

WITHYCOMBE ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY

DRAFT Minutes of the Withycombe Annual Parish Assembly held at the Memorial Hall on Wednesday 18th April 2018 at 6.30pm

PRESENT

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

Also present: Brenda Maitland Walker (,West Somerset District Council), Christine Lawrence (Somerset County Council), Paul Bryon (PPLO), Roger Hurst (Active Living & St Nicholas Church), Richard Devitt (Rodhuish Chapel), Graham Burnett(Snooker), 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

Jean Humber, Peter Humber, Mike Burnett.

3. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY HELD ON 19th APRIL 2017

The minutes had previously been circulated. They were unanimously agreed and were signed by the Chairman.

4. WITHYCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL REPORT

The Chairman delivered a short report on the work of Withycombe Parish Council over the last year.

EW thanked County Cllr, Christine Lawrence and District Cllr, Brenda Maitland-Walker for their advice and support to the Parish Council over the previous year.

The phonebox and defibrillator project are currently on hold but there is still the intention to adopt the phonebox in West Street and relocate to outside the Memorial Hall.

The Parish Council continue to fund the printing of the Parish Newsletter and would like to thank Anne and Bob Rivett for their work in pulling this together

A contribution was made to the Active Living Group last year to help cover the costs of the hall hire. The Parish Council recognise that this is an important facility for the village and would like to than Roger for all the work he puts into keeping the group going.

Titholes has taken up a lot of time over the last 5 months. As you are probably aware Savills started work on the site in November giving the PC very little notice. What was happening on site did not beare relation to the original design. Works have halted and we are liasing with Savills and the District Council to move the project forward and get the facilities for the village that we need to the standard that we expect.

5. 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 that the group was now entering its 16th year. 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 or otherwise terminate this vital community activity. The grant of £158.00 no longer covers the hall rental. Roger thanked the Parish Council who had made a one off donation to cover the rent of the hall for a further year.

Roger gave special thanks to Valerie Barnham, Carol Wright and Judith Tilley for their help with food and transport.

There is still a problem with cars parking outside and this does impact on attendance to the group as on occasions members have driven to the hall, find nowhere to park and drive back home.

(See Appendix A for full report)

St Nicholas Church: Roger Hurst delivered a report on behalf of St Nicholas Church. He advised that despite attendance being low, the church was used frequently for marriages, baptisms and funerals. The churchyard is one of the best kept in West Somerset. The grass is long at the moment because of the bad weather but this will be cut in the next couple of weeks. There is a problem with dogs running loose and fouling on the graves of late.

Work will be undertaken shortly to the bell tower and a replacement vestry roof. This will not affect the village and the Church will remain open.

Although unable to ring the Church bells on a regular basis due to lack of ringers there are plans for a group from Carhampton to be trained and to visit and ring more frequently.

The Church supports the Children Society with funds from the popular annual carol singing around the village.

(See Appendix B for full report)

St Bartholomew Chapel, Rodhuish: Richard Devitt provided a report on behalf of St Bartholomew Chapel. Richard thanked Roger Hurst as they come up once a month and join them plus at festivals. The organ stopped working last May. It took 3 months for a part to arrive from Holland.

The funeral of Robin Clode took place in June. He was instrumental in restoring the Chapel 20 years ago. Two concerts provided last year in June and December by Oliver Davis raised £2,000. There will only be one concert this year as the Dunster Festival is being run the last weekend in May. Details are available online.

There was a well-supported carol service at Christmas. The parking area is planned to be enlarged. Overall, the Chapel is in good shape and financially sound.

Snooker Club: Graham reported that the Snooker Club had done well in the last year. They had finished just below half way in the league and had won the Knockout Cup. Hoping to get a second team which will financially help the hall.

Withycombe Wheels: The Chairman delivered a report prepared by the Treasurer & Co-ordinator of Withycombe Wheels, Mrs Jean Humber.

(See Appendix C for full report)

Parish Paths Liaison Officer: Paul Bryon delivered a report on matters regarding rights of way and paths. SCC website now has an interactive map so that damaged gates, stiles, signposts can be reported. PB it would be a good idea to carry out a parish path audit of the network this year. There was some discussion regarding permissive paths and the recent notices that had been placed around the parish by the new landowners. It was confirmed that the notices are to stop any new rights of way being applied for. Will not affect existing paths. SC pointed out that the setting up of permissive paths has been very successful and that many of the new paths created on Exmoor in the last 20 years have been permissive paths. Clerk to update the website to provide clarification on the issue.

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 commended the rural communities in West Somerset on how well they had pulled together and helped each other in the recent harsh weather. The roads have unfortunately taken a hammering and Highways are doing their best to catch up with the pot holes and repairs.

EW requested that thanks be communicated back to the bridge repair team at SCC. The bridge at the bottom of Combe Lane had recently been repaired and is reported that they had carried out an excellent job.

(See Appendix D for full report)

7. DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT

Brenda Maitland-Walker delivered a report as District Councillor representing Withycombe. West Somerset is again working with iChoosr to offer residents the chance to easily switch energy providers. The Big Community Switch enables individuals to benefit from collective buying power, which helps saves money and tackle fuel poverty. For help, information or to register visit www.westsomerset.gov.uk/energyswitch or call the Council on 01643 703704. The Secretary of State has agreed the merger between West Somerset Council and Taunton Deane Borough Council. It will still need to go to Parliament for ratification. There will be a new Council from May 2019. The Council is continuing to work on transformation. IT is being updated and the intention is to make the website a lot more interactive for customers. There will be changes in staffing and councillors. The number of councillors is set to decrease from 28 to 16 with the result being councillors covering wider areas. Brenda circulated an up to date road closure timetable for West Somerset.

8. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Roger Hurst questioned whether anymore could be done regarding the BT sub-contractors who turn up unannounced. On this occasion two teams had turned up unaware of each others existence. There appeared to be a lack of supervision and the workmanship and behaviours of said workmen were questionable. Mr Hurst has endeavoured to pursue the matter through the normal complaint channels but has had little success.

BMW confirmed that neither the district council or county council had any authority over utility companies

CT asked about the absence of High Speed Broadband at Rodhuish and Golsoncott. Savills have objected to poles going up. Clerk to find out from ENP and CL will follow up.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman reminded everyone that whilst work was on-going at Titholes that the site was out of bounds. The fencing had been tied back up and secured. She also reminded that dog walkers should keep dogs on leads when walking in fields with ewes and lambs and to please secure all gates and to please keep to the footpaths.

11. CHAIRMANS CLOSING COMMENTS

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending the Annual Parish Assembly for 2018 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 7.30 pm.

Signed _____
Chairman

Date _____