

ANNUAL MEETING OF WITHYPOOL AND HAWKRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL

Draft Minutes

Tuesday 17th May 2022 7.30pm at Withypool Village Hall

Present: Parish Councillors: A Howard – AH (Chair), T Lloyd - TL, A Collins - AC, P Soltau - PS, J Soltau – JS, A Morrissey – AM, W Lock - WL; **SCC & SW&T Cllr** S Pugsley – SP (for part of meeting); **SCC Cllr** F Nicholson (for part of meeting) – FN; **Clerk** R Tomalin;

Abbreviations: ENPA – Exmoor National Park; SW&T - Somerset West and Taunton District Council; SCC – Somerset County Council;

For any Road defects – please go to the SCC Road Defect Website -

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/report-a-problem-on-the-road/>

The Annual Meeting of the Parish Council started at 7.47pm

38/22 Election of Chairman – AC proposed and TL 2nd the appointment of Mr A Howard as Chair and all agreed. He was duly elected and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

39/22 Election of Vice Chairman and appointment of representatives

Vice Chairman - AC proposed and AH 2nd Mr Tim Lloyd and all agreed

Exmoor Panel rep – AH

Consultative Forum rep – WL/PS and anyone else who wishes to attend

Henry Leigh Trust rep – Clerk will email Lyn Fisher for an update. KB will continue as Trustee until Sept 22.

Withypool Village Hall rep - AC

Hawkridge Village Hall rep – WL

Highways Warden – AC

40/22 Apologies of Absence – none

41/22 Declarations of Acceptance of Office – all Cllrs signed their Declaration of Acceptance of Office paperwork before the meeting commenced. Clerk will retain and send a copy to the Governance team at SW&T. Clerk reminded Cllrs that they need to complete their Register of Interests form within 28 days – Clerk to re-circulate.

42/22 Declarations of notifiable interests: None

43/22 Approval of the Minutes of the previous meeting on 09/03/2022 - proposed by WL and 2nd by TL and all Approved. Chair then signed the minutes.

44/22 Matters arising from the Minutes of 09/03/2022: None

As SP & FN had other parish meetings to attend the agenda was taken out of order

50/22 Report by the County & District Councillors: The PC passed on its congratulations to SP & FN for their success in the recent election – they both said they were very pleased and grateful to be re-elected again, although the control over the Council had changed and FN would no longer be lead for Children.

(i) The W&H Cllrs raised a couple of Highways issues for FN to take back (a) Portford Bridge - removing the signs and bollards as the work has been completed, (b) HGV Sign on Sparrow Lane – this has been raised by a parishioner. There is a HGV warning sign just past Olivers Cottage but this is too late as HGVs have already started going up the lane. JS reported that this was discussed at the PCC but the suggestions from Highways for placement of a sign in the church room gardens were not suitable, although the PCC is willing to work with the PC to come to an acceptable solution. FN to take away, to be discussed at next PC meeting, (c) WL noted that at a recent meeting in Hawkridge a representative from County had said that they can approach sat nav companies and have routes changed. There has been considerable work done with lorry sat navs but often a driver uses his phone instead. Clerk to email Highways about sat navs routing via Hawkridge to Tarr Steps – this is a known issue at Highways (d) WL reported that Highways have been out in the last week to look at the flooding issue near the village parking area. This has been caused by the owners of a field covering over the sump and blocking off the drain – causing water to run through the village leading to flooding and erosion of the road. When the village parking area was created the village paid for the materials and the council provided the labour on the understanding that the council would continue to maintain it. It now needs resurfacing – Clerk to check past minutes – ask David Bawden or Richard Lock for approx. date.

(ii) Highways LCN Pilot – this is moving along and a Highways steward is about to be appointed, the steward will do small scale repairs, report problems and liase with the Highways Warden when he visits the parish. (iii) ENP Local Plan review – following the consultation on the Local Plan it is likely the background advice will be reviewed and updated (for example the value of land for an affordable plot, the definition of adequately housed & the implications for self build) rather than a full scale review as this could take 3-4 years (iv) Appointments to ENPA - yet to be decided how appointments from the new Unitary Council will be made to ENPA - will it be done on a politically proportional basis or will those Cllrs elected in the ENP divisions serve on the ENPA Committee. Parishes may need to express an opinion.

