

HOLCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL
MENDIP DISTRICT OF 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

****DRAFT** Minutes from Holcombe Parish Council Meeting, which took place on
Tuesday 3rd January 2023 at 7.30 pm at Holcombe Village Hall**

Councillors Present Cllr Simon Brand
 Cllr Phil Gait
 Cllr Helen Kerr
 Cllr Simon Eade
 Cllr David Roberts

In attendance: Somerset Cllr Edric Hobbs, District Cllrs Ham and Townsend.
 There was 2 members of the public.

1. Public forum

1. A member of the public attended the meeting and expressed concerns over the lack of action regarding highway matters. Their son and daughter had both had cars written off at the main junction of the village when cars failed to stop. The most recent incident before Christmas resulted in personal injury and the car being written off. They noted that as far back as 2019 the parish council minutes highlight the lack of response from Somerset Highways and they requested that this now be taken to a higher level for action. The Chair thanked them for coming to the meeting and said that the Council had limited powers however would seek the support of the Somerset County Councillors to raise the outstanding highway issues with the Somerset Portfolio Holder for Highways.

Action: Clerk to liaise with Somerset Cllr Edric Hobbs to highlight the outstanding issues

- 2 There was concern over the entrance to the dog training field on Moons Hill where cars leaving the field are not visible until late, causing drivers to break hard.

Action: Cllr Townsend to raise with Stoke St Michael PC to establish if the entrance has permission or could be improved.

2. Apologies for absence

Somerset Cllr Tony Robbins sent his apologies which were accepted by the Chair.

3. Declaration of Interests and dispensations

There were none.

4. Approve Minutes of previous meeting held on Tuesday 6th December 2022

The Clerk had circulated the minutes prior to the meeting. Cllr Kerr proposed that they were an accurate record of the meeting and should be approved which was seconded by Cllr Gait. The minutes were duly signed.

Vote: 5 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstentions

Action: Clerk to upload to the website

5. Action updates from the last meeting

All actions had been carried out or would be discussed later in the meeting as an agenda item apart from:

1. Clerk to deliver the Book of Condolence to Rev'd Cridland for safe keeping.

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2. Clerk to progress adding Cllr Gait to the bank mandate at 4th signatory

Action: Clerk to complete outstanding tasks

6. Co-option of Councillors

Councillors were encouraged to seek potential Councillors.

Action: Clerk to advertise the position.

7. Reports

1. PCSO – A generic area newsletter had been received in December which highlighted what the neighbourhood policing team have been concentrating on during the month. There was no mention of Holcombe within the report and no crime statistics given for the Mendip East area.
2. District Council report – District Cllrs Townsend and Ham submitted the following report:

Council meetings - Due to “lack of substantive business” the Full Council meeting scheduled for 19th December was cancelled. It was advised that the Cabinet Meeting scheduled for 9th January would also be cancelled for the same reason.

Planning Policy – The Government announcement that nationally imposed housing targets are to become ‘advisory’ rather than ‘mandatory’ has yet to be translated into Local Plans. This means that speculative development may still be approved. The status of the Local Plan has been further eroded by the Judicial Review decision last month that the allocation of the additional 505 dwellings in the north east of the district had been incorrectly managed by both Mendip and the Examining Inspector. Clarification from Mendip of the effects on the Local Plan and the costs incurred are awaited.

Planning Non-Material Amendments – District Cllr Townsend queried with Mendip Planners the handling of NMA applications. The NMA proposal at Tan Farm, ref 2022/2180 included changes to the external elevations of the building which were considered by Mendip to be “inconsequential”. He asked against what criteria they were considered to be inconsequential and why all such applications are not passed to Parish Councils and Ward Members ideally for Consultation but at the least for information.

A response was received which stated the guidance does not define what changes may be treated as being non material as it would depend on the context of the overall scheme. They said that in the Tan Farm case given the site location and the scope of the changes proposed they would agree with the case officer recommendation that they are capable of being treated as an no material amendment to the planning permission as originally granted (LPA case ref: 2022/0659/FUL).

Stoke St Michael – we still await the outcome of the appeal against Mendip’s refusal of 47 houses on Coalpit Lane.

3. County Council report – Somerset Cllr Robbins submitted a detailed report for December which had been circulated to all Councillors and will be annexed to the minutes.

Somerset Cllr Edric Hobbs attended and said that there was not much to report. He would be happy to support the council in seeking action by Highways.

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4. **Update on Unitary** – The paper will go to the executive next week so it is hoped that there will be more known in the next 6 weeks. It is understood that the Local Community Networks will not be in place on the 1st April but will be pushed back.

8. Planning Applications

There were none.

