

WITHYCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Withycombe Parish Council meeting held at the Memorial Hall on Monday 7th March 2016 at 7.00pm

PRESENT

Councillors: Emma Wright (Chairman), Richard Barnham, Amanda Gardiner, Susan Gill.

In attendance: A Giles (Clerk)

Also present: Brenda Maitland-Walker (WSC), Christine Lawrence (SCC), Members of the Public.

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, Richard Barnham RB, Amanda Gardiner AJG, Susan Gill SG, Brenda Maitland-Walker (West Somerset District Council) BMW, Christine Lawrence (Somerset County Council) CL, Andy Giles (Clerk) AG.

The Meeting was digitally recorded

1680 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

CT and SC – accepted by the Council.

1681 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

None.

1682 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS:

Parish Council Meeting and Public Open Session held on 7th December 2015.

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

1683 MATTERS ARISING from the minutes

1683.1 Planning Application – 1 Park Cottages (1670.2): - At the meeting held in December 2015 it was agreed that CT would contact Mr P Lean, Planning Enforcement Officer for West Somerset Council, with a view to clarifying the outstanding planning issues that had been identified with this site. In the absence of CT, this matter was deferred until the next meeting.

1683.2 Exmoor National Park – Issues Faced By Parish Councils (1670.5): - The Clerk advised that he had been unable to make contact with the parish representative on the Exmoor National Park Authority.

1683.3 Funding of Titholes Play Area (1672.1): - The Clerk provided a breakdown of how the £7,330, set aside in the Parish Council's accounts for the development of the Titholes Play Area, had been accumulated. These details had been circulated prior to the meeting and identified that approximately £4,500 had been received from the Somerset County Councillor's Local Initiative Budget and that the remainder had been set aside from the Parish Council's own funds.

1683.4 Other Matters arising from the Minutes: - Other matters arising, including highway repairs, problems with large vehicles passing through the village and the parish website were all on the main agenda and dealt with later in the meeting.

1684 **PLANNING**

Planning Applications Received

1684.1 The Clerk reported that no new planning applications had been received since the last meeting.

Planning Applications Approved

1684.2 The Clerk reported that no new planning applications had been approved since the last meeting.

1685 **FINANCES**

1685.1 **Budget Monitoring Report:** The Clerk circulated a budget monitoring report for the period 1st April 2015 to 29th February 2016. The Clerk confirmed that the Council's finances were healthy with 'free funds' standing at £6,980 at 29th February 2016.

1685.2 **Bank Reconciliation Statement:** The bank reconciliation as at 29th November 2016 agreed with bank statements and was signed by the Chairman as an accurate record. Bank balances were:

➤ Account 95304622	£ 984.60
➤ Account 44356501	£15,268.80
Total	£16,253.40

1685.3 **The following payments were approved:**

1. A Giles (Clerk) salary / expenses (Jan 2016– March 2016)
£991.44
2. HMRC Tax due on above payment to Clerk
£134.28
3. Withycombe Memorial Hall – Hire of Hall for meetings
£120.00
4. West Side Windows (Cleaning of Bus Shelters)
£84.00
5. Withycombe Memorial Hall – Hire of Hall – Active Living
£200.00

1685.4 **Clerk's Salary and Expenses:** The Clerk advised that the amount shown above for salary and expenses included approximately £300 which had been paid to IS OK Designs for setting up the website. This invoice had been paid by the Clerk and the amount of £991.44 includes his reimbursement of this amount. The Clerk advised that he had also claimed for an extra ten hours pay for additional work involved in setting up the website. This was approved.

1685.5 **West Side Windows:** Whilst the above payment of £84.00 to West Side Windows was authorised, the Clerk asked Councillors if they could confirm that the service was still being provided, as no payments had been made to them since 2013. Councillors confirmed that the service was being carried out but that it would be possible for this work to be undertaken by local volunteers. The Clerk was instructed to write to West Side Windows and request a final invoice for services provided to date and to inform them of the Council's desire to terminate the arrangement.

1685.6 **Active Living Account:** The Clerk circulated a statement detailing transactions on the above account. The balance being held by the Parish Council at 29th February 2016 amounted to £743.00. It was agreed that the statement be sent to Roger Hurst for his information.

1686 **PARISH WEBSITE**

The Clerk reported that the Parish website was now up and running and although the information uploaded to the site so far was limited, further development would take place over the coming weeks. It was agreed that the website should be expanded and developed to involve the wider community where possible and that a leaflet should be produced for circulation throughout the Parish giving details of the new website.