SP and FN left the meeting at 8.24pm

45/22 Finance Report:

(i) Approval of Invoices: Clerks Pay and Exp Mar-May 22 **R Tomalin £299.01 Chq 553**; PAYE due to **HMRC £67.40 Chq 552**; insurance renewal **BHIB Ltd £142.88 Chq 549**; SALC Election Training (to be shared with Exmoor PC) **SALC £20 Chq 550**; SWT Election Fee £100 – invoice not yet received – all AGREED. Clerk explained a discount could be obtained if the PC commits to staying with BHIB for three years (£184.13 vs £142.88). All Cllrs agreed to take the discounted insurance rate. Clerk will ask Exmoor PC for a cheque for £10 as partial reimbursement for SALC election training. SWT Election Fee invoice will be circulated as soon as received. For the minutes Clerk noted that both Jubilee Committees accepted the PC donation as agreed at the March meeting. Cheques issued as follows; **D Williams** (Treasurer Withypool Jubilee Celebration Committee) **£250 Chq 547**; **Hawkridge Village Hall Committee** (Hawkridge Jubilee Committee) **£250 Chq 548**.

(ii) Councillor Training – JS, PS & AM expressed an interest in participating in training. The PC agreed that the councillors may attend the Councillor Essentials Part 1 training (iii) Bank Mandate – Clerk explained that the bank mandate should be reviewed in light of the new financial year and elections. All Cllrs agreed to remove Charlotte Hornsby and Keith Branfield and add TL. This cannot be actioned until the May minutes are signed at the July meeting

(iv) Internal Audit – Lyn Fisher (LF) has audited the 2021/22 accounts and completed the Annual Internal Audit Report for the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR). LF's report reads

as follows: “Thank you for inviting me to look over the accounts and minutes of Withypool & Hawkridge Parish Council. The minutes, accounts and record keeping are particularly clear and thorough. I am very happy to sign off against the control objectives in the internal audit.” Clerk explained that this year LF would like a donation to be made to the British Red Cross – all Cllrs agreed to donate **£30** to the **British Red Cross Chq 554**

(v) Presentation of 2021/22 accounts – the Clerk presented the accounts for 2021/22 (previously circulated) and noted these are available for inspection (vi) Bank Reconciliation – the closing bank balance at the end of the financial year (31 Mar 2022) was £9,300.08 – this includes receipt of the rent for Plot C £120 and cleared Chqs 540/41/42/45 (raised at the March meeting). Chq 543 £50 & Chq 544 £20 (both ifo Withypool Village Hall) have not yet cleared. In the Reserve account the balance remains unchanged at £10.67. The balance as at 29 Apr 2022 is £12,550.08 which includes receipt of precept £3,500 and payment of £250 to the Withypool Jubilee Committee Chq 547.

(vii) Approval and Signature of 2021/22 accounts and bank reconciliation – TL proposed and JS 2nd and all Cllrs agreed that the accounts and bank reconciliation should be adopted. Chair and Clerk signed.

46/22 Audit Certificate of Exemption: AGREED as correct and Chair and Clerk signed

- Total annual gross income for the authority 2021/22 £4,339
- Total annual gross expenditure for the authority 2021/22 £3,100

47/22 Audit – Section 1: Annual Governance statement 2021/22 - **AGREED** and Chair and Clerk signed

48/22 Audit – Section 2: Accounting statements 2021/22 – **AGREED** and Chair and Clerk signed

49/22 Code of Conduct, Standing Orders, GDPR, Financial Regulations & Aims & Objectives: The Cllrs agreed to adopt the existing GDPR, Aims & Objectives and Financial Regulations (previously circulated). The Cllrs also agreed to adopt the most recent Standing Orders published by NALC (previously circulated) but to maintain the current version of Sections 18 & 19 as these had been amended to be more relevant to the PC. The Clerk explained that the Local Government Association (LGA) have put together a new Code of Conduct (previously circulated) which has been reviewed by SALC & the Monitoring Officers from the District Councils. The Cllrs asked the Clerk to check if the PC had made any amendments when they adopted the previous Code of Conduct. Clerk to review and circulate comparison – to be discussed at next meeting.

