

**HOLCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL**  
**MENDIP DISTRICT OF THE COUNTY OF SOMERSET**

**[www.holcombepc.org.uk](http://www.holcombepc.org.uk)**

Clerk: Vickie Watts, Gallant Hill Farm, Foxcote, Radstock, BA3 5YB  
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**Minutes from Holcombe Parish Council meeting, which took place on  
Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2018 at 7.30 pm.**

*Councillors Present* Cllr Graham Crowe (Chairman)  
Cllr Stephenie Chorley  
Cllr Terry Dumbrell  
Cllr Phil Gait  
Cllr Trisha Jordan (Part)  
Cllr Daniel Owen  
Cllr Russell Stokes

*Also, Present:* District Cllr Philip Ham.

*In attendance:* Stephenie Chorley and Russell Stokes taking the minutes

**1 Public forum.**

There were no members of the public in attendance.

**2 Apologies for absence.**

The Clerk Vickie Watts, Cllr Simon Brand, Cllr Sue Robinson, County Cllr Pullin and District Cllr Alan Townsend sent apologies which were accepted by the Chair.

**3 Declarations of Interests and Dispensations**

There were none.

**4 Minutes of previous monthly meetings held on Tuesday**

The draft minutes for 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2018 had been circulated prior to the meeting. It was agreed that they were an accurate record of the meeting and so were duly signed by the Chair. Vote was not taken, carried forward to next meeting.

Ag

**5 Action points from last meeting and matters arising.**

All actions had been completed or would be discussed later in the meeting apart from:

- 2018/2229/MA – the Clerk had emailed on 30<sup>th</sup> October to ask the Planning Department's definition of 'non-material amendments' but had not yet received a response. VW
- The Clerk had written on 22<sup>nd</sup> October to seek approval from the homeowner for the installation of the mirror to help ease negotiating from Common Lane. Agenda item for December meeting. VW
- Re dog bin on Longleat Road – we are trying to establish who owns the land; Cllr Stokes to see whether we can install on MDC land. RS
- Clearing fence line at Lych Gate – the Clerk emailed Justin Hill on 29<sup>th</sup> October, asking him to proceed. VW
- General Data Protection Regulations – no action yet. PG/VW/Ag
- Emergency Plan Exercise – VH is booked for 15/12/18 from 10 am until 12 noon.
- Buckingham Palace Garden Parties – agenda item for December. SB/Ag
- Jubilee Gardens – quotes have been requested from Justin Hill and Fosseyway Tree Services. Ag

**6 Planning Applications**

2018/2405/FUL – Several objections had been posted on MDC's Planning Portal and Cllr Dumbrell had circulated an email listing his assessment according to our planning guidelines. He recommended refusal, based on the following criteria:

1. Overlooking & loss of privacy: it would reduce privacy of neighbourhood
2. Parking and access: would be inadequate, as per Highway Authority comments
3. Overbearing: it would overbear its surroundings
4. Layout and density: it would not relate well in layout or form with its surroundings, as per Holcombe Design Statement
5. Inadequate and unsafe access to highway and does not comply with regulations: as per Highways Authority comments
6. Public visual amenity will be lost by increasing the density of dwellings in this area

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CLr Gait had circulated details of refusal of a previous application at the same location, and was of the opinion that the same objections applied to the current application.

It was noted that Highways require a bond of £20k before work commences.

After thorough discussion, it was recommended that the application be refused for the 6 reasons given above.

***Vote: 6 For, 0 Against & 1 Abstention***

CLr Dumbrell requested that it be Minuted that an immediate neighbour had not received written notification of the planning application, whereas 27 people in Norton St Philip were on the list of Consultees. An objection has been raised with the Planning Officer, and CLr Ham is meeting with Tracy Aarons, Deputy Chief Executive at MDC, to discuss our grievances.

PH

**7 Planning Updates**

2018/1967/ADV – The erection of 2no. timber painted signs at the entrance to Tower House: application refused by MDC.

2018/2037/HSE – Replacement of an existing garage with a new garage: application withdrawn by applicant by MDC.

**8 Consider and review Parish Council planning process**

A complaint had been received following a previous meeting, because parishioners who had attended for discussion of a planning application felt they had not had a fair hearing. It was agreed that we would review our conduct of planning applications, while adhering to SALC rules which state that supporters speak first, then opposers, then applicant summarises. They suggest that each speaker be allowed 3 minutes and that once a topic has been discussed, only new topics should be raised.

CLr Crowe put forward three options:

1. Planning application comments be allowed to continue until every interested party has been heard, regardless of the fact that several speakers are voicing the same opinions. Advantage: all present feel that they have been listened to; Disadvantage – the meeting could last too long.
2. Continue as before, with the Chairman asking each parishioner to speak but only if new information was being put forward but inviting others to agree or disagree with what has been said.
3. Take Planning matters out of the Parish Council meeting and hold separate meetings to discuss all planning applications.

