

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

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

Clerk: Debbie Widdows, 19A Union Street, Wells, Somerset, BA5 2PU  
[clerk@holcombepc.org.uk](mailto:clerk@holcombepc.org.uk) 07872 857885

**Minutes from Holcombe Parish Council Meeting which took place on  
1 April at Holcombe Village Hall**

***Councillors Present*** Cllr Brand (Chairman)  
Cllr Davies  
Cllr Emery  
Cllr Gait  
Cllr Govier  
Cllr Kerr  
Cllr Roberts  
Cllr Stratford

***In attendance:*** There were 6 members of the public present.  
Clerk Debbie Widdows taking the minutes.

**1. Public forum**

Nothing to be noted.

**2. Apologies for absence**

Cllr Simon Eade sent apologies which was accepted by the Chairman.

**3. Declaration of interests and dispensations**

There were none.

**4. Approve minutes of previous meeting held on 4 March 2025**

The Clerk had circulated the minutes prior to the meeting for Councillor consideration. It was proposed by Cllr Stratford and seconded by Cllr Davies that they accurately reflected the meeting and should therefore be approved and signed by the Chairman.

**Vote: Unanimous**

**5. Actions/matters arising from the previous meeting**

The weight restrictions on the way into Stoke St Michael have been addressed and contact has been made with the correct authority.

All other actions were completed.

**6. Reports**

**6.1 PCSO**

The report from the PCSO had not yet been received.

**6.2 Somerset Council**

The following report from Cllrs Robbins and Hobbs had been shared by email to all Councillors:

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## **Budget**

Somerset Council set its 2025/6 budget on 5th March 2025, in line with what was reported to Wells City Council last month. ~Pressure in the budget is still dominated by adult social care and children's services. Even with additional Council Tax income, the budget currently requires £43m of exceptional financial support in the form of a capitalisation direction. Setting the 2026/27 will remain challenging.

## **Transformation and workforce restructure**

Work continues to put the agreed new staffing structure in place in advance of the 1st April. The official decision on the final structure for the organisation was taken by the Chief Executive on 13th February 2025.. The full decision, together with the detailed structure broken down for each directorate/service/department can be found here:

<https://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=1625>

Somerset Council's interim Chief Finance Officer and 151 officer, Maria Christofi, will be leaving the authority towards the end of April. Whilst a permanent replacement has yet to be found, current Service Director Finance and Procurement and Deputy 151 officer, Nicola Hix, will be interim 151 officer.

Under the restructure the position of Monitoring Officer will be held by the Executive Director for Resources, Strategy and Transformation, Alyn Jones (supported by multiple deputies).

Both of the above appointments were confirmed by Full Council on 26th March.

Over 2025-26 substantial work will be undertaken on the wider improvement and transformation programme to create a sustainable Somerset Council.

Over the past year, Somerset Council has undergone a Corporate Peer Challenge by the Local Government Association (LGA) and an External Assurance Review by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), both of these reports are publicly available:

LGA: <https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/council-assurance-and-peer-challenge/peer-challenges-we-offer/corporate-peer-111>

CIPFA: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/somerset-council-external-assurance-review-2024-25>

## **BSIP**

A decision on the association of Somerset's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) has been made, this includes continued funding to support the Wells-Axbridge leg of the 126 bus

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(including increasing the frequency of the Saturday services).

## Household Support Fund

A decision was made on 24th March on the allocation of the £6.74m DWP Household Support Fund. This is money provided by Central Government, to local authorities, to support those struggling with the cost of living. This funds a number of initiatives, including free school meal vouchers in holiday time, grants for vulnerable/low income people, support for the VCFSE, community grants, support for local hubs (e.g. warm spaces).

## Wells and Mendip Hills LCN

The meeting of the LCN scheduled for 18th March was postponed owing to lack of availability from some of the key stakeholders who have been invited to attend to discuss housing. Another date is due to be arranged.

The Active Travel Working Group will meet on 1st April at 7pm in the Portway Annex, the Highways Working Group will meet on 8th April at 2pm, also in the Portway Annex.

## Contacting Somerset Council

The general Enquiries number for Somerset Council is 0300 123 2224, there is also a general enquiries email address: [generalenquiries@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:generalenquiries@somerset.gov.uk).

## 7. Planning Applications

### 7.1 2025/0406/FUL – Southmead Farm Charlton Road Holcombe Radstock Somerset BA3 5EX. Demolition of barns and erection of a new build dwelling

The Chairman outlined the application which proposes the demolition of barns and the erection of a new 4 bedroom house with attached garage. He stated that the proposed new house would considerably enhance what is currently there, a view shared by the neighbour who supports the application. The applicant added some detail on the design and stressed the importance of improving the aesthetics of the barn that is currently granted Class Q permitted development rights. After a short deliberation, the Chairman proposed that as there were no breaches of the material considerations the application should be approved. This was proposed by Cllr Brand and seconded by Cllr Davies.

