

WITHYPOOL AND HAWKRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL Draft Minutes
Tuesday 11th March 2025 7.30pm at Hawkridge Village Hall

Present: Parish Councillors: A Howard – AH (Chair), T Lloyd – TL, K Branfield – KB, A Collins – AC, A Morrissey – AM, W Lock – WL, **SC Cllr** S Pugsley (for part of meeting) – SP; **Clerk** R Tomalin; **Public:** One

Abbreviations: ENPA – Exmoor National Park; SC – Somerset 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 meeting started at 7.33pm.

20/25 Questions from the public: None

21/25 Apologies of Absence: Cllr S Russell, SC Cllr F Nicholson

22/25 Declarations of notifiable interests: None

23/25 Approval of the Minutes of the previous meetings on 14/01/2025 and 27/11/24: proposed by TL and 2nd by KB and all Approved. Chair then signed the minutes.

24/25 Matters arising from the Minutes of 14/01/2025: discussed under agenda items as appropriate. SR sent a note about the first aid course, to be discussed at the May meeting.

25/25 Report by Somerset Council Councillors: (i) SC Budget – a 7.49% increase was agreed but not unanimously (ii) Parking – SC is looking to standardise parking charges across the county including charging for Sunday, on street and overnight parking & charging in car parks that are currently free – this includes Withypool, Cutcombe and Wiveliscombe. A consultation is due to be held, but the projected income from these changes has already been included in the budget. (iii) Highways – several roads across the Exmoor region have collapsed and are worse than Portford Bridge; the possible solutions for Tarr Steps range from £0.25M to £2M – the best and most cost effective solutions must be found (iv) Winter Maintenance – Kier are struggling to provide a satisfactory Winter service, the green routes can only be done if there is spare capacity and no salt bin/bag top ups have occurred anywhere (v) Housing – some of the local affordable housing is proving difficult to let, better communication is needed between the PC and Magna/Falcon so that it is easy to identify potential tenants and available properties are advertised in the right places

26/25 Planning: none.

27/25 Broadband Scheme: Nothing has been heard from MB at Connecting Devon & Somerset. As the W&H scheme had already been started it is hoped it can be progressed as an exception. In Hawkridge Airband is not working and several residents have made the switch to Starlink. Cllrs noted the mixed messaging over the switching off of the copper lines.

28/25 Highways: see also 25/25 (i) Signage Tarr Steps – a response has been received from Traffic management with some proposed new signage and locations. The Hawkridge Working Group will meet to discuss & revert, SP & Clerk to attend (ii) Church Hill, Exford – the resurfacing work is due to take place at the end of the month, the road will be closed during school hours (iii) Cllrs reported issues at Slade Bridge, Willingford Bridge, Blakeway and Foxcombe – Clerk to report, along with the

abandoned road signs across the parish (iv) Overgrown Hedges – Clerk to ask Highways to intervene as PC having no success with some landowners

29/25 Finance Report: (i) Bank Reconciliation – £5,045.52 as at 11 March, this is unchanged since the last meeting as no cheques were issued. The Liquidity Manager account has now earned £238.56 interest since opening. The interest rate will be reducing to 2.5% from 24/02/25 (ii) Approval of Invoices: Clerks Pay and Exp Nov 24 - Feb 25 **R Tomalin £601.15 Chq 606** PAYE due to **HMRC £370.40 Chq 607** Renewal of Website & Domain **Spanglefish £108 Chq 608**, Hall Hire for PC Meetings **HawkrIDGE Village Hall Committee £60.00 Chq 604 & Withypool Hall Management Committee £55 Chq 605** – all APPROVED (iii) Internal Audit – LF has confirmed she would be happy to perform the internal audit again.

The member of the public left the meeting at 8.57pm

30/25 Parish Gardens: The inspection will take place on Tuesday 6th May at 7pm. Clerk to let tenants know nearer the time. KB raised whether the village hall car park could be made bigger by removing part of the hedge/bank – to be discussed during the inspection. WL mentioned grants available for hedging/fencing – Clerk to contact Gethin Rees to ask if the PC may be eligible.

SP left the meeting at 9.05pm

31/25 Parish Maintenance: (i) Grass Cutting Quotes – Clerk reported Dan Passmore had submitted a quote of £680 to cut all grass areas in Withypool on a regular basis, and a quote of £180 to cut grass areas as requested in HawkrIDGE throughout the season and generally keep tidy. Grass cutting normally runs from March through to the end of October weather permitting but if an extra cut was needed in November there would be no extra charges. Cllrs agreed to accept the quotes.

32/25 Flood Group Plan – no updates

33/25 Chairman's Notices: none

34/25 Correspondence: Clerk noted HawkrIDGE Village Hall Committee had sent a note of thanks to the PC for agreeing to maintain the new village defib.

35/25 Report from representatives of other groups:

- Withypool Village Hall – now the hall has been painted and a small group have cleaned the hall. The toilets and kitchen will be painted next
- HawkrIDGE Village Hall – the AGM was held recently – bookings have increased thanks to the kitchen updates. Grant applications have been submitted to purchase a defib for the village. If the telephone box is owned by the PC, Cllrs agreed that the defib may be housed in it
- Henry Leigh Trust – the next date for applications is 31 March. Grants are available for a wide range of activities, books laptops etc and are not means-tested
- Exmoor LCN – see **25/25**
- Exmoor National Park Forum – no date set for the next Forum

36/25 Parish Community including the social media page update, events by other groups not listed in **35/25**: none

37/25 Items for May 2025 agenda: First Aid course, Presentation of 2024-25 accounts, Audit, Policies & Procedures. The May meeting will include the Annual Parish Meeting and the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council.

38/25 Date and time of next meeting: 13th May at 7.30pm at Withypool Village Hall

There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 9.31pm.

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