

WITHYCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Withycombe Parish Council meeting held at the Memorial Hall on Monday 3rd August 2015 at 7.00pm

PRESENT

Councillors: Emma Wright (Chairman), Chris Thomas, Stephen Crossman, Tony Connolly.

In attendance: A Giles (Clerk)

Also present: Brenda Maitland-Walker (WSC), Christine Lawrence (SCC)

For future reference attendees will be referred to in these, and subsequent, minutes by their initials viz:

Emma Wright (Chairman) EW, Chris Thomas CT, Stephen Crossman SC, Tony Connolly TC, Brenda Maitland-Walker (West Somerset District Council) BMW, Christine Lawrence (Somerset County Council) CL, Andy Giles (Clerk) AG.

The Meeting was digitally recorded

1637 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

1638 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

None.

1638 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS:

Parish Council Meeting and Public Open Session held on 11th March 2015.

Parish Council Meeting and Public Open Session held on 17th July 2015.

1639 MATTERS ARISING from the minutes

1639.1 **Sale of Projector (1609.10):** - The Clerk reported that the projector which was owned by the Council, that had become surplus to requirements, had been sold realising a net value to the Council of £28.74.

1639.2 **Blocked footpath at Buck Hill (1617):** The Clerk reported that Natural England had confirmed that the tenant farming the land had terminated the agreement which allowed public access to the area.

1639.3 **Clearance of vegetation around Council assets / repair of assets (1620):** The Clerk reported that he had requested assistance to carry out the work from both Exmoor National Park Authority and the Crown Estate however only limited assistance had been offered. The Chairman agreed to carry out a further inspection of the assets in order to assess the problem and report back to the next meeting.

SC advised that he had arranged for the vegetation around the Council owned shelters on the A39 to be cleared.

1639.4 **Civil Contingencies Unit (1622.4):** - The Clerk reported that the Somerset Local Authorities Civil Contingencies Unit was developing a database of area contacts to be used in the event of a local emergency. It was agreed that all Parish Councillors be named on the database. The Clerk was instructed to inform the Civil Contingencies Unit accordingly.

1639.5 **Planning Development – Lodge Farm Bilbrook (1609.6):** The Clerk reported that he had contacted the West Somerset Council Planning Authority in order to seek confirmation that the development met all of the requirements of the planning consent. The Planning Authority had confirmed that the development did meet the required planning conditions.

1639.6 **Authorised Signatories (1628):** Discussed later in the meeting.

1639.7 **Communications (1632):** Discussed later in the meeting.

1639.8 **Meetings (1633):** Discussed later in the meeting.

1640 TITHOLES ORCHARD

1640.1 **Correspondence:** - The Clerk reported that he had advised Lucy Back of Smiths Gore that the Parish Council were happy with the revised plan for the Play Area and Activity Field. Smiths Gore confirmed that they will now progress matters.

1640.2 **Working Group Update:** - The Chairman advised that the Working Group had nothing further to report at this stage.

1641 HINKLEY POINT 'C'

Nothing to report.

1642 PLANNING

1642.1 **Planning Applications / Approvals:** The Clerk reported that planning permission for an extension to The Haven, West Street, Withycombe had recently been granted. The Parish Council had been notified of the development but was unable to comment within the timescale, as the issue arose during the period following the May election, when the Council was not properly constituted.

1642.2 **Planning Obligations – Parish Priorities:** The Clerk reported that the Parish Council had received a request from West Somerset Council to update the priorities for the Parish. The Clerk explained that by updating and documenting the parish priorities, the Parish Council would give greater power to the Planning Authority to use Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 in order to secure funds from developers which might then be used to meet these priorities.

SC suggested that the parishioners should be consulted before the priorities for the Parish are decided. It was agreed that a letter be sent to residents informing them that the Parish Council would be setting the priorities for the Parish and inviting them to attend the Public Open Session that precedes the September meeting of the Parish Council. The letter would also ask parishioners to consider putting themselves forward for one of the vacant seats on the Council. The letter to be compiled by the Clerk in consultation with the Chairman and circulated as soon as possible.

1643 FINANCES

1643.1 **Budget Monitoring Report:** The Clerk circulated a budget monitoring report for the period 1st April 2015 to 31st July 2015. The Clerk confirmed that the Council's finances were healthy with 'free funds' standing at £5,149 at 31st July 2015.

