

**WITHYPOOL AND HAWKRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL Draft Minutes**  
**Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2023 6.30pm at Withypool Village Hall**

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

**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/>

**1/23 Questions from the public:** none

The meeting started at 6.34pm.

**2/23 Apologies of Absence:** SCC Cllr F Nicholson, Cllr A Morrissey

**3/23 Declarations of notifiable interests:** None

**4/23 Approval of the Minutes** of the previous meeting on 08/11/2022 - proposed by TL and 2<sup>nd</sup> by AC and all Approved. Chair then signed the minutes.

**5/23 Matters arising from the Minutes** of 08/11/2022: (i) the Cyber Crime Presentation took place on 6 December and was very informative (ii) East Hollowcombe planning application 6/42/22/109 was refused by the Planning Committee as the proposed gable was too overbearing being so close to the road.

**6/23 Report by the County & District Councillors:** (i) SP reported that the discretionary rate relief and rural rate relief schemes were being integrated for the new unitary council and all existing recipients needed to re-apply. (ii) Discussions have taken place with Highways regarding gritting of the green routes, these should be done if the temperature remains below freezing for 24 hours and the contractors can be told to grit in advance of snowfall if it is expected to last more than 24 hours. The Highways pilot now has a new steward. (iii) The County Council Executive meeting next week will decide on the LCN boundaries. The papers recommend making the Dulverton and Exmoor division (our 23 parishes) a single LCN, which is very good news as it ties in so well with the highways pilot.

**7/23 Planning:** (i) Initial Consultation Mast Kitridge Lane – the consultation documents for the proposed height increase by 5m and adding ancillary equipment were discussed. The Cllrs asked whether these upgrades would have any impact on the activation of the mast (ii) Initial Consultation Mast Sandyway – the Cllrs discussed the consultation papers and agreed that the mast would be an eyesore and very visible in the proposed location. However, they also accepted that if we wish to use modern technology we would have to accept the infrastructure. The Cllrs agreed they were in favour of extended mobile coverage but thought there must be a better location or a way to make the mast less visually impactful.

**8/23 Broadband Scheme:** This has moved to the formal quote stage. As expected the value of the voucher scheme has been increased so it will cover the quote received from OpenReach.

**9/23 Highways:** (i) Update on Tarr Steps traffic – SP has raised these issues with Andrew Turner and will raise again (ii) Plan for Gritting in Bad Weather – Cllrs discussed whether the PC should buy its own gritter but various issues were raised including liability and the criteria for including or not including roads in a gritting programme. Clerk has reported the level of salt in the bins and bags to Highways and has requested these are topped up. Clerk to email Molland PC to ask for a salt bin to be installed on the Devon side of Willingford Bridge (iii) Bus Shelter for School Children – a parishioner has asked if the PC could provide a bus shelter for the school children as they often have to wait in the rain and are soaked before they get to school. Cllrs discussed possible locations and agreed to meet at 10am on Saturday to review these. Clerk will attend on Friday morning to observe how many children wait for the bus. Planning permission will be required, SP noted that ENPA will soon start charging for pre-planning advice to bring it in line with every other planning department.

The member of the public left at 7.40pm.

The recent damage caused to Portford Bridge was noted and has been reported to Highways.

SP left at 7.42pm

**10/23 Finalise Budget/Precept 2023-24:** All agreed to keep the precept at £3,500 as approved at the last meeting. Chair signed the paperwork and Clerk will submit.

**11/23 Finance Report:** (i) Bank Reconciliation £10,741.98 at 30 December, this includes cleared Chq 560 Dan Passmore (Grass Cutting & Maintenance) £710, Chq 562 Clerks Pay and Exp Sept-Nov 22 £294.30 and Chq 563 HMRC PAYE £73.60 (ii) Approval of Invoices: none presented (iii) Online Banking with Natwest – Clerk explained Natwest have made online banking available with the ability to have dual authorisation of online payments. Cllrs agreed Clerk could investigate further. (iv) Chairman noted that the LGA had published new pay scales for 2022-23 and all Councillors agreed the Clerk's salary should rise to £13.21/hr and be backdated to 1<sup>st</sup> April.

**12/23 Format of Parish Meeting:** Cllrs agreed to trial a different format for the parish meeting this year. Parishioners will be invited to socialise in the village hall with refreshments and local groups (like the village hall committee, Henry Leigh Trust, Broadband Committee etc) will have the opportunity to give a five minute talk about their organisation. The Parish Meeting needs to take place between 1<sup>st</sup> March and 1<sup>st</sup> June.

**13/23 Future Projects (Grants/Funding):** Cllrs agreed the following items should be kept in mind if grants or funding opportunities occur – bus shelter, noticeboard, electric car charging points

**14/23 Parish Gardens:** Clerk noted that the tenancy for one of the plots ends later this year and enquired about the tender process. Cllrs agreed to discuss the tender policy at the next meeting.

**15/23 Parish Maintenance:** (i) Withypool Noticeboard – Clerk to ask Mary Davies about the new noticeboard for the church and approach local tradesmen for quotes for a new noticeboard - the same size and style as the existing except a waterproof backing or better insulation.

**16/23 Chairman's Notices:** None

**17/23 Correspondence:** previously circulated by Clerk. Exmoor News has written to all parish and town councils asking for a small grant as printing costs have continued to escalate and they still wish to advertise local community events for free. Cllrs agreed they would like to support the request but would like to understand the funding gap in order to determine an appropriate grant.

**18/23 Report from representatives of other groups:**

- Withypool Village Hall – no meeting, currently working through the rate relief changes
- Hawkridge Village Hall – no meeting
- Henry Leigh Trust – many applications received, meeting to award grants later this week.
- Exmoor Panel – next meeting this Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> January.
- Consultative & Parish Forum – next meeting 23<sup>rd</sup> March

**19/23 Parish Community** including the social media page update, events by other groups not listed in **18/23**: None

**20/23 Items for March 2023 agenda:** Parish Garden Tenancy Policy, Bus Shelter, Parish Meeting

**21/23 Date and time of next meeting:** the meeting will take place on 14<sup>th</sup> March at 7.30pm at Hawkridge Village Hall.

There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 8.31pm.

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