The Clerk reported that the grant claim for funding towards the website had been submitted to the Somerset Association of Local Councils in the sum of £852.84. Confirmation had been received that the claim had been approved locally and that it had been forwarded to the National Association for payment.

1687 **HIGHWAYS**

1687.1 **Problems Caused by Large Vehicles:** The Clerk advised that at the meeting held in December 2015, he had been instructed to try and arrange a meeting between a representative from the Somerset County Council Highway Authority and local Councillors in order to discuss the issues raised by local residents, regarding large vehicles passing through Withycombe. He reported that he had had a number of discussions with representatives from the Highway Authority and referred to an email that he had received on the 24th February from Gary Warren – Traffic Engineer with Somerset County Council. In the email Mr Warren advised that he felt that a meeting was not necessary on the grounds that the current arrangements appeared to be working. Mr Warren stated that according to his records, the incident that occurred in October 2015, and discussed in detail at the December meeting, is the only incident reported to the Authority since the current restrictions were put in place. Mr Warren went on to say that as long as the vehicles travelling through the village did not breach the current height restriction, they had a legitimate right to do so and that there was little else that the Highway Authority could do. Mr Warren did advise however that if local residents, or indeed the Parish Council, believed that the regulations were being broken, details of the vehicles concerned together with photographic evidence should be forwarded to the police for further investigation. Mr Warren did suggest that adding supplementary plates to the height restriction signs at the entrance to the village may be beneficial; these plates would state 'OVERHANGING BUILDING'. It was agreed that Somerset County Council Highway Department be asked to fix the supplementary 'overhanging building' plates to the existing signs as proposed by Mr Warren. RB also suggested that when these plates are being fitted, the existing signs are tightened up; he reported that on at least two occasions in the last couple of months he had had to realign the signs as they were facing the wrong way.

Councillors discussed a number of other options which might help to alleviate some of the problems including the suggestion, put forward in an email prior to the meeting, by SC to approach the Crown Estate to see if they would be agreeable to dropping the kerb directly outside Mill House in order to allow cars parked there to be a little further off of the highway. The Clerk was instructed to write to the occupier of Mill House asking if they would object to the Parish Council contacting the Crown Estate to see if they would be agreeable to this course of action.

1687.2 **Hole in the road – Court Place Farm:** The Clerk reported that he had received an email from Somerset County Council Highway Authority advising that they would be conducting a CCTV survey of the problem during the course of the next few days. Once this survey had been completed engineers would have a better idea of the extent of the problem and the work that was necessary to carry out the repairs. Parish Councillors extended their thanks to BMW for her efforts in seeking a resolution to the problem.

1687.3 **Damage to wall near Withycombe Memorial Hall:** The Clerk reported that he had been advised by Somerset County Council Highway Authority that this work will be carried out when funds become available. This was unlikely to be before 1st April 2016 when budgets for the 2016/17 financial year would be accessible.

1687.4 **Damage to bridge wall – Combe Lane:** The Clerk reported that he had been advised by Somerset County Council Highway Authority that the bridge would need to be inspected by the Highway Authority Structures Team prior to any remedial action being taken. He advised that the Structures Team had been informed but no timescale had been given for the work to be carried out.

1687.5 **Blocked Drains / Recent Flood Events:** The Chairman proposed that the Council record a vote of thanks to local residents Bill Calloway and Keith Arscott for their efforts in recent weeks to keep storm drains and gullies etc. clear from debris during periods of heavy rain. Their efforts were very much appreciated and the Clerk was instructed to write to both gentlemen thanking them on behalf of both the Parish Council and local residents. The Chairman also reported that the service that had been provided by representatives of West Somerset Council during the recent flooding events, had been excellent. She advised that sand bags had been delivered and distributed very promptly when needed and this had been very much appreciated by those residents whose properties were in danger of being flooded.

BMW advised that sand bags would not be available from West Somerset Council next year due to changes that were being made to the way that flooding events were dealt with. She advised that it may be beneficial for the Parish Council to contact Mr Keith Richards at West Somerset Council to see if any bags remained available from this year's stock; if so these could be stored in the village in order to meet future needs.

1687.6 **Flood Plan:** Councillors discussed the merits of developing a formal flood plan and joining the local parish flood group. It was generally accepted that Withycombe did not have a significant flooding problem, however the Clerk was instructed to carry out preliminary investigations into the development of a flood plan for the Parish. BMW advised that further information was available on both the Somerset County Council and Environment Agency websites.

