
Parsons Landscapes Ltd – May Grass Cutting	-	£197.91
The Wyvern Club - AGM	-	£44.00
EDF Energy – Changing Rooms.	-	£10.44
Mr. R. Shattock – Trull Green Grass Cutting	-	£32.00
Mr. D. Mountstephens – Notice Board Lock	-	£38.00

60/07 **Items for the Next Agenda**

Items for the next Agenda would include: -

- A presentation on Affordable Housing by Mr. Karl Hines, Senior Housing Enabler of the Community Council for Somerset.
- A suitable site for a notice board in Staplehay.
- Mr. Greig offered to provide additional training for the revised Code of Conduct and, subject to diary commitments, this would be held prior to the next meeting on 16th July.

61/07 **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on 16th July 2007, in the Pearce Suite, Trull Memorial Hall, Trull at 7.15 pm.

The Chairman closed the Meeting at 10.10 pm.

Signed.....
Chairman of Trull Parish Council

Date.....