

**HOLCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL
IN THE COUNTY OF SOMERSET**

www.holcombepc.org.uk

Clerk: Vickie Watts, Gallant Hill Farm, Foxcote, Radstock, BA3 5YB
clerk@holcombepc.org.uk 07971 516916 / 01479 880428

**Minutes from Holcombe Parish Council Meeting, which took place on
Tuesday 7th November at Holcombe Village Hall**

Councillors Present Cllr Simon Brand (Chairman)
 Cllr Mark Davies
 Cllr Simon Eade
 Cllr Elaine Emery
 Cllr Adrian Govier (Co-opted at this meeting)
 Cllr Helen Kerr

In attendance: There were 9 members of the public present.
 Clerk Vickie Watts taking the minutes.

1. Public forum

There were no points raised.

2. Apologies for absence

Cllr Gait, Cllr Stratford, Cllr Roberts and Somerset Cllr Edric Hobbs sent apologies, which were accepted by the Chair.

3. Declaration of interests and dispensations

There were none.

4. Approve Minutes of previous monthly meeting held on Tuesday 3rd October 2023

The minutes had been circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting. It was proposed by Cllr Emery and seconded by Cllr Davies that they accurately reflected the meeting and should be approved.

Vote: 5 For; 0 Against; 0 Abstention

5. Action updates from last meeting

All actions had been completed or would be covered as agenda items during the meeting.

6. Reports

6.1 PCSO – no report had been received.

6.2 Somerset Council – no report had been received.

7. Planning Applications

2023/2074/OUT - Application for Outline Planning Permission with some matters reserved for up to 9no. dwellinghouses with details of access.
Land To the East of Edford Hill, Holcombe, Radstock

Cllr Brand gave a brief outline of the planning application. He introduced the applicant and his agent who explained that the application was for outline planning for up to 9 houses, 2 of which would be sold as affordable housing (20% less than the market price).

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An ecological assessment had been completed which showed that as the land had been grazed by horses for some time, it was of low ecological value. The hedges will remain untouched and a 15m buffer would be created between the development and the boundary fence at the top of the site enhancing the ecological status of the area. It was claimed that the development would have a positive net gain on bio-diversity. An odour assessment had also been completed which showed there would be no adverse effect from the development.

Members of the public raised the following concerns:

- How did they know that there was a demand for housing in the village.
- The site was outside the village development boundary.
- The entrance road would be a concern due to the volume of traffic and pedestrians.
- Drainage and flooding could be an issue.
- The sewers may be unable to cope with the addition of these houses.

The Agent explained that Somerset Council are not currently able to show a 5 years housing supply meaning that there is a shortage of housing. Wessex Water would comment on the sewers and the applicant also owns the neighbouring land and would be able to mitigate and resolve any potential flooding issues.

After listening to the concerns raised by members of the public, the councillors reviewed the evidence and considered whether to approve the application. Cllr Brand proposed that the application should be approved. No other Councillors wished to second the proposal and a vote was taken to recommend refusal on the basis that the application site was outside the village development boundary and that there was a Highways safety concern around the entrance / exit on to Holcombe Hill which is busy with vehicles and pedestrians.

Vote: 4 For; 1 Against; 0 Abstention

Action: Clerk to submit the decision to the planning office

8. Co-option of Councillors

Adrian Govier attended the meeting, introduced himself and explained that he was keen to join the Parish Council having had a connection to Holcombe over many years and had lived in the village for 18 years. It was proposed by Cllr Brand and seconded by Cllr Emery that Mr Govier should be co-opted. The Chair welcomed Cllr Govier to the Council.

Vote: 5 For; 0 Against; 0 Abstention

Action: Clerk to submit paperwork to Somerset Council

9. Planning Updates

There were none.

10. Finance

10.1 Bank Reconciliation

The Clerk had prepared the bank reconciliation which was checked by Cllr Emery as being

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correct.

