

# WITHYCOMBE ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY

**DRAFT Minutes of the Withycombe Annual Parish Assembly held at the Memorial Hall on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> April 2017 at 6.30pm**

## **PRESENT**

Parish Councillors: Emma Wright (Chairman), David Tilley, Richard Barnham, Amanda Gardiner, Sue Gill

Also present: Brenda Maitland Walker (West Somerset District Council), Christine Lawrence (Somerset County Council), Members of Public.

In attendance: Sam Rawle (Clerk)

**The Meeting was digitally recorded**

## **1. CHAIRMANS WELCOME**

Emma Wright, Chairman of the Parish Council, welcomed those in attendance and opened the meeting at 6.30 pm.

## **2. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Steve Crossman, Jean Humber, Peter Humber, Mike Burnett, Lucy Back (Savills), PC Jamie Munro, PCSO Peter Boulton

## **3. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY HELD ON 21<sup>st</sup> APRIL 2016**

The minutes were circulated. It was proposed by Steve Crossman and seconded by Richard Barnham that the minutes be approved as a true record of the meeting held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2015; this was unanimously agreed and the minutes were signed by the Chairman.

## **4. WITHYCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL REPORT**

The Parish Clerk delivered a short report on the role and responsibilities of Withycombe Parish Council.

BT Telephone Box - The Chairman reported that the Parish Council have been given the opportunity to adopt the BT telephone box currently located in West Street. The telephone box could be adopted for £1 and the Parish Council would become responsible for the upkeep. One idea would be to use the box to house a defibrillator unit. Funds would need to be raised to purchase the defibrillator unit as they are in the region of £2500. A lengthy discussion followed concerning alternative uses for the phone box and its relocation to another site in the village. It was decided that further information with the opportunity to comment will be included in the next edition of the Parish Newsletter. In the meantime, any information, views or comments should be passed on to any of the Parish Councillors or Clerk. Once all the information is gathered together a public meeting will be arranged to enable residents to make an informed choice.

Titholes Orchard – The Chairman read out a recent email received from Lucy Back (Savills).

*'The sales of the estate and second residential portfolio by The Crown Estate have been finalised and all tenants and stakeholders have been informed of the new owners. All purchasers have retained Savills as the Managing Agents with me as the main point of contact. Work has started by Western Power Distribution at Titholes Orchard to relocate the overhead cables to a new underground route. Once this is complete, we will be able to*

*proceed with the work to the car park itself. The work is still under the control of The Crown Estate although the car park itself is now owned by MHPF(UK)Ltd. The development site for the cottages at Titholes remains For Sale.'*

It had been understood that the developer would take the responsibility for creating the car park area. It was felt therefore that further clarity was needed on the detail and timings and the extent to the Crowns involvement in the development of the car park.

Village Clean Up/Flood Plan - The Chairman thanked everyone who had volunteered at the village clean up in January. It had been an amazing success. A Flood Plan for the parish is being drawn up and will be registered with Somerset County Council once finalised. Cllr Gill asked that if anyone could think of areas in the parish that are at risk of flooding to let her know and she will include this on the flood map of the parish.

## **5. PARISH NEWSLETTER**

Mrs Anne Rivett provided an update on the recently relaunched Parish Newsletter. The third edition of the newsletter had recently been published. Feedback so far has been positive. It is being delivered to around 123 people; 60 by email and the other 60 were hand delivered. Anne thanked the Parish Council for funding the printing costs. It was suggested that producing a laminated useful contact numbers/emails for the parish would be a good idea.

## **6. SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT**

Christine Lawrence delivered a report as County Councillor representing Withycombe. She began by thanking the Parish Council for its hard work during the past year; she also thanked Emma Wright for the work she had done as Chairman. She was pleased to report that the culvert work outside Court Place Farm had been completed successfully and that the wall had been repaired outside the Memorial Hall. She had noted that there were some potholes at Rodhuish and she would report the matter back to the pothole team. Somerset County Council had filled 78,000 potholes in the last year and there were still more to do, particularly in rural areas. Rattle Row will be repaired in June and the road will be closed for 5 days and nights. Christine will continue to monitor the sale of Crown Land and the Titholes Orchard development. She thanked everyone who had written to Jim Butterworth providing information concerning the footpath at Blue Anchor. Progress is slow but the paperwork has gone in; it will take about a year to get a final decision. A good case has been made based on the information from the people who have written in. Christine acknowledged that there could have been more consultation about the Steam Coast Trail and the impact it would have on the affected parties.

## **7. DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT**

Brenda Maitland-Walker delivered a report as District Councillor representing Withycombe. The merger proposal has gone into the Government and we have received a letter of acceptance. It was predicted to receive an answer by September from the Secretary of State, however, this may now be delayed because of the General Election. Brenda reported that Hinkley Point business rates had recently been re-valued and the District Council will be receiving a refund which is good news. The budget savings required for 2018/19 have now reduced from £800,000 to £170,000 because of the recent revaluation. Somerset West Lottery is about to be launched. There is a meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup> May at the Council Offices to explain more about how it will work. Local charities are urged to register as there is a chance to win some money.

## **7. REPORTS FROM VILLAGE ORGANISATIONS**

**Withycombe Active Living Group:** Roger Hurst delivered a report on the activities of the Withycombe Active Living Group. He advised that the group aimed to provide friendship, fun

and social activities for older members of the community and had now been in existence for 14 years. Roger advised that the grant funded contribution from SCC had diminished considerably over the years and that he envisaged the group would soon have to become totally independent.