51/22 Broadband Scheme – PC acting as Guarantor: Clerk confirmed (as per email previously circulated) that SALC had advised the PC did not have the power to stand as Guarantor and could not use the General Power of Competence as the Clerk was not CiLCA qualified. Update on progress of broadband scheme to be provided at next meeting.

52/22 Highways: (i) HGV Sign Sparrow Lane – see **50/22** (ii) WL reported overgrown hedges between Hawkridge & Tarr Steps and around Chibbet Post. Clerk to report.

53/22 Planning: None

54/22 Parish Gardens: TL confirmed that the car park opposite the village hall was still owned by the Lady of the Manor.

55/22 Parish Maintenance: AH noted the kissing gate into the Jubilee Garden needed some attention but he would repair. AC has arranged with Highways that he will refill the salt bins with the salt left in the grit bag by Worth Farm.

56/22 Chairman's Notices: On behalf of the PC, AH thanked KB for his service to not only the PC but also the Village Hall Committee and Henry Leigh Trust. Clerk to send letter of thanks.

57/22 Correspondence: previously circulated by Clerk.

58/22 Report from representatives of other groups:

- Withypool Village Hall – new cooker has been installed but is far larger than the original so the kitchen door will need rehangng, electricity has also been installed in the shed. Next jobs include painting the outside and inside in Winter, and buying new curtains. At the recent VH meeting the benefits of having a landline and broadband were also discussed.
- Hawkridge Village Hall – planning to paint the guttering and outside boards this Summer as well as revamp the kitchen.
- Exmoor Panel – the last meeting was held in March and included an update on the Highways LCN pilot and Highways steward and a demonstration of Parish Online which includes lots of information on the local area, land, houses etc. Some parishes raised concerns that they were not listened to and would be forgotten in the new Unitary Council. Next meeting is 9th June
- Consultative & Parish Forum – the last meeting held in March included an update on the Glover review, renewable energy schemes for local communities and the family friendly cycle trail project. Next meeting is 23 June at Withypool Village Hall.

59/22 Parish Community including the social media page update, events by other groups not listed in 89/21: (i) Queens Jubilee celebrations – PS reported that there will be a lighting of the beacon on Withypool Hill with a BBQ and bring your own booze on Thurs 2nd June. A celebration lunch will take place on Sun 5th June along with a short service in church. There will be a flower festival in church throughout the long weekend celebrating the decades of the Queen's reign. The children will be presented with commemorative mugs and a scarecrow competition will take place. In Hawkridge there will also be a lighting of the beacon event on Thurs evening with an afternoon tea on Sunday followed by a service in church. Commemorative mugs will also be available.

60/22 Items for July 2022 agenda: Format of Annual Parish Meeting, Broadband Scheme, Code of Conduct, Withypool Noticeboard.

61/22 Date and time of next meeting: the meeting will take place one week early on 5th July at 7.30pm at Hawkridge Village Hall.

Future Meeting dates - tbc

Tuesday 13th September 2022 – Withypool Village Hall

Tuesday 8th November 2022 – Hawkridge Village Hall

Tuesday 10th January 2023 – Withypool Village Hall

Tuesday 14th March 2023 – Hawkridge Village Hall

There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 9.28pm

Clerk's Performance Review and Salary – the Cllrs met prior to the meeting to discuss the clerk's performance. Cllrs decided to increase the clerk's salary to NALC SCP 14 and asked that the Clerk make sure she also invoice for all expenses. Clerk thanked the Cllrs for the pay rise and positive feedback and explained that she does not charge expenses to any of the PC's she clerks for as it is often more hassle than it's worth.

Signed.....Date.....