

WITHYPOOL AND HAWKRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL Draft Minutes
Tuesday 14th March 2023 7.30pm at Hawkridge Village Hall

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

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/>

27/23 Questions from the public: email regarding drainage in Hawkridge – discussed under **32/23**

The meeting started at 7.31pm.

28/23 Apologies of Absence: Cllr A Morrissey, Cllrs A Collins & SCC & SW&T Cllr S Pugsley will be late as attending other meetings

29/23 Declarations of notifiable interests: None

30/23 Approval of the Minutes of the previous meeting on 10/01/2023 and the emergency planning meeting on 31/01/23. Minutes of 10/01/2023 meeting proposed by TL and 2nd by JS and all Approved. Minutes of 31/01/2023 meeting proposed by PS and 2nd by TL and all Approved. Chair then signed the minutes of both meetings.

31/23 Matters arising from the Minutes of 10/01/2023 & 31/01.2023: discussed under agenda items as appropriate.

AM joined the meeting at 7.36pm.

32/23 Report by the County & District Councillors: (i) FN reported that the gritting (or lack of it) of the secondary (green routes) was a problem all over the county, not just here, as the contractor had reduced driver numbers. The budget proposal to cut salt bins and bags had been removed, however the Winter 23/24 review will begin in the next few months so it may be raised again.

(ii) Tarr Steps Repair – the Environment Agency will only allow work in the river between 16th June & 30th Sept due to interference with wildlife. However, in the past the EA has allowed work to go on outside of this period. The members of the public noted that it is very inconvenient, particularly for someone who lives in Hawkridge but works at Tarr Farm, as well as the school bus which is now driving all the way round. It is not appropriate for these regular users to be walking the extra distance to cross using the footbridge. As well as safety and climate change concerns, it was also noted that 4WD vehicles regularly drive through the ford during the prohibition period.

(iii) Drainage in Hawkridge – a member of the public explained the lengthy and frustrating issue with the drainage in Hawkridge. Nearly two years ago a gate was widened into a field which caused a section of roadside gutter and a drain access chamber to be blocked. This was raised with Highways immediately so that they could take appropriate action. While they have been out to survey the situation and confirmed that the obstructions are unauthorised no remedial action has been taken despite repeated requests. Excess surface water now flows through the village depositing gravel and debris along the way, properties are at risk of flooding during heavy rainfall, a ditch has formed

between the road and car parking area by the village hall and sheet ice now forms across the roads. The procrastination, lack of action and leadership from Highways has been appalling. FN has raised this with Highways and will raise again with Senior Management. The PC will also write to ask what remedial action is being taken and the proposed timeline.

AC joined the meeting at 8.06pm

(iv) LCN Update – the Exmoor LCN will essentially be the Exmoor Area Panel with a wider remit, however it will need members to be Cllrs not clerks as they will need to speak for and make decisions on behalf of their Parish Council. The Highways pilot and Highways Steward will continue.

The agenda was taken out of order while waiting for SP to arrive.

35/23 Highways: (i) Update on Tarr Steps traffic – see later minute **35/23** below (ii) Gritting/Salt Bin Refilling/New Salt Bins – see discussion under **32/23** above & below (iii) Bus Shelter for School Children – Clerk reported what she had observed when she went to review how many children use the school bus. She has circulated information for a National Lottery application and has asked ENPA about planning permission. FN noted that a Council review was ongoing with regard to bus shelters and the PC should write to Mike Rigby.

SP joined the meeting at 8.26pm

32/23 Report by the County & District Councillors: (v) ENPA Elections – SP explained that SALC would be running the election process for the parish representatives to be elected to ENPA. The hustings usually take place on 31 May with the election likely in June (vi) New Salt Bins – these were discussed at the recent Exmoor Area Panel, it was suggested these should not be put out too early in case they go missing.

35/23 Highways: Update on Tarr Steps traffic – SP has raised these issues with Andrew Turner and has received no update

33/23 Planning: (i) GDO 23/04 WATERHOUSE FARM, WITHYPOOL, MINEHEAD, TA24 7RD Prior notification for building to storage agricultural implements – the Cllrs discussed the application and agreed to support it as the proposed location and design of the building appeared to relate well to the existing farm buildings.

