

WITHYCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Withycombe Parish Council meeting held at the Memorial Hall on Wednesday 11th March 2015 at 7.00pm

PRESENT

Councillors: John Fulwell (Chairman), Jean Humber, Ian Hutchings, Chris Thomas, Stephen Crossman, Emma Wright.

In attendance: A Giles (Clerk)

Also present: Tim Taylor (WSC), Christine Lawrence (SCC), Sue Hurley PCSO.

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

John Fulwell (Chairman) JF, Ian Hutchings IH, Jean Humber JH, Chris Thomas CT, Karen Evans KE, Stephen Crossman SC, Emma Wright EW, Tim Taylor (West Somerset District Council) TT, Christine Lawrence (Somerset County Council) CL, Andy Giles (Clerk) AG (PCSO) Sue Hurley SH.

The Meeting was digitally recorded

1606 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

KE – accepted by the Council.

1607 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

CT declared a personal interest in the planning application to be considered under agenda item 7.1.

1608 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS:

Parish Council Meeting and Public Open Session held on 14th January 2015.

The minutes of the above meeting having been circulated prior to the meeting, were agreed as accurate and signed by the Chairman.

1609 MATTERS ARISING from the minutes

1609.1 Parking Fines (Public Open Session): - A question had been raised by JH at the January meeting; she had asked TT to confirm what percentage of money raised from parking fines charged in West Somerset that was returned to the area. A response had been received from S Deakin of Somerset County Council advising that, under current legislation, income generated from fines was, in the first instance, used to fund the enforcement service. Any surplus could be used to fund transport initiatives in the area, however the low level of income currently generated meant that there was no surplus.

1609.2 Fly Tipping – Park Cottages (1591.1): TT advised that he had reported the matter to Peter Lean (Planning Enforcement Officer – West Somerset Council) who had in turn passed the matter on to Peter Owen (Assistant Highway Manager – Somerset County Council). Mr Owen had now confirmed that the area of land in question was the responsibility of the County Council.

It was agreed that the Clerk be instructed to write Somerset County Council Highway Department and request that they make every effort to keep the area clear.

1609.3 WSC Community Asset Transfer Policy (1591.2): The Clerk reported that he had now received a reply from West Somerset Council confirming that there are no assets classed as community assets within the Parish of Withycombe that are owned by West Somerset Council. Whilst the garages in West Street are owned by WSC, they are classed as operational assets and as such, would not be affected by the Community Asset Transfer Policy.

1609.4 **Planning Permission – Park Cottages, Rodhuish (1591.3):** TT reported that the building (large shed / garage) at 1, Park Cottages had been erected without planning approval. He confirmed that the owner was in the process of seeking retrospective planning permission for the structure.

1609.5 **Flood Risk Areas (1591.4):** The Clerk reported that he had not received any information regarding areas that might be particularly prone to flooding. Councillors agreed to reaffirm the Council's existing position regarding the West Somerset Flood Group in that it would not join at this stage.

1609.6 **Development on land adjacent to Lodge Farm, Bilbrook (1594.3):** The Clerk advised that the documentation which supported the original planning application stated that '...the proposed development will consist of 3 agricultural barns, 1 mobile log home (which adheres to the definition of a caravan in the Caravan Sites Act 1968).

The matter was debated by the Council with particular concern being expressed over the dimensions and characteristics of the dwelling. It was agreed that the Clerk be instructed to seek confirmation from West Somerset Council that the development was in accordance with the planning permission and the associated planning conditions granted for the site.

1609.7 **Highways – Blocked Drains (1599.1):** The Clerk reported that he had contacted Somerset County Council Highways Dept. and notified them of the problems discussed at the January meeting. SCC had responded seeking clarification as to the precise location of the drains that were a problem. SC confirmed that the drains in question were on Higher Rodhuish Road. He also advised that there were a number of blocked drains on the A39; these were on the hill as you approach Carhampton from Williton. The Clerk was instructed to contact SCC with the aforementioned details.

1609.8 **Vehicle Parked Outside Shop - Carhampton (1592.2):** Correspondence pertaining to this matter had been circulated prior to the meeting. SH reported that she had visited both the shopkeeper and the owner of the vehicle. She advised that the vehicle in question was not parked illegally and that the owner felt justified in parking it in this particular area as she had concerns about its security. SH advised that the matter should be progressed through SCC Highways Department who may decide to impose a time restriction for parking in the area concerned; such a restriction would be supported by the police. Councillors agreed that the matter would best be dealt with by Carhampton Parish Council.