10.2 2nd Quarter Budget Review 2023/24

The Clerk had prepared the 2nd quarter budget review which had been circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting. It was proposed by Cllr Kerr and seconded by Cllr Eade that the report showed that the accounts were as expected for this period and should be approved.

Vote: 5 For; 0 Against; 0 Abstention

10.3 Consider funding request from Citizens Advice Somerset

It was proposed by Cllr Brand and seconded by Cllr Davies that a payment of £500 would be paid at the start of the 2024/25 financial year.

Vote: 5 For; 0 Against; 0 Abstention

Action: Clerk to notify Citizens Advice Somerset

10.4 Parish Council Payments

The following invoices were presented for payment:

Vickie Watts – Salary & Expenses	£ 336.81
Julia Evans – Jubilee Garden Expenses	£ 63.92
Jeremy Weare Limited – Playing Field grass cutting	£1237.20
Jeremy Weare Limited – Cemetery grass cutting	<u>£ 684.00</u>
Total to pay	£1921.20

10.5 Playing Field Payments:

The following invoices were presented for payment:

Big Wood Play – Zip wire annual inspection	£ 168.00
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It was proposed by Cllr Brand and seconded by Cllr Davies that the abovementioned payments for both the Parish Council and the Holcombe Playing Field should be approved.

Vote: 5 For; 0 Against; 0 Abstention

11. Highways

11.1 Update on installation Auto Speed Watch

Cllr Stratford had provided a report via the Clerk explaining that there had been some teething issues whilst setting up the Auto Speed Watch unit. Although the unit is working and picking up vehicles that are driving above the speed limit, the clarity of the image is not currently sufficient to identify the registration plate on all occasions. Cllrs Stratford and Roberts have been working with the Auto Speed Watch team to address these problems and it is hoped that the issues will have been resolved before the next meeting.

Action: Cllrs Stratford and Roberts to progress

11.2 Update on existing issues already reported to Somerset Highways

There was nothing to report.

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11.3 Report of new issues

It had been noted that the 30mph zone had been extended from Stoke St Michael towards Oakhill. The Clerk to establish on what grounds this had been approved and whether the Parish Council had paid for the implementation of the change. Cllr Brand raised the point whether the council could lobby Highways to extend the 30mph limit of the village from the Holcombe Farmshop towards Tibbets Transport using the precedent from Oakhill.

Action: Clerk to progress

12. Review Grass Cutting contract for 2024 / 2025 / 2026

The Clerk explained that there Jeremy Weare Ltd had just finished the 2nd year of a 3-year grass cutting contract. No further action is required until October 2024.

13. Councillor Reports/Updates including Highways, Playing Field, Village Hall, SALC, etc

Cllr Emery asked permission to secure the Book Exchange cabinet to the wall of the Lychgate so that it was more accessible. All Councillors agreed that this would be a good idea.

14. Meetings/Training to attend

02/12/23 10am to 3pm – SALC AGM. Cllr Gait to attend.

11/01/24 time TBC – Local Community Network meeting @ SHAPE Mendip. Cllr Gait to attend.

15. Correspondence

Older People Research – The Community Council for Somerset are helping Somerset Community Foundation with this research. They are looking at groups and organisations across the whole of Somerset and in six case study areas: Watchet, Priorswood in Taunton, Shepton Mallet and the villages of Evercreech, Coleford and Holcombe. Anyone over the age of 60 is encouraged to complete the questionnaire.

Action: Clerk to promote

Exclusive Memorials – Request for an additional inscription to the Garret memorial. Approved by all Councillors.

Action: Clerk to notify Exclusive Memorials

CPRE magazine – Passed to Cllr Eade

Climate Adaption Toolkit – Passed to Cllr Brand for consideration

Information on participating in the Community Council for Somerset's Community Review – All Councillors to read the information supplied

16. Next meetings:

Parish Council meeting on Tuesday 5th December 2023 @ 7.30pm

The meeting finished at 20.35hrs