


Minutes of Compton Bishop Parish Council Meeting
held on January 9th, 2008 at Cross Memorial Hall at 7.30 p.m.

Present: Councillors Farley (Chairman), Jordan, Parker, Warner together with 9 members of the public.

Public Participation: Mr Brinson informed all present that his application to erect a dwelling on his land at Cross Lane was currently being considered by Sedgemoor District Council and that if any member of the public wanted more information, he would gladly supply it. Residents were asked to support the Driver Awareness evening with Somerset Safety Partnership on Tuesday 15th January at 7.30 p.m.

1. **Apologies for Absence:** Cllr. Mrs Rix, Cllrs Byrne and Rolfe
2. **Approval of minutes:** The minutes of the meeting held on December 12th were approved, unanimously.
3. **Members' Declarations of Interest:** All members present had declared interests on a pro-forma provided by the Clerk prior to the meeting. They are recorded as follows:
Cllr Farley declared personal interest in correspondence items (12) 36, 40, 42, 43, 44, and (1) 9 as author or addressee of the items. He had personal interests in agenda item 15 as author of the complaint to be discussed and in item 7 as husband of the Cross Memorial Hall booking Secretary.
4. **Reports on matters arising from the previous minutes not listed elsewhere on the agenda:**
 - The Chairman asked for confirmation that the Council's newsletters had been distributed to all households, where the inhabitants were on the electoral roll. He was assured this was so. He emphasised the need for all residents to check their entry on the Parish Electoral Roll.
 - Clerk confirmed that the sum of money granted by Cllr Ham for 2007 had been £250 and not the sum of £500, which had become accepted in discussions over a period.
 - Cllr Jordan was asked to organise suitable engraving on a trophy to be awarded by the gardening Club for the Best Hanging Basket. The Chairman would provide her with a rough sketch of the layout of the agreed wording.
5. **Resolution to exclude Press and public:** It was RESOLVED unanimously that pursuant to Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 that, because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and press leave the meeting during items dealing with Complaint to the Standards Board and Clerk's complaint. It was further agreed that the last 3 items of the agenda would need to be re-ordered.
6. **Finance**
 - a. **Monthly reconciliation(s).** COUNCIL RESOLVED to approve the monthly reconciliation for December (attached to these minutes).
 - b. **Payments due:** COUNCIL RESOLVED that all payments due and listed below should be made:
 - Clerk's salary, travel etc. £169.92
 - Payment for photocopying of newsletter etc. £75.00
 - This latter item had already been paid and £10 received from the Cray Charity for its part of the account.
 - c. **Note application for Precept for 2008/9:**
 - It was noted that the Clerk had submitted a request to Sedgemoor District Council for an annual Precept in the sum of £6,200.
 - d. **Note an application to Cllr Ham**
 - It was noted that the Clerk had applied to Cllr Ham for a grant from his Amenity Fund for a sum of £875.00 to cover the cost of a notice board and seating at Cross Memorial Hall. Cllr Ham had been made aware of an overspend of £49.90 on his 2007 grant.
 - e. **Request for churchyard maintenance grant for St. Andrews Parish Church, Compton Bishop.**
 - Council resolved to grant a sum of £150.00 to the Crook Peak United Parish Parochial Council,
 - f. **Income Tax matters.**
 - The Clerk was asked to investigate the benefits of submitting information on Tax matters to Inland Revenue "on-line"



8. Planning:

- a. The Council had responded by email to an invitation to attend a Development Control meeting on 8th January and/or to comment further on application 21/07/0007/CJ (Mobile home on OS Field No. 5382). A supportive comment had been sent, as the original objection expressed by the Council now appeared to have been resolved, but had asked for a condition to be attached that the drove and approaches to the site be well-maintained.
- b. The Council RESOLVED unanimously to support the following application:

Reference: 21/07/00027/CJA (deadline 12/01/08)

Town and Country Planning Act 1990

Town and Country Planning General Development Orders 1995

Proposal: Erection of agricultural workers dwelling

Location: Agricultural workers dwelling, Southcroft Farm, Cross Lane, Cross, Axbridge, BS262ED

Applicant: Jans Free Range

The Chairman asked that it be noted that Cllr Byrne had written to Sedgemoor District Council about this application and that it had been pointed out to the Authority that his expressed view was not that of the Council as a body.

Council then RESOLVED that Cllr Byrne should be censured by the Chairman for his action in responding independently of the Council's Planning Advisory Group, of which Cllr Byrne is a member. By doing so he had contravened Standing Orders 2.2 and 5.4.

9. Reports from Advisory Group leaders

a. Environment

- Cllr. Parker reported he had received estimates for repairs to the benches at Big Tree and opposite the White Hart Inn. Council RESOLVED to accept an estimate for repairs from RJB landscaping in the sum of £325.00.
- Further investigation would need to be done on the repairs to bus shelters. Cllrs Parker and Warner would do this.
- Council RESOLVED to request another site visit from Sedgemoor District Council Health and Safety Adviser to look again at the bench being erected at Bishop's Path.
- The Clerk had made contact with Compton Bishop Estates in order to discover land ownership and tenancies alongside parish roads so that hedge-trimming responsibilities could be more readily identified.
- The Clerk was asked to discover what, if any, excess would be payable should the Council's insurers be asked to meet the costs of repairs to the Compton Bishop village sign – opposite Bourton Lane.
- Cllr Parker undertook to provide a resumé of two documents recently received – on Hinkley Point expansion and a possible Severn Barrage as both projects may have effects on the community.
- There were no major issues to report in respect of the Springfield Wildlife Site.

c. Highways

- The Council RESOLVED to request that Sedgemoor District Council pay particular attention to litter picking throughout the parish in the "Sweepclean" programme scheduled for May 2008.
- The Chairman presented to all councillors a draft report to be considered by the Joint Parishes A38 Group on 16th January. Councillors were asked to let him have any observations or amendments as soon as possible.
- Discussion of a proposal by Cllr Byrne that salt-bins should be provided was deferred until the next meeting, when it was hoped he would be present. Somerset Highways had confirmed that the bags will be removed in April.
- Discussion of a proposal by Cllr Byrne that dog-fouling notices should be provided was deferred until the next meeting, when it was hoped he would be present.



- The Clerk was asked to contact Somerset Highways officer Liam Gill to thank him for work on the verge in Old Coach Road, to point out that the gully near the New Inn was still blocked, and to ask that remedial work be undertaken on the lay-by in Webbington Road, opposite Bourton Lane.
10. The Council RESOLVED to give further consideration to a request from Sedgemoor District Council to sign up to the **Sedgemoor Charter**, which purports to set out mutual responsibilities and to encourage mutual cooperation. A decision would be made at the February meeting. The Clerk would provide each councillor with a set of relevant papers.
 11. Cllr. Jordan asked that both councillors and residents provide her, or the webmaster, Mr Patrick Freeman, with news items for inclusion on the Parish **website**.
 12. 10 completed **questionnaires** from young people within the parish had so far been returned from amongst the estimated 70 children in the village. Further completed copies were expected and an analysis of results may be ready for the February meeting.
 13. Councillors discussed items of **correspondence** as follows:
 - In response to correspondence between the Council and Avon and Somerset police, the Council expressed its every confidence in the work that the Clerk to the Council has and is undertaking on its behalf in the light of a communication and possible allegation made to the police by Cllr. C. Byrne. The Council has not been provided with a copy of the letter written.
 - It was agreed to invite the Somerset branch of Somerset Citizens Advice bureau to the Annual Meeting to give a brief 10-minute presentation about its work and will consider the annual meeting content at its next meeting.
 - Councillors welcomed the new arrangements proposed by Sedgemoor District Council in dealing with enforcement matters.
 - Councillors agreed that item 14 of correspondence should not be in the public domain as it was correspondence between Cllr Byrne and the group of councillors enquiring into the Clerk's complaint against him was removed from the correspondence file and handed to Cllr Parker (as member of the Investigating Panel).
 14. Date, time and place of the next Council: 13th February, 2008 at Cross Memorial Hall at 7.30 p.m.

Note: At this point the Press and public were excluded from the meeting.

15. Council RESOLVED to take professional advice before finalising a complaint to the Standards Board for England against the conduct of Cllr Byrne.
16. A report is nearing completion into the complaint by the Clerk against the conduct of Cllr Byrne.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 21.30 hours

SIGNED AS A TRUE RECORD: *E. Jastey* **Chairman**

DATE: *13-2-08*

Minutes of Compton Bishop Parish Council Meeting
held on February 13th, 2008 at Cross Memorial Hall at 7.30 p.m.

Present: Councillors Farley (Chairman), Parker, Warner, Rolfe, Byrne (until 21.30 hrs.) and Cllr Mrs. Rix - together with 8 members of the public.

Public Participation: *Mrs Caroline Woolley asked what action was being taken in respect of the repair of a Victorian post-box situated in a wall on the North side of Old Coach Road between properties "Stocks and "The Maples". The Clerk was asked to investigate.*

Mrs Dickinson referred to the lack of dog-fouling bins in certain areas of the parish and suggested sites at the points where public rights of way meet the highway. Mr Tobin asked that before any action is taken on erecting such bins in Compton Bishop hamlet that the residents be consulted.

1. **Apologies for Absence:** Cllr. Mrs Jordan
2. **Approval of minutes:** The minutes of the meeting held on January 9th were approved, unanimously.
3. **Members' Declarations of Interest:** All members present had declared interests on a pro-forma provided by the Clerk prior to the meeting. They are recorded as follows:
Cllr Warner declared personal interest in correspondence item 16.
Cllr Rolfe declared personal interest in agenda items 16, 17, 19.
Cllr Farley declared personal interest in agenda item 17.
4. **Reports on matters arising from the previous minutes not listed elsewhere on the agenda:**
 - The Clerk reported that he had received a map showing the extent of Compton Bishop Estates' land in the parish. He was asked to make a copy of this for Cllr. Warner's use as Public Rights of Way representative.
5. **Resolution to exclude Press and public:** It was RESOLVED unanimously that pursuant to Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 that, because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and press leave the meeting during agenda item 19.
6. **Finance**
 - a. **Monthly reconciliation(s).** COUNCIL RESOLVED to approve the monthly reconciliation for January (attached to these minutes).
 - b. **Payments due:** COUNCIL RESOLVED that all payments due and listed below should be made:
 - Clerk's salary, travel etc. £214.42
 - Re-imburement of the Clerk for materials to repair a sign at Webbington Road. £12.56
 - c. It was noted that a grant of £400 had been received from Cllr Alan Ham towards the cost of providing a new notice board at Cross Memorial Hall.
 - The Clerk was asked to affix minutes of meetings, laminated, to the unprotected boards at Kennel Lane and Church Lane, even if this resulted in the removal of some community notices already in place.
 - d. It was noted that Moore Stephens had been re-appointed as External Auditor of the Council's annual accounts for the next 5 years.
 - e. Cllr Warner reminded Council that the annual reconciliation and preparation of accounts for audit would be required at the end of March.
7. **Planning:**
 - a. The Council considered the need for affordable housing within the parish as a result of correspondence from Sedgemoor District Council, Cllr. Ham and Mr. Steve Brinson. It was RESOLVED to request a meeting with Mr Duncan Harvey the Strategic Housing Officer at Sedgemoor District Council. It was RESOLVED that the Clerk should contact the Parish /Town Councils at Wedmore, Axbridge and Cheddar to discover what further insights those councils may have on the issue of Affordable Housing.



- b. The Council RESOLVED to recommend that Sedgemoor District Council approve the following application, adding the comment that it was consistent with the Village Design Statement:

Reference: 21/08/00001/CJM (deadline 18/02/08)

Town and Country Planning Act 1990

Town and Country Planning General Development Orders 1995

Proposal: Erection of first floor side extension, part first floor, part two storey, part single storey rear extension and garden store/hobby room

Location: Spindelberry Cottage, Church Lane, Compton Bishop, Axbridge, BS262HB

Applicant: Ms A Vickerstaff Mr A Tobin

8. Reports from Advisory Group leaders

a. Environment

- Cllr. Parker reported that the order had been placed for repairs to the benches at Big Tree and opposite the White Hart Inn. This latter may have been further damaged and the contractor would be asked to undertake whatever repairs now seemed necessary.
- He had received one late estimate, which included an estimate for work on the bus shelters. This would be kept on file. Further investigation would need to be done on the repairs to bus shelters. Cllrs Parker and Warner would do this.
- Council RESOLVED to insure the new bench near Compton Bishop Church in the sum of £250.00 at a premium of approximately £3.00 per annum. The Clerk reported that the insurance company had confirmed that the bench, although of traditional design would be covered by the Council's Public Liability insurance and had recommended regular inspection and risk assessment. The Clerk and Chairman would speak with Mr John Buckler about completing the installation of this bench and the creation of a suitable pathway to it.
- Council RESOLVED to censure Cllr Byrne as being in breach of its Standing Order 2.2 and the Code of Conduct paragraphs 3(1), 3(2) and 5. This censure motion resulted from Cllr Byrne's unilateral correspondence with Mr John Buckler concerning the erection of a bench at Compton Bishop.
- The Clerk pointed out that all work done by Mr Buckler on the bench was done in an unpaid, voluntary capacity. It was agreed that the group who had worked on this project should be formally thanked for their efforts.
- Cllr Mrs Rix reported on the Springfield Wildlife Site. The pollarded willow would need no further work. There was still a quantity of willow logs available for residents to take away for free. The warning was repeated that they were green logs. The Clerk was asked to write a letter of thanks to Dr. Sarah Ayling for her continuing hard work on the site.
- Cllr. Parker reported that a proposal to extend the facilities at Bristol International Airport was being challenged by the Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- Cllr Parker reported an instance of fly-tipping at the Webbington Road Western lay-by under Crooks Peak OS 153~391551 and asked the Clerk to make Sedgemoor District Council aware of this.
- Damage was reported to 6 no. wooden post bollards at the Western lay-by car-park on the Webbington Road below Crook Peak. The Clerk would ask either Sedgemoor District Council or the National Trust to effect repairs.
- The Clerk had received notice of a group being formed at Wedmore to investigate "green issues" in the area and would display a poster advertising a "Green Fair" at Shapwick on 1st. March.

b. Highways

- The Clerk reported that the gully on the A38 near the New Inn had been repaired.
- The broken finger-post at the end of Church Lane on Webbington Road had been reported to Somerset Highways and was said to be listed for repair.
- Somerset Highways had declined to make repairs outside Mrs. Parkman's house in Old Coach Road. The Council instructed the Clerk to contact the officer concerned and to express the Council's dissatisfaction at this response.

- The Clerk was asked to report the finger-post on the corner of Old Coach Road and Webbington Road, which needed renovation and to ask if and when posts in the parish were repaired/replaced could this be done utilising old cast-iron materials?
 - The Joint Parishes A38 Group had met and agreed amendments to a report that has to be finalised and then sent to Somerset Highways to assist officers in their decision making.
 - Cllr Byrne agreed to carry out further investigations into the costs and procedures for providing permanent plastic salt-bins within the parish.
 - Cllr Byrne agreed to carry out further investigations and to provide a map to show proposed siting of dog-fouling bins within Compton Bishop. Council agreed that it would be appropriate to consult residents on the proposed sites of bins before any action is taken. Concern was expressed about the routine emptying of these bins.
 - The Chairman reported that the discussion paper provided to Somerset Highways setting out possible footway and footpath improvements within the parish, had as yet received no response.
 - The Council RESOLVED to censure Cllr Byrne for his behaviour, as being in breach of its Standing Order 2.2 and the Code of Conduct paragraphs 3(1) and 5. Cllr Byrne had misrepresented the situation to residents in respect of proposals to review the provision of footways within Cross, which was considered unbecoming of a Councillor and, in writing to Somerset Highways unilaterally on the same matter had brought the Council into disrepute.
 - The Council RESOLVED to write to Sedgemoor District Council Chief Executive deploring the possible sale of the Meadow Street car park in Axbridge. This facility was seen as vital to the parishioners who needed to use the shops and facilities in the town. A copy would be sent to Axbridge Town Council. A letter had been received also expressing similar views.
9. The Council RESOLVED to authorise the Chairman to sign the Sedgemoor Charter.
 10. The Council asked the Clerk to incorporate a number of suggested additions and amendments into a model set of Standing Orders provided by Somerset Association of Local Councils. This would be circulated to members for adoption at the March meeting.
 11. The Council RESOLVED to continue its Advisory Groups, but to restructure them as follows:
 - Cllr Mrs Rix would stand down as one of the Council's Memorial Hall representatives as she found attendance at afternoon meetings impossible. The Hall committee would be asked if there was a resident whom it would like the Council to co-opt in her place.
 - It was RESOLVED that Cllr Byrne would no longer serve on either the Highways or Planning Advisory Groups. The Council noted that he had demonstrated an inability to follow Council procedures in these two areas and had undertaken unhelpful actions that had indicated his unwillingness to work co-operatively. The Groups' new composition will be as follows:

Group	Leader	Members
Financial	Cllr J. Warner	Byrne, Farley
Planning	Cllr M. Rolfe	Parker, Farley
Environment	Cllr R. Parker	Byrne, Jordan, Rix
Highways	Cllr E. Farley	Parker, Rolfe, Warner

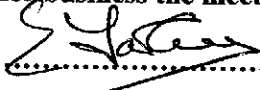
12. The Council agreed to ask Mr Patrick Freeman to attend a future Council meeting to set out some further ideas about the website's development.
13. Work was in hand to produce the Council's trophy for "The best hanging basket".
14. Copies of a report produced by Mrs Jane Murray to discover priorities for young people in the parish, were passed to members in preparation for further discussion at the March meeting. Mrs Murray was thanked for her excellent efforts in preparing, collating and analysing the results.
15. The Chairman produced an analysis of progress made towards meeting the agreed Council priorities set out in August 2007. There had been good progress on 66% of the areas identified for action.
16. The correspondence file had been circulated to members prior to the meeting. No further items were considered worthy of longer discussion.
 - The Clerk was instructed to begin the circulation of correspondence 14 days before each monthly meeting. All correspondence received after that date would not be discussed until the month following, unless Clerk or Chairman deemed it imperative to act upon an item.