1609.9 **Highways – Posts for Former Withycombe Sign (1592.2):** The Clerk reported that he had contacted Somerset County Council Highways Dept. and notified them of the problem. SCC had responded to confirm that they will investigate the matter in the near future. IH advised that the posts had been cut down but a significant proportion was still protruding. IH agreed to inspect the posts in order to ensure that they were no longer hazardous.

1609.10 **Council Projector (1603):** The Clerk confirmed that he has now collected the projector but he has yet to advertise it for sale.

1610 **TITHOLES ORCHARD**

1610.1 **Lease Update:** - The Clerk reported that he had received correspondence from Smiths Gore, the agents acting for the Crown Estate in connection with sale and development of the Titholes Orchard site. Smiths Gore had provided a site plan and had asked for the Parish Councils comments. JH expressed concern that the correspondence from Smiths Gore suggested that very little work would be done to the Activity Field and the Play / Seating Area prior to their transfer to the Parish Council. JH and EW advised that previous consultations with parishioners had identified the need for the areas to be predominantly flat and easily accessible. The Clerk advised that the requirements set out in the Agreement for Lease (Page 2 Condition (b)) required 'the grading of the Play Area and Activity Field in consultation with the Lessee and the laying of grass on the Play Area and Activity Field'.

It was agreed that the Clerk be instructed to write back to Smiths Gore confirming that the Parish Council will be seeking the grading of the Play Area and Activity Field in accordance with the conditions of the Lease.

JH also advised that the plan provided by Smiths Gore showed a gate to access the Activity Field but it did not include a gate to the Play / Seating Area. The Clerk was instructed to advise Smiths Gore of the omission.

1610.2 **Working Group Update:** - JH suggested that proposals for the Titholes Play Area and Activity Field be presented to parishioners at the Annual Parish Assembly. JH agreed to draft a short summary of the details to be presented and to forward it to the Clerk for inclusion in the notice for the meeting.

1611 HINKLEY POINT 'C'

This item was addressed in the Public Open Session that preceded this meeting.

1612 PLANNING

1612.1 **Planning Applications Received**

Application 3/41/15/001 – Erection of replacement roof on existing equestrian building – Sandhill Racing Stables, Sandhill Lane, Withycombe TA24 6HA.

Councillors inspected plans and associated documents pertaining to this application. No adverse comments were expressed.

1612.2 **Planning Applications Approved.**

The Clerk advised that he had not been notified of any Planning Applications that had been approved since the date of the last meeting.

1613 PARISH COUNCIL ELECTIONS – THURSDAY 7TH MAY 2015

The Clerk reported that he had received a supply of Election Notices together with Nomination Packs and an Election Timetable. The Chairman declared that he would not be standing for re-election to the Parish Council in May. The Chairman advised that Councillors wishing to stand for re-election would need to complete the appropriate forms within the Nomination Pack. The Clerk advised that completed forms must be with the Returning Officer at West Somerset House, Williton before 4.00pm on Thursday 9th April 2015.

TT advised that he would not be standing for re-election to the West Somerset District Council. The Chairman thanked TT for the support and advice that he had provided to Withycombe Parish Council during his time in office.

JH expressed her thanks to JF for the work he had done for the Parish Council, in particular, she was grateful for the work he had done to clarify the Council's finances and financial records.

1614 FINANCES

1614.1 JF provided an income and expenditure statement, including budget monitoring information, for the period ended 28th February 2015. Free funds available as at 28th February = £5,007. JF advised that the Council's finances were healthy, and that income and expenditure were expected to be within budget for the current financial year. He also advised that he had now transferred an additional £1,000 to the funds set aside for the Titholes Play Area project, in accordance with the decision made by the Council at its meeting in January 2015. The total funds now ring-fenced for the project amount to £7,050.

1614.2 The bank reconciliation as at 28th February 2015 agreed with bank statements and was signed by the Chairman as an accurate record. Bank balances were:

| | |
|--------------------|------------|
| ➤ Account 95304622 | £ 208.13 |
| ➤ Account 44356501 | £13,061.40 |
| Total | £13,269.53 |

1614.3 The following payments were approved:

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|---|---------|
| 1. A Giles (Clerk) salary / expenses (Feb 2015–Mar 2015) | £398.61 |
| 2. HMRC Tax due on above payment to Clerk | £89.52 |
| 3. Jean Humber (Reimbursement Status Printers – Newsletter) | £25.90 |

1615 ACTIVE LIVING ACCOUNT

The Clerk circulated a statement detailing transactions on the above account. The balance being held by the Parish Council is £933.52. It was agreed that the statement be sent to Roger Hurst for his information.