Councillors felt that the meeting in question was difficult as part of the planning application had been withdrawn some hours prior to the meeting, and although consultees present had been notified, the Parish Council had not and had to seek verification prior to discussion. It was felt that Councillors had possibly mistakenly assumed that most present had objections to the part that had been withdrawn, and the Parish Council could see no reason for refusal based on the criteria that are always applied. Councillors decided to select Option 2 above, but that SALCs ground rules be explained prior to discussion and that time taken on any application be limited to half an hour. Should this be insufficient, that portion of the meeting should be adjourned to a separate meeting.

The Clerk will write to the complainant, asking if she wishes to raise a formal complaint under our complaints procedure.

VW

**9 Reports**

**9.1 PCSO Report**

No apologies and no report for Holcombe had been received.

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9.2 Mendip District Council report

District Cllr Ham attended and gave the following report:

Halecombe Quarry's application goes to the Board on Thursday, the report being 120 pages long. The process was started over four years ago and no one mentioned Bath hot springs until 8 months ago. Halecombe have not changed anything over the last 13 years so the drop in water level is not due to them. Hopefully the application will be approved for another 12 years works for the tar plant (£9m), and they will review the impact on the hot springs at each drop in level.

The playing field track (see also Playing Field report): Rick has offered to provide materials for the path and take away waste, Mr Ryan will quote for works.

MDC's Planning Enforcement team has been increased to six members, and fines have been increased to £150 per time.

Cllr Ham's portfolio of Transformation has so far spent £25m on assets that will raise £1.1m in revenue per annum. £6m has been spent on a derelict site in Frome and 3 more acquisitions are under review in Bristol, Frome and Plymouth, and another is under consideration in the Mendip area, but its location cannot be announced yet, all of which will result in £2.5m receipts each year. A press release will be published this Friday.

Cllr Ham had attended a CAB presentation on Monday night. £100k has been cut from their county budget, and every £1 we give generates £50 for the economy. (This was discussed further under Correspondence).

SWP (Somerset Waste Partnership) have presented their new business plan, including the creation of an incineration plant in Avonmouth, as they are pulling out of sending anything to landfill.

If the Planning Officer wishes to approve tonight's planning application, our having recommended refusal, they will need to refer back to Cllrs Ham and Townsend before taking any further action. As stated in Item 6, Cllr Ham has a meeting with Tracy Aarons, Deputy Chief Executive at MDC, on Wednesday with regard to our recent experience with MDC Planners.

Unitary talks - feasibility studies are being undertaken to look at the range of options.

Cllr Townsend did not attend the meeting but provided the following report:

1. I have written to Charlie Higgins in Highways about the drain problem reported in Charlton Rd outside End-Ever. He has undertaken to investigate and raised a job number.
2. I have also written to Traffic Highways Management requesting as a low-cost contribution to safety the painting of 30 mph roundels on the road by the Hall and on Holcombe Hill. No response yet.

9.3 County Councillor Report

County Cllr Pullen did not attend and did not provide a written report.

**10 Finance**

10.1 Bank reconciliation – The Clerk had prepared the bank reconciliation which had been checked by Cllr Owen prior to the meeting and was found to be in order.

10.2 Consider and approve 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter budget review – The budget is broadly on track, with some expenditure moved around, but reserves were not amended.

- The Clerk is to purchase a new printer.
- Councillor training is not expected to incur more expenditure.
- Village grants – there was an anomaly regarding purchase of the Dyson, which was moved accordingly.
- The budget for Jubilee gardens and floral gateways was moved into the dog waste bin budget, as no expenditure is envisaged.
- The Speedwatch budget was also moved to the dog waste bin budget.
- The Clerk is following up progress on the SID.

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Approval of the budget without further amendments was proposed by Cllr Crowe and seconded by Cllr Stokes.

***Vote: 7 For, 0 Against & 0 Abstentions***

10. Review quotes for Event Parking and Village Hall signage

Cllr Dumbrell had reviewed the options and proposed purchase of 1 x Event Parking, 2 x Event Parking – Left, 2 x Event Parking – Right, 1 x Event Parking – Ahead signs, and 2 x Beware Pedestrians free standing signs, at a cost of £173.57 incl VAT. Cllr Owen seconded the proposal and all Councillors agreed. The Clerk to advise whether she will complete the purchase or whether Cllr Dumbrell should pay and reclaim expense.

VW

***Vote: 7 For, 0 Against & 0 Abstention***

10.4 Payments:

The following payments were read out for approval:

Vickie Watts – Clerk Salary for October	£222.22 & expenses of £40.88	£263.10
	Holcombe Village Hall grant	£500.00

Vote was not taken, carried forward to next meeting.

Ag

**11 External meetings to attend and reports on meetings attended**

Emergency Plan Exercise – 15/12/18 at the Village Hall 10am until 12 noon.