- All correspondence from Cllr Byrne would be filed separately, but not circulated, because of the quantity and vexatious nature of his letters. The Chairman would inform him of this decision and make it clear that all matters that he wished to raise must be done within Council meetings. The exception was any items of business that need to be placed on an agenda. Cllr Byrne's correspondence would continue to be available to members and residents as before at meetings and after tabling at a meeting.
17. The Chairman informed members that a formal complaint about Cllr Byrne's conduct had been sent to the Standards Board for England.
 18. Date, time and place of the next Council: 12th March, 2008 at Cross Memorial Hall at 7.30 p.m

Note: At this point the Press and public were excluded from the meeting.

19. A report concluding the work of Stage I from the Investigating Panel concerning the complaint made by the Clerk was received. It was agreed that Stage II of the procedure should be progressed.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 22.45 hours

SIGNED AS A TRUE RECORD:  **Chairman**

DATE: 12-3-08

Minutes of Compton Bishop Parish Council Meeting held on March 12th, 2008 at Cross Memorial Hall at 7.30 p.m.

Present: Councillors Farley (Chairman), Warner, Rolfe (until 21.40 hrs.), Byrne (until 20.40hrs.) and Cllr Mrs. Jordan, together with 5 members of the public.

Public Participation: *Mrs Caroline Woolley said she had heard of Cllr. Byrne's letter to Mr. John Buckler at the previous meeting and had been very upset by its contents as she felt sure Mr. Buckler would have been. She asked that Cllr. Byrne cease writing distressing correspondence.*

Mr. Bob Jordan requested that in planning the Annual Open Meeting agenda, the Council should bear in mind that the 2007 meeting had been regarded as being too long, with too many speakers.

1. **Apologies for Absence:** Cllr. Mrs Rix, Cllr. Parker
2. **Approval of minutes:** The minutes of the meeting held on February 13th were approved, unanimously.
3. **Members' Declarations of Interest:** All members listed below had declared interests on a pro-forma provided by the Clerk prior to the meeting. They are recorded as follows:
Cllr Jordan declared personal interest in agenda items 7 & 8
Cllr Rolfe declared personal interest in agenda items 13 – several items of correspondence.
Cllr Farley declared personal interest in agenda item 13 as author or recipient of letters 43, 44, 11-02, 12-02.
4. **Reports on matters arising from the previous minutes not listed elsewhere on the agenda:**
 - The Clerk provided Cllr. Warner with a map showing the extent of Compton Bishop Estates' land in the parish. A copy now remained in the Clerk's file.
 - Cllr. Rolfe asked for clarification about the next steps in erecting a notice board at the Memorial Hall. It was agreed that he should obtain a written quotation for the construction of the board, the Chairman should request a written permission from the Hall Secretary for the placement of the board and both report back at the next meeting.
5. **Resolution to exclude Press and public:** It was RESOLVED unanimously that pursuant to Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 that, because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and press leave the meeting during agenda item 16.
6. **Finance**
 - a. **Monthly reconciliation(s).** COUNCIL RESOLVED to approve the monthly reconciliation for February (attached to these minutes).
 - b. **Payments due:** COUNCIL RESOLVED that all payments due and listed below should be made:

Cross Memorial Hall	09/01 to 12/03	£65.00
SALC subscription 2008/9		£129.08
RJB Landscaping seat repairs		£411.00
Premier Trophies – Hanging basket trophy		£15.49
St Andrews Press – Standing Orders copying	£13.43	
Clerk's Salary etc		£170.97
 - c. It was noted that within the February reconciliation a sum of £10, from the Cray Charity, was shown as deposited together with £400 received from Cllr Alan Ham. This was recorded as one deposit, although 2 amounts were paid in..
 - d. Cllr Warner confirmed that the annual reconciliation and preparation of accounts for audit would be required at the end of March. He and the Clerk would work on this.
7. **Planning:**
 - a. The Council reminded the Clerk of the need to obtain more information about the need for affordable housing within the parish. The Clerk was instructed to request a meeting with Mr Duncan Harvey the Strategic Housing Officer at Sedgemoor District Council and that the Clerk should contact the Parish /Town Councils at Wedmore, Axbridge and Cheddar to discover what further insights those councils may have on the issue of Affordable Housing.
 - b. The Council instructed the Clerk to point out to Sedgemoor District Council that on occasions less than complete information is sent to the Parish Council when asking for its recommendation on planning applications. This was not seen as being in the spirit of the Sedgemoor Charter.
 - c. A set of amended drawings had been received in respect of: **Reference: 21/08/00001/CJM**
Town and Country Planning Act 1990
Town and Country Planning General Development Orders 1995
Proposal: Erection of first floor side extension, part first floor, part two storey, part single storey rear extension and garden store/hobby room
Location: Spindelberry Cottage, Church Lane, Compton Bishop, Axbridge, BS262HB
Applicant: Ms A Vickerstaff Mr A Tobin
These drawings required no further comment.

PKJ

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8. Reports from Advisory Group leaders

a. Environment

- The Clerk had asked Sedgemoor District Council to confirm which benches, if any, it owned within the parish.
- Repairs had now been completed to the damaged benches throughout the parish.
- It was RESOLVED unanimously to invite R.J.B. Landscaping to quote for work on the path and for remedial work to the bench at Bishop's Path. The specification drawn up by the Chairman was to be the basis of the quotation and in the event that the work could be done for less than £300, the Clerk was to instruct R.J.B. to proceed.
- The Chairman tabled a report on his attendance at a recent "Flood Fair" (22/02) and drew Council's attention to the ongoing preparation of an Emergency Plan for the parish. He had also attended a Scout event at Weare (20/02) and it was agreed that contact details for the local Scouts should be included on the parish website. He had also attended a meeting at which he had signed the Sedgemoor Charter a document signifying co-operation between Compton Bishop Council and the District Council (21/02)
- The Chairman reported damage done to a fence in the Springfield Wildlife Site, to the rear of Mr. Blower's property, presumably during work to pollard a willow tree. The Clerk had made contact with Sedgemoor District Council about this.

b. Highways

- The Clerk reported a number of highways requests made to Sedgemoor and Somerset County Council:
 - Fly tipping and broken bollards at the lay-by in Webbington Road – below Crook Peak.
 - The dangerous state of the finger-post at the end of Church Lane.
 - The need for renovation to the finger-post at the Webbington Road- Old Coach Road junction.
 - A request that this post should also indicate a route to A38 and M5 via Old Coach Road, to reduce right-turning traffic at the New Inn.
 - Somerset Highways and Sedgemoor District Council had been asked about the appropriateness and legality of a large temporary sign erected on the wall of the New Inn facing the A38. No definitive response had yet been obtained.
- The Clerk was instructed to pressurise Somerset Highways yet again about the blocked gully on A38 beside the New Inn.
- The Clerk had raised with Sedgemoor District Council the matter of the banner advertising open days hung on the wall outside the New Inn. A number of members of the public had reported that this was a distraction and a safety hazard to motorists at this dangerous crossroads. He also reported that the banner had since been removed.
- It was reported that during heavy rain, excess water appeared on the road at New Town and that a blocked gully on the south side of the road may be the cause.
- Councillors were concerned that the ditch clearance behind the bus shelter in Old Coach Road had been ineffective – largely because the culvert under the access ways had not been cleared and the ditch had been dug to a depth that was below the water-table.. The Clerk would follow-up on this.
- The Clerk reported that Axbridge Town Council was proposing to obtain control of the Meadow Street car-park. The Town Council had been grateful for the support from Compton Bishop Council in this matter.
- Cllr Byrne asked that his investigations into the costs and procedures for providing permanent plastic salt-bins within the parish be regarded as "on hold".
- Cllr Byrne asked that his investigations into the proposed siting of dog-fouling bins within Compton Bishop be regarded as "on hold".
- The Council RESOLVED to forward an amended document from the Joint Parishes A38 Committee to Somerset Highways and to issue a Press release on 13th. March on this matter. Neither document nor Press Release offered solutions to the A38 problems.
- The next meeting of the Joint Parishes A38 Committee would be in Axbridge on 20th. March.

- A first draft consultative proposal for changes to the A38 Cross crossroads layout and signage was shown to councillors. Once a clear proposal was available from Somerset Highways a public meeting would be called. Cllr. Byrne suggested that in view of the likelihood of large numbers wishing to attend the Webbington Hotel might be considered as a venue. *At this point (20.40 hrs.) Cllr. Byrne left the meeting.*
 - The Clerk was instructed to contact the Somerset County Council Public Rights of Way Officer with a view to discussing the possible footpath improvement between Cross and Axbridge via Cross lane.
9. The Council RESOLVED to adopt a set of Standing Orders provided by the Clerk, based upon a recommended model provided by Somerset Association of Local Councils and including specific Standing Orders previously adopted by the Council. This approval was subject to some adjustments in the ordering of the document and its layout and an additional paragraph 6.4 in the Councils pre-existing Orders as follows:

- *Neither the Chairman, nor the Clerk shall enter into any correspondence with the complainant except as specified in paragraphs 6.1, 6.2, 6.3 above.*

The Clerk would provide all councillors with a final bound copy of these Standing Orders after these adjustments had been made.

10. Councillor Mrs. Jordan reported that the website was functioning well. She was authorised to provide the webmaster, Patrick Freeman with a number of items. It was agreed that any local charity that had a Charity Commission registered number could have its contact details displayed on the website by request.

11. The Council was shown the engraved trophy to be presented for the "Best Hanging Basket".

12. The Council recorded its thanks to Mrs Jane Murray for her hard work and comprehensive report into the perceived recreational needs of young people in the parish. Cllr. Mrs. Jordan gave a précis of the results, re-emphasised the Council's role as "facilitator" in any further projects. She would make known the results of the survey via the website and at the Annual Open Meeting in April. *There were 78 young people in the parish (9-14yrs) and 31% returned questionnaires. Among the more noteworthy issues raised by the young people were:

- The need for a safe and mud-free footpath to Axbridge
- There was too much dog-mess and graffiti
- The need for a young people's notice board
- Their wish for locally organised events and activities such as a Youth Club and a Fun Day.

At this point (21.40 hrs.) Cllr. Rolfe left the meeting

13. The Council noted a copy of a newsletter provided to selected members by Cllr. Byrne. This was presumed to be for general circulation around the parish. In view of its inflammatory nature and the number of errors of fact within it and letters attached to it that misrepresented original communications by collating extracts from a variety of sources. *Within the "newsletter" there appeared to be letter from Mrs. S. Pavay, addressed to the Clerk and copied to a variety of recipients. The Chairman was asked to respond to this letter, as it made certain comments about the Clerk, which needed clarification.

14. Date, time and place of the next Council: 9th April, 2008 at Cross Memorial Hall at 7.30 p.m

Note: *At this point (22.05) the Press and public were excluded from the meeting.*

15. The Chairman reported progress with the Grievance Procedure Part II and this was noted by councillors.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 22.15 hours

SIGNED AS A TRUE RECORD:.....Chairman

DATE:9-4-08.....

Minutes of Compton Bishop Parish Council Meeting
held on Tuesday 29th. April 2008 at Cross Memorial Hall commencing at 6.30 p.m.

This meeting was held to respond to a request from Sedgemoor District Council for the Council's views on a current planning application which had to be reviewed before the next scheduled Council Meeting

1. Present :

Councillors Farley (Chairman), Byrne, Warner, Jordan, Parker, Rolfe

2. Apologies :

Councillor Rix, Parish Clerk Mr Passey

3. Declarations of Interest :

There were no declarations of interest by councillors in respect of any items on the agenda

4. To resolve responses to any current relevant Planning Applications received, as statutory consultees, from Sedgemoor District Council as follows:

4.1. Application reference: 21/08/00003/RSM (received 11/04/08)

Town and Country Planning Act 1990

Town and Country Planning General Development Orders 1995

Proposal: Erection of 2 storey dwelling and garage partly on site of existing dwelling (to be demolished)

Location: The Bungalow, Barton Road, Webbington, Axbridge, BS262HT

Applicant: Mr and Mrs E Charman

The application is not for full planning as indicated on the notice, merely a request to a change of roofing material from tiled roof to slate.

After a brief discussion there were no objections to the request for the change, a vote was unanimous.

4.1.1. The Council was critical of the unclear reference that the Sedgemoor Planning department used on this application. The reference implied that it was for a full application and no mention of the minor alteration. The Council's response to Sedgemoor District Council should comment on this, similar remarks have been made by this council on other planning applications.

5. The meeting closed at 6.37pm

SIGNED AS A TRUE RECORD:.....Chairman

DATE:14-5-08.....

Present: Councillors Farley (Chairman), Warner, Parker, Rolfe, Byrne (until 21.10hrs.) Cllr. Mrs. Rix and Cllr. Mrs. Jordan, together with 25 members of the public and press.

Public Participation: *Mrs Jenny Hay deplored the display of advertising notices at various points around the parish, particularly at the New Inn. by those responsible for events at Wavering Down House, This, she felt was particularly distracting to road users.*

The Chairman had also received correspondence on this same matter and he read from an email sent by Mr Steven Riley. The writer had also asked what action could be taken about the empty property to the East of "Alcasta" in Old Coach Road, Cross. The Chairman also responded to Mr Riley's questions arising from an unofficial newsletter circulated by Cllr. Byrne, which had caused alarm in the community by suggesting that Somerset Highways was supported by the Parish Council and intended to prohibit entry into Cross from the A38.. The Chairman explained that this assertion by Cllr. Byrne was totally untrue and he referred to the "Statement" and Press releases issued to try to re-assure residents that this plan was an initial suggestion put forward for discussion.

Mrs. Caroline Woolley expressed strong disapproval of Cllr. Byrne's recent newsletters, which in her view made vitriolic and untrue attacks on members of the Parish Council. Cllr. Byrne thanked her for her openness in drawing this to the public attention.

Mr Duncan Harvey the Strategic Housing Officer at Sedgemoor District Council addressed the meeting. He defined the types of affordable housing developments considered acceptable in planning terms. He gave statistics of house prices in the parish to demonstrate that for first-time buyers or low-income groups, there was no likelihood of buying property in Compton Bishop/Cross. He explained how land for affordable housing might be brought forward. He suggested that at present no-one knew if there was a need for affordable housing in the parish as a housing needs survey had not yet been carried out. Sedgemoor District Council could conduct such a survey as a first step.

1. **Apologies for Absence:** None
2. **Approval of minutes:** The minutes of the meeting held on March 12th were approved, by majority vote, subject to the following amendments: Other minor amendments were inserted by the Clerk on the signed copy.

Para 12 line 4 after "Annual Open Meeting" insert "where she will stress the need for active involvement, by adult parishioners. Subsequent Open Meetings would be useful to progress possible action"

Para 13 line 4 after "sources" add "It was suggested that a meeting between Cllr. Byrne and selected councillors, to identify the extent of the inaccuracies and establish the true impact of any problems might be useful."

The Clerk repeated his plea that any amendments to be proposed to minutes already circulated in draft form should be presented to him in writing, or to the Chairman, prior to the council meeting at which they are to be approved. This would save time and avoid uncertainty.

3. **Members' Declarations of Interest:** All members listed below had declared interests on a pro-forma provided by the Clerk prior to the meeting. They are recorded as follows:

Cllr Parker declared personal interest in agenda items 4, 12, 14 being mentioned by name in letters; also in item 7c as the applicant is a fellow councillor.

Cllr Rolfe declared personal interest in agenda items 7c and 14 as a fellow councillor.

Cllr Jordan declared personal interest in agenda items 7c and 14 as a fellow councillor.

Cllr Farley declared personal interest in correspondence items 02-04, 06-04, 09-04, 15-04, 16-04, 17-04, 18-04, 21-04, 23-04, 25-04, 26-04, 28-04 as either recipient or author of the item.

Cllr. Byrne declared prejudicial interest in agenda item 7c as the applicant. Prior to the meeting he had informed the Clerk of his intention to withdraw from this item and that he would not be speaking about it in the public session.

Cllr. Warner declared personal interest in agenda items 14, and 16.

Cllr Rix declared personal interest in agenda item 7c as the applicant is a fellow councillor.

4. **Reports on matters arising from the previous minutes not listed elsewhere on the agenda:** There were none however at this point in the meeting Cllr. Parker felt it important to make the following statement before the business part of the meeting began:

"Cllr Byrne and his team saw fit to produce a personal newsletter and have it delivered on or around 15th March to parishioners. Its content is factually incorrect, misleading, and malicious and brings this council into disrepute. This behaviour is un-becoming of a parish councillor".

Council then RESOLVED, by a majority vote, the following motion of censure on Cllr. Byrne in the following terms: *“Councillor Byrne is censured by this council for distributing a newsletter which contains statements which are incorrect, libellous and bring the council into disrepute. His actions breach the Code of Conduct paragraphs 3(1), 3(2)(b), 3(2)(c), 4(a), 5 and 2.2 of our Standing Orders.*

5. **Resolution to exclude Press and public:** It was RESOLVED by majority that pursuant to Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 that, because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and press leave the meeting during agenda item 16. Cllr. Byrne asked that his vote against this resolution should be recorded.
6. On a majority vote, Cllr. Byrne alone voting against, it was RESOLVED to bring forward item 14 of the published agenda, a motion of no confidence in councillors and the Clerk, to be discussed as the next agenda item. Cllr. Byrne was then invited to put forward his motion of no confidence, which he had requested be put on the agenda. He declined to do so. After heated discussion, he agreed to withdraw his motion on the grounds that he knew he would find no seconder from amongst his fellow councillors. He stated that he would produce a newsletter and circulate it to the parish explaining his decision to withdraw.

In view of the adverse comments about the Chairman made by Cllr. Byrne over a period of time, Cllr. Rolfe proposed a vote of confidence in Cllr. Farley in the following terms:

“As Cllr Byrne’s withdrawn motion intimated that this council suffers from poor leadership it is appropriate that I make a statement of my confidence in Councillor Farley and his position as Chairman of this council. His conscientiousness, impartiality and patience in these difficult times has, in my opinion, been exemplary. I therefore propose a motion that this council has full confidence in our Chairman.”

This motion was seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Rix and had the support of all councillors present with the exception of Cllr. Byrne.

In the course of the discussion, Cllr. Byrne explained the difficulty in complying with the Chairman’s instruction to him not to contact the Clerk directly, because of the ongoing investigation into the Clerk’s complaint against him. Cllr. Byrne agreed that all papers from the Clerk should be posted to Wavering Down House in future, lest the two of them should meet on his property. Cllr. Byrne accepted the possibility, pointed out by the Clerk, that this arrangement might mean that he, Cllr. Byrne, might receive items for council business later than other councillors, who would continue to receive personally delivered material.

