

**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on :-
11th March 2025 at 7:30pm in the Village Hall**

Present: Stephen Kimsey (SK) (Chair), Dot Hayward (DH), Steve Powles (SPo), , Mary Abel (MA) & Francis Nicholson (FN).

No	Discussion	Action
1	Apologies:- Marc Vyvyan-Jones (MVJ), Chris Chanter (CC), Stephen Pugsley (SPu), Sarah Payne (SPa), Louise Cook (LC)	
2	Declarations of Interest:- none declared	
3	Minutes :- It was agreed that these were an accurate representation of the meeting on the 21st Jan 25. MA proposed they were accepted, SPo seconded and the minutes were accepted and signed off.	
4	<p>Somerset Council and LCN updates:-</p> <p>Prior to the meeting - Discussion with Kali Martin (Highways) about the currently closed road to Clatworthy. No decision has yet been made as to what work needs to be done, or when. We might learn something in the next few weeks, but this is clearly not good enough given that the closure is the fault of Somerset Council. Also a discussion with our neighbours from Clatworthy. They have a resident who is making official complaints about this on-going closure, perhaps something we should also consider although we should wait a few weeks to allow time for the promised detail and schedule for the repair. The closure of this road is a big issue</p> <p>Also briefly discussed possible collaboration of sorts for a VE Day event – not just celebrating the valour of those who fought, but also those who worked locally providing the food and other key support. (nb The village hall will be showing the Land Girls film, based on WW2 and filmed in the area. The church will also be doing celebrations the weekend before)</p> <p>Somerset Council Car Parking – though apparently there will be “further consultation” the current administration has included expected new revenue from introduction of county-wide consistent car park charges – including revenue from currently free car parks.</p> <p>Interesting discussion on this as it is abundantly clear that car park charging (or not) needs to be considered on a case-by-case basis. For instance, the small car park at Withypool (12 cars) was originally for residents of nearby affordable housing, and is still partially used for such. It is also clear that the cost of introducing charging (signage, machines, maintenance, staffing, etc.) most likely exceeds income. Similarly, the car park next to The Rest and Be Thankful (Cutcombe) is apparently on a long (100 year) lease from the pub to the council. It would clearly be disastrous for the pub, let alone local businesses, if charging were introduced to what is the pub car park.</p> <p>Though the County Council has decided to NOT charge for overnight parking, they are still planning on county-wide charging. There is supposed to be further consultation on this matter – but the details of this remain unclear.</p> <p>Boundary Review – Somerset County Council have submitted a response to the LGBC with respect to Exmoor. They have suggested an East/West split of Exmoor, which would see the Brendon Hills parishes included within Exmoor</p>	

