

Great Elm Parish Council

**Minutes (draft) of parish council meeting held at the Village Hall, Great Elm on
Friday 11 March 2022, 7.30pm after several postponements due to covid, illness and electricity outages**

1. Present

Colin Jacobs, Member
Edmund Thompson, Chair
Gerry Peachey, Member
Kevin Whitmarsh, Member

2. Apologies

None. ET noted Jim Duffus' resignation notified and circulated by email some months ago.

3. Public participation

Five parishioners in attendance.

4. Declarations of Interest

None

5. Minutes of previous meeting

Approved

6. Actions from the previous meeting

JD reported that the rubbish bin by the Duck Pond had disappeared (presumed stolen) and that littered rubbish in the vicinity appeared to have considerably decreased, apparently the result of walkers taking their rubbish home and no longer being able to empty their cars of rubbish to overflowing in the bin. Litter is still evident in smaller quantities, the accumulation of which has been diminished by parishioners regularly collecting it up and disposing of it in their own home bins. Ad hoc signs asking that litter be taken home have been seen around the Duck Pond.

7. Planning matters

Noted applications/decisions, several of which GEPC had been asked to review and make comment on, this being done in circulation as usual to meet the stipulated deadlines for comment. GEPC's comments all available on Mendip's planning website as a matter of public record.

Application for approval of details reserved by conditions 3 (joinery details), 4 (materials (external walls & roofs)), 5 (sample panel (external walls)), 6 (ducts, pipes, rainwater goods) on planning permission 2019/2013/HSE (Proposed erection of a new garage structure with solar panels) Open for comment icon. Glebe House Church Lane Great Elm Frome Somerset BA11 3NZ. Ref. No: 2022/0018/APP | Received: Thu 06 Jan 2022 | Validated: Thu 06 Jan 2022 | Status: Registered

Application for approval of details reserved by condition 3 (joinery details) on planning permission 2019/2014/LBC (Proposed erection of a new garage structure with solar panels) Open for comment icon. Glebe House Church Lane Great Elm Frome Somerset BA11 3NZ. Ref. No: 2022/0027/APP | Received: Thu 06 Jan 2022 | Validated: Thu 06 Jan 2022 | Status: Registered

Application for approval of details reserved by conditions 7 (drainage) on planning consent 2020/1964/FUL. The Bungalow Court Farm Buckland Lane Great Elm Frome Somerset BA11 3NS. Ref. No: 2021/1410/APP | Received: Thu 17 Jun 2021 | Validated: Mon 28 Jun 2021 | Status: Decided

Erection of single storey rear extension & installation of dormer window.
Conversion of existing garage & car port to guest annexe ancillary to dwelling.
Somersleaze House Coal Lane Great Elm Frome Somerset BA11 3NR. Ref. No:

2021/1176/HSE | Received: Fri 21 May 2021 | Validated: Mon 07 Jun 2021 | Status: Decided

Creation of access. Land At Great Elms Elm Lane To Hapsford Hill Great Elm Frome Somerset BA11 3NW. Ref. No: 2021/0844/FUL | Received: Tue 13 Apr 2021 | Validated: Tue 04 May 2021 | Status: Decided

Erection of annexe. Mellis Valley House Elm Lane To Park Hill Great Elm Frome Somerset BA11 3NZ. Ref. No: 2021/0477/HSE | Received: Tue 02 Mar 2021 | Validated: Thu 11 Mar 2021 | Status: Decided

Application for a non-material amendment to permission 2020/1964/FUL for the change to fenestration. The Bungalow Court Farm Buckland Lane Great Elm Frome Somerset BA11 3NS. Ref. No: 2021/0436/NMA | Received: Thu 25 Feb 2021 | Validated: Thu 25 Feb 2021 | Status: Decided

Erection of a sustainable 1no. dwellinghouse, with parking, garaging, and gardens. Land At 375507 149633 Elm Lane To Hapsford Hill Great Elm Frome Somerset. Ref. No: 2020/2507/FUL | Received: Wed 09 Dec 2020 | Validated: Fri 15 Jan 2021 | Status: Unknown

8. Speeding through village

No progress to report.

