



Locking Parish Council

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The Parish Hall, Grenville Avenue,
Locking, North Somerset BS24 8AR

PARISH OF LOCKING

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Minutes of the **ANNUAL PARISH MEETING** for the **PARISH OF LOCKING** held on **THURSDAY 27th APRIL 2023 at 6.30pm** at Locking Parish Hall, Grenville Avenue, Locking.

Meeting opened at 6.30pm

The meeting was chaired by Cllr Paul Jones, LPC Chairman

Present:

6 members of the public

8 members of Locking Parish Council

1. Apologies:

2. Confirmation of Minutes: To approve as a correct record the minutes of the last Annual Parish Assembly held on 28 April 2022.

The minutes for the Parish Meeting held on the 28 April 2022 had been displayed on the notice boards and Locking Parish Council website from 17 April 2023 and copies were circulated within the Hall. The Minutes were **AGREED** by all present and signed as a correct record of that meeting

3. Locking Parish Council Reports:

a) Chairmans Report for Annual Parish Assembly

Good evening and welcome to this year's Annual Parish Assembly. This meeting is not a Parish Council meeting but is organised by the Parish Council to enable residents and local community groups to get together to discuss local issues. It's also your opportunity to ask 'what is your Parish Council doing for you or what are we not doing for you' or perhaps what can we do better? Hopefully, we will be able to answer your questions tonight, if we cannot then we will provide an answer to you as soon as we can.

You may have noticed that there are elections taking place for North Somerset Council along with Town & Parish Councils on 4 May 2023 – please be aware you will need to bring photographic ID along with you to vote. Locking Parish Hall is a designated Polling Station on the 4th May

Parish Council Election cycles are every four years, at the start of this 4 year period in 2019 this Council had 7 Cllrs, we are now at the end of our fourth year, and I'm pleased to say we have 13 Parish Councillors and it's been a busy year with some of the initiatives highlighted below and of course our committee Chairperson's will also give their update.

Sadly, some Parish Councillors will not be standing for re-election, Cllr John Keate, Cllr Les Mason, Cllr Carl Prosser, Cllr Justine Carter and Cllr Paul Fowler, we would like to thank them all for their hard work and dedication over the past 4 plus years and give them our best wishes for the future.

We have used media opportunities through our editions of 'Looking at Locking' and Facebook page along with Parish noticeboards to improve our communications with you. Looking at Locking in particular gives a view that hopefully does outline what we as a Parish Council have and will continue to do for you in the future in our growing vibrant community. We hope that you have found our editions of Looking at Locking to be helpful and informative and thank all those who have contributed items to make it an interesting read.

We, like others, are aware that there are many residents who live within our community who do not have the technical knowledge to use smart phones, tablets or laptops hence our commitment to providing 'Tea and Tech Lessons', these sessions are freely available at the Parish Hall with refreshments available as a bonus. Details of these sessions can be obtained from our Clerk who can be contacted on 01934 820786. Parish Councillors fully support these sessions as they can help people understand new technologies which can have an impact on their daily lives, we would like to thank Cllr Lisa Clarke who has been on hand most Tuesday mornings offering her expertise to those who need a bit of help and Cllr Wendy Ashdown who has offered encouragement and made countless cups of tea!

The Parish Council will continue to invest in the community you want to see and will continue to assist Parishioners through our partnership and meetings with Local Businesses, St Augustine's Church, Locking Parklands Developers, North Somerset Council, Local Policing Team, the New Doctor's Medical Centre, and the Primary and Secondary Educational Centres to ensure that our and your voice is heard.

The initiatives that we have put into place to help those in need during these continuing difficult times included the supply of food, essential items and winter warm packs.

With the support of our partners, we have introduced at Locking Parish Hall:

- Parish Pantry
- Book Exchange
- Community Living Room
- A safe meeting place for all

Our agreed Parish Council Projects continue to be developed with applications being submitted to North Somerset Council Planning Department for the upgrade to the Carpark at the Old Banwell Road Playing Field. Work to improve the drainage of the car park will begin in the next month or so.

Secondly, the Spinney is still a major concern to this Council, this important 'Travel Link' to the new Doctor's Surgery, New Schools and Commercial Businesses on Locking Parklands has been identified as being not fit for purpose and in urgent need of upgrading – Good news North Somerset Council (NSC) has following our representations and with the assistance of our District Councillors have agreed to undertake works to the Spinney to make it a safe and fit place for all users.