9. Planning Updates

There were none.

10. Approve use of playing field car park for a funeral on 22/12/22

The Clerk had emailed the request to all Councillors who responded positively. The Clerk confirmed with the applicant that permission was given and would record it as one of the 12 uses in the rolling year.

Action: Clerk to update the car park diary

11. Determined whether the conditions attached to the playing field car park should be relaxed or removed.

After discussion it was agreed that an application would be submitted to Mendip Planning department to remove conditions 2 and 3 from the variation conditions listed in application 2017/1743/VRC dated 21st June 2017.

Action: Update at February meeting

12. Consider quotes for Phase 2 of the work at Jubilee Garden – to slightly adjust the layout to improve safety and visual impact of the garden.

A contractor did meet at site but decided not to quote on the basis that they did not have time in their diary to take on such a large project. It was questioned whether they felt the proposed budget of £2K was insufficient for the design. The Clerk and the Chair will meet with another local contractor tomorrow and will report back at the February meeting.

Action: Clerk & Chair to meet contractor. Agenda item for next meeting

13. Consider underwriting the costs of a new Parish Magazine

A request had been received from the Townsend Family asking if both Holcombe and Coleford Parish Councils would underwrite any loss in producing the new parish magazine in the first year up to a maximum of £1,061.

After discussion Cllr Eade proposed and Cllr Gait seconded that the Council would underwrite 50% of any loss in producing the parish magazine up to a maximum of £530.50 for the first year. This would then be reviewed and potentially offered again for a second year to allow the magazine the best chance of becoming established.

Vote: 5 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstentions

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14. Review the Cemetery Fees

The Clerk had circulated the Cemetery fees with various percentage increases for consideration. The fees are not intended to make a profit but cover the running cost of the Cemetery. It was proposed by Cllr Kerr and seconded by Cllr Eade that the fees should be increased by 10%.

Vote: 5 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstentions

Action: The Clerk to amend, circulate and upload to the website

15. Finance

1. Bank Reconciliation

Cllr Gait checked the bank reconciliation prepared by the clerk for the 31/12/22 and found it to be in order.

2. Consider and review 3rd Quarter budget 2022/23

The Clerk circulated the spreadsheet showing the income and expenditure for the year to date ending 31/12/22. Income stood at £14218.68 and expenditure £14010.48. The budget for the year was to use £4882 from the reserves and all agreed that this looked realistic and would be signed by the Chair.

Vote: 5 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstentions

3. Review Clerks appraisal and pay review for 2023/24

It was agreed by all Councillors that the pay increase would be awarded in April but for the sake of completeness the Chair will undertake the appraisal and share with full Council

Action: Chair to complete the appraisal. Agenda item for February

4. Discuss budget and precept for 2023/24

The Clerk had provided a draft budget for 2023/24 for discussion. Each line of the expenditure was considered and some amendments were made. After thorough discussion it was proposed by Cllr Brand and seconded by Cllr Gait that the precept would be increased by 5% to £13081 which equates to 60p per week for the parish element of the council tax for a band D homeowner. This is an increase of 3p per week on last year's precept amount.

Vote: 5 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstentions

Action: Clerk to notify the authority of the precept request

5. Parish Council Payments

The following invoices were presented for payment:

V Watts – Salary £359.10 and Expenses £50.46	£ 409.56
Jeremy Weare – Playing Field £873.60 & Cemetery £578.40	£1452.00
Holcombe Village - Hall hire Oct – Dec	£ 54.00

It was proposed by Cllr Kerr and seconded by Cllr Gait that all payments should be made.

Vote: 5 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions

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16. Highways

1. Update on installation of Speed indicator device

The supplier did install the SID but decided that alterations were required and so have taken it away. A new date for installation has not yet been confirmed.

Action: Clerk to progress

2. Update on existing issues already reported to Somerset Highways

As no response has been received from Somerset Highways regarding a number of issues affecting the village and in light of the safety concerns highlighted by parishioners, the clerk is to compile a consolidated list of outstanding issues and forward to Sara Davis (SCC Highways) copied to Mike Rigby (SCC Portfolio Holder) plus district and county councillors. It is hoped that this will elicit a positive response.

Action: Clerk to compile list and send

3. Report of new issues

There were no new issues reported.

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

Somerset Association of Local Councils

New training dates had been circulated to all Councillors. The Clerk should be informed if bookings are required.

18. Meetings/Training to attend

There were none.

19. Correspondence

Information from company supplying Coronation memorabilia – Passed to Cllr Brand.

20. Next meetings:

Parish Council meeting Tuesday 7th February 2022

Meeting closed at 21.35hrs