SC suggested that the cost of the consultation process, referred to in Minute 1642.2 above, be funded from the budget for the Parish Newsletter. This was agreed.

1643.2 **Bank Reconciliation Statement:** The bank reconciliation as at 31st July 2015 agreed with bank statements and was signed by the Chairman as an accurate record. Bank balances were:

➤ Account 95304622	£ 617.83
➤ Account 44356501	£14,164.31
Total	£14,782.14

1644 ACTIVE LIVING ACCOUNT

The Clerk circulated a statement detailing transactions on the above account. The balance being held by the Parish Council is £1,183.25. It was agreed that the statement be sent to Roger Hurst for his information.

1645 HIGHWAYS

1645.1 **Blocked Drains – Culver Lane:** The Clerk circulated correspondence from Revd. Prebendary J Thorogood regarding drainage issues in Culver Lane. Revd. Thorogood had requested that action be taken to clear the blocked drains in Culver Lane and that the area be swept in order to keep it free from debris which would cause the problem to re-occur. The matter had also been raised with BMW and her response to Revd. Thorogood had also been circulated.

BMW confirmed that the area was not in the street sweeping contract administered by West Somerset Council. If the area were to be swept the cost would have to be met by the Parish Council; BMW had made enquiries as to the likely cost of the work and was awaiting a response from officers at WSC.

It was agreed that in the first instance the matter should be raised with Somerset County Highways Dept. and that they be requested to clear the blocked drains. CL agreed to contact the appropriate officer in SCC to report the problem. The Clerk was also instructed to raise the matter with Somerset County Highways Dept. and to write to Revd. Thorogood to advise him of the action taken.

1646 RIGHTS OF WAY

1646.1 **Parish Path Liaison Officer:** Kerrie Thorne of Christophers Cottage, Lower Street, Withycombe had attended the Public Open Session that preceded this meeting. Kerrie had volunteered to take over the role of Parish Path Liaison Officer for Withycombe Parish following the resignation of Chris Adams. Councillors approved the appointment of Kerrie to the position and the Clerk was instructed to write to her welcoming her to the role. The Clerk was also instructed to write to Chris Adams thanking him for the valuable work that he had carried out in the past as Parish Path Liaison Officer.

1647 COUNTY COUNCILLOR and DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORTS

The County Councillor (CL) and District Councillor (BMW) presented their reports in the Public Open Session which preceded this meeting.

There were no matters arising from the reports that required further action by the Parish Council.

1648 COMMUNICATION MATTERS

1648.1 **Letter to Residents:** The Chairman circulated a draft letter to residents giving details of the Parish Council and Councillors and inviting residents to come forward to stand as Parish Councillors. It was agreed that the letter should be amended to incorporate an invitation to attend the Public Open Session which precedes the next meeting of the Parish Council in September when the Parish priorities will be discussed (See Minute 1642.2 above). It was agreed that the letter would include contact details for Councillors and that these contact details would also be displayed on the Parish noticeboards.

1648.2 **Parish Newsletter:** Councillors discussed the way forward regarding communication issues between Councillors and between the Council and residents. It was agreed that communication between Councillors would be most efficient and effective if carried out by email. Communication with the community would be via a letter to residents prepared and delivered at least annually.

1648.3 **Parish Noticeboards:** The Clerk reported that the Parish noticeboard in Rodhuish had been damaged and one of the sides was now bent. CT agreed to take the damaged part and endeavour to straighten / repair it. EW and CT agreed to assist with the printing and displaying of items on the noticeboards.

1648.4 **Broadband:** The Clerk reported that Withycombe Parish was still 'under evaluation' with no date set for connection to superfast broadband services.

1649 AUTHORISED SIGNATORIES

1649.1 **Bank Mandate:** SC and EW had completed and returned the 'Additional Party Forms' to NatWest Bank in Minehead. TC explained that he had experienced difficulties at the bank and had yet to return his forms.

The Clerk circulated a 'Bank Mandate Amendment Form' which was then completed and signed by Councillors. The purpose of the form was to add the following signatories to the Bank Mandate; Emma Wright, Stephen Crossman and Tony Connolly.

The following signatories were removed; John Fulwell and Jean Humber. When complete the form was authorised by existing signatories Chris Thomas and Andy Giles.