We as a Parish Council will continue to engage with NSC and our partners to ensure that this essential work is completed to our satisfaction and that it meets the needs of everyone.

Furthermore, Council has continually sought to engage with North Somerset Council over the withdrawal of the 126 Bus service and the introduction of the 'Demand Responsive Transport' initiative. We will continue to work with NSC to ensure that Parishioners are able to fully understand and obtain details on how this new system operates as it became live on 3 April 2023.

We will also monitor, record and challenge those instances where Parishioners are for whatever reason are unable to obtain transportation to obtain essential services.

We are also currently seeking to try and change the route of the number 51 Bus service so that it includes Locking Village which to us is an easy fix to a problem caused by the demise of the 126 Service.

We are working towards our Neighbourhood Plan for Locking and have recently submitted our Application for the Designation of a Neighbourhood Area to North Somerset Council.

We would like to thank Cllr Tremlett, who has taken the lead for the Plan and the volunteers who have taken on this huge task and if you would like to be involved, please contact the Clerk for further details.

One of the social highlights for this Summer is Locking Parish Fete on 15 July 2023, we are working with our partners to arrange this event and hope to include Locking's got Talent and The Great Locking Bake Off. As always to hold a successful event volunteers are required so, if you can spare 1 or 2 hrs, please contact the Clerk.

As mentioned earlier Chairs of our Parish Committees will tonight also, provide an update of what works and initiatives that we have been able to complete over the past 4 years.

b) Assets & Amenities Committee Chairmans Report from Cllr Wendy Ashdown:

We have been very busy planning and progressing projects for both the Hall and Park and the OBR playing field.

The Parish Hall has been very busy of late running the Parish Pantry and the Warm Space which have both been very successful. Also running in the Parish Hall is the Book Exchange which is very well attended. The major preoccupations for the Parish Hall are the Health and Safety risk assessments along with the fire regulations.

The Park and the play equipment is very well used on a daily basis along with all the picnic tables. The Park along with the equipment installed at the playing field is checked weekly by the Council's Parish Orderly and both are subject to an annual inspection by a specialist company.

We are in the process of upgrading the car park at the Old Banwell Road Playing Field (OBR).

Tenders have now been received for initial drainage works and we are hopeful that work will start this summer. It is hoped that any remedial works at the OBR Car Park will be conducted in the School holidays in order to minimise disruption to children, residents and users of the OBR Car Park. On behalf of the committee we thank the Parish Orderly Mike, Hall Cleaner Danny, Changing Room Cleaner Daniel along with our contractors for their hard work over the last year. We would also like to thank our regular hirers for continuing to support the Parish Hall and the playing field.

c) Finance & Human Resources Committee Chairmans Report from Cllr Bill Bearsby:

It has been a difficult year, due to the tail end of covid and the rise in the cost of living, which has impacted on revenues and expenditure. However, the council produced a budget which we managed to keep to including doing the projects that we planned.

Over the last few years, we have managed to create a general reserve in line with the national association of local councils' recommendation to cover any unexpected expenditures.

At last, after a long process of agreeing the specification getting planning approval and going out to tender, I am pleased to say the first stage of upgrading the car park at Old Banwell Road namely the drainage will be done this summer.

All being said we are in a relatively healthy position financially wise thanks to the controls we have in place regarding revenue and expenditure. Due to these controls, we were able to limit our precept rise to 3% for 2023/2024. Finally, my thanks to the Clerk our Responsible Finance Officer for her due diligence in keeping our accounts and for her advice.

- **Draft Statement of Accounts for Financial Year 2022/23**

In the absence of The Clerk, Cllr Bearsby presented the statement of accounts for the Parish

Council for the last financial year and highlighted the level of reserves, including the earmarked reserve for drainage works at Old Banwell Road Playing Field.

The un-audited accounts for the Financial Year 2022/23 were present and agreed subject to audit.

4. North Somerset Council: Ward Councillors Report – No report received

5. Reports from Locking Community Groups/Organisations

a. Locking Seniors – Report from Anthea Raines:

As a group we have a membership of 22 ladies.

We meet fortnightly on a Wednesday afternoon at St Augustine's Church Centre, 2pm-4pm.

