

# WITHYCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

## REPORT OF THE PUBLIC OPEN SESSION ON THE 5th MARCH 2018 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 / Richard Barnham RB / Amanda Gardiner AJG / Susan Gill SMG / David Tilley DT / Brenda Maitland-Walker (West Somerset District Council) BMW / Christine Lawrence (Somerset County Council) CL / Sam Rawle (Clerk) SR.

The meeting was digitally recorded

These notes formulate a record of the Public Open Session held on the 5th March 2018.

The Chairman opened the meeting at 7.00pm. She reported that apologies had been received from SC.

#### 1. Somerset County Councillor Report

*Adverse Weather* – Highways had done a fantastic job in the recent bad weather. Didn't quite run out of salt. Most villages had pulled together and helped each other.

*Ofsted Report of Children's Services* – Recent rating of 'Requires Improvement to be Good'. Improvement plan is being updated and amended to reflect the recommendations.

*Family Support Service* – Developing an integrated service with the Health Visiting Service being brought in house next year. Working to ensure services are provided where they are needed, concentrating money on frontline staff and not on buildings.

*Secondary School Admissions* – 97.5% of children have been offered a place at one of their top three secondary school preferences. In total 93.5% received their 1<sup>st</sup> preference.

*Single Use Plastics* – Have agreed to begin work to move towards the withdrawal of all Single Use Plastics across all of its sites. Somerset Waste Partnership are engaging through social media, local media and through the Schools against Waste programme about the impact of plastic.

*Somerset Rivers Authority* – Discussions continue with Defra about SRA being a self-precepting body. Government has committed to introducing legislation, this is likely to be through a Private Members Bill.

*National College for Nuclear* – Opened on 7<sup>th</sup> February is now providing a state of the art nuclear training facility. Bridgwater and Taunton College are the principle delivery agency, supported by their Energy Skills and Advanced Engineering centres.

*Libraries Consultation* – Library Consultation continues and recent community engagement events have been well attended. Important that as many people as possible are encouraged to engage with the consultation as possible to provide comprehensive feedback.

#### 2. Sue Southwell – Exmoor Rural Housing Network

The Chairman welcomed Sue Southwell, Co-ordinator from the Exmoor Rural Housing Network.

Sue explained that the Network was a conglomeration of local organisations concerned about local people not been able to find affordable housing on Exmoor. Over the last year the Network had been trying to get an idea of what the local need was by carrying out a

number of housing need surveys to build up an evidence base. They were currently in the process of undertaking one whole survey over a number of parishes:- Cutcombe, Exford, Exton, Luccombe, Winsford, Wootton Courtney and Timberscombe. Old Cleeve had requested a survey so it was suggested that Nettlecombe, Monksilver and Withycombe could also be included to get an idea of what this part of the moor needs.

Sue explained that it was only the 1<sup>st</sup> stage of the process so there was no guarantee it would lead to anything but without it nothing would happen. The survey would be carried out by Somerset Community Council. There would be no cost to the parish as an application would be made for funding to cover the costs. It would be helpful if the Parish Council could advertise the survey nearer the time. Drop in sessions will be held across the parishes to help people. SG suggested that the parish newsletter could be used for publicising the survey.

Surveys would be posted to every household. There will be a lot of publicity up front so that people know that they are coming. Surveys will be returned directly to Somerset Community Council via pre-paid envelope. The Community Council will write the final report. The report will cover all parishes and identify the need in each one.

The application for funding to cover the cost of the survey will take about 3 months. Envisaged that survey would be carried out late summer/early autumn.

The network is also trying to create a group of volunteers called Local Housing Contacts. The idea is to have one located in every parish. If someone in the parish has a housing problem they can approach this person. Sue will send out a description of the role to the Clerk to circulate.

It was agreed by all that support be given to the ERHN to carry out a housing needs survey in the parish.

### **3. District Councillor Report**

*Budget* – West Somerset has set its budget for 2018/19. There will be an extra £5 per week on the Council Tax. Will be charging the Somerset Rivers Authority precept for another year.  
*Waste Contract* – Current contract with Kier being brought to an end. Will be re-tendering with a view to be doing more plastic recycling. Will not be in place as quickly as would like.

*Local Plan* – Undertaking a lot of work. BMW circulated copy of an inset map showing the piece of land at Titholes with allocated provision for a playground. Gives it some protection to an extent.

*Partnership Working* - Transformation phase of work on-going.

The Public Open Session ended at 7.30pm.

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Chairman

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