

The Annual Parish Meeting Of Withypool and Hawkridge Draft Minutes

Tuesday 17th May 2022 Withypool Village Hall 7.30pm

Attendees A Howard (Chair), A Collins, T Lloyd, P. Soltau, W Lock, J Soltau, A Morrissey, SCC Cllr F Nicholson; SW&T Cllr S Pugsley; Clerk R Tomalin;

The meeting started at 7.34pm

- 1. Welcome by the Chairman**
- 2. Minutes of the 2021 annual parish meeting** (Previously circulated)
- 3. Approval of Minutes of the last meeting** of May 2021 Prop by TL and 2nd by AC
- 4. Report about the last 12 months within the Parish** read by the Chair

Annual Report for Withypool and Hawkridge: 2021-22

The Parish Council meetings were held every other month alternating between Hawkridge village hall and Withypool village hall. It has been encouraging to be able to meet in person for the whole year, however the benefits of online meetings should not be forgotten. The Parish Council has supported a petition for online meetings to be reinstated. Having the option of an in-person or online meeting is particularly useful during bad weather, illness and when councillors have multiple commitments in one evening. All agendas, minutes and other important documents continue to be available on the Parish Council website in order to comply with Transparency Legislation.

The Parish Council considered three planning applications over the past 12 months. These included an application to erect an agricultural building on land to the east of Hawkridge village, an application to repair a barn at Hind House, Hawkridge and an application to erect a pedestrian bridge over the River Barle below Great Bradley.

The Parish council are again very grateful to Mrs Frances Nicholson, County Councillor and Mr Stephen Pugsley District Councillor for their continued passion for the area. Their support and advice at the meetings is always very much appreciated. We look forward to them guiding us as we navigate the transition to the new unitary Somerset council. We would also like to thank Mrs Lyn Fisher for once again completing the internal audit of the Parish Council's 2021-22 accounts.

As most of you know, Keith Branfield decided not to stand for re-election this year after 15 years of service as a Councillor, the last 8 of those as Vice Chair. We thank Keith for his commitment to not only the parish council but also the village hall committee and Henry Leigh Trust.

The parish maintenance has continued to be carried out by a local contractor and the parish council are very happy with the work that Dan Passmore does in the village. We would also like to thank the parishioner who has been looking after the flower bed behind the bench by the village shop.

The Parish Council would like to thank Doctors Jeremy and Mary Davies for the continued work they do in the village, the parish are incredibly grateful. Jeremy has once again been working his magic on the signposts and benches, and they have continued to volunteer at the vaccination clinics. The Withypool Village Hall committee have been working hard installing a new shed, improving access

and upgrading the kitchen appliances. We look forward to the village hall being used more frequently by local groups.

The Hawkridge Revel & Gymkhana took place in August and was, as always, very well attended and a most enjoyable day. We would like to thank the Chairman, David Bawden, and Treasurer, Gwen Bawden, who have now stepped down after many years of service. We would also like to thank Michael and Kathy Lock for their continued work in the village, particularly with the village hall. We also thank Gwen again for her many years of service as Treasurer to the village hall.

The Henry Leigh Trust continues to award grants to local young people. The awards process takes place three times a year, and in the last 12 months many applications have been approved for driving lessons, music and singing lessons, swimming lessons, laptops, books and much more.

In August a public meeting was held to discuss broadband availability in the parish. A committee has been liaising with Connecting Devon and Somerset regarding the broadband voucher scheme. An application has now been submitted to Open Reach and we await their quote. The Parish Council would like to thank the Broadband Committee for their efforts and look forward to moving to the next stage of the process.

As a parish we are very much looking forward to the upcoming Queens Platinum Jubilee celebrations. Committees in both Withypool and Hawkridge have been working very hard organising events for the long weekend. There have been a number of fundraisers and it has been good to see people getting together again. As well as lighting of beacons on Thursday evening, there will be church services, a flower festival in Withypool church, a community lunch and afternoon tea. We thank all of the volunteers who have spent many hours planning these events and encourage all parishioners to come along and celebrate together. If anyone would like to help at these events it would be greatly appreciated.

I would also like to thank all the parishioners of the parish. Along with the rest of the country we have experienced a challenging couple of years but our community spirit has prevailed. It was good to see that during Storm Eunice we once again came together to check on our neighbours, deliver groceries, hot meals and drinks, and generally support each other. It makes me proud to be part of a wonderful, kind spirited community.

AC proposed and WL 2nd the adoption of the annual report and all agreed.

5. Format and timing of the Annual Parish Meeting – Clerk explained that the Annual Parish Meeting must take place between 1st March & 1st June, it did not need to take place at the same time as the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council. FN explained that in some parishes local clubs and societies etc. (like the Henry Leigh Trust, PCC) were invited to speak or showcase their activities to parishioners over tea & cake or cheese & wine. It was an opportunity for the public to raise questions about the parish and its future. Cllrs decided to mull it over and discuss at the next PC meeting in July.

6. Closure of meeting – the Chair closed the meeting at 7.44pm

Signed by chairman.....Date May 2023