Over the last 12 months, we have had a Talk on 'Scams', by Lin Griffin from Age UK.

An afternoon tea in celebration of the late Queen's 70th Jubilee.

A talk and slides on 'Locking' by Simon Begent.

Luncheon at the Beachlands Hotel.

James Vincent entertained us, with songs and keyboard.

A wonderful Christmas meal at the Beachlands Hotel.

Quizzes and table top games with much laughter and cheating!

We are all looking forward to another year of friendship, company and laughter.

b. Parklands Educate Together Primary School – Report from Mr Jeremy Hughes, Headteacher:

This academic year has been very successful for Parklands. We have seen a dramatic increase in numbers, with now around 260 children in the school and our oldest children going into Year 6 from September 2023. We employ over 50 staff, with the majority from the Weston area.

We had our first Ofsted inspection in January this year, which has graded us as Good in all categories. It was a very positive experience, and the school community were pleased to have all their hard work acknowledged.

Our children recently participated in a Dance Festival at The Playhouse, which was a wonderful celebration with several other schools from the area. Our parent volunteer group organised an Easter Egg Hunt around the Parklands area in the school holidays, with participants from not only our own school but around the local community.

We are currently campaigning for safer routes to school for our children, as there are no safe crossings, parking restrictions or traffic measures in the vicinity of the school. Any support from local councillors would be welcomed in this respect.

c. Locking Grove – Report from Director Siobhan Armstrong:

Tree Replacement Programme

The Directors of Locking Grove's Residents' Company are very pleased to report, that since the last Stakeholders' meeting, they have been able to plant twenty-two new trees! This is in addition to the Queen's Platinum Jubilee tree, so kindly donated by Locking Parish Council.

This project has been in the pipeline for some time. Most of the trees have been planted to replace ones which have been removed over the years under advice from the Tree Surgeon responsible for conducting Locking Grove's annual tree survey, or ones which have fallen naturally. A few trees were also planted to satisfy the terms of the council's 'planning permission' when the Mendip Road entrance was widened.

The twenty-two trees are a mixture of lime, cheery, acacia, red maple and ornamental pear. The planting also includes a new 'copse' of nine trees which are a mixture of liquid amber and columnar English oak. The copse trees were suggested by James McCarthy, one of the Tree Protection Officers at NSC.

King's Coronation – Locking Grove Street Party

This will take place from 2pm on Saturday 6 May.

Queen's Platinum Jubilee Commemoration

The Directors have plans in place to install the Queen's Jubilee Bench in a position by the Water Tower and the Locking Parish Council Notice board. The commemorative tree has already been planted there.

The hope is to establish a community focal-point by adding a decorative flowerbed which will also incorporate an RAF Locking commemorative plaque.

d. St Augustine's Church – Report from Rev Anne Wilkin

Overall, it has been a good year, but with new challenges to face.

Services everything is very much back to normal with services at 10am and a monthly service at 4pm on the 4th Sunday of the month. Everyone has returned to church – even those who said that they wouldn't because of covid being still around. We have begun to focus more on families and children and to make our Family Services with something for everyone – especially for the children. Celebration Sunday in the centre on a 4th Sunday is very popular and is the best attended service. We are also working on integrating the children more in that also.

On Sunday 11th June we are holding a Family Fun afternoon 3 – 5pm in the centre as a one-off to see if this time is a good one for families. We'll have songs, quizzes, story, food, games and crafts.

Community Café these have continued on the last Saturday of the month with a different charity bringing items to sell to raise money. These mornings have become very popular and are buzzing with people – real coffee, home – made cakes and a great atmosphere – what's not to love!

Community Lounge and Parish Pantry It has been really good to work with the Parish Council with us both hosting warm rooms and pantries. We opened for 4 sessions a week with 2 volunteers hosting each one. People came in for a coffee and chat and it was well – used. The pantry was also appreciated and helped many people. We have decided to continue to open the lounge on Tuesdays 2 – 4pm as we have had regulars who wanted to meet. This will go on for as long as there is a need. The pantry will be available then as long as supplies continue.

School The church's relationship with the school has grown stronger over this past year. I have taken assemblies, read stories to classes, spoken to classes, they have visited church and I have been questioned. We look forward to the future and how we can work more together.

Crosslinks The magazine is still being delivered to every home in the parish. We want this to be for the community and the church so do let us know if you want anything included. As Parklands grows this may mean we have to decide on numbers printed.

