

ANNUAL MEETING OF WITHYPOOL AND HAWKRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL

Draft Minutes

Tuesday 7th May 2024 7.30pm at Withypool Village Hall

Present: Parish Councillors: A Howard – AH (Chair), T Lloyd - TL, A Collins – AC, A Morrissey – AM, P Soltau - PS, J Soltau – JS, W Lock (for part of meeting) – WL, **SC Cllr** S Pugsley (for part of meeting) – SP; **Clerk** R Tomalin; **Public:** None

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/>

41/24 Questions from the public: none

The Annual Meeting of the Parish Council started at 7.41pm.

42/24 Election of Chair – TL proposed and AC 2nd the appointment of Mr A Howard as Chair and all agreed. He was duly elected and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

43/24 Election of Vice Chair and appointment of representatives

Vice Chairman - JS proposed and AC 2nd Mr T Lloyd and all agreed
Exmoor LCN – JS
Consultative Forum – Cllrs will take turns
Henry Leigh Trust – Clerk will email Lyn Fisher for an update.
Withypool Village Hall - AM
Hawkridge Village Hall – WL
Flood Group - PS

44/24 Apologies of Absence: Cllr F Nicholson, Cllr S Pugsley will be late as attending other meetings

45/24 Declarations of notifiable interests: none

46/24 Approval of the Minutes of the previous meeting on 12/03/2024: Proposed by AC and 2nd by TL and all Approved. Chair then signed the minutes.

47/24 Matters arising from the Minutes of 12/03/2024: discussed under agenda items as appropriate.

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

49/24 Planning: None

WL arrived at 7.56pm

51/24 Highways: (i) Signage Tarr Steps – a road closure has been added to the One Network website which should stop satnavs sending cars through the river. This will only work on modern satnavs/apps which update frequently. JD will be asked to paint over the white Tarr Steps signpost in the village. Mr Carew should be approached to gain his views on wording for any signage. Additional signs suggested at Mare Pool and Colland Cross (ii) Drainage Hawkridge – Cllrs met with Highways representatives and parishioners to discuss the proposed solution and agreed some amendments (iii) Hedges – several hedges in the parish need attention, Cllrs/Clerk to contact landowners

52/24 Finance Report: Clerk left the room while Cllrs discussed the Clerk's salary. NALC has increased the rate for SCP28 to £19.05/hr, in light of the extra work sometimes required Cllrs agreed Clerk should charge for hours worked rather than a set 3 hours per week. Clerk thanked the Cllrs for the recognition of her work (i) Approval of Invoices: Hedge Cutting **A Blackmore £250 Chq 589**, annual insurance renewal **Clear Insurance £228.50 Chq 590**, Clerks Pay and Exp Mar-May 24 **R Tomalin £436.35 Chq 591** PAYE due to **HMRC £267.60 Chq 592** – all AGREED. (ii) Councillor Training: Cllrs expressed interest in planning training which was supposed to be arranged by ENPA some time ago

(iii) Bank Mandate: current authorised signatories were reviewed – all agreed no changes required (iv) Savings Account: Clerk explained that the Liquidity Fund Manager 95 day interest rate was due to reduce soon and that it was difficult to move funds between the existing Reserve Account and Current Account (in writing or by two authorised signatories visiting a branch). Cllrs reviewed the planned expenditure for the year and agreed to deposit £10,000 into the 30 Day Liquidity Fund Manger.

(v) Presentation of 2023/24 – the Clerk presented the accounts for 2023/24 (previously circulated) and noted these will be made available for inspection by the public (vi) Bank Reconciliation – the closing bank balance at the end of the financial year (31 Mar 2024) was £9,682.65 – this includes cleared Chqs 586/87/88 (raised at the March meeting) and Chq 579 SALC Affiliation Fee. Chq 584 Spanglefish (website) £108 & Chq 585 Hawkridge Village Hall £55 had not yet cleared. In the Reserve account the balance has increased from £10.74 to £10.86. The balance of the Current Account as at 7 May 24 is £17,508.79 which includes receipt of precept £7,000, receipt of the rent for Plot C £1,000 and payment of Chqs 584 & 585 noted above.

