

# WITHYCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

REPORT OF THE PUBLIC OPEN SESSION ON THE 11<sup>th</sup> MARCH 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:

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

*The meeting was digitally recorded*

1. These notes formulate a record of the Public Open Session held on the 11<sup>th</sup> March 2015.

### **2. Crime Update**

PCSO SH reported that there were no incidents of crime reported in the Parish in the last quarter. There had, however, been a break in at a barn in Wootton Courtenay and SH advised parishioners to remain vigilant.

SH advised that, due to structural changes being made within the Police Force, a police representative would not be attending the meetings of parish councils in West Somerset in the future. Police representatives would, however, attend Area Panel meetings and Officers would provide written reports for parish council meetings upon request, provided that requests were submitted at least seven days in advance. SH also advised that she would be leaving the police service and that future contacts would be PC Jeff Trimming or PCSO Brian Stevens.

The Chairman thanked SH for the help and advice that she had provided to the members of Withycombe parish during her time as a PCSO.

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

*'No Tipping' Sign:* CL donated a 'No Tipping' sign to the Council. It was felt that it may be of use in seeking a resolution to problems currently being experienced in the parish.

*SCC Telephone Number:* CL advised that a new contact number had been introduced by Somerset County Council; persons wishing to contact the Authority in the future should do so on 0300 123 2224. The change had been made to reduce costs and to increase efficiency.

*Library Consultation:* CL reported that the consultation exercise had now been completed and changes would be implemented throughout Somerset to the mobile library service. The effect on Withycombe Parish would be the loss of one of the stops at either The Causeway or Meadow Cottages, whilst the stop in Rodhuish would be retained. It was agreed that it would be preferable if the stop at The Causeway in Withycombe be retained. CL advised the Parish Council to encourage parishioners to use the facility in the future in order to reduce the risk of further cuts to the service.

The Chairman thanked CL for her contribution to the meeting.

### **District Councillor – Presentation of Report by (TT)**

*Health and Wellbeing:* TT paid tribute to CL following his recent attendance at a county-wide Health and Wellbeing meeting. CL is the Chair of the Somerset Health and Wellbeing Board and TT reported that the day had been very informative and extremely valuable. TT advised that, in future, communities will need to do more at every level in order to improve the health and wellbeing of citizens. It is likely that Parish Councils will have a role to play in ensuring better use of resources from service providers.

*West Somerset Council – Budget 2015/16:* TT reported that West Somerset Council had set a balanced budget for 2015/16. He also advised that the new officer team, put in place as part of the joint working arrangement with Taunton Deane Borough Council, was now complete. There is now one officer team serving both Councils and, whilst the new arrangements are working well, it would be some months before the full benefits would be achieved.

*Hinkley Point:* TT reported that the development was progressing slowly and that he, along with many others, was frustrated by recent delays.

*Superfast Broadband:* TT advised that most areas of Minehead are now connected to superfast broadband, however it is not clear when other communities will be connected to the network. The lack of clarity regarding future connections is making it very difficult for households and, more importantly businesses, to plan for the future.

*Somerset Rivers Authority:* TT reported that the first meeting of the Authority had now taken place. There is still confusion regarding any future funding mechanism that might be put in place to address flood related issues. TT advised that a countywide levy, collected through the local taxation system, was still a possibility.

*Townsend Farm:* TT advised that there had been no change to the number of dwellings to be delivered by the project. There will be twenty affordable houses (sixteen for rental and four for shared equity purchase), plus ten houses to be sold on the open market.

The Chairman thanked TT for his contribution to the meeting.

The Public Open Session ended at 7.35 pm.

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Chairman

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