34/23 Broadband Scheme: no update.

36/23 Finance Report: (i) Bank Reconciliation £10,629.28 at 1 March, this includes cleared Chq 557 SALC (Affiliation Fee) £62.70 & Chq 561 SALC (Cllr Training) £50.00 (ii) Approval of Invoices: Clerks Pay and Exp Sept-Nov 22 **R Tomalin £349.33 Chq 568** PAYE due to **HMRC £80.00 Chq 564**, Hall Hire for PC meetings **Withypool Hall Management Committee £80.00 Chq 566**, Hall Hire for PC Meetings **Hawkridge Village Hall Committee £45.00 Chq 565** – all AGREED (iii) Online Banking with Natwest – Clerk has investigated online banking with Natwest; one person sets up the payment and a second person authorises it, so there is still dual sign off. Cllrs agreed Clerk could set up online banking (iv) Councillor Training – JS & PS would like to attend the Finance & Governance training offered by SALC – all Cllrs approved. Several Cllrs also expressed an interest in Planning training – SP will raise this with ENPA but it is unlikely to take place until after the elections.

37/23 Plan for Parish Meeting: Cllrs decided to stick with the usual format this year, with the Coronation celebrations in early May it was thought parishioners may not wish to attend a second gathering in the month. Some kind of get together later in the year may be planned to inform parishioners of village activities and ongoing projects.

38/23 Parish Gardens: Clerk explained what she had discovered from reading past minutes and correspondence regarding the tender process. Cllrs agreed a Tender Process policy should be in place so it was clear to all current and future tenants.

39/23 Parish Maintenance: (i) Withypool Noticeboard – Clerk noted that the noticeboard in Winsford had been provided by ENPA, SP to investigate. Tender to be posted on FB and noticeboard asking for quotes for a new noticeboard. Tender process to be clear as to dimensions, materials etc. so as far as possible like for like quotes are received. Clerk to also review cost of recycled plastic noticeboards for comparison. (ii) Grass Cutting Quote - Clerk reported that Dan Passmore had submitted a quote of £670 to cut all grass areas on a regular basis, cut the beech hedge next to the car park and spray off weeds. Grass cutting normally runs March to October but if an extra cut was needed in November there would be no extra charges. Chair noted that it should also include the pathway from The Old Chapel – all Cllrs agreed to accept the quote.

40/23 Chairman’s Notices: None

41/23 Correspondence: previously circulated by Clerk. Clerk updated the Cllrs about the request from Exmoor News for a small grant. The funding gap was unknown as print costs continued to rise, however they have received grants of £50-£200 from parish and town councils. Cllrs discussed and approved a grant of **£100 Chq 567 Exmoor News.**

42/23 Report from representatives of other groups:

- Withypool Village Hall – no meeting
- Hawkridge Village Hall – recently held AGM – previous year had been busy and it was good to see the hall being used again. Kitchen renovation planned. Concerns raised about cost of electricity and will likely need to increase hire cost.
- Henry Leigh Trust – next deadline for applications 31 March.
- Exmoor Panel – next meeting this Thursday 16th March
- Consultative & Parish Forum – March meeting cancelled

43/23 Parish Community including the social media page update, events by other groups not listed in **42/23:** Meeting to discuss plans for the Withypool Coronation celebrations will be held tomorrow Weds 15th March. There will be a church service at Hawkridge at 3pm followed by afternoon tea. All Cllrs approved the use of the Jubilee Gardens should they be required for the celebrations.

44/23 Items for May 2023 agenda: Drainage in Hawkridge, Audit, Code of Conduct, Standing Orders, GDPR, Aims & Objectives, Financial Regulations. The May meeting will include the Annual Parish Meeting and the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council.

45/23 Date and time of next meeting: the meeting will take place on 9th May at 7.30pm at Withypool Village Hall.

There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 9.38pm.

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