(vii) Internal Audit: Lyn Fisher (LF) has audited the 2023/24 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 again meticulous - extremely thorough, transparent and well organised. I think they are exemplary. I am very happy to sign off against the control objectives in the internal audit." Clerk explained that LF would like a donation to be made to the British Red Cross again – all Cllrs agreed to donate **£50** to the **British Red Cross Chq 593**

(viii) Approval and Signature of 2023/24 accounts and bank reconciliation – AC proposed and AM 2nd and all Cllrs agreed that the accounts and bank reconciliation should be adopted. Chair and Clerk signed

53/24 Audit Certificate of Exemption: TL proposed, AC 2nd and all **AGREED** as correct and Chair and Clerk signed

- Total annual gross income for the authority 2023/24 £4,675
- Total annual gross expenditure for the authority 2023/24 £5,106

54/24 Audit – Section 1: Annual Governance statement 2023/24 - AC proposed, JS 2nd and all **AGREED** and Chair and Clerk signed

55/24 Audit – Section 2: Accounting statements 2023/24 – TL proposed, AM 2nd and all **AGREED** and Chair signed

56/24 Code of Conduct, Standing Orders, GDPR, Financial Regulations & Aims & Objectives: The Cllrs reviewed the policies and agreed no amendments were necessary.

57/24 Parish Gardens: (i) Plot C – Cllrs discussed the fencing quote for Plot C and decided it was best to check with the tenant as views differed as to what would be best. AB will be asked to supply a new quote – the Cllrs agreed this can be circulated and approved via email to speed things up (ii)

Plot E – the ditch the other side of the hedge needs to be dug out to alleviate some of the drainage issues (iii) The tenancy on Plot D expires at the end of August. It will be advertised early so that the Cllrs can discuss the bids at the July meeting.

58/24 Parish Maintenance: (i) Lots of pot holes have been marked for repair by the new contractor (ii) Parishioners have kindly cleaned the benches and weeded the flower bed. Maybe the PC could employ someone to do some tidying up and clearing around the parish (depending on the outcome of the devolution of services) but insurance would need to be investigated.

59/24 Flood Group Plan (PS): The flood group met at the end of April. PS has applied for funding which can be used to purchase blow up gel bags, brooms, shovels and wheelbarrows. This all needs to be available on an open access basis. Posters & flyers will be produced and a post will be made on the FB page to inform the community once available. PS will work on a Flood Plan.

SP arrived at 9.09pm

48/24 Report by Somerset Councillors: (i) The LCN will be on Thursday and will include a review of the Highways pilot. The cattle gate at Withypool needs to be raised at the meeting as well as at Comers Gate as the barriers keep being knocked (ii) Exford and Cutcombe schools will be joining forces in September due to low numbers.

50/24 Broadband Update: No update and no response from Connecting Devon & Somerset.

60/24 Chairman's Notices: None

61/24 Correspondence: all correspondence has been circulated

62/24 Report from representatives of other groups:

- Withypool Village Hall – a poster competition has been organised for the local young people to create the advertising for this year's Flower Show & Fete as it is the 70th anniversary. A flower arranging demonstration and workshop has been arranged for late June. A cleaner has been employed to clean the hall on an ad hoc basis
- Hawkridge Village Hall – meeting take place now
- Henry Leigh Trust – next deadline for applications 31 August.
- Exmoor LCN – see **48/24**
- Consultative & Parish Forum – this has been replaced by the Exmoor National Park Forum and will be held twice per year. The first meeting will be on 18th June at 6.30pm.

63/24 Parish Community including the social media page update, events by other groups not listed in **62/24:** None

64/24 Items for July 2024 agenda: Plot D tender, Risk Register, Freedom of Information Policy

65/24 Date and time of next meeting: the meeting will take place on 9th July at 7.30pm at Hawkridge Village Hall. AM send her apologies.

There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 9.44pm.

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