

HUISH CHAMPFLOWER PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk to the Parish: Dorothy Hayward

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Meeting of Huish Champflower Parish Council

held on the 14th November 2023 at 7:30pm in the Village Hall

Present: Dorothy Hayward (DH) (Clerk), Mary Abel (MA), Sarah Payne (SPa), Stephen Kimsey (SK) (Chair), Stephen Powles (SPo), Cllr Francis Nicholson (FN) and Marc Vyvyan-Jones.

1	Apologies:- Louise Cook (LC), Chris Chanter (CC), Cllr Steven Pugsley (SPu).	
2	Declarations of Interest- None	
3	Minutes of the meeting on the 26th September 2023. It was agreed that these were an accurate record of the meeting. It was proposed that they were accepted by MA and seconded by SPa, the minutes were accepted and signed off by the chair.	
4	<p>Matters Arising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Date of next meeting incorrectly said December rather than November-corrected on signed copy. ● Appeals have gone out for finger post signs but no luck as yet, it will be in the parish magazine next month. The signs can be left anonymously at the village hall if necessary. It will save a lot of money if we can find them. ● There has been no contact from the grit bin officer, it is proposed to go back to the old system of a large paper map and a meeting with all the Highway Wardens for the parishes. ● Woodland on the Cleeve the structure has started sliding down the hill. Action DH to contact Russell Williams in the planning dept. ● Fencing letter still to be sent Action DH ● Brown lane, the costs of repairing would take the whole budget for the county, they have it on their lists, but can only afford to do reactive repairs for safety reasons. This is frustrating for both residents and officers. ● Footpath past the stables on the Cleeve, MVJ has recently sent photos to the new footpath officer but he has a large patch to cover. 	DH DH
5	<p>Updates from Somerset Council Councillors. - Somerset Council in very difficult financial circumstances, redundancies following the unification of councils have not all happened and £70 million added to the budget for the fair costs of care. Big decisions need to be made in order to avoid bankruptcy and commissioners being appointed. Somerset Council has until Feb 2024 to set a balanced budget. This is not a good position to be in.</p> <p>Bill Revans, leader of Somerset Council, wrote to all Parish Councils outlining services that might be withdrawn and which Parish Councils might want to consider funding themselves. Parishes could group together to fund services. However, this will mean an increase in parish council precepts and we currently have no indication of what the costs involved would be. Making things more local could mean they are targeted on local needs and possibly done cheaper. Most parish councils will find it difficult to set a precept without knowing the costs. Grit supply, hedge trimming on vertical banks are 2 of the areas. Many of the other services aren't available in the parish but residents do use facilities when out and about. If the precept were to substantially increase then we would need a public meeting. The precept has not been raised since 2016. Allowing for inflation our precept would be in the region of £5000 in current prices. Parish Councils need to set their budgets by January, the sooner we let Somerset Council know the better. Action All, take the lists sent by Bill Revans and mark the services that we need ourselves with HC and those we can possibly share with other parishes, then forward to DH to amalgamate. FN keen to prioritise the recycling centre in Dulverton.</p>	All
6	Planning Matters - Mr Bryant of Higher Brown Farm has written letters to DH and SPu and has phoned MA. He has a buyer and the buyers have been speaking to the planning dept, SPu has been applying pressure	

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	on the planning dept and this seems for the moment to be going well. Action MA to phone Mr Bryant after this evening's meeting.	MA
7	<p>Exmoor Panel LCN Update: The Panel discussed the recent Somerset Council request for review of services as well as providing updates from Business and Housing sub-groups. SK is on the Housing sub-group.) Housing is not affordable for those on average/below average incomes, with 2-3 bed homes costing approx. 9-10x salary to buy. There are also problems with finding building land and public transport. Magna provides majority of social housing in the area, but their local residence qualification encompasses the whole of Somerset.</p> <p>The Business sub-group is looking at ways to attract and boost employment. There are not enough well paid jobs in the area and this relates to the housing issue. The sub-group is looking at doing surveys around broadband connectivity. The feeling in our Parish is that yet another survey would be too much for residents who have been repeatedly surveyed over recent years. However, it is important to know where is connected and where isn't. Huish Champflower is served by Technological and BT/OpenReach with only a small number of households not reached, in part due to local landowners objections. The new mobile mast might have a positive impact but it has yet to be switched on. Action:- All - we could prepare a list of households in the parish not able to get broadband by reaching out to neighbours.</p>	ALL
8	<p>Community Review Project- Community Council Somerset - CCS have “secured funding to support another phase of Town and Parish Councils to create a Community Review by the autumn of 2024.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Do you know what your community needs and wants in the coming years? ● Do you want to make sure everyone can get involved and have their say? ● How can you support your community to increase resilience in the future? ● If you would like to better understand your community, why not undertake a new Community Review or refresh an existing plan? <p>Papers were circulated on the 6th Nov 23. However, it was felt that with the difficulty over the county budgets situation it would be difficult to take this up at the present time. Action DH to feed back to them that we will revisit in July 2024 and if available again next year we would look at taking up the offer then.</p>	DH
9	<p>Finances - We have £3839.83 in the Treasurers account and £1071.83 in the Business Bank Account. There are no outstanding invoices at the moment. Since the last meeting we have paid £71.89 in SALC membership and £20 in auditing training to SALC. Also DH has identified £2178.40 in VAT that we can reclaim from 1/4/22 to 30/11/23. Action DH to reclaim the VAT</p>	DH
10	<p>Highway Matters - Matters discussed in matters arising</p> <p>Potholes reported on the Cleeve were fixed within days of the report to Highways</p> <p>SPo and MA had both received letters about cutting their hedges bordering roads, providing 2 weeks notice though it took a week before either letter was received. SPo photograph was not of one of his hedges and this had been wrongly addressed. Mary's hedges cannot be done now as her husband has broken his foot. Normally a Hedge Cutting request would come from the parish but in this instance it has not. Action FN to investigate</p>	FN
11	<p>AOB</p> <p>Query about a defibrillator at the village hall, there are minimum distances that we need to be aware of DH to check regulations and costs and to see if there is any grant funding. The possibility of a cricket team coming back to the playing fields may make a difference here.</p> <p>Huish Moor noticeboard still in need of repairs hopefully 2 local residents have this in hand. Action SPa</p>	DH SPa
12	<p>Date of next meeting:- Jan 9th 2024, an earlier meeting may be called if required.</p>	