1687.7 **Greenland Lane:** The Clerk reported that he had been contacted by a local resident who lives adjacent to Greenland Lane and that they had reported that vehicles were regularly getting stuck in the lane. The Clerk reported that he had informed the Highway Authority and advised the resident of the contact details of local Councillors should she have any further problems. It was agreed that no further action was necessary at this time.

1688 **RIGHTS OF WAY**

1688.1 **Minehead & Burnham on Sea Motor Club:** The Clerk reported that he had received correspondence, circulated prior to the meeting, confirming that permission had been granted for the Burnham on Sea Motor Club to hold a scramble / rally on the 16th April 2016. The event would at times, utilise the footpaths and bridleways that are within the boundaries of the parish. The correspondence was noted.

1688.1 **M.C.C. Motor Club:** The Clerk reported that he had received correspondence, circulated prior to the meeting, confirming that permission had been granted for the M.C.C Motor Club to hold part of the 'Lands End Trial, on footpaths and bridleways that are within the boundaries of the parish. The event would take place on the 25th / 26th March 2016. The correspondence was noted.

1689 TITHOLES ORCHARD

The Clerk reported that he had contacted Lucy Back to get an update of progress on the development of the Titholes Orchard site. She had advised that work on the site had stopped temporarily until electricity cables and a transformer are relocated by Western Power; once they had been moved, the next phase of work would commence. Lucy also advised that marketing of the site would get underway in the near future.

1690 ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY

The Clerk advised that he had provisionally booked the Memorial Hall for Wednesday the 20th April for this year's Annual Parish Assembly. It was agreed to move the booking to Thursday the 21st of April, provided that this was acceptable to the Withycombe Memorial Hall Committee, in order to allow the Annual Parish Assembly to coincide with the Queen's 90th Birthday celebrations. If this was agreed that the Annual Parish Assembly would commence at 6.30 p.m. followed by light refreshments and a celebration of Her Majesty's birthday. This matter is also referred to later in these minutes (Minute 1694.2).

A list of organisations to be invited to attend was reviewed and the Clerk was instructed to send out invitations accordingly. SG agreed to coordinate the arrangements for refreshments.

1691 COUNTY COUNCILLOR and DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORTS

1691.1 The County Councillor (CL) presented her report in the Public Open Session which preceded this meeting. There were no matters arising from the report that required further action by the Parish Council.

1691.2 The District Councillor (BMW) presented her report in the Public Open Session which preceded this meeting. There were no matters arising from the report that required further action by the Parish Council.

1692 COMMUNICATION WITH PARISHIONERS

RB expressed concern that there were many residents who were not aware of the business and activities of the Parish Council and he felt there was a need to raise awareness of the Parish Council's role in the wider community. It was agreed that the development of the website, will help to improve communication with residents, however there was a need to inform people of the existence of the website and how to access it, and, that this would need to be done by distributing flyers and displaying posters.

The Clerk was instructed to investigate the cost of purchasing a laminator in order to assist with the production and distribution of flyers and posters.

1693 RESIGNATION OF COUNCILLOR ANTHONY CONNOLLY

The Chairman reported that Anthony Connolly had tendered his resignation from the Parish Council due to the burden of his work commitments.

The Clerk was instructed to advertise a notice for a casual vacancy for a Parish Councillor on the Parish Council website.

1694 **CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED**

1694.1 The Clerk reported that correspondence had been received from CL, Chairman of Somerset County Council advising that ‘Somerset Day’ will take place on the 11th May 2016. CL advised that many events were taking place across the County and Withycombe was invited to take part in the celebrations. The Clerk was instructed to display a poster advertising the event on the Parish Council’s website.

1694.2 The Clerk reported that correspondence had been received from the National Association of Local Councils inviting the Council to take part in the Queen’s 90th Birthday celebrations by lighting a beacon on the 21st April 2016. The Clerk also reported that he had received an enquiry from local resident, Jean Humber asking if the Parish Council would be arranging any events to mark the Queen’s birthday. After due consideration it was decided that the Parish Council did not have the necessary resources required to light a beacon and it would not participate in the celebrations in this way. Councillors confirmed the proposal to hold a celebration after the Annual Parish Assembly which will be held on Thursday 21st April (See Minute 1690).

1694.3 The Clerk reported that correspondence had been received from the Exmoor National Park Authority advising that the next meeting of the Exmoor Consultative and Parish Forum would be held in the Exford Memorial Hall on Thursday the 10th March 2016. The correspondence was noted.

1695 **ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING**

There were no items proposed for the next meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.50 pm.

Signed _____
CHAIRMAN

Date _____