	<p>East. Exmoor East will include – Huish Champflower, Clatworthy, Upton, Skilgate, Brompton Regis, Brompton Ralph, Bury, Carhampton, Dunster, Old Cleeve, Wootton Courtney and Treborough. The Boundary Commission will be considering submissions and will then have further consultation – likely sometime in the summer or autumn.</p> <p>Somerset Council Peer Review – one outcome of this current review is that the LCN’s are apparently NOT working as predicted! This is certainly NOT the experience with the Exmoor LCN – which most definitely IS working. There was agreement that if the LCN’s were to fold our grouping would continue to meet – possibly resurrecting the previous Panel.</p> <p>Highways – have fortunately escaped the major cuts threatened at the end of last year, though sadly Kevin Bridgwater (a regular attendee at these meetings) and David Peake will both be leaving. Highways are clearly struggling to cope with the repairs resulting from the winter weather. As discussions proceeded, it is clear that we’re not the only parish with collapsed roads. It is also clear that there are growing issues with the performance of Kier. Mention was made of the recent resurfacing of Brown Lane – mentioned as one of the most Pot-Holed lanes in the county! Apparently, the decision was made to overlay the existing road, then at some point in the future to address drainage issues, followed by the dreaded top dressing. Most of Brown Lane has been done but 4 large potholes remain, which have been marked up Surface dressing on Maundown has failed needs to be reported</p> <p>Police – unfortunately not present – but their provided update (mentioning a few thefts and alleged attempts) included a few items of interest – Off-road vehicles - where caught (including photographed) off-road on prohibited sites will be sent a single warning letter, after which any subsequent infringement can result in the vehicle being confiscated by the Police. (Maybe we should place a note to this effect near the Old Quarry?) Fraud/Scams – Police are happy to attend meetings to discuss the various types of fraud/scam, the increasing risk from digital payments, etc. This is something we should consider. DH to add to the next agenda Tanners Hill also in quite a poor state DH to report</p> <p>Community Resilience – unfortunately not present. There is an Emergency Planning workshop being held at Oake Village Hall on 25th March (10.30 till 4).</p> <p>Exmoor National Park – no official representation – some discussion about the reintroduction of the Pine Marten. It was pointed out (by SPu) that these species reintroduction activities are not undertaken by the ENP and that whilst there is cost relating to reintroduction, there is little (effectively none) thought as to who pays for resulting damage or other.</p> <p>SALC – Health & Wellbeing Funding – there is still money available (c. £225k+) from the original £750k fund, though there is a deadline of 4th April for applications. Remaining money should be available later. In the year when applications reopen.</p> <p>Other Matters Grit Bins – it was suggested that there is a chance of a cold snap at some stage</p>	<p>DH</p> <p>DH</p>
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	<p>in the coming few weeks and that grit bins should be checked and top-up requested ASAP. Do we need a new/relocated bin at Coombe End? DH</p> <p>Somerset Council updates Council In addition to all the work above Council Tax will rise by 7.5%, the council were given special exemption from the government</p>	DH
5	<p>Matters arising:- VE day film to be shown, SPo to check that the drains at Winters Cross are running effectively</p> <p>MA to send SK contact details for Paul Sanders to see if we can get a permissive path over his field from the village, to make it safer to get to the hall. Also we should look at the feasibility of a stile by the swings to cut some of the road walk down-add to next agenda</p> <p>Data retention, we have the policy from Somerset we need to check old records to see what needs to be kept, what archived and what should be destroyed. DH/SK to look at this during quiet periods over the summer</p>	<p>SPo</p> <p>MA/SK</p> <p>DH</p> <p>DH/SK</p>
6	<p>Highways:-</p> <p>Ice signs-Sarah managed to get 2 Ice signs from an auction for £10 they have worked well on the Cleeve but one needs to be redeployed to Winters Cross at the top of Higher Shute drive possibly. DH to discuss with Julian Hepworth</p> <p>Narrow bridge sign, we need to liaise with Wiveliscombe Town Council and Highways as the Washbattle bridge gets knocked by big lorries, the last turning point is at the top of Maundown Hill.</p> <p>Fingerpost sign replacements are likely to be roughly £1100 for the 2 posts at Flint Cross, we may get a discount of 50% for partially being in the National Park. There may be delivery costs and fitting costs, DH to discuss with Tom Thurlow. Parish Council would like to progress with these repairs whilst the project on Exmoor is ongoing.</p> <p>At Sperry Cross the sign for Wiveliscombe is right in the drivers eyeline, could it be placed at the top as that would be safer. DH to discuss this as well</p> <p>Speeding:-There have been incidents of speeding in the village and near misses with horses and abusive drivers. Horse rider now wearing a helmet cam and any future incidents to be reported to the police.</p>	<p>DH</p> <p>DH</p> <p>DH</p> <p>DH</p>
7	<p>Finance:-</p> <p>Following the introduction of a £4.25 charge per month from Lloyds, DH and MA visited the banks. Lloyds said this was their policy and will not change. NatWest have community accounts and don't charge and the same is true for Santander. Most of our signatories have accounts with NatWest, so hopefully easier to set up. It was proposed that we change bank accounts from Lloyds to NatWest and transfer the funds after the precept is received at the end of April. This was proposed by MA and seconded by SPo and agreed. DH will start the transfer process.</p> <p>Current balances are:-</p> <p>Community Account (formerly Treasurers account) £7,138.87</p> <p>Payments of £162.20 for Insurance and £24.99 grant to the village hall for a small grit bin</p>	DH

	<p>Community Instant Access Acc (formerly Business Bank Account) £1089.88 £0.95p in interest earned since last meeting</p> <p>Charitable donations The following donations were proposed by MA and seconded by SPo. All donations must be paid via BACS so we don't have cheques waiting to be cashed. British Heart Foundation £100 Exmoor Search and Rescue £50 Air Ambulance £100 Wivey Link £50 St Peter's Church £300</p> <p>Clerks wages £950.47 for the second 6 months of the year £455.40 to HMRC</p> <p>DH to sort out all payments Year end is approaching DH to ask Andrew if he will audit the accounts for us</p>	DH
8	<p>Planning None Outstanding in Huish at the moment. Somerset Council will no longer be sending out the orange display notices but Neighbours and Parish Council will be informed</p>	
9	<p>Emergency Plan SK has been looking at this trying to get a rural plan to fit into an urban template doesn't work. There are risks around Clatworthy, Hinckley, Severe weather and utility failure. Some people have generators, SPo has found a portable power station that can be charged with solar panels or by plugging into the mains for £540. Further work is needed on the plan.</p>	
10	<p>Litter picking event-mention this at the annual meeting of the parish perhaps in June. Are litter pickers available to borrow from the Community Office? DH to ask</p>	DH
11	<p>Volunteer day also June – suggestions include - Ice sign for Winters Cross needs someone to look after it, adopt a grit bin and footpath adoption, helping out with events for the village hall, the church and around the parish</p>	
12	<p>AOB Policies and Procedures. SK will review online and update and email to all councillors for sign off</p>	
13	<p>Next Meeting. The 2 annual meetings and the next Parish council meeting will all be held on the 13th May starting at 7:00 pm</p>	