Cllr Rix confirmed through the minutes that she had been present at the 7th July Council meeting contrary to an assertion from Cllr Byrne for which he apologised.

7. Finance

- a. **Monthly reconciliation(s).** COUNCIL RESOLVED to approve the monthly reconciliation for March (attached to these minutes).
- b. **Payments due:** COUNCIL RESOLVED that all payments due and listed below should be made:

Woodspring Resource Centre – A38 reports	£95.00
Clerk’s salary etc.	£173.77

It was agreed that payment of the insurance premium due to Allianz Insurance by 1st. June should be deferred to the next meeting when all benches for which the council is responsible will have been added to the schedule and a new premium agreed.

It was anticipated that other Councils that form part the A38 Joint Parishes Group will reimburse part of the Woodspring account.

- c. It was RESOLVED that the Clerk should draw a cheque and keep an account for cash in the sum of £100.00 to meet petty cash expenditure.
- d. Cllr. Warner confirmed that the annual reconciliation and preparation of accounts for audit was underway. He had seen a first draft from the Clerk and gave some indication of the present financial position. The next stage would be to make contact with the internal auditor, Mr John Gravell. The Clerk was asked to produce a simple balance sheet showing income and expenditure for presentation to the public at the AGM later in the month.

8. Planning:

- a. The Clerk had been told by the Enforcement Officer at Sedgemoor Council that the recently erected sign displayed on the New Inn wall, exceeded 0.64 square metres and were the subject of investigation by the Enforcement Team. They were deemed to be larger than would normally be permitted. Cllr. Byrne claimed that as it was for charity different rules applied and offered to

P. Farley

- c. It was RESOLVED that the Chairman should write to the HSBC bank and also should visit the Winscombe branch in an effort to resolve exactly, who are the current signatories to cheques. The Clerk reported some confusion between the branches at Wells and Winscombe. The Chairman would also ask for an explanation of what were seen as exorbitant charges (£135.00) for an overdraft of less than £41. The Clerk would in future ensure that a "running total" of assets in the account was maintained on each cheque stub. It was suggested that should such enquiries at the bank prove unsuccessful, the council should consider changing to a different bank. It was further RESOLVED that Standing Orders should be amended to ensure that the Clerk is one signatory to council cheques.
- d. The Clerk reported that the internal auditor, Mr John Gravell was expected to make a start on examining documents in the next few days. Cllr Byrne questioned the propriety of the financial aspect of the Bishop's Path seat and demanded that all original estimates and documents in respect of work organised by Mr John Buckler on the Bishop's path seat, should be made available to him for inspection. He was reminded by the Clerk that these items would be needed by Mr Gravell. Once Mr Gravell had finished the Annual Audit process would get underway and all members of the public would be able to inspect, on request, all documents of this kind.
- e. The Clerk was asked to provide a list of all annual subscriptions made by the council to outside bodies and to indicate the benefits of such subscriptions.

8. Planning:

- a. It was RESOLVED that the Clerk should inform Sedgemoor District Council that it recommended refusal of the following application:

Town and Country Planning Act 1990

Town and Country Planning General Development Orders 1995

Proposal: Formation of horse riding arena

Location: Land at Wavering Down Farm, Webbington Road, Compton Bishop, Axbridge, BS26 1AA

Applicant: Mr D Gaze

The grounds for recommending refusal would be as follows:

1. Impact of the arena on neighbours, especially visually and impact of surface water
2. Effect on landscape in an AONB
3. Non compliance with SDC Local Plan 1991-2011
4. Impact on the character and appearance of the area

In particular the application contravened items CNE 1, 2, 17 and 6. A copy of Cllr Rolfe's report to be appended to the response to SDC

Cllr. Byrne informed the council that he would be submitting a personal response to the application in support of the proposal and that he would sign his letter to the Planning Officer "Councillor Byrne", as he was allowed to use that title by virtue of his being a councillor on several councils.

- b. It was RESOLVED that the Clerk should inform Sedgemoor District Council that it had no objection to the approval of the following application:

Town and Country Planning Act 1990

Town and Country Planning General Development Orders 1995

Proposal: Erection of single storey side extension.

Location: Sunnymead, Webbington Road, Cross, Axbridge, BS262EL

Applicant: Mr Yardley

- c. It was RESOLVED that in order to progress the matter of possible affordable housing development in the parish, the Planning Advisory Group would seek to hold a meeting with the Planning department at Sedgemoor District Council and then present a paper for discussion at the July meeting.

9. Reports from Advisory Group leaders

- a. **Environment**

Handwritten signature

- Cllrs Warner and Parker had inspected the bus shelters and produce a condition report for each. The shelter at Kennel Lane/Webbington Road would receive no further attention as it was felt this was not the council's responsibility. Detailed specifications for the other two at Church Lane and Old Coach Road would be prepared to be put out to tender.
- It was RESOLVED to ask RJB Landscapes to fix the Bishops path seat in place and to re-instate the grass verge in front of it. The Clerk was asked to contact RJB about splitting in the wooden slats of the two public seats at Church Lane and opposite the White Hart. Councillors felt the wood should be treated to avoid splitting. Work on constructing a path from this seat to the road would be put out to tender to other local businesses until 3 estimates for the work could be compared. Cllr Byrne offered names but no contact details of local businesses which might do the work
- Cllr. Rolfe had provided a written quotation for the production of a wooden notice board for positioning at the Cross Memorial Hall in the sum of £375.00. The Clerk was asked to seek 2 other quotations using the same specifications for council to consider.
- Cllr. Jordan reported on a recent work-party at the Springfield Wildlife Site and asked that Mr Arnold be thanked for his grass-cutting efforts on the approach path to the site. Chairman undertook to do so.

b. Highways

- The Clerk reported a number of highways requests made to Sedgemoor and Somerset County Council upon which there was as yet no action – including the removal of roadside salt-bags, the repair of Church Lane signpost, repairs to the gully at New Inn and potholes reported at Compton Bishop.
 - Minutes of the most recent A38 Joint Parishes Meeting would be supplied to councillors by Cllr Farley as soon as practicable.
 - The Clerk was asked to inform Sedgemoor District Council of Japanese Knotweed growing beside the rhyme along Crossmoor Drove beside the A38.
 - Mr Betty from Somerset Highways had asked the whereabouts of the top part of the sign at Church Lane, from the fact that it was no longer in its last known position, beside the post, Cllr. Farley presumed that it had been removed by the county's contractor.
 - The Clerk was asked to ensure that Tim Baker had begun this year's programme of grass cutting and to establish his schedule of proposed cuts. He would be asked to include regular cuts of the area at the Bourton Lane – Webbington Road junction.
10. Cllr Jordan asked that a reminder to residents about the need to observe speed-limits in the parish be put on the council's website. Council approved this idea. She also asked that an agenda item "Green issues" be put on the next agenda. This was agreed.
11. Cllr Warner reported on the Open Meeting held on 10th. May in the Memorial Hall to investigate what support existed for improved youth activities. The council agreed to pay printing costs to produce flyers for distribution to every household to advertise the next Youth Group meeting to be held on 16th. June.
12. There was little discussion about the correspondence file, which had not been covered elsewhere. However Cllr Parker read a statement as follows:

"Unfortunately I have to raise, again, Cllr Byrne letters - reference 0511 - Newsletter 14th April. This newsletter dated 14th April was addressed to members of Cross and Compton Bishop parish, I am not certain whether it was delivered to all parishioners, as I did not receive a copy. Its content is included in a further newsletter dated 23rd April, again was addressed to members of Cross and Compton Bishop parish, and I am not certain whether it was delivered to all parishioners as I did not receive a copy.

I wish to comment on these with specific reference to the newsletter of 23rd April. The title 'Racial abuse, assault and discrimination' is offensive and the inference that I, and fellow members of this council, are guilty of such things is intimidating and particularly upsetting. Cllr Byrne's statements are an exaggeration and a misrepresentation of the truth. They are, in my opinion, a further instance of his continuous campaign to discredit this council and intimidate me personally.

I understand that a letter has been received from a member of the parish which is a 'statement of witness' to the alleged assault on April 9th. I would appreciate, Mr Clerk, a personal copy of this.

The deluge of unpleasant material being circulated by Cllr Byrne causes me distress and anxiety. I have, therefore, formally instructed Cllr Byrne to cease using my name in letters and newsletters and to make no contact with me except within Parish Council Meetings and not to use my name, whether directly or by inference, in any of his public correspondence or publications. Any issues which relate to, or arise from, my conduct as a councillor, or council business that I am involved in are to be brought to Parish Council meetings, where they correctly belong, and can be dealt with in an open forum.

I wish to state that, as the allegations made by Cllr Byre are very serious and that legal action may ensue I do not refer to these allegations in the following statement regarding the two Newsletters dated 14th and 23rd April.

Cllr Byrne and his team have produced personal newsletters which have been delivered to parishioners. Their content is not factually correct, it is misleading, malicious and brings this council into disrepute. This behaviour is un-becoming of a parish councillor.

I propose that Councillor Byrne is censured by this council for distributing newsletters dated 14th and 23rd April 2008 containing statements which are incorrect, contain personal attacks and are of an offensive nature which exceeds the line of acceptable behaviour and brings this council into disrepute. His actions breach the Code of Conduct paragraphs 2(b) 3(1), 3(2)(b), 3(2)(c), 5 and 2.2 of our Standing Orders.

The censure motion was approved.

There then followed a heated argument between councillors in respect of some of Cllr Byrne's written material and the Chairman's responses to it as found within the file. During this period both Cllr. Parker and Cllr. Rolfe left the meeting. Cllr Parker left the meeting after Cllr Byrne had accused Mrs Parker of using confidential information, provided to her, Cllr Byrne suggested, by Cllr Parker himself. This Cllr Parker strenuously denied.

13. It was confirmed that there would be a need to find a temporary replacement for the Clerk in the winter months. This would be discussed in more detail at the June meeting. Cllr Byrne asked about a summer break from meetings as this practice was followed on other councils on which he served. No decision was made on this.

14. Date, time and place of the next Council: 11th June, 2008 at Cross Memorial Hall at 7.30 p.m.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 22.50 hours.

SIGNED AS A TRUE RECORD:.....Chairman

DATE:11-6-08.....

Present: Councillors Farley (Chairman), Warner, Parker, Rolfe, Byrne and Cllr. Mrs. Jordan, together with 3 members of the public.

Public Participation: *Mrs D. Dickinson, of "Justaway", referred to the bench outside the White Hart Inn. In her opinion the seat was very uncomfortable and she offered, should the council decide to remove it, to provide a new bench in the same area, at her own expense, in memory of her late husband. The Chairman thanked her for her kind and generous offer and asked her to confirm this in a brief letter.*

1. **Apologies for Absence:** Cllr. Mrs. Rix
2. **Approval of minutes:** The minutes of the meeting held on May 14th were approved, by majority vote, subject to the item "Apologies for Absence" being amended to "none".
3. **Members' Declarations of Interest:** All members listed below had declared interests on a pro-forma provided by the Clerk prior to the meeting. They are recorded as follows:
Cllr Rolfe declared personal interest in agenda item 12 in respect of any correspondence from Cllr. Byrne.
Cllr Farley declared personal interest in correspondence item 5 (i) as a signatory, item 12 (0352, 0540, 0546, 0547) as either the author or recipient of these items.
Cllr. Byrne passed a letter to the clerk, which declared that he had no confidence in the Clerk and all councillors as well as making seven serious unsupported allegations. The letter was read aloud by the Clerk and entered into the public record.
4. **Reports on matters arising from the previous minutes not listed elsewhere on the agenda:** The following matters were raised:
 - Cllr. Rix was elected subject to her agreement, as Vice-Chairman as this was omitted from last month's proceedings under "urgent business". Cllr Byrne said that the two items of urgent business on the May agenda, namely the appointment of chairman and advisory group members were not legitimate, but he provided no ground for the statement.
 - Cllr. Warner agreed to take on the role of Parish Council Liaison councillor on the Cross Memorial Hall committee, in place of Cllr. Farley, who would advise the Hall Committee Chairman accordingly.
 - It was agreed there should be no summer break in meetings.
 - The Clerk was asked to check with Sedgemoor District Council (SDC) what work had been done under its "Sweep-Clean" policy.
 - Cllr. Byrne confirmed that he would be willing to meet Cllrs. Warner and Farley, together with an SDC officer at Bridgwater House on 3rd July at 15.00 hours to try to resolve the clerk's formal complaint against his, Cllr. Byrne's, behaviour despite having previously refused to do so on the grounds that he believed the Chairman lacked impartiality in this matter.
5. **Finance**
 - a. **Monthly reconciliation(s).** COUNCIL RESOLVED unanimously to approve the monthly reconciliation for May (attached to these minutes).
 - b. **Payments due:** COUNCIL RESOLVED that all payments due and listed below should be made:

Clerk's salary etc.	£180.77	
Kings of Wessex School (photo-copying)	£9.55	(retrospective)
Clerk's salary re-adjustment (see below)	£49.80	
Cross memorial Hall (hire)	£91.00	
 - c. Council noted the completion of his part of the Annual Audit document by Mr John Gravell, the council's Internal Auditor, and subject to one minor alteration agreed that this should form part of the Annual Audit paperwork. Mr Gravell had no matters to bring to the attention of councillors. He is to be thanked for his contribution.
 - d. It was RESOLVED by majority to approve the Annual Accounts for 2007/8 and that the Chairman and Clerk should complete and sign the Annual Audit documentation for year-end 31st March 2008.
 - e. The arrangements for residents to have sight of financial papers relating to the Annual Audit had been advertised within the parish. It was agreed that Cllr Byrne should make arrangements to look at these documents in the presence of the Chairman at a mutually convenient time.
 - f. It was RESOLVED that the Clerk should prepare a bid to SDC for Amenity Grant funding to cover both grass-cutting and the repair of benches in the parish.

- g. It was agreed unanimously that the Clerk should be paid at the appropriate rate on the National Joint Council Pay Scale from April 2007 and that a salary adjustment of £49.80 should be made to cover that period. Any further increase during the current year would be dealt with separately.
- h. The Chairman had written to the HSBC bank at Winscombe in an effort to try to resolve, exactly, who are the current signatories to council cheques. In connection with this the Chairman would also seek clarification from Somerset Association of Local Councils as to who is legally required to sign council cheques. It would appear from recommended Standing Orders that it should not include the Clerk. It was also agreed that the current unsatisfactory level of service from HSBC warrants a review, with an aim to change. It was reported that banks in Cheddar provides a better and more personal service.

8. Planning:

- a. It was RESOLVED unanimously that the Clerk should inform Sedgemoor District Council that the council recommended approval of the following amended application:

Ref: 21/08/00005

Compton House, Coombe Lane, Compton Bishop, Axbridge, BS26 2HE

Erection of replacement summerhouse to form ancillary guest accommodation

Full Planning Permission

This recommendation would be subject to the summerhouse not being used as accommodation

- b. It was RESOLVED unanimously that the Clerk should inform Sedgemoor District Council that the council had no objection to the approval of the following application:

Ref: 21/08/00007

6 Wavering Down Rise, Shute Shelve, Axbridge, BS26 2JJ

Erection of conservatory to SE elevation

Full Planning Permission

9. Reports from Advisory Group leaders

a. Environment

- Cllr Jordan agreed to produce a draft information document for circulation throughout the parish to keep residents informed of recycling. This would be presented and agreed at the July meeting.
- Cllr. Rolfe agreed to contact 3 separate contractors to provide quotations to carry out works on the bus-shelters in the parish, in accordance with the agreed specification document that he presented to the meeting. The Clerk was asked to contact Somerset Highways with a view to that department carrying out repairs to the hard standing in front of the "Coronation" shelter and expedite the work required to the sunken gas cover opposite the shelter. Cllr Parker would provide the Clerk with a picture.
- The Clerk reported that RJB Landscapes had carried out work to secure the Bishops Path seat and had carried out remedial work to two more benches at Church Lane and the White Hart Inn.
- It was RESOLVED that a work party of councillors and the Clerk would re-establish a dry path to the bench at Bishops Path. Cllr Rolfe agreed to co-ordinate this group, volunteers were Cllrs Rolfe, Farley and Parker..
- The Clerk was seeking 2 further estimates for a notice board for the Cross Memorial Hall, based upon Cllr Rolfe's specifications.

(Note: At this point 21.05 Cllr Byrne left the meeting)

- The Clerk was asked to inform SDC that there were instances of ragwort at the Springfield Wildlife Site and Cllr Parker will advise the National Trust of infestation in the disused quarry.
- Cllr Warner would contact the Public Rights of Way Officer to ask that PROW AX15/12, Scaurs Path be cleared.

b. Highways

- It was reported that the gully by the New Inn on the A38 had been repaired. The roadside salt bags had been removed.
- The Clerk was asked to request a site meeting with Mr Gill of Somerset Highways to discuss a number of local issues. Mr Gill would also be asked to arrange for grass cutting to take place at the Old Coach Road/A38 junction at Lower Weare to avoid sight line restriction. The Weare Parish Council would be informed of the request.
- The Clerk reported that Mrs Berry the SDC Enforcement Officer had emailed to say that she was preparing to take legal action against those who had displayed large distracting signs exceeding a 0.6 square metre size at the A38/Cross Lane junction by the New Inn.

- The council RESOLVED to carry out an audit to discover which areas of verge need more regular cutting at this time of the year to maintain sight lines. This work would then be proposed either to Somerset Highways or considered for maintenance at the parish council's expense.
10. Councillors were asked to read, annotate and circulate a re-typed copy of adopted Standing Orders produced by the Clerk. This copy had been re-numbered as per the council's earlier request. Email copies would be provided to those councillors, who requested it.
 11. Cllr Jordan reported that one volunteer had come forward from the local community to help with any agreed youth provision. There was to be another Open Meeting for interested parties on 16th June.
 12. It was agreed that in future the Clerk should scan and email to councillors any items of correspondence that might need their individual attention or some action before the monthly meeting. Councillors noted that the new arrangements for making complaints about councillors' conduct required that the initial contact should be with SDC. Cllr Jordan considered the pro-forma produced by the District Council to be unnecessarily intrusive into a complainants' personal information.
 13. It was agreed that the chairman should ask SALC for advice on how best to arrange to employ a temporary Parish Clerk during Mr. Passey's planned period of absence.
 14. Cllr Warner asked that if a Newsletter was to be published shortly, it should include a reference to the Cray Charity and grant possibilities for suitable candidates.
 15. The Chairman reported that Mrs Broadbent had offered to deputise for the Clerk for the November to January council meetings. It was agreed that the Chairman should discuss the terms of the temporary employment and any conditions which she may wish to include.
 16. Date, time and place of the next Council: 9th July, 2008 at Cross Memorial Hall at 7.30 p.m.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 21.45 hours.