9. Future of GEPC, given continuing absence of clerk and lack of interest from potential applicants.

ET confirmed that still no clerk could be recruited and that GEPC would need, as previously agreed, to be dissolved through the calling of a Parish Meeting to effect this, all under the auspices of Mendip's Electoral Services Manager (Steve lake), with whom ET had been in correspondence for advice. GEPC's current understanding of matters based on Mr Lake's advice was outlined (succinctly summarized in an email from ET to Mr Lake, copied here for public record)

"Dr Edmund R. Thompson <edmundthompson@gmail.com. 18 May 2021, 14:26. Cc to Colin, Kevin, Fran [Gerry].

Dear Steven

Thanks for taking the time to discuss and explain the exigencies around dissolving the Great Elm Parish Council and Great Elm simply having thereafter a Parish Meeting.

I gather that in effect Great Elm has had a Parish Meeting since the institution of the 1892 act you mentioned (although I suspect this has been honoured mostly in its breach - I do not myself know that this Parish Meeting has met at any point over the years I've lived in the parish (around 14 years).

I further gather that, as Chair of GEPC, I am de facto Chair of the Parish Meeting and have the power, therefore, to call a Parish meeting that can then vote to dissolve the Parish Council and thenceforth operate by having two or more Parish Council [stet, should read Parish Meeting] meetings per annum, acting under the provisions of the 1972 Local Government Act, Schedule 12, Part III (which I'll look forward to reading).

I additionally gather that the case of Great Elm dissolving its Parish Council should be quite simple as it has no assets and is not a trustee, as far as we know, of any charities. I gather that whatever monies the Parish Council has in its bank account will revert to the Parish Meeting.

I will accordingly consult with my fellow Parish Councillors and take matters forward by hopefully calling a Parish Meeting for as soon as possible after the end of all Covid 19 pandemic restrictions on public indoor gatherings, hopefully towards the end of June.

I will keep you abreast of everything and take up your offer to help draft some suitable wording for a motion to dissolve the GEPC in a vote.

Thanks again for your help.

Sincerely, Edmund

Mr Lake subsequently confirmed in writing (20 May 2021) that under Section 10 of the Local Government Act 1972 there is a power to dissolve parish councils in small parishes: *"Where the population of a parish having a separate parish council includes not more than 150 local government electors, the parish meeting may apply to the district council for the dissolution of the parish council, and thereupon the district council may by order dissolve the parish council."*

Mr Lake also confirmed that Great Elm has 127 electors, under the 150 threshold.

Mr Lake has not yet, however, confirmed what the position is regarding any monies in the GEPC bank account, a matter he appears consciously to have omitted from his confirmations.

ET proposed and council agreed that GEPC proceed to call a Parish Meeting under the guidance of Mendip Electoral Services as soon as possible with the primary aim of proposing and voting on a dissolution of GEPC and the formalization of a non-precept raising Parish Meeting. Anand and Jim volunteered to publicise the meeting by means of paper and electronic notices. ET to progress with Mendip.

10. Financial report and matters

ET reported GEPC's decision to not raise a precept for the financial year 2022/3 in light of its intent to progress its own dissolution before or early in fiscal 2022/3.

ET proposed and council agreed GEPC should discharge all current debts/monies owing (such as to Mendip for election expenses levied, fines for late submission of matters usually dealt with by clerks, and previously agreed disbursements such as GEPC member liability insurance paid out of pocket due to not having clerk/covid, grass cutting, Village Hall, website, etc).

11. Correspondence

ET reported Sally Rosa (an organiser of summer jubilee activities in Great Elm alongside Jim, Anand and others) had emailed him regarding financial support for beer and a bar. ET cautioned that, given the agreed plan quickly to call a Parish Meeting to dissolve the GEPC and the consequent uncertain position regarding the propriety of committing public monies in GEPC's bank account at this juncture to future events, it might be prudent to propose only that the GEPC support the request in principle and await guidance from Mendip on what can and cannot be done with any monies remaining in the account after already agreed and incurred expenditures have been paid. Council agreed support in principle. KW, in line with urging from attending parishioners, proposed and GP seconded that GEPC agree a contribution forthwith. Proposal was not carried. ET to ask Mendip to give clarity on precept monies remaindered in GEPC bank account.

12. Clerk's matters

None.

13. Date of next Meeting

None.

14. Chair's thanks

ET thanked attending parishioners, and as it seemed the meeting would be GEPC's last, also thanked the council members for their time and help over the past several years.

15. Meeting ended approximately 9.30pm