Cllr Gait attended the MDC Parish Forum on 18<sup>th</sup> October which discussed the Parish Council elections next May. An election has to take place if there are more applicants than places, at a cost of approximately £4k. The new Councillors take office 4 days after the election.

**12 Councillor Reports/Updates**

(Village Hall, Playing Field, Highways, Cemetery, Footpaths, Speedwatch, SALC etc)

12.1 Highways

The dog waste bin in Common Lane had been shattered, presumably by a firework, at the weekend. It will need to be replaced, but the Clerk is to investigate claiming on our insurance.

VW

It was thought that one of the grit bins had similarly been vandalised, Cllr Gait agreed to investigate all grit bins to see if any needed to be replaced / claimed on insurance. If they don't qualify on the insurance policy, we will need to spend Parish funds to replace them, and the Clerk should notify parishioners in On the Map & on Notice Boards.

VW

Concern was expressed at Somerset County Council's recent letter notifying changes to highways winter service 2018/19, which involves a massive 21% reduction in road gritting in snowy weather. Cllr Dumbrell suggested we enlist local businesses to sponsor Holcombe's gritting and investigate the current state of our grit bins with a view to topping them up if necessary. Cllr Dumbrell agreed to lead a project to establish how much grit we have and how much we need, and to decide whether we need more bins.

TD

Cllr Chorley will scan & forward SCC Highways letter to Cllr Dumbrell.

SC

The Clerk will investigate the cost of larger grit bins.

VW

The Clerk will include Highways plan update on our web-page, Holcombe FB page and notice boards.

VW

12.2 Village Hall

The next meeting will take place on the 15<sup>th</sup> November 2018, having been postponed from October.

It was agreed at the October PC meeting that Cllr Chorley would establish if there was a shortfall of funds to cover the proposed work and report back to the next meeting.

SC

12.3 Playing Field

The bank statements have arrived and the figures will be incorporated into the accounts. Hedge trimming has been completed.

Cllr Stokes advised that Ryan has measured the path and will submit his quote, but he does not expect the path to be constructed before Spring 2019.

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The Zip Wire has been disabled as the recent inspection warned of possible danger. An inspection by the manufacturer is awaited.

The Christmas Tree has been well watered over the last few weeks. The Duke of Cumberland pub will be supplying mulled wine and mince pies for the lighting-up ceremony at 5 pm on Sunday, 2<sup>nd</sup> December, for which we are very grateful. A suitable gift must be purchased as thanks to them after the event. The Village Hall has been booked from 4 pm for an hour or so, for the Duke to warm the mulled wine, and the VH committee will not be charging the PF for this hire.

12.4 Highways – see 12.1 above.

12.5 Cemetery  
Nothing to report.

**13 Holcombe Gala 2019**

There had been a suggestion that the Gala, if there is to be one, be held a week earlier on 29<sup>th</sup> June, being Armed Forces Day, but on learning that the Dysons (and their tents) would be at Glastonbury and Dave Sprinks would also be unavailable, it was proposed by Cllr Gait and seconded by Cllr Dumbrell that the date be set at 6<sup>th</sup> July.

***Vote: 7 For, 0 Against & 0 Abstained***

It was agreed that the PC meeting on Tuesday, 4<sup>th</sup> December would commence at 7 pm with an open meeting for people wishing to help at the Gala. The Clerk to publicise accordingly.

VW

*Cllr Jordan left the meeting at 9.15 pm.*

**14 Agree Parish Council meeting dates for 2019**

Councillors had studied the schedule circulated by the Clerk. Cllr Owen proposed and Cllr Gait seconded acceptance of the dates, and all present voted in favour.

***Vote: 6 For, 0 Against & 0 Abstained***

**15 Correspondence**

A letter had been received from the Chief Executive Officer of Citizens Advice Mendip, requesting funds towards their services. They advised that in 2017/18 they saw 16 new clients from Holcombe with 21 problems. It was proposed by Cllr Dumbrell and seconded by Cllr Crowe that the Clerk will respond to the letter, advising that we will build into next year's budget a donation of £500, which will be issued to Citizens Advice Mendip on 1st April 2019.

VW

***Vote: 6 For, 0 Against & 0 Abstained***

Councillors had read the email correspondence from Ian Dumont that he had sent to Minerals & Waste Somerset, and following investigations it was felt that the drop of water level at Tufa Falls was due simply to a lack of rain, rather than works by local businesses. It was agreed that the Clerk should send Mr Dumont Cllr Ham's response.

VW

Ag

The Council Elections Timetable had been received but not yet circulated. Add to agenda.

A letter of thanks had been received from Margaret Read for the grant for new chairs for the Ladies Evening Club.

**17 Reports and items for next meeting**

Gala 2019 – Agenda item  
Payment to Cllr Stokes for Keysafe – Add to agenda

Ag  
RS

**18 Dates for next meetings**

Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2018 at 7 pm – Public Gala meeting  
Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2018 at 8 pm – Parish Council meeting  
Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2019 – Parish Council meeting

Meeting finished 21.30hrs