SIGNED AS A TRUE RECORD: .....Chairman

DATE:9-7-08.....

20080312 Draft Minutes V2 Efpp Approved With Proposed Amendments 08/07/2008



Present: Parish Councillors Farley (Chairman), Mrs A. Rix (Vice-Chairman), Mrs M. Jordan, Byrne, Parker and Warner , together with 7 members of the public (list attached to these minutes).

Public Participation: *Mr Patrick Simpson, together with Mrs. Pauline Warner, outlined plans for a "Summer Scarecrow Festival" to be held on 6th and 7th September 2008. This event would involve the whole community in a variety of exciting events. There would be an initial outlay to meet costs of insurance, printing, signs, hire of the Memorial Hall and the purchase of trophies. They hoped that this could become an annual event. Council was asked to consider to what extent this venture might be funded from the parish budget.*

Dr. Sarah Ayling gave an update on the Wildlife site, thanking all volunteers for helping with general tidying and grass-cutting. She asked if the Clerk could contact Sedgemoor District Council (SDC) about an alder tree that was leaning badly and about the outstanding repair to broken fencing. She proposed running a "Wildlife Diary" competition for youngsters in the parish during the summer holiday and asked if Council would consider donating a sum towards the prizes she wished to award

1. **Apologies for Absence:** Cllr. Rolfe apologised for his absence, by letter, handed to the Clerk. This was accepted.
2. **Approval of minutes:** The minutes of the meeting held on June 11th were approved, by majority vote, Cllr Byrne abstaining.
3. **Members' Declarations of Interest:** All members listed below had declared interests on a pro-forma provided by the Clerk prior to the meeting. They are recorded as follows:
Cllr Farley declared personal interest in correspondence items referenced 0716, 0718, 0719, 0720, 0766 as author of these items.
Cllr Warner declared personal interest in agenda item 4
Cllr Mrs Rix declared personal interest in agenda item 4
Cllr Mrs Jordan declared personal interest in agenda item 4
Cllr Parker read a statement as follows:

I have taken advice from SALC and The Monitoring Officer as to whether or not I have to declare an interest with regard to any business concerning Cllr Byrne. I am advised that I am a borderline case and probably do not have to declare a personal interest. However, within the code of conduct, I am obliged to be aware that I must not ignore the existence of interests from the point of view of a reasonable and objective observer and as such I understand that I should declare the nature of the interest when it is apparent to me.
I, therefore, wish to make this statement to ensure that I have conformed to the code of conduct.

Yesterday, the 8th July The police telephone to advise me that on Monday, 7th July, Cllr Byrne reported to them that I had committed an assault on him at the council meeting on 9th April 2008. He, Cllr Byrne, stated that he has two witnesses to support this allegation. I was asked if I was willing to provide a statement and I, naturally, offered to attend an interview at the earliest opportunity which was today, Wednesday 9th July at 9.00am.

I was cautioned, asked if I wanted legal representation now [at my own expense] and advised that if I were to be arrested today then I would be offered free legal representation. I was formally cautioned and my interview was recorded. I was advised that the Criminal Prosecution Service would be involved. This was not a nice experience. I was also instructed to have no contact with Mr Byrne.

I have had to assess my own position and whilst I feel under extreme pressure I have concluded that this declaration permits me to attend this meeting and participate in Council Business within the guidelines of The Code of Conduct.
However, because of the advice received and the police request, I am unable to have any contact with Cllr Byrne.

4. **To receive evidence to be provided by Cllr. Byrne in support of his letters dated 11th. June and 23rd. June which declare that he had "no confidence" in the Clerk and the Parish Council as a body, and which make a number of unsubstantiated allegations of misconduct against them**
 - A letter had been received on 9th July from Cllr Byrne, stating "I will not be submitting a letter to this council...", which the Chairman read aloud. Councillors did not see this as providing any evidence as had been required. Council RESOLVED by a majority vote with one abstention that this letter and other relevant material be passed directly to the Standards Committee of SDC. It was also RESOLVED by majority vote with one abstention, that a special meeting of the Parish Council be called and held with Press and public excluded with the sole purpose of resolving what steps the council as a body might take in response to Cllr Byrne's continuing lack of co-operation with, and confidence in his colleagues. A date and venue would be arranged as soon as possible.
 - The Chairman then made the following statement and proposed from the chair that Cllr Byrne be censured, which, by majority with one abstention, the Council RESOLVED to do.



"Councillor Byrne has tabled a further letter stating he will not be submitting any evidence despite an instruction to do so. He has made a number of such motions and each time has failed to back up his allegations with fact or proof, as requested by this council. He has also sent over 22 complaints, about this council, to The Standards Board for England. Each and every one has not been referred for investigation because the Standards Board for England had no finding of fact. It is understood that he has submitted others recently to the SDC Standard's Committee, which await adjudication.

These continuous attacks on the integrity of this council represent a relentless ongoing campaign of harassment and intimidation, which is levelled at each member and employee of this council.

It is intolerable and unacceptable.

Councillor Byrne's actions far exceed the line of acceptable behaviour for any member of council and contribute to making the Council dysfunctional as well as bringing it into disrepute.

His actions breach the Code of Conduct paragraphs 3(1), 3(2)(b), 3(2)(c), and 5 and I move that he be censured and that papers relating to these incidents be prepared and submitted to SDC Standard's Committee in the form of a "Complaint."

- The Clerk, in his role as Responsible Finance Officer, invited Cllr. Byrne to provide him with the evidence that he claimed would justify his, Cllr Byrne's allegation in his letter of 11th. June that there had been "fraud" in respect of the Council's financial affairs. The Clerk pointed out that he had a duty to either carry out an investigation, or report to the relevant authorities any evidence there may be of fraud, which may be seen as a criminal offence. Cllr. Byrne refused to provide his evidence saying that this was all with the police at Cheddar police station and that Sgt. Tripp would provide the Clerk with such evidence as had been presented by Cllr. Byrne.
- The Clerk was asked to discover what work was carried out by Sedgemoor District Council in its "Clean Sweep" activity earlier in the year.

5. Reports on matters arising from the previous minutes not listed elsewhere on the agenda: The following matters were raised:

The Chairman outlined the history of the Clerk's formal complaint against the conduct of Cllr Byrne. He presented a Stage II Grievance Panel report. . The Panel, Cllr Byrne and Mrs Dickinson (Friend), had met on Thursday 3rd. July 2008 at SDC offices in the presence of Ms Melanie Wellman, who had acted as note-taker. The result was unsatisfactory through a lack of cooperation by Cllr Byrne, who gave no indication that he wished to see the matter resolved. The Panel had made recommendations in an endeavour to resolve the dispute and these were as follows:

- 1 That Council offers to reimburse the Clerk "Without prejudice" at his standard hourly rate in the sum of £300.65 subject to tax and NI if applicable. This being in consideration of the additional work that Councillor Byrne has caused and which lead to the Clerk submitting a formal Complaint.
- 2 That Councillor Byrne be censured for failing to assist and cooperate in discharging the Council's "Duty of care to its employee" and that a formal complaint be made to Sedgemoor District Council Standard's Committee concerning his conduct.
- 3 Council resolves to instruct Councillor Byrne not to make any contact with the Clerk and should he have any Council business to be transacted, then his sole channel of communication is through the Chairman.
- 4 The Clerk is not to exceed 20 hours per month work without prior authorisation of the Council.
- 5 That on receipt of an itemised account Councillors Parker and Rolfe be reimbursed for the direct expenses involved in producing the Stage I report amounting it is understood to £34.82.

- 6 That an invoice is raised on Councillor C. Byrne in the sum of £335.47. to defray monies incurred in discharging the Council's "Duty of care" to the Clerk, solely as a result of his sustained activity and which is beyond that which Council Tax payers in the Parish can be expected to bear.
 - 7 That the above actions if approved discharges the Stage II Grievance Panel from further duty related to this matter and that it be considered concluded.
 - 8 That a copy of the report be forwarded to the legal department of Sedgemoor District Council.
- Council RESOLVED to adopt all the recommendations of the Stage Two report listed above, by a majority vote with one abstention.
6. To confirm the appointment of a Vice-Chairman for the year. Cllr Mrs Rix formally agreed to act as Vice-Chairman for the year and was duly thanked by the Chairman.

7. Finance

- a. **Monthly reconciliation(s).** COUNCIL RESOLVED unanimously to approve the monthly reconciliation for June (attached to these minutes).
 - Cllr. Byrne confirmed that he would not be presenting cheque number 100353 for encashment in the sum of £3.00 dated 24/04/07
 - The Clerk made councillors aware that he had not yet presented his salary cheque number 100388 in the sum of £170.97 dated 18/03/08. There would be a need to "stop" this cheque and re-issue a new one as it was presumed lost.
 - b. **Payments due:** COUNCIL RESOLVED with one abstention, that all payments due and listed below should be made:

Clerk's Salary etc.	£175.17 (calculated at £8.39 per hour)
Tim Baker Grass cutting	£160.00
Extra insurance premium (3 benches)	£13.21 (confirmation awaited)
CPRE subscription	£28.00 (CPRE recommended figure)
 - c. Council noted the proposed priorities for the Local Initiatives Budget within the Brent Knoll Division – Temporary Speed Indicator Devices (6 in Somerset) and improved grass cutting on verges. The Chairman would attend the next meeting on 29th. July at East Brent Village Hall. He would also ask if funding could be found for some work on local Public Rights of Way at the Scaurs Bridlepath, Kennel Lane and school transport.
 - d. Council noted the advantages of paying subscriptions to a variety of external organisations and agreed that as each became due in future, the document provided by the Clerk would be used to decide if the subscription was likely to give value-for-money.
 - e. Council RESOLVED to invite a representative from the Axbridge Museum Trust to come to the next monthly meeting to explain its need for financial help. The Council felt that in principle it would wish to assist, but needed to understand the degree of commitment expected. A review of the Council's forward budget would be a useful pre-requisite to any regular donation.
 - f. The Clerk reported that HSBC bank still appeared to have the wrong signatories listed, and had not replied to the Chairman's request for an explanation of recent bank charges. The Clerk will confirm that the signatories are confirmed correctly. The Clerk was instructed also to contact NatWest, Lloyds and Barclays banks to discover if their service provision might be more in line with the council's requirements, which are to include an automatic switch between accounts.
8. **Planning:**
- a. It was RESOLVED unanimously that the Clerk should inform Sedgemoor District Council that the council had no objection to the following application:

Town and Country Planning Act 1990

Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation Order) Regulations 1969

Proposal: Crown lift to 2m above ground level one copper Beech Tree (T5)

Location: 12 Wavering Down Rise, Shute Shelve, Axbridge, BS262JJ

Applicant: Mrs Reason

9. Reports from Advisory Group leaders

a. Environment

- Cllr Parker proposed that, because of Cllr Byrne's continuing actions against the council and Cllr Parker in particular, the situation is untenable and Cllr Byrne should be removed, as a member, from this group. Council resolved that this should be so, with one abstention.
- Cllr Parker asked that it be noted that despite District Councillor Denbee's statement at the Annual Open Meeting that waste collection for the parish would continue on a weekly basis, he, Cllr Denbee had now reported that since all waste collection was now in the hands of Somerset Waste Partnership, there could be no guarantee that this would be the case.
- Cllr. Jordan had produced a comprehensive information document for circulation throughout the parish to keep residents informed on recycling. Council RESOLVED unanimously that this should be displayed on the council's website and distributed to every household with the next newsletter. The trial scheme in Axbridge was noted.
- The Clerk was instructed to write to Mrs Dickinson, Justaway, to thank her for her kind offer to provide a new seat at the White Hart should Council so decide. In the past this area had been the site of a bus-stop. Ownership of the verge would need to be clarified with Somerset Highways at a site meeting see (b) spot 2 below.
- The Council RESOLVED unanimously to accept a quotation from Messrs. Blight and Scoble for a notice board at the Memorial Hall in the sum of £375.00 VAT as this was cheaper than 2 other quotations obtained with similar quality to the one opposite the White Hart which Messrs. Bright and Scoble had previously supplied. The Clerk would place the order as soon as possible. Fixing was not included.
- Only one quotation was currently to hand for repairs to the bus-shelters. The Clerk was instructed to contact the other 4 invited tenderers and to set a deadline for a response.
- Council RESOLVED to make the sum of £30 available for the provision of prizes for a "Wildlife Diary" competition to be organised by Dr Sarah Ayling. The Clerk to write advising her of the sum to be allocated.
- Cllr Parker spoke of work done to clear ragwort on National Trust land and of the Trust's efforts to keep the Cross Quarry tidy as it seems to be used for nefarious purposes and camping by youngsters, who leave debris including cans and broken glass. The council expressed its thanks to Cllr Parker for his personal efforts in helping with the clearance.

b. Highways

- Chairman gave details of the recent traffic census carried out by Somerset County Council (SCC) as part of its proposals for changes to the A38 junctions at Lower Weare and New Inn. The statistics gathered would be made known to the council in due course. No further proposals are expected from SCC until the autumn.
 - It was noted that a site meeting had been arranged with Mr Liam Gill of Somerset Highways (SCC) to take place on 25th. July when a number of outstanding issues would be discussed. Councillors were asked to tell the Chairman beforehand of any issues that they felt should be mentioned to SCC. The bend at Webbington Farm, the bridge joint over the motorway and Cross Lane roadside bank erosion were mentioned particularly.
 - It was noted that the latest heavy rains had not overwhelmed the gully by the New Inn on the A38.
 - The Clerk was asked to obtain a quotation from Tim Baker for extra cuts of grass around the new bench at Bishop's Path.
 - Cllr. Warner would contact SCC's Public Rights of Way Officer about the Scaurs Bridle Path and the reduction of vegetation overgrowing the path to the Quarry over Mr Knife's, of The Yews, field.
10. Councillors had read, annotated and circulated a re-typed copy of adopted Standing Orders produced by the Clerk. However, Cllr Byrne had not done so, as he insisted that he must have a clean copy, having denied receiving such a copy at a monthly meeting. Chairman provided him with such a copy and Cllr Byrne undertook to return this, annotated, to the Chairman by Saturday 12th. July. The Clerk would then re-type the Standing Orders and present the new layout for approval at the August meeting.
11. It was noted that a sign had been attached to a gateway in lower Cross Lane indicating that this was not an access to a public footpath. This was confirmed as being correct – the footpath beginning some few yards to the East towards Axbridge.
12. The possibility of there being a completely separate village website was discussed and councillors felt that should this be desirable then a responsible parishioner would be needed to act as its editor.
13. The Chairman tabled a copy of a report of a SALC meeting that he had attended on 12th. June.

14. Cllr Byrne reported that an organisation "Cross Connections" had been formed with a view to organising events for young people in the community. Cllr Byrne reported on the aims of the group and listed the officers as Ms Claire Settle, Chairman, Mrs Julie Rawlings, Vice-chairman, Mrs Doreen Dickinson, Secretary, Mrs Charlotte Higman, Hon Treasurer, Committee Members: Mrs Ruth Orriss, Elizabeth Parker, and Sarah Jackson. A copy of the minutes of the first meeting would be sent to the Clerk, who then could establish contact. In order to facilitate the youth work of the group, council RESOLVED to fund either 4 meetings in the Memorial Hall or to a maximum sum of £50, whichever was the least in the first instance.

- Council RESOLVED unanimously to support the "Summer Scarecrow Festival" event by making the sum of £358, against invoice, available to the organisers.

(Note: Cllr Byrne left the meeting at 22.45)

15. The correspondence had been circulated to all councillors on email by means of pdf. files. Cllr Byrne had received the file with original items. Councillors agreed that they would be happy to see this arrangement continued, with pdf. files of about 10 items being sent at intervals during the month.


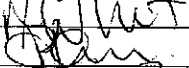

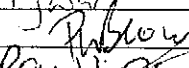
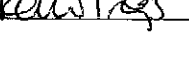


- Cllr Jordan had spoken to Cllr Denbee about the personal information required by Sedgemoor under the new Sedgemoor Standards Committee scheme. Date, time and place of the next monthly Council: 13th August, 2008 at Cross Memorial Hall at 7.30 p.m.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 22.55 hours.

SIGNED AS A TRUE RECORD:  Chairman

DATE: 13th August 2008

HEALTH AND SAFETY AND CONTACT SHEET 09/07/2008

NAME PRINTED	SIGNATURE	COMPLETE POSTCODE
DICKINSON		BS26 2EE
A. WHITE		BS26 2BN
P. SIMPSON		BS26 2EH
P. Raw		BS26 2EF
P. WARNER		BS26 2EQ
P. WILLOW		BS26 2EF
J. RAWLINGS		BS26 2EH

~~20080709 draft minutes for cllrs comments 13/08/2008~~

Present: Parish Councillors Farley (Chairman), Mrs A. Rix (Vice-Chairman), Mrs M. Jordan, Parker, Rolfe and Warner , together with 1 member of the public (list attached to these minutes).

Public Participation: *Although invited by the Chairman to speak, there was no public participation. However, for clarity, before the meeting began Chairman explained why there was a need to exclude press and public from items 5 and 6 on the agenda in the following terms:*

It would be necessary to exclude press and public from items 5 & 6 on this agenda as the matters to be discussed concern accusations made against the Council's employee, namely the Clerk.

The Council had "a duty of care to its employee" and also a responsibility to ensure that the clerk works satisfactorily. Council must therefore do its utmost to investigate all charges made against him by Cllr Byrne, who had been required by the Chairman to present evidence of the clerk's alleged misdemeanours. The Council also had a duty to defend the clerk against false allegations if no credible evidence were forthcoming.

Chairman also explained that some part of the minutes of this meeting may be deemed confidential but this may not become apparent until the meeting was underway. Minutes of this meeting would be available in the normal way.

