

# **ANNUAL MEETING OF WITHYPOOL AND HAWKRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL**

## **Draft Minutes**

**Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2025 7.30pm at Withypool 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 7.42pm.

**39/25 Questions from the public:** None

**40/25 Election of Chair** – TL proposed and AC 2<sup>nd</sup> the appointment of Mr A Howard as Chair and all agreed. He was duly elected and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

**41/25 Election of Vice Chair and appointment of representatives**

Vice Chair - AH proposed and AC 2<sup>nd</sup> Mr T Lloyd and all agreed

Exmoor LCN – AH & AC

Consultative Forum – AC (see also **46/25**)

Henry Leigh Trust – KB

Withypool Village Hall - AM

Hawkridge Village Hall – WL

Highways Warden - AC

**42/25 Apologies of Absence:** Cllr S Russell, SC Cllr F Nicholson, SC Cllr S Pugsley will be late as attending other meetings

**43/25 Declarations of notifiable interests:** None

**44/25 Approval of the Minutes** of the previous meetings on 11/03/25: proposed by TL and 2<sup>nd</sup> by AC and all Approved. Chair then signed the minutes.

**45/25 Matters arising from the Minutes** of 11/03/2025: discussed under agenda items as appropriate.

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

**47/25 Planning:** none.

**48/25 Broadband Scheme:** BT has announced that the copper network will be closed by 31 January 2027.

**49/25 Highways:** (i) Signage Tarr Steps – Cllrs reviewed the latest set of signage proposals and the majority agreed to move forward with the blue signs providing these would be paid for by SC. The Somerset Council sign at Five Cross Ways could also be changed to point to Marsh Bridge. See also **46/25** below

**50/25 Finance Report:** (i) Approval of Invoices: Clerks Pay and Exp Mar-Apr 25 **R Tomalin £424.60 Chq 611** dated 5 June, PAYE due to **HMRC £261.20 Chq 612** dated 5 June, **SALC** Affiliation Fee **£111.24 Chq 609** – all AGREED. Clerk explained the annual insurance quote from Clear Councils had

been received but was considerably higher than last year. Zurich offer a similar policy but their online system holds out-of-date information about the PC precept amount. Clerk had submitted a request to have this updated and is awaiting a response. Cllrs agreed Clerk could proceed if the insurance did not exceed £350. Exact amount and cheque details to be noted in the July minutes (ii) Councillor Training: Clerk noted SALC offer various training courses if Cllrs need a refresher

(iii) Bank Mandate: current authorised signatories were reviewed – all agreed no changes required

(iv) Presentation of 2024/25 Accounts – the Clerk presented the accounts for 2024/25 (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 2025) was £4,850.97 – this includes cleared Chqs 604 to 608 (raised at the March meeting) and rent for Plot C. The Liquidity Manager balance was £10,262.21 and the Reserve Account balance was £10.98. The balance of the Current Account as at 13 May 25 is £11,850.97 which includes receipt of the precept, the Liquidity Manager account has earned £284.73 in interest to date.

(vii) Internal Audit: Lyn Fisher (LF) has audited the 2024/25 accounts and completed the Annual Internal Audit Report for the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR). LF's report reads as follows: "Thank you for again inviting me to look over the accounts and minutes of Withypool and Hawkridge Parish Council. The minutes, accounts and record keeping are very efficiently maintained – and show clearly the business of, and decisions taken by, the Parish Council during the year. 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 **£75** to the **British Red Cross Chq 610**.

(viii) Approval and Signature of 2024/25 accounts and bank reconciliation – AC proposed and AM 2<sup>nd</sup> and all Cllrs agreed that the accounts and bank reconciliation should be adopted. Chair and Clerk signed

**51/25 Audit Certificate of Exemption:** TL proposed, AC 2<sup>nd</sup> and all **AGREED** as correct and Chair and Clerk signed

- Total annual gross income for the authority 2024/25 £10,337
- Total annual gross expenditure for the authority 2024/25 £4,733

**52/25 Audit – Section 1:** Annual Governance statement 2024/25 - AC proposed, KB 2<sup>nd</sup> and all **AGREED** and Chair and Clerk signed

**53/25 Audit – Section 2:** Accounting statements 2024/25 – KB proposed, AM 2<sup>nd</sup> and all **AGREED** and Chair signed

**54/25 Code of Conduct, Standing Orders, GDPR, Financial Regulations & Aims & Objectives:** The Cllrs reviewed the policies and agreed no amendments were necessary.

**55/25 Persistent and Vexatious Complainant Policy:** to be reviewed at the July meeting

SP arrived at 8.40pm

**56/25 Parish Gardens:** (i) Grant eligibility – Clerk has made contact with Gethin Rees, and he is optimistic an application will be successful. The minimum charge would be £250 + VAT. Cllrs agreed to proceed providing there are no minimum acreage requirements. (ii) Inspection Report – Cllrs met on 6<sup>th</sup> May and inspected all the Parish Gardens. Clerk read a summary of the observations (iii) Plot C rent due on 1<sup>st</sup> April was received late March (and has been included in the 2024/25 accounts).

**57/25 Parish Maintenance:** (i) First Aid Training – discussion postponed until the July meeting. (ii) Hawkridge Defib – Clerk confirmed the PC does own the phone box in Hawkridge.

**58/25 Flood Group Plan** – no updates

**46/25 Report by Somerset Council Councillors:** (i) Signage Tarr Steps – SP & FN met KB from Traffic Management to review the proposed signage. The Fingerpost Volunteer needs to be contacted to see if there is room on the spigots at Withypool Post and Mare Pool to add an extra finger (ii) Car Parking Proposals – the car park at Cutcombe has been measured up for the new car parking charges, even though the public consultation has not yet been published. Withypool VH Committee were very concerned about the charging plans as the VH car park may be used as a substitute. It can not be easily fenced off for VH users only. Clerk to request an update from Steve Deakin, Chris Hall and Richard Wilkins at Somerset Council (iii) ENP Forum – this will now be an annual meeting as it costs too much money to run & too much officer time. ENPA representatives are supposed to attend the LCN and this would be the forum to raise issues going forward (iv) Broadband – a briefing from Connecting Devon & Somerset is due to take place this coming Monday

**59/25 Chair's Notices:** none

**60/25 Correspondence:** Clerk mentioned two events which will be held soon in Minehead – the Somerset Prepared Resilience Roadshow on 19<sup>th</sup> June and the Wessex Water Drop In on 24<sup>th</sup> July

**61/25 Report from representatives of other groups:**

- Withypool Village Hall – the AGM was held recently. Sue Wakeham has resigned from the committee and Lyn Lindgren has taken over as Bookings Secretary. The hall has been painted and new blinds have been fitted; a quiz was held to raise funds and show off the new decor.
- Hawkridge Village Hall – the defib has been fitted on the wall. The phone box was not suitable for insurance purposes and electricity supply.
- Henry Leigh Trust – approx. 20 applications were received in the last round. Grants are available for a wide range of activities, books laptops, driving tests and lessons etc and are not means-tested. The PC agreed to nominate David Bawden again as Trustee for another four year term.
- Exmoor LCN – AGM 5<sup>th</sup> June 7pm Moorland Hall
- Exmoor National Park Forum – see **46/25**

**62/25 Parish Community** including the social media page update, events by other groups not listed in **61/25**: none

**63/25 Items for July 2025 agenda:** First Aid training, Persistent & Vexatious Complainant Policy, Freedom of Information Policy, Risk Register

**64/25 Date and time of next meeting:** 8<sup>th</sup> July at 7.30pm at Hawkridge Village Hall

There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 9.35pm.

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