

DRAFT

**Minutes of Horsington Parish Council Meeting held at St Margaret's Hall on
Thursday 4th June 2015**

Public Forum: Mrs J Pyne provided an outline of the situation regarding the hedges in Horsington that had recently been cut. Mrs Pyne reported that in March it became apparent that the hedges on property owned by Mr Colebatch from the Village to the primary school had not been cut. The Parish Council receives complaints from mothers with children about having to walk out in the road to avoid the hedges along this stretch of road. The Parish Council asked Highways Department to assess the situation. The Highways Department visited the site and then wrote to the Parish Council for the name of landowner for the hedges along this stretch of road and included a plan of the hedges in question. The Parish Council provided Mr Colebatch's address and did not hear anything else until these hedges and all the other hedges were cut. Since the hedges were cut the Parish Council has obtained a copy of the letter, dated 30th April, that the Highways Department sent to Mr Colebatch asking him to remove the overhanging growth at Lower Road, Horsington within one month. The letter enclosed a map and a sketch showing the standards that they were trying to achieve. The letter stated that the Highways Department was aware that it was in the bird nesting season but that works could be carried out providing an inspection of the hedge was carried out prior to works being undertaken.

Mrs Pyne reported that the Parish Council had not contacted anyone about any of the other hedges in the Village that had been cut.

When the hedges had been cut Mrs Pyne contacted DEFRA who passed her onto Rural England. On Rural England's advice she reported the matter to the Rural Crimes Officer at Avon and Somerset Police.

District Councillor T Inglefield reported that investigations were being made whether any action could be taken under the Wildlife and Countryside Act and that he was awaiting a response.

Mrs Pyne read out a statement received from Mrs Colebatch just before the meeting. The statement said that all hedges, including roadside hedges, are cut on a 2 or 3 year cutting rotation. Reference was also made to regulation GAEC 7a which includes a general prohibition against cutting or trimming a hedgerow between 1st March and 31st August unless there the hedgerow overhangs and obstructs a highway, road or footpath. The statement confirmed that the Highways Department issued an instruction to cut the hedges along Lower Road, Horsington. As the hedges along Duck Lane were at a similar stage of growth and concerns had been received about the hedges in Marsh Lane a decision was made to cut the hedges in all three locations. The hedges were cut following an inspection.

Mr Fergusson asked if the Highways Department letter only referred to Lower Road. Clerk confirmed that this was correct.

Members of the public thought that the hedges had been cut back too severely.

R Gaunt reported that 2 members of the public had complained to the Police and that an eye witness had reported that he had seen dead birds.

Clerk reported that he had been contacted by the Daily Mail but that he was out when ITV had called.

Mrs Pyne stated that the matter was now in the hands of the Wildlife Crime Officer.

Mr Gaunt, Mr Fergusson and Mr MacDonald left the meeting at 7:50.

Mrs Colebatch joined the meeting at 8:00 and asked if there were any questions. Mrs Pyne asked her why the hedges away from Lower Road had been cut. Mrs Colebatch stated that the Duck lane hedges were at a similar stage of growth and that a complaint had been received from a local farmer about the hedge in Marsh Lane.

As there were no further questions Mrs Colebatch left the meeting at 8:05

18. Members present: Mrs J Pyne (Chairman), Mrs A Clayton, I Snowden, Mrs B Mann & S Hawkins.

Public present: District Councillor T Inglefield, R Gaunt, J MacDonald, M Ferguson & D Chapman (Clerk).

Apologies: County / District Councillor W Wallace.

19. Declarations of interest /dispensations: None.

20. To approve draft minutes as a correct record of meeting held on 14th May – proposed by I Snowden and seconded by Mrs A Clayton.

21. Matters arising from previous minutes:

1. S Hawkins reported that Mrs & Mrs Franklin had offered to repair the pot hole in the car park opposite the primary school and that the work had now been done.

22. Vacancy for Councillor: It was reported that 3 applications had been received and that a vote would take place by the Councillors at the July meeting.

23. Planning: Applications: None

Determinations:

1. 15/01696/FUL & 15/01697/LBC Mr & Mrs R Martin, Serts Place and Chutenbunny, Stowell Hill, Horsington – erection of sunrooms to cottages including an opening from each cottage to the proposed sunrooms – **granted – noted.**

2. 15/01343/FUL & 15/01344/LBC Mr P Longman, Horsington Grange, Rectory Lane, Horsington – erection of orangery and kitchen conservatory – **granted – noted.**

3. 14/02810/FUL Mr & Mrs PJ & M Phillips, Land at New Park Farm, Marsh Lane, Horsington – erection of agricultural building – **granted – noted.**

4. 15/00866/FUL Mr & Mrs I Skinner, Pumpkin Cottage, Cabbage Lane, Horsington – extension and refurbishment of existing garage / carport to provide additional ancillary accommodation incidental to the enjoyment of the main dwelling together with a small extension to residential curtilage – **granted – noted.**

Other: None.

24. Finance:

1. Cheques authorised:

000969 £450.00 S Hawkins – cutting grass at large play area, church yard, memorial and brook.

000970 £472.50 S P Collins – cutting grass and hedges at Cemetery.

2. **Money Received:** £75.00 for the interment of Mrs J Wood in grave I5 and £5 from the Village Hall for 5 years peppercorn rent for land at the rear of the Village Hall.

25. Play Area:

1. S Hawkins reported that he would start painting the play equipment as soon as the weather improved.

26. Cemetery / Churchyard:

1. The charges for the Cemetery were reviewed and it was agreed to increase the charge for purchasing a grave from £175 to £195. It was also agreed to leave the other charges unchanged.

2. It was agreed that S Hawkins would cut some small branches of the trees at the Churchyard.

3. Chairman reported that Steve Collins had worked hard at the Cemetery to make it look nice for Mrs Wood's funeral.

27. Horse Pond:

1. I Snowden reported that C James was happy to raise and lower the sluice gates.

28. Footpaths:

1. District Councillor T Inglefield reported that there was a problem with a footpath along Cabbage Lane that links to the A357 and that he had reported it to Eve Wynn at the County Council Footpaths Department.

29. Newsletter:

1. It was agreed to advertise the vacancies for Parish Councillors in the July edition.

30. Correspondence:

1. Somerset Community Foundation - Newsletter – **noted.**

2. SSDC South Somerset Together AGM – **noted.**

3. Avon & Somerset Police & Crime Commissioner Plan 2015 - 2017 – **noted.**

31. Any other business of importance:

1. Mrs B Mann reported that the wall leading from the small play area needs repairing. **Clerk to contact Hastoe Housing Association.**

Meeting Closed at 8:50pm

Date of next meeting Thursday 9th July 2015 starting at the Cemetery at 7pm.