1. Apologies for Absence: Cllr. Byrne had sent letter a letter, dated 27th July, to the Chairman as follows:

Dear Chairman,

Re: Meeting to be held on 30/07/08

I am writing to advise you that the meeting proposed for the above date is not fully legal. The matter is already being investigated by Avon & Somerset Police and the Standards Committee at Sedgemoor District Council and I perceive your allegations to be false. Furthermore, I have not been given the full seven days notice of the meeting. I am curious as to why the Clerk is not bringing his case directly to an employment tribunal and have wondered if it is perhaps because the matter would not be taken seriously by a tribunal due to the nature of his allegations and the scale of his grievances. Whatever the case, I do not believe this meeting to be permissible or even necessary.

I have therefore decided not to attend this meeting, which I consider to be nothing less than a Kangaroo Court. I would sooner have my day at the Bristol Crown Court, in front of bona fide judges.

The Clerk explained that notices of the meeting had been displayed on public notice boards on 23rd. July thus giving at least 3 clear days notice of the meeting as statutorily required. The Chairman had pre-notified Cllr Byrne of the meeting by letter dated 22nd July 2008. The intention to hold this meeting had been resolved at the July 9th. meeting. A summons to attend had been delivered by recorded delivery to Cllr Byrne's address on 26th July. The Mr Steven Hellard of the Legal Department at Sedgemoor District Council had informed the Clerk that under the Local Government Act of 1972 (Part II) in the event of the failure of a Councillor to receive a summons to a meeting this did not invalidate the meeting.

Under the circumstances the Chairman proposed that Cllr. Byrne's letter of apology for absence, if that was how it was intended to be viewed, did not give a sufficiently acceptable reason for his absence. It was unanimously RESOLVED not to accept Cllr Byrne's apology for absence from the meeting.

2. **Members' Declarations of Interest:** All members present, declared a personal interest in items 5 and 6 on the agenda and made it clear that their "duty of care" to the Council's employee and the need to ensure the proper functioning of the Council was an over-riding factor. They recognised that within Cllr Byrne's letter of 11th June they also may stand accused, but that Cllr Byrne would no doubt report his concerns and evidence against them to SDC Standards Committee for investigation in the usual way. They further recognised that the main business of this meeting was intended to deal with the allegations made by Cllr Byrne against the clerk.

In addition, Cllr Parker made the following statement:

In view of the outstanding allegation of assault made against me by Cllr Byrne, and the on-going police and Criminal Prosecution Service investigations, I must re-iterate my position which was declared at our last council meeting.

I am advised that I probably do not have to declare a personal interest. However, within the code of conduct, I am obliged to be aware that I must not ignore the existence of interests from the point of view of a reasonable and objective observer. As such I feel duty bound to declare a personal interest in respect of any matter involving or arising from Councillor Byrne.

I have concluded that this declaration permits me to attend this meeting and participate in Council Business within the guidelines of The Code of Conduct.

I continue to be under instruction from the police to have no contact with Cllr Byrne and therefore any comment or remark concerning Cllr Byrne will be made through the chair.

3. It was unanimously RESOLVED that in view of the special nature of the business to be transacted, that the public and press should be excluded from items 5 and 6, which would deal with matters affecting the Council's employee
4. Chairman read part of his letter to Cllr. Byrne dated 22nd July 2008 as follows:

"You will shortly be receiving an agenda for an additional Council meeting on the evening of the 30th July as noted in the draft minute number 4 of the 9th July meeting. In order to give you time to prepare you should note that:

I am issuing to you a chairman's ruling, as I did prior to our July 9th. meeting that: You, Councillor C. Byrne, are to produce for the 30th July meeting, for consideration by Council all the evidence that you have, in writing, relating to the allegations in your letter dated 11th June, 2008 that you tabled at the June Council meeting and to which so far you have failed to respond satisfactorily,"

Council NOTED this further ruling by the Chairman set out in his letter dated 22nd July 2008, that Cllr. Byrne should produce clear written evidence in support of all the allegations and statements set out in his, Cllr Byrne's, letter dated 11th June 2008 and that this evidence should be presented at this meeting.

At this point the Chairman proposed and it was unanimously RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting, with the assurance that interested parties would be recalled to the meeting prior to item 7 on the agenda.

5. Council NOTED Cllr. Byrne's response, in his letter dated 27th July, which is reproduced at item 1 of these minutes, to the Chairman's ruling set out in a letter to Cllr Byrne dated 22nd July 2008.

RESOLVED unanimously that Cllr Byrne had not responded appropriately to the Chairman's repeated ruling, by failing to produce any evidence whatsoever in support of his, Cllr Byrne's, allegations set out in his letter of 11th. June."

Despite the absence of Cllr Byrne the Chairman felt it important that all of Cllr Byrne's allegations in his letter of 11th. June, with respect to the clerk, should be considered in turn.

- Chairman reminded members that in the letter dated 11th June, Cllr Byrne stated in paragraph 1 that he is not treated equally and fairly by the clerk because of his (Cllr Byrne's) homosexuality...

It was RESOLVED unanimously that Cllr Byrne shall provide Council with examples, with dates, of unequal and unfair treatment by the clerk and indicate how this may be attributed to Cllr Byrne's personally declared homosexuality

- Chairman reminded members that in the letter dated 11th June, Cllr Byrne stated in paragraph 2 that the clerk has misled the Planning Department at Sedgemoor District Council and knowingly given them false information...

It was RESOLVED unanimously that Cllr Byrne shall identify the applications or occasions to which he refers and give details of how the clerk has misled Sedgemoor District Council.

It was RESOLVED unanimously that Cllr Byrne shall provide the Council with examples of the false information has been given by the clerk, explain how that information was transmitted and provide Council with evidence that any such information was given "knowingly".

- Chairman reminded members that in the letter dated 11th June, Cllr Byrne stated in paragraph 3 that the clerk has broken Health and Safety laws when dealing with the matter of the benches in the village.

It was RESOLVED unanimously that Cllr Byrne shall provide Council with details of the Health and Safety laws that he alleges the clerk has broken and explain by what actions or inactions the clerk has broken them

- Chairman reminded members that in the letter dated 11th June, Cllr Byrne stated in paragraph 4 that he, Cllr Byrne, has asked to see the Council's accounts many times and that the clerk has not shown them to him. He also accuses the clerk of fraud. This is a very serious offence defined as "deliberate deception, trickery, or cheating intended to gain an advantage"

It was RESOLVED unanimously that Cllr Byrne shall provide to the Council dates when he requested sight of the accounts, how these requests were made and give details of the Clerk's response.

It was RESOLVED unanimously that Cllr Byrne shall provide Council with details of alleged fraud, defined as "deliberate deception, trickery or cheating" that the Clerk has engaged in, give details and dates, and explain how these alleged actions have been to his, the clerk's, advantage.

- The Chairman reminded members that at the council meeting on July 9th. Cllr Byrne told the council that evidence of fraud had been passed to the police – to Sgt. Mike Tripp at Cheddar police station. Sgt Tripp had written on 21st July, in response to a written enquiry from the clerk, denying that any such evidence had been passed to him by Cllr Byrne. Sgt. Tripp had confirmed in a telephone conversation with the clerk that this letter still represented the situation as at 2. P.M. on 30th. July. The letter from Sgt. Tripp was read out, as follows:

Dear Mr Passey,

I write further to your letter dated the 16th July to confirm that we are not in possession of any evidence relating to an allegation of fraud against Compton Bishop Parish Council or any individual member and we have not been presented with any evidence from Councillor Byrne.

There is currently no investigation being conducted by the police at this time in this regard.

It was RESOLVED unanimously that Cllr Byrne shall publicly apologise for lying within council to members and to the public and to withdraw unequivocally his statement that he had provided Sgt. Tripp with evidence of fraud prior to the council meeting on 9th. July

- Chairman reminded members that in the letter dated 11th June, Cllr Byrne stated in paragraph 5 that the clerk has covered up a clear case of assault on Cllr Byrne by another member of the Council during a public meeting.

It was RESOLVED, with Cllr Parker abstaining, that Cllr Byrne shall explain in writing and in detail how the clerk has covered up this alleged assault.

- Chairman reminded members that in the letter dated 11th June, Cllr Byrne stated in paragraph 6 that the clerk had harassed other parishioners on Cllr Byrne's account

It was RESOLVED, with Cllr Parker abstaining, that Cllr Byrne shall provide the Council with the names of the parishioners that he alleges have been harassed by the clerk and explain when and how this alleged harassment took place.

It was RESOLVED unanimously that Cllr Byrne shall explain to Council how any contact between the Clerk and parishioners that may be deemed by Cllr Byrne to be "harassment" can be seen as being on his, Cllr Byrne's account, rather than within the general duties of the Clerk, namely to investigate matters brought to his attention, which may affect the Council, or its reputation.

- Chairman reminded members that in the letter dated 11th June, Cllr Byrne stated in paragraph 7 that the clerk had not informed him of meetings nor given him information that he should have had as a councillor

It was RESOLVED unanimously that Cllr Byrne shall provide the Council with examples, or instances, of the Clerk failing to inform him of meetings, together with dates and purposes of the meetings in question.

It was RESOLVED unanimously that Cllr Byrne shall provide the Council with examples of the kind of information that the clerk has withheld from him, which in Cllr Byrne's opinion he should have had as a councillor.

Chairman then invited the clerk to comment on any of the allegations made against him by Cllr Byrne. The clerk felt unable to make any comment on any of Cllr Byrne's allegations until he was clear as to their exact nature and detail.

It was unanimously RESOLVED to record that thus far Cllr Byrne had persistently disregarded the chairman's rulings that he, Cllr Byrne, should provide written supporting evidence for his allegations against the clerk in his letter dated 11th. June and without providing such evidence he was maliciously obstructing Council business.

It was unanimously RESOLVED that the chairman should write to him once again giving details of the resolutions passed at this meeting in that regard and that the chairman should rule that he, Cllr Byrne, shall respond to those resolutions, in writing, to the chairman by 10th. August.

It was unanimously RESOLVED that "The Council wishes it to be known by whomsoever it concerns, that the Council has every confidence in their employee, the Clerk, Mr Paul Passey and the way in which he performs and executes those duties both for and on behalf of the Council that are his responsibility. By this statement they wish to demonstrate their full confidence and ensure that through this means they demonstrate their "duty of care" towards him, to which he is fully entitled as an employee, against as yet non-proven allegations that have been tabled by Councillor Byrne."

6. The council resolved to take further action in response to Cllr, Byrne's letter dated June 11th. 2008 and in response to related matters as follows:

It was RESOLVED unanimously that implementation of the Stage Two Grievance Procedure recommendations should be discussed at the August meeting.

Chairman reported that Cllr Byrne had made contact with the council's auditors Moore Stephens prior to the July 9th meeting to raise unspecified issues that now were being investigated at possible extra cost to be met from the council's precept. In view of the fact that Cllr Byrne had not raised any concerns with the council prior to contacting Moore Stephens and in an attempt to forestall unnecessary expense by a prolonged investigation it was RESOLVED that the chairman should write to Moore Stephens requesting a copy of Cllr Byrne's correspondence under the Freedom of Information Act if necessary.

Note: At this point in the meeting, those who had been excluded were invited to return to the meeting, but none had chosen to remain outside during the intervening period.

7 It was NOTED that whilst Cllr Byrne had returned one copy of Standing Orders he had retained the copy with the range of suggested minor amendments proposed by other councillors. He was instructed to return this copy to the chairmen immediately.

It was RESOLVED that Cllr Byrne shall return the Standing Order copy, annotated by councillors to the chairman immediately.

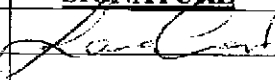
8. Date, time and place of the next monthly council meeting: 13th August, 2008 at Cross Memorial Hall at 7.30 p. m.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 21.52 hours.

SIGNED AS A TRUE RECORD:.....Chairman

DATE:13th Aug, 2008.....

HEALTH AND SAFETY AND CONTACT SHEET 30/07/2008

<u>NAME PRINTED</u>	<u>SIGNATURE</u>	<u>COMPLETE POSTCODE</u>
Laura Grant		BS26 2GG

06/08/2008 17:38:00

Present: Parish Councillors Farley (Chairman), Mrs A. Rix (Vice-Chairman), Mrs M. Jordan, Parker and Warner, together with 3 members of the public (list attached to these minutes).

Public Participation: *Although invited by the Chairman to speak, there was no public participation. However, for clarity, before the meeting began Chairman explained why there may be a need to exclude press and public from items 5 and 6 on the agenda in the following terms:*

It may be necessary to exclude press and public from items 5 & 6 on this agenda as the matters to be discussed concern accusations made against the Council's employee, namely the Clerk.

The Council had "a duty of care to its employee" and also a responsibility to ensure that the clerk works satisfactorily. Council must therefore do its utmost to investigate all charges made against him by Cllr Byrne, who had been required on several occasions by the Chairman to present evidence of the clerk's alleged misdemeanours. The Council also had a duty to defend the clerk against false allegations if no credible evidence were forthcoming.

Chairman also explained that some part of the minutes of this meeting may be deemed confidential but this may not become apparent until the meeting was underway. Minutes of this meeting would be available in the normal way

Before the meeting began, Mr John Page, Chairman of the Axbridge & District Museum Trust addressed the council on the matter of the shortfall of funding at the Museum, due to the cut-back in funding (25%) by Sedgemoor District Council. The Trust would fall £5000.00 below expected revenue this year and by 2010 its reserves would be used and the future of the Museum was then in doubt. He explained that perhaps 30 local parish councils had been asked to help with funding. The Trust would ideally require guaranteed funding from other sources, to enable other applications to funding bodies to be made. The Chairman thanked Mr Page for his explanation and for answering questions and confirmed that this issue would be discussed at the September parish council meeting.

- 1. Apologies for Absence:** Cllr. Rolfe had apologised for his absence to the Clerk, citing ill-health. This was accepted.
Cllr. Byrne had apologised for his absence in a letter delivered to the Chairman's at the Memorial Hall, just before the meeting. He cited as his main reason "a prior engagement" and made other declarations of "no confidence" in the council. In view of the fact that all council meetings are held on a regular date, the "prior engagement" was not accepted as a valid excuse for absence.
- 2. Approval of minutes:** The minutes of the meetings held on July 9th and July 30th were approved, unanimously.
- 3. Members' Declarations of Interest:** All members present, declared a personal interest in items 5 and 6 on the agenda and made it clear that their "duty of care" to the Council's employee and the need to ensure the proper functioning of the Council was an over-riding factor. They recognised that within Cllr Byrne's letter of 11th June they also may stand accused, but that Cllr Byrne would no doubt report his concerns and evidence against them to SDC Standards Committee for investigation in the usual way. They further recognised that the main business of this meeting was intended to deal with the allegations made by Cllr Byrne against the clerk.

In addition, Cllr Parker made the following statement:

"Cllr Byrne is continuing his campaign against me, and my fellow councillors, with unfounded allegations, which are both fabricated and unsupported with fact. He has also attempted to gain a criminal prosecution against me personally.

I am saddened that Cllr Byrne feels motivated, for whatever reason, to continue in this way and it clearly demonstrates that there is a significant breakdown in his relationship with me.

It is for these reasons that I must declare a Personal Interest in any matter concerning, or involving Cllr Byrne, which may arise during our Council Meeting or council business."

The Chairman also declared personal interest in all items of correspondence between himself and Cllr Byrne.

All councillors also recorded personal interest in item 13.

- 4. To resolve whether or not in view of the special nature of the business to be transacted, that the public and press should be excluded from item 5, which is intended to deal with matters affecting the Council's employee.** It was RESOLVED that in view Cllr Byrne's absence and his failure to produce any evidence in support of his allegations against the clerk, the press and public should not be excluded from item 5 on the agenda.

5. To note responses from Cllr Byrne to a number of resolutions passed by the council at its meeting on 30th. July 2008, which were required from Cllr Byrne prior to this meeting, and of which he was given prior notice. The council noted that there had been no response by Cllr Byrne to the resolutions passed at the council meeting on 30th. July.
6. To resolve what further action shall be taken in the light of Cllr Byrne's responses noted at item 5 above. The Chairman read the following statement:

"Council received a letter tabled by Councillor C. Byrne dated 11th June, 2008 at its council meeting of that date. In this he stated that he had no confidence in the Clerk, Chairman and other Councillors as well as making a series of serious allegations (7 in all). Councillor Byrne has been asked to provide any evidence that he has to support these allegations particularly over those matters concerning the Clerk, the Council's employee, on the 9th July, again on the 30th July and confirmed to him in writing. He has failed to produce one shred of evidence to support the allegations he has made and he did not attend the meeting of the 30th July, which he claimed to be illegal, where a number of resolutions were passed calling upon him to bring forward his evidence.

Councillor Byrne has directed the Council's attention to the Monitoring Officer at Sedgemoor District Council and to the Police, whom he alleges have all the allegations and evidence. For the Monitoring Officer, she acknowledges that she has received a copy of the allegations; the Police have confirmed in writing that they have received no evidence from Councillor Byrne and will not be mounting any investigation.

Given this is the case, Councillor Byrne has attempted to deflect attention to authorities, who have no direct responsibility in this matter of the clerk's alleged misdemeanours and so is maliciously disrupting the work of this Council particularly in relation to the Clerk, its employee. This is not the first time that Councillor Byrne has used this tactic and such action brings the Council into disrepute through being unable to devote its attention to important business particularly in relation to the Clerk.

I believe this Council will deplore the duplicity of Councillor Byrne and his abject failure to substantiate any of the serious allegations he has made.

That being the case, I would like to propose the following resolution that:

In the light of Councillor Byrne offering no evidence, he makes it impossible for Council to investigate until relevant evidence is forthcoming. Council therefore considers this particular matter, of the clerk's alleged misdemeanours set out in Cllr. Byrne's letter of 11th June, closed. Councillor Byrne will be accorded the basic services to perform his duties as a councillor and this council reaffirms that he is not to communicate with the Clerk and that any communication necessary, should be made via the chairman who will consider whether or not the matter is relevant to the business of the council."

This RESOLUTION was passed unanimously.

Council also RESOLVED unanimously to censure Cllr Byrne for failing to bring forward any evidence he may have of misdemeanour by the Clerk and declares that this action also brings the council into disrepute.

7. Reports on matters arising from the previous minutes not listed elsewhere on the agenda: There were none.

8. Finance

- a. *Monthly reconciliation(s).* COUNCIL RESOLVED unanimously to approve the monthly reconciliation for July (attached to these minutes).