Roger thanked Somerset County Councillor Christine Lawrence for the support she had given the Group; he also thanked members of the village, the Parish Council and the Memorial Hall Committee for their support. Roger gave special thanks to Valarie Barnham, Carol Wright and Judith Tilley for the help that they had provided.

The Chairman thanked Roger for his report and all that he did for the older members of the community.

**St Nicholas Church - Withycombe:** Roger Hurst delivered a report on behalf of St Nicholas Church. He advised that despite the low attendances, the Church continued to be popular with visitors. The Church was on the Millennium Way route so a lot of walkers stop on the way. Roger summarised the historic aspects of the Church and he circulated a copy of the pictorial leaflet that is available in the Church. During the last year, the mains water supply has had to be sadly discontinued mainly due to old piping which would have needed considerable renovation. However, 2 water butts installed in the Churchyard and bottled water in the Vestry have provided an adequate alternative. Roger reported that following a Quinquennial Architect's Inspection some expensive work will need to be undertaken to the church of the next 3 years. There is a serious ingress of water to the bell tower which will cost in the region of £12,000 and the slated roof to the Vestry will need to be replaced at a similar cost. An application to a National fund for a grant was rejected therefore financing the work will come from restricted funds. The Church was floodlit to celebrate the 90<sup>th</sup> birthday of Her Majesty the Queen and the floodlights are available for anyone in the community to request at a cost of £6 per night. Roger emphasised that newcomers and visitors were always welcome to the Church.

**Withycombe Memorial Hall:** Judith Tilley delivered a report on behalf of the Trustees of Withycombe Memorial Hall. Judith advised that she had stepped down as Chairman this year and that Anne Rivett had taken over the role.

She reported on use of the Hall during the last twelve months and that the regular Table Tennis session and Pilates classes were bringing in much needed income to the Memorial Hall. Judith thanked Anne Rivett and Jean Humber for their help in organising fundraising events. There was no major expenditure on repairs last year, with only a few minor maintenance issues requiring attention. The Trustees will continue to keep the Hall in good and serviceable repair.

**Public Rights of Way:** The new Parish Path Liason Officer, Paul Bryon delivered a report. The current state of the rights of way network was overall in good shape. There are one or two gates/stiles which need attention and these have been reported back to the rights of way team at SCC. There is quite a lot of signage that is worn out or pointing the wrong way so this has also been reported. The next step will be to set up a 'Adopt a Path Scheme' within the Parish. Volunteers choose a path within the parish which they regularly and help with cutting back vegetation and reporting any problems. Paul will provide more details about this in the next edition of the Parish Newsletter.

**Withycombe Wheels:** The Chairman delivered a report prepared by the Chairman of Withycombe Wheels, Mr Peter Humber. Peter advised that Withycombe Wheels had made 27 journeys during the year compared with 54 journeys in 2016. This is the lowest number since Withycombe Wheels was established in 2003. Unusually they were for both medical reasons and for shopping in roughly equal number. Whilst the number of service users was small, to those users the service was of vital importance. There are 6 regular drivers who

receive 45p per mile. If anyone is interested in driving or the scheme please contact Jean Humber (Co-ordinator and Treasurer) [jeanhumber@btopenworld.com](mailto:jeanhumber@btopenworld.com). Financially, Withycombe Wheels remains on a sound footing.

The AGM would be held on Saturday, 10<sup>th</sup> June in the Memorial Hall at 11.00am and all are welcome.

**Withycombe Short Mat Bowls Club:** Emma Wright delivered a short report on behalf of Mike Burnett who was unable to attend the meeting. She reported that the Club meet regularly on Thursday evenings. The Club has not been able to attract any new members in the past year so if anyone would be interested please let Emma know.

**Snooker Club:** Judith Tilley reported that Dennis Symes had retired. Any further contact should be via Graham Burnett.

**Pilates:** It was reported that the group was popular and well attended. The group meets on a Tuesday evening and Thursday morning. Any ability.

**Table Tennis:** Meets on a Monday evening 7.30pm – 9.30pm. Very popular. Mix of ages and abilities. The group will have a break over the summer and re-commence at the beginning of October.

## **10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

A member of the public reported that Japanese Knotweed had been seen growing in the stream outside the Memorial Hall. It had been reported to the District Council who advised they would pass the information to the correct department. It was reported that there is another spot in Coombe Lane that has been there for several years and it was concluded that it was probably been carried downstream. It was agreed that the Clerk would inform Somerset County Council.

A question was asked of whether Withycombe Wood carried a protection status. Concerns were raised that as the farms and land previously owned by the Crown Estate had been sold the woodland could be unprotected. Advised to speak to Cllr Steve Crossman as it was understood it was part of the tenancy for Court Place Farm.

Cllr Amanda Gardiner reported that the areas around the bus shelters had recently been trimmed by Paul Gardiner. The Chairman reported that Paul Gardiner had also carried out maintenance work on the Millennium Trees and that one tree had been replaced. Paul was thanked for the work he had carried out on improving the condition of the trees.

It was suggested that Withycombe in conjunction with other parishes could undertake a joint litter pick session of a Saturday morning.

**11. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21<sup>ST</sup> APRIL 2016:** The draft minutes previously circulated were approved and signed by the Chairman. The proposer was Cllr Tilley, seconded by Cllr Barnham.

## **11. CHAIRMANS CLOSING COMMENTS**

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending the Annual Parish Assembly for 2017 and for their contributions to the meeting. She invited everyone to stay behind after the meeting and to enjoy refreshments which had been arranged by the Parish Council. The Chairman thanked Parish Councillors Sue Gill and Amanda Gardiner for preparing the refreshments.

The meeting closed at 8.20 pm.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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