1616 HIGHWAYS

1616.1 The Clerk reported that he had received notification of a temporary road closure for Sandhill Lane, Withycombe for a five day period from 23rd February 2015 (correspondence had been previously circulated). The work had now been completed.

1617 RIGHTS OF WAY

1617.1 IH asked if the issue discussed at the Council's January meeting regarding the padlocked gate blocking the permitted path which crosses fields at the top of Buck Hill, adjacent to Combe Lane, had now been resolved. JH reported that the matter had been progressed by Mr Chris Adams who voluntarily assists the Council with matters associated with Rights of Way and that she would forward the latest correspondence to the Clerk.

1618 COUNTY COUNCILLOR and DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORTS

The County Councillor (CL) and District Councillor (TT) 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.

1619 TOWNSEND FARM

This item was addressed in the Public Open session that preceded this meeting.

1620 REVIEW OF RISK REGISTER

Forms completed following a review of Parish assets were returned to the Clerk. JH reported that having inspected the Beech Trees on Withycombe Hill, one tree was found to be dead and one of the cages was in need of repair. She also advised that whilst the Millennium Seat adjacent to the trees was structurally sound, it had become almost totally obscured by vegetation. She advised that there was an urgent need for the gorse / brambles surrounding the seat to be cut back in order for it to remain accessible. JH reported that she had asked the neighbouring farmer if they were agreeable for the work to be done as permission would be needed to cross their land; the farmer was happy for the work to be carried out but did not have the resources available to undertake the work themselves. JH advised that the area around the seat on the Beacon Site also needed to be cleared.

CT suggested that enquires be made of Exmoor National Park Authority to see if the clearance of vegetation could be carried out by any of the volunteer groups who carry out similar work on their land. SC advised that the Crown Estate have similar volunteer groups who carry out this type of work and they may be able to assist. The Clerk was instructed to make enquiries of the aforementioned organisations, to see if they are able to help by providing volunteers to clear the areas concerned.

1621 ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY 2015

The Clerk advised that the date for the Withycombe Annual Parish Assembly had been set for Wednesday 22nd April 2015. The list of organisations to be invited to attend was reviewed by Councillors and revised where necessary.

The Chairman asked Councillors for their views on whether refreshments should be provided in order to try and encourage more parishioners to attend. It was agreed that refreshments should be provided and that efforts be made to make the event more sociable in order to encourage as many people as possible from the village to come along. The Chairman offered to meet the cost of the refreshments for the event; this was welcomed by the Council. It was agreed that a presentation would be made to the Annual Parish Assembly regarding the proposals for the Titholes play area. SC suggested that the Parish Council also present a short report to the Assembly advising parishioners of the role of the Parish Council, together with reporting on recent activities. This was agreed.

1622

CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

1622.1 The Clerk reported that correspondence had been received from Somerset County Council, circulated prior to the meeting, advising that the Somerset Minerals Plan, upon which the Parish Council had recently been consulted, would now be adopted. The correspondence was noted

1622.2 The Clerk reported that correspondence had been received from Somerset County Council, circulated prior to the meeting, advising of the Somerset Micro-Enterprise Project. It was agreed that the scheme should be investigated further to see if it offered any opportunities to support organisations within the village.

1622.3 The Clerk reported that correspondence had been received from Somerset County Council, circulated prior to the meeting, advising that the Authority would shortly be implementing changes to Library Services as a result of a recent review. Following the review the mobile library stops in Withycombe would be merged into one; it was agreed that the preferred stop would be The Causeway and the Clerk was instructed to notify SCC of the Parish Council's preference.

1622.4 The Clerk reported that correspondence had been received from Somerset Local Authorities' Civil Contingencies Unit, circulated prior to the meeting, requesting help in developing a database of Somerset Emergency Community Contacts. Withycombe Parish Council had been asked to provide appropriate contacts for inclusion on the database. It was agreed that this matter be deferred until the next meeting of the Council to be held in May 2015.

1622.5 The Clerk reported that correspondence had been received from Somerset County Council, circulated prior to the meeting, advising that over one million pounds had been allocated to the Western Somerset LEADER project for the period ending 30th September 2020. Grants would be available from the scheme which had a minimum application limit of £2,500. The correspondence was noted.

1622.6 The Clerk reported that correspondence had been received from West Somerset Council, circulated prior to the meeting, advising that the Draft West Somerset Local Plan to 2032 had now been published. Formal responses to the Plan could be made up until 23rd March 2015. The correspondence was noted.

1622.7 The Clerk reported that correspondence had been received from St John Ambulance, circulated prior to the meeting, asking that the Council consider making a financial donation to support the work of the organisation. The correspondence was noted.

The meeting closed at 9.10 pm.

_____ Chairman

_____ Date