- b. *Payments due:* COUNCIL RESOLVED that all payments due and listed below should be made:

Clerk's Salary etc.	£221.42	(at £8.39 per hour)
Community Council for Somerset subscription	£25.00	

- It was also RESOLVED that the Clerk should arrange for a sum of £1000.00 to be transferred from the Business Money Manager Account to the Community Account.

11. Affordable Housing. Councillors were provided with a set of notes following a meeting of the Planning Advisory Group's meeting with Mr Duncan Harvey at SDC. Cllr Parker had produced a fuller report and this would be discussed in detail at the September meeting.

12. Copies of Standing Orders.

- Council RESOLVED that the set of Standing Orders approved at the March meeting and recently amended for minor typographical and numbering errors, should now be printed and a bound copy produced for each member.
- Council RESOLVED to censure Cllr. Byrne for failing to return the annotated copy of minutes circulated amongst all councillors after the 9th July meeting, despite several requests to do so by the chairman. This failure seriously delayed the production of these Standing Orders.
- The clerk was instructed to seek estimates for the printing and binding of the Standing Orders and with chairman's guidance accept the lowest estimate.

13. Decision Notices from SDC Standards Committee.

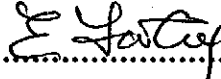
- In total seven decision notices had been received concerning complaints made by Cllr Byrne against fellow councillors and these were considered by SDC Standards Committee on 24th. July.
- In all cases there had been no evidence of councillors breaking the Code of Conduct.
- In two cases, rather than investigate the matters complained of, the committee had recommended a session of "equalities training" for the whole council, at SDC's expense.
- Members generally regarded this proposal by the Standards Committee to be against natural justice and unacceptable, since it assumed that the issues complained of by Cllr Byrne had some substance, which all members strenuously denied.
- It was agreed that no decision about undertaking the offered training was possible until further clarification was received from the Monitoring Officer.
- The Decision Notices and related letters sent to the Monitoring Officer and chairman of the Standards Committee would be included in the Correspondence File, with members' permission.

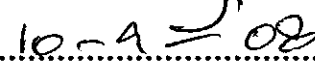
14. Correspondence.

- It was agreed that any unsigned letters received by the council should be returned to the writer if known, for signature and re-submission.

15. Date, time and place of the next monthly Council: 10th September, 2008 at Cross Memorial Hall at 7.30 p.m.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 22.45 hours.

SIGNED AS A TRUE RECORD:  **Chairman**

DATE: 

1. **Present:** Parish Councillors Farley (Chairman), Byrne, Parker and Warner, together with 5 members of the public (list retained).
2. **Public Participation:** *Although invited by the Chairman to speak, there was no public participation. However, before the meeting began, Chairman explained that he had been advised that a previous council meeting had been tape-recorded and that under the council's Standing Orders this is not permitted.*
3. **Apologies for Absence:** Cllr. Rolfe had apologised for his absence to the Clerk, citing ill health. This was accepted. Cllr Mrs Rix had also apologised for her absence to the Clerk, citing her involvement in a regular academic course, of which she had previously made council aware. This was accepted.
4. **Approval of minutes:** A majority approved the minutes of the meetings held on August 13th, subject to the words "and the Internal Auditor" being inserted in paragraph 8(c) spot 1 after the words "after they had been approved by council".
5. **Members' Declarations of Interest:** Cllr Parker declared personal interest in item 14 on the agenda and in any item of correspondence or business relating to Cllr. Byrne, on the grounds of a breakdown of personal relations between them.

Councillor Farley declared a personal interest in a number of items of correspondence between himself and Cllr Byrne, of which he, Cllr Farley, was either the recipient or the author.

Cllr. Byrne asked if Ms Charlotte Grant might read a statement that he had prepared. With Chairman's permission she did so. However, during the reading of the statement it became clear that some issues raised were likely to refer to the Clerk, the employee of the council, and Ms Grant was advised by the clerk that if this were the case, then press and public would have to be excluded. On Cllr Byrne's instruction, Ms Grant then omitted those parts of the statement referring to the clerk.

The Chairman was of the opinion that this statement was not a true declaration of interest and should not be included in its entirety in the published minutes. Cllr Byrne felt that this was unfair, in that previous statements by other councillors had been published in minutes. The statement was passed to the clerk to form part of the public record. The Chairman made it clear that he disagreed with much of the statement and would respond in writing to Cllr Byrne after the meeting.

This statement resulted in several exchanges between Cllr Byrne and fellow councillors. He was required by the Chairman to be silent, or to address the meeting in accordance with Standing Orders. Within these exchanges Cllr. Byrne made remarks about the Chairman's conduct which included the phrase "You treat me like sh**." At the Chairman's request Cllr Byrne repeated these words and in view of their extreme nature members asked the clerk to minute them.

Cllr Warner was of the view that Section 33 of the council's Standing Orders would have to be invoked if Cllr Byrne continued in his behaviour. For the benefit of the public and councillors, the clerk then read Section 33 aloud. It was RESOLVED by majority that, in the event that Cllr Byrne continued to ignore the Chairman's rulings to only speak about the business on the agenda in an acceptable manner and when invited to do so, then he should be called upon to withdraw from the meeting, or alternatively the meeting would have to be suspended and reconvened later. Cllr Byrne appeared to accept this decision of council and agreed to conduct himself as required by the Chairman.

Cllr Byrne then asked that Ms Grant be permitted to read another statement, which he produced at the table and handed to her. She felt unable to read it, so Cllr Byrne asked the clerk to read it aloud. This statement was a personal letter from Ms Grant addressed "To whom it may concern". It explained in some detail the reasons as she saw them for Cllr Byrne's absence from the council meeting on 13th August. Clerk explained that this was not a document from a councillor, but was a matter that should have best been raised in the "Public Participation" part of the meeting. This letter included references to third parties, which could, in the clerk's view, be both upsetting to them and intrusive into their personal affairs, so he advised that he considered it better to read the letter aloud, with Ms Grant's permission, but not to make detailed references in the minutes. The letter would remain on the public record. The Clerk later in the meeting undertook to make Ms Grant aware of how this matter would be recorded in the minutes and would send her a copy of the draft before the next meeting.

6. **To resolve whether or not in view of the special nature of the business that may be transacted, that the public and press should be excluded from any item on the agenda.** It was RESOLVED that in the event that any reference to the Clerk's employment should arise later in the agenda, it may be necessary to exclude press and public, whilst that matter were discussed.

7. **Reports on matters arising from the previous minutes not listed elsewhere on the agenda:** Cllr Parker reported calculations he had made following Mr John Page's presentation at the August meeting in respect of funding at Axbridge Museum. It was agreed that the Museum Trust should be asked for more information about which other parishes had been asked to donate funds and what was the anticipated income from these.

Cllr Parker informed the meeting that Cllr Byrne had appealed against a decision notice issued by Sedgemoor District Council in respect of his, Cllr Parker's alleged breach of the Code of Conduct. This had the effect of keeping the original complaint "live". The Chairman believed that Cllr Byrne had taken this same course of action in respect of other Decision Notices.

Cllr Warner asked that it be noted that the sum of £6,700 mentioned last month at paragraph 8 as the likely excess of income over expenditure at year end March 2009 would represent a fall in the carry-forward figure recorded at year end 2008 which had been £7,580

8. **Resignation of Councillor Jordan.** It was with regret that the Chairman had received a letter of resignation from Cllr Mrs Jordan. He wished to put on record his appreciation of all her hard work both within the council and outside it on behalf of the community. In response to a question from Cllr Parker as to Cllr Jordan's reasons for resignation, the Chairman read the following:

"A complaint was made to the Standards Committee of Sedgemoor District Council by Councillor Byrne under reference 2008/6. This referred to Cllr Byrne allegedly not receiving notice of a youth meeting for reason of his and his partner's sexual orientation. The first that Cllr Jordan knew of this complaint having been made was a letter from SDC. It advised that no finding of fact had been made, but put forward "Equalities training" as a possible solution for the whole council. This inept human relations handling and assumption of presumed guilt through the actions taken by SDC were extremely objectionable. Cllr Jordan considered her good name and reputation had been impugned and that the committee had adjudicated without considering whether or not there was any validity in the original allegation or making any reference to her before reaching its conclusion. She strongly denied that there was any ground for the complaint and sought a withdrawal in order to "Clear her name". SDC has made no response so far and Cllr Jordan considered that she would be better placed to deal with this matter outside the confines of Compton Bishop Parish Council and hence has tendered her resignation."

The Clerk then advised on the procedure for filling the vacancy. He would be posting the notice to Sedgemoor District Council after posting the relevant paper on Council notice boards.

Cllr Byrne reported that he had contacted SDC for the relevant forms and had obtained at least ten signatures to require an election. He also reported that he knew of seven people who wished to stand for election. The Chairman stated that his unilateral action in this matter before the official notice had been displayed and without any discussion or agreement from the council was unacceptable.

9. **Finance**

- a. **Monthly reconciliation(s).** COUNCIL RESOLVED unanimously to approve the monthly reconciliation for August (attached to these minutes).

- b. **Payments due:** COUNCIL RESOLVED that all payments due and listed below should be made:

Clerk's Salary etc.	£147.47	(at £8.39 per hour)
Tim Baker – grass cutting – Invoice 067	£130.00	
Payment to Clerk in respect of Stage 2		
Grievance Procedure	£300.65	
Mrs Sue Ham – expenditure in connection with "Hanging basket" competition	£9.98	

- It was also noted that Cllrs Rolfe and Parker had waived the proposed reimbursement of their costs in respect of work carried out on the Grievance Procedure Stage 1. Chairman thanked them for their generosity.

Note: *Councillor Byrne left the meeting at this point in the meeting (20.40 hours)*

- c. It was RESOLVED that the Clerk should receive the sum of £300.65 in respect of the Grievance Procedure Stage 2 recommendation (see (b) above)
- d. Council noted recent correspondence with Moore Stephens, the council's external auditors as follows.
- The Auditors had returned the Annual Audit Return document requiring the Chairman and Responsible Finance Officer (Clerk) to change figures to reflect the un-presented cheques outstanding at the end of the year 2007/8. In addition the Clerk was requested to give an explanation of both past and present Petty Cash management as this appeared to show money owed to the clerk – a deficit. The clerk had informed Mr John Gravell the council's internal auditor of this situation and had confirmed that Moore Stephens required no input from him in this adjustment process.
 - Moore Stephens had also indicated in their letter that errors in the completion of Annual Audits could result in extra costs.
 - Their investigation into matters that had been raised by Cllr Byrne, as an elector of the parish, was still on-going and were as yet unresolved. They appeared to be separate issues from the Annual Return documentation.
- e. Somerset Arts Week had responded to the council's donation earlier in the year by inviting members to the opening event at Taunton. No one was able to attend and the clerk was asked to write to apologise. Local artist, John Buckler had thanked the council for its support of this event
- f. The clerk reported that the signatories to cheques were now Cllrs Farley, Rix, and Parker and that the mandate showed that the clerk may also sign, but would do so in all cases. Council RESOLVED that Cllr Warner should also be listed as a signatory in accordance with Standing Orders.
- g. It was resolved that the Clerk should claim for his 2008 hourly rate rather than continue with that of the previous year and that in next month's submission for salary will include the back-dated element.

10. Planning: There were no planning applications to be considered.

11. Reports from Advisory Group leaders

a. Environment

- The clerk reported that he had invited 5 companies to tender, but had received only one estimate for work to the two bus-shelters, from D. Ham of Weare in the sums of £1510.00 and £1155.00. Council RESOLVED to accept this estimate. The clerk would also write to the County Councillor to request assistance from his devolved budget to help defray the costs of this work.
- Messrs Blight and Scoble had quoted £375.00 + VAT for a replacement display board for the damaged one at Kennel Lane. It was RESOLVED to accept this estimate and clerk was asked to inform them accordingly. It was hoped that this board and the one for the Memorial Hall would be produced at the same time.
- Cheddar signs had quoted £227.84 plus VAT to supply and fix a roadside sign "Webbington – beneath Crook Peak", which had been vandalised. It was RESOLVED to accept this estimate and the Clerk was asked to inform them accordingly.
- The Clerk was asked to now submit a claim to the council's insurers reflecting the costs above together with an estimate for fixing the display board, which had also been damaged beyond repair. A report had been made to DEFRA, following a complaint to the council, concerning the field of ragwort adjacent to the entrance to Wavering Down Rise. DEFRA claimed they were not able to do anything about it because the landowner had not been identified. Efforts had been made locally, but to no avail and DEFRA was considered a more appropriate body to locate the landowner than the Parish Council. The Clerk will advise DEFRA accordingly.
- The Chairman reported that Dr Sarah Ayling was collecting children's wildlife diaries produced in the school holiday with a view to presenting prizes. There would be a meeting at the Site on 20th September for local Watch Group. The clerk was asked to contact Sedgemoor District Council to discover what progress had been made in repairing Mr Blower's fence adjoining the site.
- A notice to residents about overgrowing vegetation along the footway in Old Coach Road was on the website. Council agreed to a form of words that could be set out in a letter to residents who failed to cut back their vegetation. The Clerk was asked to make Somerset Highways aware of the growth of ivy on the parapet on Bow Bridge in Old Coach Road. This matter would also be mentioned in a Council Newsletter.



- It was agreed to put a warning on the website about possible tick bites when walking on the Mendip.
 - The National Trust had resolved its dispute with some householders about the routing of the Millennium Walk behind properties at Webbington.
 - The AONB draft management plan had been reported at the last council meeting by Cllr Parker. He had attended the AONB meeting and confirmed that there were no matters of concern for the parish.
 - The clerk was asked to contact British telecom to see if figures were available for the usage of the two phone boxes in the parish.
 - Councillor Parker reported run-off from the field adjacent to Vernon Lane and a blocked gully at the end.
- b. Highways**
- Councillors were told that Sedgemoor District Council were of the view that the verge opposite the White Hart Inn was adopted highway verge and the responsibility of Somerset Highways.
12. Somerset Association of Local Councils (SALC) had forwarded details of grants available to local voluntary groups. The clerk was asked to pass a copy to both Mrs Settle as Chairman of Cross Connections and to the Council Chairman. SALC AGM would be held on 27th September at Woolavington.
 13. **Affordable Housing.** Councillors discussed the report on Affordable housing provided by Cllr Parker. It was agreed that the next step would be to issue an invitation in the next newsletter to anyone in the parish who felt that they or their family had a need for "affordable housing" to contact SDC officer Duncan Harvey. It was noted that in SDC's Housing Strategy document the likelihood was that such housing would be concentrated in either Axbridge or Cheddar. Residents would be informed through the council's autumn newsletter.
 14. **Standing Orders.** All councillors present were given a set of agreed Standing Orders. The Clerk is to issue copies to other councillors. In order to inform would-be candidates for council, the clerk would provide the Webmaster with a pdf copy of the document for display on the website.
 15. **Website.** It was agreed that Cllr Parker should act as Liaison Councillor with Mr Patrick Freeman both whilst the latter was on leave and thereafter. It was agreed that costs of maintaining the web-hosting service and retaining the domain name should be reimbursed to Mr Freeman against his receipts as had been done last year. The Clerk is to advise him of these arrangements
 16. **Correspondence.**
 - Cllr Parker asked if it was possible to investigate if council funds might be used to defend councillors in legal actions that were connected with council business. He referred to correspondence item 0902. The matter will be referred to Mr P. Lacey for advice.
 - Council expressed its concern at the response of Ms Wellman at SDC to the Chairman's attempts to keep her informed as to the situation between Cllr Byrne and his colleagues (0906)
 - Item 0917 was passed to Cllr Warner for his perusal and advice at the next meeting if he felt it relevant.
 17. Date, time and place of the next monthly Council: October 8th, 2008 at Cross Memorial Hall at 19.30 hours.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 22.00 hours.

SIGNED AS A TRUE RECORD:.....Chairman

DATE:.....

Present: Parish Councillors Farley (Chairman), Byrne, Parker and Warner, together with 2 members of the public (list retained).

Public Participation: *Although invited by the Chairman to speak, there was no public participation.*

1. **Apologies for Absence:** Cllr. Rolfe had apologised for his absence to the Clerk; he was away in Australia. This was accepted. Cllr Mrs Rix had also apologised for her absence to the Chairman, citing her involvement in a regular academic course, of which she had previously made council aware. This was accepted.

2. **Approval of minutes:** The minutes of the meeting held on September 10th were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record. Cllr. Byrne abstained.

3. **Members' Declarations of Interest:** Cllr Parker declared personal interest in items 7a and 7b and in item 14 - any item of correspondence or business relating to Cllr. Byrne, on the grounds of a breakdown of personal relations between them.

Councillor Farley declared a personal interest in a number of items of correspondence between himself and Cllr Byrne, of which he, Cllr Farley, was either the recipient or the author.

Cllr. Warner declared a personal interest in item 10 as this dealt with a matter that had, in part, derived from an unsubstantiated complaint made against him to SDC Standards Committee.

4. **To resolve whether or not in view of the special nature of the business that may be transacted, that the public and press should be excluded from any item on the agenda.** It was RESOLVED that in the event that any reference to the present Clerk's employment should arise later in the agenda, or any sensitive matter relating to the employment of a temporary clerk, it may be necessary to exclude press and public, whilst those matters were discussed.

5. **Reports on matters arising from the previous minutes not listed elsewhere on the agenda.**

- The Chairman reported that he had written to Cllr Byrne in response to his, Cllr Byrne's, statement at the previous meeting. All councillors were given a copy of that letter dated 20th September, 2008.

- The Chairman and Clerk had investigated the possibility of indemnifying individual councillors against legal costs in the event of action being taken against them. Both SALC and the council's insurers and brokers were of the opinion that unless such an incident arose from actions taken by a councillor with the authorisation of the council then no such indemnification was possible.

- Chairman reported that the Scarecrow Festival organisers had a surplus of funds following the event and this would be held to support a similar venture in 2009. Councillors expressed their thanks to all involved and to Cross Connections for its very successful activities on the Sunday of the Festival weekend.

- Cllr. Parker asked that no reference be made to ivy on the bridge in Old Coach Road in the forthcoming newsletter, as this was not a matter for individuals, but for Somerset Highways.

- Cllr. Parker reported that CPRE was supporting a campaign for Affordable Housing in rural communities. He had completed a questionnaire about facilities and needs in Compton Bishop.