Social events this year have been open gardens, Tear Fund Quiz, Harvest supper and Maundy Thursday suppers with Hutton, Lunch Clubs at the Coach House, a speaker on 'Are Humans Special?' and Men's Breakfasts.

The Pastoral Assistants meet to talk about people we need to keep a watch on. We are always happy to visit anyone in the parish.

Churchyard It is hard work keeping the churchyard looking smart. This year we introduced Adopt a Grave and we now have 7 people who have offered to look after a grave.

Maintenance We have had our five yearly church inspection, which has provided us with a list of a lot of urgent and non – urgent work to be done on the church. Being Grade II listed this will cost us a lot of money. Our lovely Church Centre is proving costly to heat also. As with many churches finances have been a big challenge this year.

This coming year we look forward to a special Coronation Service on 7th May as well as our usual worship. We are here for everyone in the parish and seek to reach out in word and action with the good news of Jesus, in a way that is relevant to all people and all ages. We want to be here for future generations and are working hard on growing the church so we are viable and flourishing.

e. 1st Locking & Hutton Scouts – Report from Gareth Coombes

The 1st Locking and Hutton Scout Group have had a really successful and busy year. We currently have 120 members across all sections, in April 2022 we opened a squirrel unit which is a brand new section for young scouts aged 4-6 and this has proven to be really popular, as the unit is full and we have a waiting list. The Beaver, Cub and both scout groups are also flourishing. We are as ever looking for more volunteers to work with us either in weekly meetings or behind the scenes.

After saving up and fundraising we were able to purchase our own minibus last year, this has already helped us hugely with the rising costs of transporting out young people to activities and camps and we are now at a stage where we are able to hire it out to other groups so that the minibus may eventually be self-sustaining.

We ran the Santa Float in the 1st week of December and it was even more popular than ever, we visited Hutton, Locking, Haywood Village, Elborough and both Locking Parklands and Camp. Many people came out to see us and say hello to Santa, we raised quite a bit for funds which will go towards the rising costs of camp and transport.

The Easter egg hunt this year was the most successful it has ever been, the weather was glorious and we sold out of egg hunt sheet withing 2 hours, it was so lovely to see so many people from the local community come out to see and support us and enjoy the facilities within the village, we look forward to 2024's Egg hunt (and hope the weather is kind then too!)

Over the coming summer months, we have quite a few events to look forward to, the summer fete in July, and a number of camps including our week long summer camp which this year is in Dorset. We are looking forward to celebrating our group being 85 years old in June 2024 so are planning a year of celebrations culminating in a big birthday party, so watch this space!

6. Electors: Questions from the floor:

Questions from the floor:

a. Loss of 126 Bus service.

A member of the public summarised her views on the inadequacy of the present arrangement, provided by `Westlink`, which utilises a prebooked minibus service to access the nearest link into the First Bus network and then onwards to required destination. She used local examples (i.e. Locking to WSM / Locking to WSM Hospital / Locking to Bristol Hospitals to illustrate typical shortcomings that rendered the reality of the service to be severely limited.

She cited examples - heavy volume of traffic made bus late so driver didn't come / bus took a different route etc. She cited the difficulty of attending a hospital appointment with her husband, in which hours were spent attempting communications and `waiting`. She questioned access to other surgeries and the cost of taxis when the Westlink service failed - and the unnecessary stress placed on those already suffering. She also went on to list the efforts she had taken to bring this situation to the attention of stakeholders, which echoed LPC's own efforts.

b. Inevitably, First Bus route 51 was brought into the conversation - and the polarised positions were restated. Cllr Hilder stated that the `door` remained `open` with regard to this issue, and that a LPC working group were following events closely.

c. Three questions were asked by another member of the public:

The first related to the funding period for the public transport settlement - which is thought to be two years.

Secondly - when might the work start on the upgrading of the footpath known as the Spinney begin?

The latest estimate suggested to LPC is that the work should be completed by September 2023 - bearing in mind that it features in both the transport plans of the New School and New Surgery. All documents/reports relating The Spinney are in the public domain.

d. Cllr Keate asked from the floor, when are the houses on the NSC part of the site to be built? This time last year we were expecting work to be begin shortly.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 7.17pm

Signed.....Date..... Chairman