1650 MEETINGS

1650.1 **Format of Meetings:** The Clerk reported that he had received advice from West Somerset Council regarding an enquiry into whether BMW could sit on Withycombe Parish Council. The enquiry had been made following discussions at the Parish Council meeting held on July 17th (See Minute 1633). West Somerset Council advised that it would not be possible for BMW to take a seat on Withycombe Parish Council as she is currently serving on Carhampton Parish Council.

The advice went on to suggest that the vacant seats on the Parish Council are advertised throughout the Parish. It was agreed that this be addressed in the letter to residents referred to in Minute 1648.1 above.

1650.2 **Date and Time of Meetings:** Councillors discussed various options for the date and time of future meetings based on the availability of Councillors and the availability of the Memorial Hall. The Clerk advised that for a period of twelve months the Hall would be available on a Monday evening. It was agreed that meetings would be held on the first Monday of the months of March, June, September and December. If further meetings were required in order to discuss planning matters or matters requiring an urgent decision of the Council; these would be arranged on an ad-hoc basis.

It was further agreed that if the Parish Council is consulted on a planning matter the issue will, in the first instance, be circulated by email. If it was then deemed necessary to convene a meeting in order to formulate a response, the Chairman would instruct the Clerk to make the necessary arrangements.

1650.3 **Code of Conduct Training:** The Clerk reported that he had received an invitation from West Somerset Council for Councillors to attend a training session on Code of Conduct related matters. The sessions would be held in September 2015. The Chairman confirmed that she would be attending the session on the 14th September 2015.

1651 TOWNSEND FARM

1651.1 **Correspondence from Hastoe Housing Association:** The Clerk reported that he had received a letter from Hastoe Housing Association giving details of the properties being constructed on the site at Townsend Farm, Carhampton. The letter included advice for prospective tenants suggesting that they check that they are registered with Somerset Homefinder as this will be the mechanism used to advertise the properties.

BMW advised that prospective tenants had experienced problems as they had assumed that they are registered with Somerset Homefinder when in fact they were not. It was agreed that a notice be placed on the parish noticeboards advising interested persons to check that they were correctly registered.

CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

1652.1 **Somerset County Council Chairman's Awards:** The Clerk reported that the Parish Council had been invited to make a nomination for the Chairman's Award for Service to the Community. It was unanimously agreed that Roger Hurst should be nominated for the work that he has done over a number of years through the Active Living organisation.

1652.2 **Somerset County Council – Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA):** The Clerk reported that he had been advised by Somerset County Council that the JSNA summary has now been published. The JSNA provides a great deal of information on health and well-being issues throughout the County. CL confirmed that the exercise had produced very valuable and interesting information which would now be used to inform decisions on the provision of services in the future.

1652.3 **Exmoor National Park – Forest Management Plan:** The Clerk reported that correspondence had been received from Exmoor National Park Authority regarding a consultation process being carried out by the Forestry Commission in connection with a proposed Forest Management Plan for the Crown Estate, Dunster. The correspondence had been circulated prior to the meeting; the content was noted.

1652.4 **Avon and Somerset Police:** Various newsletters and correspondence received from the Avon and Somerset Police authority were circulated by the Clerk. The correspondence was noted. BMW also provided an up to date list of Police Authority contacts.

1652.5 **Came and Company:** A newsletter received from the Council's insurers Came and Company was circulated by the Clerk. The content was noted.

1652.6 **Exmoor National Park Authority – Local Plan Consultation:** Various documents related to the consultation process being carried out by the Exmoor National Park Authority regarding the Local Plan had been circulated prior to the meeting. The correspondence was noted.

1652.7 **Somerset Choices:** Correspondence advising of a new website which provided help and advice aimed at helping to keep people independent, healthy and well, had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Clerk was instructed to pass the information on to Roger Hurst in order that he might advise members of the Active Living Group.

1652.8 **West Somerset Standards Advisory Committee:** The Clerk advised that the Parish Council had been invited to vote for candidates who had been nominated to represent Parish Councils in the area on the West Somerset Standards Advisory Committee. Councillors agreed that it would be inappropriate to express a view as none of the candidates were known to them.

ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

1653.1 **Parish Priorities:** The Parish priorities will be set at the next meeting following discussions in the Public Open Session which will precede the meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.50 pm.

Signed _____
CHAIRMAN

Date _____