6. **Finance.** The Clerk presented members with a paper showing projected income and expenditure until the end of the financial year, together with up-to-date assets. Members agreed that this should be updated for each monthly meeting and noted that several items listed were estimates; for example, the final cost of Audit and response to queries, the possible forthcoming election and repairs to bus shelters if no grant/donation was forthcoming from the SCC Local Initiatives Budget.

a. **Monthly reconciliation(s).** COUNCIL RESOLVED unanimously to approve the monthly reconciliation for September (attached to these minutes).

b. **Payments due:** COUNCIL RESOLVED that all payments due and listed below should be made:

Cross Memorial Hall (July-Dec mtgs. + 1)	£86.00
Patrick Freeman (website fee)	£24.95
Patrick Freeman (domain name)	£17.63
Clerk's salary etc.	£170.97
Clerk's pay adjustment (see below)	£50.34
Tim Baker – grass cutting (Invoice 100)	£40.00

c. It was RESOLVED that the sum of £100 should be issued for Petty Cash, in view of the need to provide the temporary clerk, Mrs Broadbent, with a positive Petty Cash balance. The Petty cash account would be presented in detail to the Finance Advisory Group and "signed off" before handing over to her.

- d. The Clerk was asked to confirm the accuracy of an item on the invoice from Cross Memorial Hall; Cllr Byrne believed that the booking dated 11th. July might be inaccurate.
 - e. Council reconfirmed its decision at the November 2007 meeting, to donate £250 to "Contact" magazine.
 - f. Council RESOLVED to meet the Clerk's pay adjustment in the sum of £50.34 as set out in a paper presented to each councillor. As from 6th October the Clerk's salary would be paid at a rate of £8.59 per hour with car mileage allowance at 45.8p per mile for vehicles of engine size above 1200cc. The hourly rate was based upon the National Joint Council pay scale (Pt. 18) for the year 2007/8 and so would need to be reviewed once scales for 2008/9 had been agreed. The mileage allowance readjustment was based upon 2008/9 rates. From now onwards pay claims would be based upon these figures.
 - g. It was RESOLVED to make a grant towards Village Carol singing in the sum of £28 following a request by Mrs Margaret Jordan.
 - h. The Chairman had responded in a detailed letter to requests for information received from Moore Stephens (External Auditors). A copy of the letter would be made available to Cllr Byrne.
 - i. It was RESOLVED that without further information from Axbridge Museum Trust about the response from other parishes to its plea for financial assistance, the Council would not make a donation at this time. The Clerk would endeavour to find out if any such donation or grant would be anticipated as an ongoing annual event by the Trust. In that event some consideration would have to be made on the forthcoming budget-setting process. The Clerk would attend the AGM of the Trust on 21st October and make a report back to Council.
 - j. The Clerk reported that funding from SCC Local Initiatives Budget was not certain, but that County Councillor Alan Ham was aware of the costs involved in bus-shelter repairs and would put this forward for consideration.
 - k. Council RESOLVED to meet the costs of an Autumn Newsletter, amounting to about £20. A draft will be available at the November meeting.
 - l. All councillors were asked to inform Cllr Warner of any projected expenditure they anticipate, above the normal, for consideration in preparing a draft budget for 2008/9. Such a draft would be ready for consideration at the November meeting so that a Precept figure may be agreed.
7. **Planning:** As statutory consultee, Council RESOLVED, to raise no objection with Sedgemoor District Council to the following applications, although the Clerk would also pass on some concerns and ask for clarity about the proposed drainage system for the site.

a. **Reference number: 21/08/00011/CG (received 26/09/08)**

Town and Country Planning Act 1990

Town and Country Planning General Development Orders 1995

Proposal: Retention of track

Location: Land at Wavering Down Farm, Webbington Road, Compton Bishop, Axbridge, BS26 1AA

Applicant: Mr D Gaze

b. **Reference number: 21/08/00012/CG (received 29/09/08)**

Town and Country Planning Act 1990

Town and Country Planning General Development Orders 1995

Proposal: Formation of horse riding arean

Location: Land at Wavering Down Farm, Webbington Road, Compton Bishop, Axbridge, BS26 1AA

Applicant: Mr D Gaze

8. **Reports from Advisory Group leaders**

a. **Environment**

- The clerk reported that Mr. D. Ham of Weare had agreed to begin work on the repairs to bus shelters towards the end of the month. It was agreed that residents should be informed that this work was imminent and that concerns were expressed about children waiting for buses whilst work was in progress. This matter is to be raised with Mr Ham. Letters to neighbouring householders and items on the website and in the Autumn Newsletter would be appropriate.

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- The Clerk reported that Messrs Blight and Scoble anticipated completion of display cabinets/notice boards for Kennel Lane and the Memorial Hall within the next 2-3 weeks.
- The Clerk had submitted an insurance claim for all works at Kennel Lane. Cheddar Signs Services had quoted for fixing the new Kennel Lane display cabinet. The total cost for cabinet, sign and fixings would be £863.15 of which £128.56 would be VAT and refundable to the Council. The insurance excess would be £125.00. Council asked the Clerk to confirm what permissions may be necessary to locate the new Kennel Lane display cabinet in a safer site, on the West side of Kennel Lane, near the street name sign.
- Dr Sarah Ayling had provided a report on activities and future work to be carried out at the Springfield Wildlife site. Council was disappointed to learn that children in the community had not taken up Dr Ayling's suggestion of a summer-time nature diary. It was suggested that next year Cross Connections might be able to help with publicity. The Clerk was asked to contact SDC once more about the damage to Mr Blower's fence.
- It was reported that although the majority of overhanging vegetation along Old Coach Road bordering the footway had been cut back, a few gardens had vegetation extending beyond their boundaries. Cllr Byrne was asked to provide the Chairman with details of the properties that he felt needed to be advised to cut back vegetation.
- The Scaurs bridleway was reported to be in a dangerous condition and the gate at the top is said to be broken. The Chairman would investigate.
- The Clerk was asked to contact Compton Bishop Estates to ensure that their hedge-cutting contractor is required not to leave excessive amounts of debris on the highway.
- The council was clear that the responsibility for ragwort removal lay with DEFRA and not Natural England and that the Clerk should inform DEFRA accordingly.
- Details of an AONB grant scheme, "Sustainable Development Fund" would be passed to Cross Connections by the Clerk.
- Cllr Parker would apply for free bulbs from Sedgemoor and plant them around our village signs.
- Cllr Warner will attend a Somerset Levels and Moors meeting entitled "Local Action for Rural Communities", when details are received. It is believed this group may indicate other sources of grant funding for local projects.

b. Highways

- Councillors were told that Somerset County Council Highways had sent a map to indicate that it had ownership of the verge opposite the White Hart Inn. It was agreed that no further action on bench replacement at this site would be wise in the short term. Mrs Dickinson, resident, had offered to fund a new bench, but she concurred with this view. The meeting had been suspended and re-convened to hear her view on this matter.
 - The Clerk was to ask SCC Highways for an extra grass verge cut on the North side between Bourton Lane and Newtown to improve sight lines and space for pedestrians. Also can "No Footway – pedestrians on road" signs be erected between Church Lane and the Memorial Hall area? The Clerk was also to enquire the reason for so many road-works in Cross Lane recently.
- 9. Temporary Parish Clerk.** The Chairman reported that Mrs Sandra Broadbent had now agreed to a temporary contract to act as Temporary Parish Clerk to run from 3rd November to 12th February. Exact details of how the hand-over would take place will be discussed with her shortly. Cllr Byrne wished it to be noted that he was unhappy with the means by which this appointment had been made. The Clerk referred him to the minutes of the June meeting when the procedure for appointment had been discussed and determined. Cllr Byrne had left that meeting early and so was not present for the discussion. In answer to a query from Cllr Byrne the Chairman re-iterated that he, Cllr Byrne, should continue to channel correspondence for the council through the Chairman and that he should have no contact with the temporary Clerk.
- 10. Equality and Diversity Training.** Councillors heard that a course in Equality and Diversity training had been offered by SDC. In the event the target audience for this course is to be widened to include other local parishes and perhaps SDC staff, members were asked if they would wish to attend. In principle all agreed, with the exception of Cllr Parker, who felt that his professional background had equipped him to understand the issues involved. The Chairman would contact Ms Wellman at SDC and suggest new dates in the light of the suggestion to widen the audience base.
- 11. Councillor vacancy.** The Clerk informed members that 4th December was the date chosen by SDC to hold an election for the Parish Councillor vacancy should this become necessary. Notices asking for nominations will be displayed shortly. Council agreed that polling cards will be a necessity.

Note: Cllr Byrne left the meeting at 22.00hrs

- 12. Somerset Association of Local Councils (SALC)** The Chairman had attended a recent meeting and all councillors had received his report prior to the meeting.
- 13. Website.** Cllr Parker reported that all was well with the website.
- 14. Correspondence.**
 - Councillors were asked to help complete a Council Services questionnaire. This would be circulated and the combined results collated by the Chairman.
 - A letter from Cllr Byrne dated 25th September was discussed. Whilst it was similar to one printed in a recent copy of the Cheddar Valley Gazette, there were serious unfounded accusations against the Council within this version, which it appeared, had received widespread circulation. The Council agreed the following statement:

A "Lampoon" apparently concerning Councillor Byrne of this Council has been given wide circulation. This Council regrets that one of its Councillors should attract through his actions such satire, even though his actions have attempted to bring this Council into disrepute and he has done his best to make it dysfunctional. Councillor Byrne has issued a letter dated 25th September, 2008 denying any involvement in the "Lampoon" production, but in so doing has stated that this Council has spread "Hate" about him.

Such a statement from Councillor Byrne is deplored and very strongly denied. It is unwarranted, even though Councillor Byrne has made many unsupported allegations against colleague councillors, has abused Standing Orders and been completely uncooperative. He alludes to being bullied by this Council and this is equally unjust when it is he that has exhibited that style and made threats towards councillors.

- 15. Date, time and place of the next monthly Council:** November 12th, 2008 at Cross Memorial Hall at 19.30 hours

There being no further business the meeting closed at 22.20 hours.

SIGNED AS A TRUE RECORD:.....**Chairman**

DATE:12-11-08.....

Present: Parish Councillors Farley (Chairman), Byrne, Parker and Warner, together with 1 member of the public (list retained).

Public Participation: *Although invited by the Chairman to speak, there was no public participation.*

1. **Apologies for Absence:** Cllr. Rolfe had apologised for his absence to the Clerk; he was unable to attend due to illness. This was accepted.
2. **Members' Declarations of Interest:** There were none.
3. **Application reference:** 21/08/00013/CG

Town and Country Planning Act 1990

Town and Country Planning General Development Orders 1995

Proposal: Use of land to site an agricultural workers mobile home

Location: Mobile Home, Bramble Farm, Webbington Road, Compton Bishop, Axbridge

Applicant: Mr B Flood

It was RESOLVED unanimously to inform Sedgemoor District Council that, subject to a condition of planning permission, that the screening hedgerow be maintained at a height of 3 to 4m, the council supported the application

Note: Cllr. Byrne left the meeting at 18.32hrs

4. Budget matters.

- Councillors RESOLVED that subject to any further suggestions for likely expenditure in 2009/10, the Clerk and the Leader of the Finance Advisory Group should draw up a draft budget for presentation at the November meeting.
- It was noted that there were several unresolved financial demands on this year's income, which included possible election costs, Audit fees for both the standard external audit and in respect of queries raised directly with the auditors by Cllr. Byrne.
- The bid for Local Initiative Grant (LIG) funding for the bus shelter repairs had been unsuccessful, but Community Chest a less generous source of grant may be available. LIG funding was being channelled into the installation of Speed Indicator Devices, a footpath to Brent Knoll and the beach at Brean. A sum would need to be included in the budget for a SID installation within Cross village (£750 for a post, a one off charge and £500 annually for use).
- Work on repairs to both bus shelters was due to begin in November.
- The possibility of setting up a project-specific reserve fund such as the purchase of land for a sports ground, was discussed.
- It was noted that Sedgemoor District Council had £77,197 in its RTL 3 fund (developers' contributions) available for the Cheddar Valley Cluster area parishes to claim for specific projects. This fund and its distribution would be discussed at Badgworth and Biddisham Village Hall on 18th November.
- A request for an annual donation for 2009/10 had been received from "Contact" magazine and this would be included in the draft budget.

5. Request from the Clerk.

- The Clerk was instructed to re-write a recent cheque to "Contact" magazine in the sum of £250.00. The previously written cheque had been erroneously made payable to "Crook Peak Benefice".

There being no further business the meeting closed at 18.45 hours.

Cllr Parker distributed an outline draft of the Autumn Parish Newsletter & requested that Councillors provide him with relevant articles as soon as possible and prior to the NEXT Council Meeting

SIGNED AS A TRUE RECORD: E Farley Chairman

DATE: 12-10-08

Present: Parish Councillors Farley (Chairman), Byrne, Parker and Warner, together with 6 members of the public (list retained).

The Chairman offered a warm welcome to Mrs Broadbent who has taken over from Paul Passey while he is visiting New Zealand. The Chairman wished Mr Passey a safe journey and pleasant holiday.

Public Participation: The Chairman invited the public to speak, Mr Colin Rix asked about a newsletter circulated by Cllr Byrne where he said that a former Cllr Margaret Jordan was not found innocent of discrimination. However, a newsletter circulated by Compton Bishop PC said that Mrs Jordan was exonerated. Mr Rix asked has she been found guilty or not? Chairman said that there is an item on the agenda dealing with this, but the Standards Committee advised that, "The allegations were not upheld and they made no finding of fact". Cllr Byrne said that the newsletter circulated by CBPC does not come from the full council. The Chairman asked for it to be minuted that he does not support the views expressed by Cllr Byrne.

1. **Apologies for Absence:** Cllr. Rolfe had apologised for his absence to the Chairman and SDC. This was accepted. Cllr Mrs Rix had also apologised for her absence to the Chairman, citing her involvement in a regular academic course, of which she had previously made council aware. This was accepted.
2. **Approval of minutes:** Before the minutes of the meeting held on October 8th were approved The Chairman said that he received a letter on the 12/11/08 dated 11/11/08 from Cllr Byrne outlining his concerns about the 8th October Parish Council meeting minutes. Cllr Byrne said that items 14 and 9 were not correct. The chairman read out items 14 and 9. The Chairman explained that temporary appointments do not have to be advertised. The discussion to recruit a temporary clerk was discussed in June and it was decided to appoint a temporary clerk. The Chairman asked the members if they approve items 9 and 14 Cllrs Farley, Parker and Warner approved these items. The Chairman then asked if cllrs approved the minutes. Minutes of the previous PC meeting were signed by the Chairman as a true record. Cllr. Byrne abstained. The minutes of the planning meeting on 22/11/08 were approved unanimously.
3. **Members' Declarations of Interest:** Cllr Parker declared personal interest in items 5a any item of correspondence or business relating to Cllr. Byrne, on the grounds of a breakdown of personal relations between them. Councillor Farley declared a personal interest in items 5 and items of correspondence between himself and Cllr Byrne, of which he, Cllr Farley, was either the recipient or the author. Cllr. Warner declared a personal interest in items 10 and 13. Cllr Byrne declared a personal interest in the planning application made by Jans free Range.
4. Should public and press be excluded from any item on the agenda because of the special nature of business. Cllrs Warner, Parker and Farley agreed. Cllr Byrne abstained.
5. Cllr Byrne read out a letter from himself dated 19/10/08 where he said that he had:
 - 1) No confidence in the temporary clerk
 - 2) No confidence in the Chairman
 - 3) No confidence in the leader of the Highways Committee
 - 4) No confidence in the leader of the Environment Committee
 - 5) No confidence in the leader of the Finance Committee
 - 6) No confidence in the leader of the planning committee.Cllr Parker told Cllr Byrne that they were not committees but advisory groups, he then asked why he had no confidence in the Environment Advisory Group he cited hedging and street furniture and this has nothing to do with the EAG. The Chairman asked if there was anyone to second Cllr Byrne's motion. The motion was not supported and so failed, no other Cllrs agreed with Cllr Byrne.
- 6 Cllr Warner raised the issue of the funding for Axbridge Museum. Chairman to ask Clerk, Paul Passey if he attended the meeting where the issue was discussed.
- 7 **Finance**

The Temporary Clerk tabled a single copy of the accounts and will give one to each member but said that she would provide individual copies for the next meeting.

 - a. **Monthly reconciliation(s).** The temporary clerk read out the reconciliation for October and the COUNCIL RESOLVED unanimously to approve the monthly reconciliation for October (attached to these minutes).
 - b. **Payments due:** COUNCIL RESOLVED that all payments due and listed below should be made:

St Andrew's press in Wells	£37.00
Clerk's salary etc.	£175.45

Cllr Byrne asked why we were using St Andrew's press and Chairman explained the usual printers were closed for half term.
 - c. An elector had made a complaint about the PC accounts. The elector turned out to be Cllr Byrne, who accused the council of false accounting. The council auditors have not signed off as yet because Moore Stephens are undertaking a full investigation. Chairman read out a letter from Moore Stephens. Which stated that our accounts are still open. The Chairman said that he had spoken to the auditors and they are happy and satisfied with the accounts and hope to sign them off once they had a reply from a letter they are sending to Cllr Byrne. It was noted that the fee would now be in the region of £800 in addition to the usual fee of £150. The Chairman said it was totally regrettable that the council has to pay the increased amount and this was due to Cllr Byrne making the accusation without exhausting internal remedies first. Cllr Byrne accused the Chairman of being a liar. Cllr Parker asked if Moore Stephens had found anything wrong with our accounts?

Three unbanked cheques had to be brought into account and the submission form so amended. The Chairman put the question to Cllr Byrne that he had accused the Chairman of lying. Cllr Byrne said that he had taped conversations of the Chairman. Cllr Parker asked Cllr Byrne to supply the council with these tapes as he was making a serious allegation and that he may have information that is relevant and it is incumbent upon him to disclose. The Chairman brought the meeting to order.

