

Williton, Watchet & Quantock Vale Area Panel

Notes of Meeting held on 3 March 2015

at the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Williton, at 7.00 pm

Present

Cllr E. May (Chairman)	West Somerset Council
Cllr A. Trollope-Bellew	West Somerset Council
Cllr D. Westcott	West Somerset Council
Cllr S. Dowding	West Somerset Council
Cllr S. Goss	West Somerset Council
Cllr A. Knight	West Somerset Council
D. Talling	Holford PC
P. Grandfield	Holford PC
D. Drabble	Sampfurd Brett PC
V. Boxall	Stogursey PC
J. Foster	Watchet Town Warden
L. Whetlor	Watchet Town Council
S. de Renzy-Martin	Watchet Town Council
J. Koch	Williton Parish Council
R. Woods	Williton Parish Council
R. McDonald	West Somerset Flood Group
PCSO S. Thompson	Avon & Somerset Constabulary
B. Cleere	West Somerset Council (Director)
Apologies	
D. Peake	SCC Highways
Cllr. HJW Davies	West Somerset Council
Sgt Daly	Avon & Somerset Constabulary
J. Richards	WACET
G. Bigwood	Williton Parish Council
A. Stivins	Williton Parish Council

1. Have Your Say – Community Issues/Concerns

Holford PC representatives expressed concern that they had not yet received details about the charges levied by West Somerset Council for uncontested elections and how the figures had been arrived at. Brendan Cleere promised to get the matter looked into and a response would be provided to Holford and wider panel members
A response has subsequently been provided and is attached to these minutes for wider information.

2. Apologies for Absence

Noted as above.

3. Notes of the Meeting held on 16 December 2014 and Matters Arising

The notes of the above meeting were confirmed as a correct record.

4. Police Report

Discussion focused on problems arising from large lorries coming through Watchet, taking deliveries to the solar farm development at Old Cleeve. Footpaths and verges were being damaged and lorries were too large to safely make the turn at the sharp bend in the Town Centre. Parked vehicles had been damaged by passing lorries and concerns were expressed about safety of pedestrians.

Although the solar farm development had nearly ended, Watchet Town Council requested a meeting with SCC Highways to discuss how such circumstances could be avoided in future.

Cllr May and Brendan Cleere agreed to raise these issues with SCC Highways.

5. Highways Report

David Peake (who had sent apologies) provided a written update on current works, which had been circulated to all attending.

6. Devon & Somerset Fire Service Report

None received.

7. West Somerset Flood Group (WSFG)

Robert McDonald outlined the role of WSFG, as a group of town and parish councils actively working to reduce flood risk at local level and give a voice to the communities of West Somerset in the current debate in managing future flood risk. The group is supported in its work by agencies including Somerset County Council, West Somerset Council, Environment Agency, Exmoor National Park and The National Trust.

Mr. McDonald encouraged parish and town councils to join WSFG by contacting the secretary, Dr Teresa Bridgman on 01984 640996 or email pawmark@btinternet.com

8. District Flood Board

Cllr Trollope-Bellew outlined the role of the above group, convening local groups with statutory agencies and ensuring effective co-ordination of flood protection works,

mindful that the issues and solutions in West Somerset were different from the rest of the County.

9. West Somerset Council

Brendan Cleere reported that the Council had now set a balanced budget for 2015/16 and highlighted the further financial challenges ahead, with a projected funding gap between income and expenditure of greater than £1m by 2020.

10. Date of Next Meeting

9 June 2015, 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Williton

The meeting ended at 7.55pm.

Advice Note in Respect of Election Charges for Parish Councils

The Scale of Fees agreed locally sets out the fees to be paid for the Returning Officer and the clerical allowance. The section below relates to Parish Councils:

2. Parish Council Elections

Fee for conducting the election, giving the prescribed notices, preparing and supplying nomination papers, deciding as to the validity of nominations, appointing and remunerating Deputy Returning Officers, arranging for or conducting the poll, counting the votes, declaring the result and making return of same and generally performing all the duties which a Returning Officer is required to perform under the Representation of the People Acts and the Rules and Regulations made thereunder, and including all disbursements and expenses other than those for which special provision has been herein made, as follows:

One basic fee for undertaking the above services irrespective

of the number of elections

£62.00

together with:

a) *for each contested election:*

*in a parish or group of parishes, or (where a parish is divided into wards) in a ward - not exceeding 1,000 electors **£46.00***

*over 1,000 but not exceeding 3,000 electors **£62.00***

*over 3,000 electors **£72.00***

b) *for each uncontested election **£45.00***

c) *plus a clerical allowance as follows:*

(i) **Contested Election**

*A clerical allowance of **£87.00** per contested election of a Parish Councillor, provided that such fee shall be increased by **£72.00** in the case of not more than one election being held on the same day.*

(ii) **Uncontested Election**

*A clerical allowance of **£55.00** for each uncontested election.*

With regard to a contested election, the fees above will be charged, along with the following

- Hire of polling station – split cost between elections (i.e. Parliamentary, District and Parish)
- Polling Station Staff inc. training and mileage (Presiding Officer and Poll Clerk) – split cost
- Polling Station Inspectors (visit station to check up and collect postal votes) – split cost
- Postal Vote Packs – split cost (only two way as Parliamentary sent separate)
- Postal Vote Staff (issue and opening) – split cost (only two way)
- Ballot papers – whole cost

- Counting cards (grass skirt style) – whole cost
- Verification Staff and Venue – split cost (three way)
- Count Staff and Venue – split cost (two way)

The greatest cost is always the printing of the ballot papers, postal vote packs and the counting sheets and these are hard to predict as they depend on the number of candidates. A set up cost is incurred regardless of the size of the parish.