***Vote: Unanimous***

***Action: Clerk to notify the planning officer.***

### 7.2 2025/0333/PAA Land at 366658 149692 Stratton Road Holcombe, Shepton Mallet, Somerset

The Chairman explained that this application was for notification only.

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## 8. Report on Planning Updates

2023/2074/OUT – APP/E3335/W/24/3346542- Appeal Decision Land to the East of Edford Hill, Holcombe, BA3 5DB the erection of up to nine dwellings with associated alterations to existing access

The Chairman notified the councillors that the appeal was dismissed on 7 Marh 2025.

## 9. Parish Council Payments

### 9.1 Agree bank reconciliation for February, March and April

This was incorrect on the agenda as it was for January, February and March.

**Action: PG to review and approve the reconciliation.**

### 9.2 Agree 4<sup>th</sup> quarter budget

Cllr Gait presented a spreadsheet showing the income and payments for the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of the financial year and the budget for next year. After some discussion regarding individual entries and the amount of reserves that may be required to balance the budget, all councillors agreed that it met the councils objectives and represented good value for parishioners. The only concern related to the amount quoted by Somerset Council (SC) for the emptying of the dog poo bins. The Chairman agreed to raise this with SC and to negotiate a reduction based on the frequency of emptying the bins. This budget was proposed by Cllr Brand and seconded by Cllr Gait.

**Action: SB to liaise with Somerset Council regarding the emptying of the dog bins.**

**Vote: Unanimous**

### 9.3 Insurance renewal with Hiscox Insurance

This is due to be renewed on 1<sup>st</sup> June. In order to gain a quote, a questionnaire needs to be filled in. Cllr Kerr kindly agreed to complete the questionnaire with the clerk's support.

**Action: HK to complete the questionnaire with the Clerk.**

### 9.4 Parish Council Payments

The following invoices were presented for payment:

|       |  |         |
|-------|--|---------|
| 9.4.1 | VE80 Fund  | £500    |
| 9.4.2 | Cllr Simon Brand Printer Cartridges                  | £39.25  |
| 9.4.3 | Hill & Hill grass cutting                            | £284.17 |
| 9.4.4 | Reissue of cheque for donation to playing fields     | £3,000  |
| 9.4.5 | Holcombe Village Hall – Jan - March hire of the hall | £72     |
| 9.4.6 | Debbie Widdows Salary                                | £462.84 |

It was proposed by Cllr Govier and seconded by Cllr Stratford that the above-mentioned payments be approved.

**Vote: Unanimous**

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**10. Highways**

**10.1 Update on Auto Speed Watch**

Cllr Stratford to discuss with PCSO on the way forward to manage the data collected.

**10.2 Update on existing issues already reported to Somerset Highways**

A quote to replace the missing village nameplate from Signefex for £125 was presented.

***Action: Clerk to contact Somerset Council traffic management and confirm if they are replacing missing village signs at their expense. If not it was agreed that the sign would be ordered.***

**10.3 Report of new issues**

Marksbury Village sign was found in Holcombe and brought to the meeting. It is to be returned to the village via SHAPE Mendip.

***Action: Clerk to deliver to Somerset Council for B&NES to collect.***

**11. Dog Litter Bins**

**11.1 Quote from Grounds Maintenance Somerset Council for emptying dog bins**

This was discussed under item 9.2.

**12. Councillor Reports/Updates including highways, playing field, village hall, SALC etc.**

**12.1 Village Hall**

Cllr Emery reported on the Village Hall AGM.

**12.2 Playing Field Committee**

Cllr Emery reported on the Playing Field Committee meeting.

**13. Meetings/training to attend**

**13.1 SALC – Preparing for Year End & Audit - for the Parish Clerk on Thursday 3 April 6-8pm - £35**

***Action: Clerk to attend training.***

**14. Correspondence**

Email from Traffic Management received on 31 March asking if the Parish Council can have a look in their communities at the white lining road markings and let them know if any are faded or worn and need remarking.

***Action: JS to coordinate the response to Traffic Management.***

Email received from RBL on 14 March to order a wreath for Remembrance Day.

***Action: Clerk to re-order the same wreath as last year.***

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The Chairman stated that he had received an email from a parishioner which detailed an unsavoury incident between a resident of Scotts Close who was crossing the road to the church and a driver of a vehicle. The action of the driver was unwarranted and intimidating; as such this is to be discussed with the PCSO. Residents are encouraged to report any further incidents of this nature.

***Action: JS to report this antisocial behaviour to PCSO and meet with him to discuss the way forward.***

***SB to correspond with the resident.***

- 15.** Next meeting:  
6<sup>th</sup> May 2025 Parish Council Meeting

The meeting finished at 20:29 hrs