- d. There is a Somerset County Council Local Initiatives budget of £15,000. The Parish Council's bid to improve bus shelters had been rejected. The PC has an opportunity to apply to the Community Chest. Cllrs Byrne, Warner, Parker and Farley supported an application to the Community Chest. Speed indicators were approved through the LIG. The cost would be £500 pa, Highways did not approve the siting of an indicators in Webbington Road but did approve one to be sited in Old Coach Rd. Cllr Byrne said that he was not happy with the speed camera. The meeting was adjourned at 20.30 pm as a parishioner wished to put a question to the cllrs. Mr Peter Omerod asked about using hand held speed cameras, which would be on a voluntary basis and may not be so costly. The Chairman responded and said that the Speed Watch Scheme needed trained volunteers and police approval. Council had not approved a scheme. The meeting resumed at 20.33
- e. Cllr Warner presented the draft budget. He commented that the financial picture looked gloomy, as there were some unexpected cost. Cllr Warner went through the projected 08/09 costs. He said the bus shelter repair is necessary but costly. The loss of the "No claims" record from Allianz Insurance regarding the Kennel Lane Notice-board will have financial implications. The Moore Stephens cost might be £1,600 not £2,400 as first indicated. Cllr Warner said that the Council's precept might have to increase by 20%. Cllr Parker said that this was unacceptable. The Chairman thanked Cllr Warner for all his hard efforts. The Chairman proposed the resolution that we apply for an increase in the precept of 20%. Cllrs Byrne, Warner, Parker and Farley approved with a review later in the year. The resolution was carried.
- f. No further reports from the Finance Advisory Group.
8. **Planning: a. Reference number: 21/08/00014/SJR (Dated 24/10/08)**

Proposal: Erection of front porch on site of existing (to be demolished) and rear conservatory

Location: Mearebrook, Old Coach Road, Cross, BS26 2EG

Applicant: Mr H Hoy

Recommendation: The Planning Advisory Group recommends that there should be no objection to this application. However, the following comments should be attached to any response.

- The building materials for the front porch should match the existing dwelling.
- The Planning Authority should ensure compliance if relevant, to policy BE2 (c).
- Council supported this application and the Temporary Clerk asked to reply to Sedgemoor accordingly.

b. **Reference number: 21/08/00015/CJA (Dated 29th October 2008)**

Proposal: Erection of agricultural workers dwelling

Location: Agricultural workers dwelling, Southcroft Farm, Cross Lane, cross, BS26 2ED

Applicant: Jan's free Range

Cllr Byrne declared a verbal declaration of interest in this application. Cllr Parker said that we should ask planners to include letters from architects when reviewing applications. The recommendations were read out. Cllrs Byrne, Farley, Parker and Warner approved. The Clerk was asked to return the application to Sedgemoor with the approved comments.

Note: *Cllr Byrne left the meeting at 21.05 hrs stating that the clerk had not treated him with respect and that he would like to receive the correspondence that had not been shown to him.*

9. Reports from Advisory Group leaders

a. Environment

- Repairs to the bus shelter are due to take place shortly.
- There will be two notice boards, which Cllr Rolfe is to collect. They will be in natural oak and it is recommended that they should not be varnished.
- It was proposed that the notice board at Kennel Lane should be repositioned to the south side of Kennel Lane given SCC approves. Mr Liam Gill has been asked about this. It is noted that the council will have to reinstate the broken fence. Cheddar signs have to erect the village sign.
- Mr David Aggett is to make direct contact with Mr Blower. Clerk said she had an email from Mr Aggett asking for Mr Blower's telephone number.
- The Gate at the top of the Scaurs footpath needs replacing. National Trust should do something about it, but they deny ownership. The meeting adjourned at 21.10 as Mrs Tyas made a point of information saying that historically owners had to maintain the land on the other side of the fence. Meeting resumed at 21.12. Clerk to write to Mr Crawford to ask if he can replace the gate.

b. Highways

- Mr Gill had been asked about progress with the sign posts in Webbington Road which are due to be refurbished. Cllr Farley said that he made contact with Mr Liam Gill.

10. **Equality and Diversity Training** is due to be held on 17th November, Mrs Louis Potter is to confirm. Axbridge, Weare and Compton Bishop councillors are expected to attend. Cllr Parker said that he had contacted Mr John Healey, minister for Local Government, regarding the Standards Board, Code of Conduct and The Standards

Committee. The letter was forwarded to 'Communities and Local Government'. Cllr Parker said that the Policy Advisor was very interested in his comments and wanted him to send more. So Cllr Parker said it would be very useful to widen the scope of these comments, particularly in view of The Standards Board's invitation for consultation. Cllr Parker proposed that a working group of councils i.e Axbridge, Cheddar and Weare be contacted with a view to holding a workshop of Chairman/Chairpersons to identify possible improvements in the system process. Cllr Parker offered to organise and facilitate the workshop. Cllrs Warner and Farley supported this view and it was resolved that Cllr Parker would contact each council whilst the Chairman was on leave.

11. Parish Council Elections. The election is to be held on 4th December and there are five candidates. The chairman congratulated all the candidates and was heartened by the response. The Council has opted for polling cards and all residents listed in the register for Electors are legally entitled to vote and will know.

12. SALC nothing to report.

13. November newsletter and misrepresentation. Chairman tabled a report titled, Report Concerning Unofficial Newsletters. Council was asked to consider that Council either 1) Accept the position that Cllr Byrne uses the banner heading of, COMPTON BISHOP PARISH COUNCIL or 2) Have recorded in the minutes a resolution reflecting council's views on the actions of Councillor Byrne in publishing these 2 newsletters 3) Consider a censure motion against Cllr Byrne for his publishing actions 4) By supporting the notice issued, instruct Cllr Byrne not to use Compton Bishop Parish Council's banner unless authorised to do so 5) Consider legal action to prevent such misuse of the Council's banner 6) Formally submit a complaint to Sedgemoor District Council's Standards Committee.

Resolution: Council resolved that items 2,3,4 and 6 from minute 13 above are supported and should be put into effect. 1)To have recorded in the minutes a resolution reflecting Council's views on the actions of Cllr Byrne in publishing his new newsletters. 2) Apply a censure motion against Cllr Byrne for his publishing action 3) Validate the notice issued to Cllr Byrne dated 7.11.08 and 4) Formally submit a complaint to SDC's Standards Committee. Cllrs Farley, Parker and Warner approved the resolution. Chairman said the resolution was carried.

14. Website. Cllr Parker updated members: all approved council minutes are on the website, details of the bus shelter repairs and the elections. The Chairman thanked Cllr Parker.

15. Correspondence. It had not been possible to assemble the full file in time for the meeting. It would be circulated when available and be combined with that of November ready for the next meeting. PDF copies will be circulated electronically and the October collation will be made available to Cllr Byrne separately. Cllr Warner asked that the Temporary Clerk provide items requiring Advisory Group action to Advisory Group leaders as soon as the correspondence becomes available.

- Chairman discussed Cheddar Valley Cluster Group meeting and said that cluster group meetings should be attended by elected members only. The preceding PACTS meeting is open to the public. Cllr Byrne had a friend with him who was not an elected member. The Chairman had written to him about this matter.
- Cllr Parker mentioned road salt spreading and said there was a split bag by the M5 Loxton Bridge The Temporary Clerk was instructed to contact the relevant body.

16. Date, time and place of the next monthly Council: December 10th. 2008 at Cross Memorial Hall at 19.30 hours

There being no further business the meeting closed at 21.45 hours.

SIGNED AS A TRUE RECORD:.....**Chairman**

DATE:10-12-08.....

Present: Parish Councillors: Farley (Chairman), Byrne, Parker, Warner, Rolfe and Windmill together with 6 members of the public (list retained).

The Chairman gave out three notices 1) he offered a warm welcome to the newly elected councillor, Mr David Windmill 2) he mentioned that it was reported in the London Gazette that Brigadier Tom Lang is to hold the role of a Deputy Lieutenant Commission and 3) the Chairman reported that he had received an email from the clerk Paul Passey who is in New Zealand, who sent his best wishes.

Public Participation: *Although invited by the Chairman to speak, there was no public participation.*

- 1. Apologies for Absence:** Cllr Rix had apologised for her absence to the Chairman citing her involvement in an ongoing academic course, of which she has previously made the council aware. This was accepted.
- 2. Approval of minutes:** The minutes of the meeting held on November 12 were approved by Cllrs Farley, Warner, Parker and Byrne. Cllrs Windmill and Rolfe abstained from approval as they were not present at the meeting held on the 12th November. The minutes were signed by the Chairman as a true record. Cllr Warner asked about the broken fence at Kennel Lane and whether the council was responsible for replacing it. He was informed that it was covered by the Council's insurance. The Chairman read out a censure motion concerning Councillor Byrne. Under minute number 13 of the meeting held on 12th November 2008 Council determined that Councillor Byrne should be censured for his publishing actions, which have and continue to bring this Council into disrepute. In particular, his use of the official banner title of the Council on personal matters, which are completely unauthorised by the council. The flagrant disregard of a notice dated 7.11.08 served upon him to that effect. His publication of confidential Standards Committee information whilst due process is being followed and his complete failure to observe this Council's Standing Orders and maliciously causing Council's resources to be improperly used through his perverse and persistent complaint submissions. This censure motion was proposed by Cllr Farley and Seconded by Cllr Warner and approved by Cllr Parker the motion was carried.
- 3. Members' Declarations of Interest:** Cllr Parker declared a personal interest in items 6, 15 any items related to Cllr Byrne and item 12 planning application at Wavering Down Farm as he is a neighbour. Cllr Rolfe declared a personal interest in any item relating to Cllr Byrne. Cllr Warner declared a personal involvement in item 15. Councillor Farley declared a personal interest in items 2 as he was the author of the censure motion, items 9 and 10 as he is the author of the report, items 11c as he is he author of the submission and item 15 as he is the author of the letters to Cllr Byrne; 1102,1106,1111,1112,1117,1119,1121,1124,1125,1126,1129 to 1134.
- 4. To resolve whether in view of the special nature of the business that may be transacted that the public and press should be excluded from any item on the agenda.** It was unanimous that there was nothing to resolve.
- 5. To welcome the newly elected Councillor.** The clerk gave Cllr Windmill a copy of Council Standing Orders and said that the Code of Conduct publication was on order and would be given to him as soon as she receives it. Cllr windmill signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office form and the Notification of a Member's Financial and other Interest's form
- 6. Review Procedure for Correspondence:** Cllr Warner would like to see correspondence related to the Advisory Groups first before it is scanned. Clerk was instructed to identify with Advisory Group leaders which correspondence should be seen first. Cllr Parker said that scanning into PDF format is time consuming for the clerk and eats into the clerk's time. Cllr Rolfe recommended a summary description. Cllr Parker said that he would look again at the index and cover sheet.
- 7. Freedom of Information: model publication scheme.** Cllr Parker took the councillors through all parts of the publication and identified through a report the adoption of a model under the Freedom of Information Act. Cllr Warner raised the matter of cost of implementation. Cllr Parker recommended that as the report had to be adopted by 31st December that the Cllrs adopt it as a proforma, then work out a scale of reasonable charges at the next meeting. Cllr Parker was asked to make some changes to the text, deleting the word 'committee' for 'advisory group'. Cllr Parker proposed adopting the scheme, which was carried unanimously. The report will be put on the council's website
- 8. To receive a report from Cllr Parker re: code of Conduct Consultation.** Cllr Parker reported that a meeting between Cheddar PC and Compton Bishop PC was held on 28th November. The authorised representatives were Liz Brimmel and Cllr Barry Carter from Cheddar and Cllrs Parker, Rolfe and Warner from Compton Bishop. Cllr Parker distributed a summary of Consultation questions and response. The questions were examined. Secondly, Cllr Parker explained the Code of Conduct for employees. He said that the only point to be expanded was item 16 as it does not reflect the Code of Conduct and is aimed at larger councils. Cllr Parker said that there was a recognised need for a Code of Conduct for clerks. Cllr Parker proposed this and Cllr Byrne seconded it – the motion was unanimously carried. The Chairman thanked Cllr Parker for all his hard work. The final paper delivered by Cllr Parker was titled, The Complaints procedure – Grass Roots Experience/Issues. Cllr Parker said that as it does not have to be given in as early as the other papers a response can be made at the next Parish Council meeting.
- 9. To receive submission to Pioneer Somerset.** Cllr Farley handed out the document; Pioneer Somerset, 'Devolution of Services' Survey, the Cllrs all said that they were happy with the proforma however, it was agreed that grass cutting along the verges in the parish was not as good as it should be. Cllr Parker suggested that guided walks were something that could be offered by the council.

10. To report on Equality and diversity Training and progress.

Cllr Farley reported that SDC organised the training and it was held in Cross Memorial Hall on 10.12.08, but attendance was not very good. Cllr Byrne said herepresented the parish councils at Weare, Axbridge and Cheddar. Cllr Byrne said that he sent a report to the three parish councils. Cllr Parker commented on the cost implications to the taxpayer if the recommendations were taken to the extreme. The Council decided to use the Association SALC if they needed advise on this matter and not purchase expensive books that could date.

11 Finance

a. **Monthly reconciliation(s).** The temporary clerk read out the reconciliation for November and the COUNCIL RESOLVED unanimously to approve the monthly reconciliation for November (attached to these minutes).

b. **Payments due:** COUNCIL RESOLVED that all payments due and listed below should be made:

Clerk's salary and expenses (6 weeks not 4 weeks)	£268.70
Bus shelter repair	£2,853.00
Parish Council election costs	£1,264.30

The Council decided to transfer the sum of £3,000 into the current account to pay for the cost of the bus shelter repair and the PC election costs. Cllr Warner requested that it is minuted the donation to Contact Magazine is for the period 2009-2010 and not 2008-2009.

c. **To note response to and from community chest:** The sum of £750 has been awarded to help pay for the repair of the bus shelters.

d. **Precept form submission, amenity grant and open meeting.** The Council had requested the precept for 2009/10 be increased by 20%. Cllr Parker proposed and seconded by Cllr Byrne. Clerk instructed to process the form. It was reported that probably no amenity grant will be awarded to the council for 2009. The date for the Open Meeting will be Friday 24th April 2009.

e. **Any further reports from the Finance Advisory Group.** Cllr Farley said that Moore Stephens will be closing the Parish Audit this week – Cllr Farley read out a letter from Moore Stephens. The Audit Commission were intending to charge the council £592.00 for their part in Cllr Byrne's complaint and £1,402.50 for Moore Stephens all plus VAT.

It was recorded that this Council had made no request for the investigation by either Moore Stephens or the Audit Commission in to malpractices/abuse of funds by the Council. This complaint had been made solely by Cllr Byrne without prior knowledge of Council and as a direct result the costs outlined have been incurred. Cllr Farley reported that neither auditor required any further action, had found the allegations to be groundless and the audit was closed.

12. Planning:

a. **Reference number:** 21/08/00016/CG

Proposal Retention of Track

Location Land at Wavering Down Farm, Old Coach Road, Cross Axbridge BS26 2EL

Applicant Mr D Gaze

Ref No 21/08/00016/CG

Recommendation: The planning Advisory Group supports the construction of an unobtrusive track located in a position, which does not harm the scenic quality of the landscape in this Area of outstanding Natural Beauty.

Planning: b. Reference number: 21/08/00017/SJ

Proposal Erection of two-storey side extension to include garage, partly on site of existing (to be demolished)

Location Weare Close, Old Coach Road, Cross, Axbridge BS26 2EQ

Applicant Mr and Mrs I Currell

Recommendation: The planning Advisory Group supports the construction of the extension but also support a compromise in respect of the design of the roof so that the extension does not harm the residential amenity of Greystacks.

Cllr Byrne mentioned a protest outside the White Hart Inn at 11.30-11.45 in protest of the proposed planning permission to build on the car park of the White Hart and convert the Inn into two dwellings.

Note: Cllr Byrne left the meeting at 21.35 hr

13 Reports from Advisory Group leaders

a. Environment

- Cllr Parker reported on the AONB Partnership. The Draft Management Plan 2009-2014
- The Scaurs: Mr James Crawford has repaired the gate. The Clerk was instructed to write to Mr Crawford to thank him and mention that the Scaurs is a bridle path and that the gate needs to be suitable for horses.
- Cllr Parker is satisfied with the bus shelter repairs.
- Cllr Rolfe said that the cost of erecting the notice board at the Memorial Hall was approximately £30 Councillors approved the payment.

- A license is needed to reposition the notice board at Kennel Lane. It was reported that only an SCC road contractor can erect a notice board on the highway. Cllr Farley to submit an application for a license.
- Stop the Drop and anti litter report was brought to the attention of the council.
- Following the invitation, in the Parish Newsletter, to submit an interest in Affordable Housing to SDC. Duncan Harvey reported back to the council that no expression of interest has been received.

b.Highways

- Mr Gill had been asked about progress with the sign posts in Webbington Road which are due to be refurbished. Cllr Farley said that they are under repair.
- Problem with mud running off the field in Bourton Lane, the farmer to be approached
- The grit bag has been re-positioned back from the road edge and the mud has been removed from the road edge on the bend of Barton Road and Kennel Lane junction.

14 Website. Cllr Parker updated members: election results are on the website, it was decided that social events e.g. carol singing should not be advertised on the Parish website. Cllr Farley said that he would write to all the candidates in the parish elections and thank them for participating, which the council appreciated.

15 Correspondence. Cllr Parker mentioned the letter numbered 1213, which in his opinion is abusive and confrontational, irrational and offensively bullying. Not what should be expected from a member of this Council. Also, item 1218 another letter from Cllr Byrne, which demonstrated Cllr Byrne's unreasonable attitude to this Council. It is abusive, confrontational, irrational, offensively bullying and factually incorrect. Cllr Parker said that he takes issue on two points: 1) Cllr Byrne states that "Cllr Parker said I am warning you", this is untrue, I have never uttered these words. 2) In Cllr Byrne's last paragraph he mentions the state of the verge at Kennel Lane junction and states, "We are here to look after the people of the parish not to turn a blind eye to hazards such as this". How offensive to even suggest such a thing he is attempting to discredit this council. Cllr Parker proposes that Cllr Byrne be censured for showing, in these two letters, a lack of respect to this Council and its members and through them has breached the code of conduct – paragraph 3(1), 3(2)(b) and 5. The proposal was carried.

16. To resolve the date, time and place of the next monthly Council: January 14th 2009 at Cross Memorial Hall at 19.30 hours

There being no further business the meeting closed at 22.00 hours.

SIGNED AS A TRUE RECORD:*E Farley*.....Chairman
DATE:14-01-09.....