

Great Elm Parish Council

(Website: greatelmparishcouncil.webs.com)

Minutes of the Great Elm Parish Council Meeting held in the Village Hall on Monday 22nd January 2018 at 7:30pm

Present: Edmund Thompson Chairman
 Ric Swann Vice Chairman
 Jim Duffus Council Member
 Gerry Peachey Council Member

1. **Apologies:** Kevin Whitmarsh

2. **Public Participation:**

Raj Russell Parishioner (throughout)
 Approximately 25 Parishioners (initial presentation)

3. **Declarations of Interest:** None

4. **Minutes of Previous Meeting:** Agreed as correct and signed by the Chairman.

5. **Presentation – Buckland Dinham superfast internet connection**

Paul Laurence (Voneus Ltd) gave a presentation on how faster broadband (30 to 50 mbps) could be brought to Great Elm and surrounding district. Paul explained the system currently operating in Buckland Dinham, where an antenna on Buckland Dinham church connects wirelessly to other properties in the village. A similar system could be installed in Great Elm; signals would be beamed from Buckland Dinham church to a property (a landing point) which was in line of sight. From that initial property, connections would be made to other properties. Problems making connections to properties out of line of sight (ie down the hill) would be solved by mounting hop-points on appropriate properties.

Paul showed pictures of the various antennae emphasizing their relative small size and that approval on listed building was a mere formality.

If there was sufficient demand from villagers, a system could be up and running in a few months. Costs currently around £20/month for 20Gb data and £34.99/month for unlimited data.

Installation costs apply although Paul was informed that a further voucher scheme would soon be introduced by Connecting Devon & Somerset (a government led partnership) aimed at reducing such costs.

Paul circulated a form asking for names of those people interested in subscribing to broadband using the wireless system.

Paul went on to talk about the alternative fibre-optic broadband being introduced gradually throughout the area by Gigaclear, but this it is believed would not be available until end of 2019.

6. **Reduction of speed limit between Hapsford and Mells**

All agreed speeding traffic was a major problem for residents, pedestrians (especially children and elderly), cyclists, and horse-riders, posing nuisance, hazard and loss of peaceful amenity to all for no benefit. The slowing down of traffic regarded as non-detrimental to all in the Parish and highly desirable, not just within village centre, but from beginning to end of Parish along all roads, most particularly the Murtry/Mells road. ET to liaise with JB regarding what other villages in the area might

have done to obtain 20mph signage and other traffic calming measures to reduce traffic speeding.

7. Matters Arising or Outstanding from the last meeting:

7.1 Improvements to the duck pond area:

JD to investigate drainage further.

8. Highways/footpaths:

Giles Toulson-Clark raised matter of trees fallen across paths and within the Mells Stream. RS to email relevant contact details of Mendip footpaths officers.

9. Financial report and matters:

9.1 Accounts

<i>Clerk's salary July – December 2017</i>	<i>£207.98</i>
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<i>SALC affiliation fee</i>	<i>£42.16</i>
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Agreed.

10. Planning:

10.1 Proposal for land at Chubbs Yard

Jason Ricards addressed the meeting saying he was thinking of buying and developing the site (excluding the existing dwelling) and wanted to work with the Parish before deciding whether or not to proceed with purchase of the site. No drawings, plans or specific proposals were presented. Mr Ricards thanked the attendees for their time.

10.2 Planning applications

None.

10.3 Mendip Decisions

2017/2527/FUL & 2017/2528/LBC – Creation of new vehicular access and driveway (revised from previous granted planning application 2010/044) – Manor Farm. Approved by MDC on 21 November 2017.

11. Correspondence:

Talybont Ltd had sent generic letter to explore possibilities for 'community' electricity projects. Little specific detail given. JB to ask for any specific proposals the firm might have (in writing).

12. Clerk's matters:

None.

13. Any Other Business:

13.1 JD raised matter of grass outside Village Hall being churned up by vehicles parking in wet conditions. JD suggested he'd look at possible means to reduce damage, such as plastic and concrete mesh. Some comment that this would look bad, be ineffective and easily damaged. Suggestion of putting up posts was put forward by RS and met with some agreement and disagreement as a way to protect such green areas. Parking on the Murtry/Mells road also suggested by ET as an alternative parking option that would also have the benefit of slowing traffic down.

13.2 ET conveyed complaint that the cycle path has been cleared excessively making it 'look suburban' and destroying its function and value as a wildlife corridor. Some members opined that it

looked fine and that undergrowth cutting provided habitat for beetles.

13.3 With a view to assisting with any further enquiries regarding the Council’s views regarding Chubb’s Yard, RS suggested a general Council view be formulated in light of the failure of previous development proposals and appeals in relation to developing the site, and because of the site’s centrality to the village. It was noted that it was not the Council’s function to ‘work’ with or be seen to endorse or support any specific developers or development, and also that the Council recognised that its view should not limit or constrain whatever any party interested in the site may seek to do. Nevertheless, it was thought worthwhile to have a general position discussed and a consensus arrived at to assist any future or potential parties interested in gauging the Parish Council’s views and thereby save Council time in the event of multiple enquiries being made of it by different parties at different times.

Considerable discussion, taking on board the key village objections, and the findings of the latest formal appeal, regarding a proposal to build several houses on the site, was entered into. The nature and extent of development was considered, including work units, shop, multiple ‘affordable’ housing, multiple ‘unaffordable’ housing [‘executive’ houses], multiple national-builder-type suburban estate houses, carpark, green-space, alternative site for Jackdaws, and others. None was considered either genuinely desirable for the village as a whole or realistically feasible.

The conclusion was that the site, with its limitations due to contamination, its lack of drainage, its centrality within the village, and with the interests of those already living in the Parish in mind, was that the site probably best lends itself to a single dwelling of exceptionally high architectural merit, essentially the kind of development allowable under the Paragraph 55 clause of the National Planning Policy Framework. This clause allows single country dwellings of exceptional architectural merit. An approach to developing the site along these lines was thought most likely to produce something that might enhance the village and thereby be consonant with the nature of the village and the interests of parishioners.

Meeting closed at 10.10pm

Date of the next Meeting

Monday 26th March 2018 at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall.

**Signed by E Thompson
(Chairman)**

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Date

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Clerk: Miss Joy Book
Tel: 07704 584953
Email: parishcouncils.frome@gmail.com

5 The Cooperage
Frome
Somerset BA11 1JX