

WITHYCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

REPORT OF THE PUBLIC OPEN SESSION ON THE 3rd AUGUST 2015 IN THE MEMORIAL HALL, WITHYCOMBE at 7pm.

PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

For future reference Councillors and the Clerk will be referred to in these, and subsequent, reports by their initials:

Emma Wright (Chairman) EW / Chris Thomas (Vice Chairman) 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

1. These notes formulate a record of the Public Open Session held on the 3rd August 2015.

2. **County Councillor – Presentation of Report by (CL)**

Fairer Funding for Somerset: CL reported that Somerset County Council were making efforts to secure a better funding package from Central Government and had launched a 'Fairer Funding for Somerset' campaign. The campaign had the backing of Somerset MP's and would seek to secure improved funding arrangements for services throughout the County.

Future of Local Government Services: CL advised that Somerset County Council would be discussing the options for changes to local government and how services might be delivered in the future, with representatives from Central Government. In particular, discussions would take place regarding the devolution of services.

Hinkley Point 'C' Power Station: CL advised that Somerset County Council would be striving to ensure that the development secured jobs for local people and funding for local communities.

Highways: CL advised that preliminary investigations were underway regarding the upgrading / widening of the A303.

Dunster Paving: CL advised that progress was being made towards resolving the difficulties that had arisen following the recent changes to some of the pavements in Dunster. It is hoped that the situation would be resolved in the near future.

The Chairman thanked CL for her contribution to the meeting.

3. **District Councillor – Presentation of Report by (BMW)**

West Somerset Council – Financial Position: BMW reported that the downward revaluation of the rateable value of Hinkley Point B power station would have an adverse effect on the finances of West Somerset Council. It was currently estimated that the adjustment would result in a shortfall in income to the District Council of £370,000. SC asked BMW if the negative financial impact would be mitigated by the proposed construction of the Hinkley Point C power station. BMW confirmed that the new Hinkley C station would have a positive financial impact when it became operational but that this would be some years in the future.

New Development - Minehead: BMW reported that planning permission had now been granted for the construction of a Premier Inn hotel and restaurant on West Somerset Council land in Minehead.

Somerset Rivers Authority: BMW advised that funding for the Somerset Rivers Authority is likely to be raised through a separate precept levied through local taxation; the levy would apply to all properties throughout Somerset. Final approval of the proposals would be made by Central Government.

Council Tax Rebate Scheme: BMW advised that a consultation process was underway regarding the Council Tax Rebate Scheme for 2016 /17. BMW urged Councillors to contribute to the consultation process.

The Chairman thanked BMW for her contribution to the meeting.

The Public Open Session ended at 7.35 pm.

Chairman

_____ Date