

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 7th March 2023 at 7.30 pm at Holcombe Village Hall**

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

In attendance: Somerset Cllr Edric Hobbs, District Cllrs Ham and Townsend.
 There were 3 members of the public.

1. Public forum

1. A resident from Scott's Close said that he had been walking his dog around the playing field gravel path over the last 4 months as part of his recovery from heart surgery with no one questioning his actions. He said that there were several residents from Scott's Close that used the facility as it offers a safe, level place to walk and it would be very sad if this had to stop. Cllr Brand said that dogs were only to use the public right of way whilst on a lead and walkers must clean up after the dogs in their care. He thanked the resident for coming and said that the Playing field committee would be made aware of his views.
2. A resident expressed concern over the speed which vehicles travel through Holcombe. They stated that the only way this will stop is if the police enforcement attends and fines offenders.
3. A member of the public raised concerns over the Cookwood development. The initial application was for 147 timber lodges and a pool to be used as a holiday resort but it appears that this has changed to 122 holiday homes that can be used 365 days. They explained that they had met with Mendip Planning representative who confirmed that no breaches of the law or planning regulations had occurred and that there had been no requirement for public consultation to amend the planning permission, which they found hard to believe.

Cllr Brand agreed that a letter should be sent to Mendip Planning department to request that Holcombe Parish Council be kept informed over future changes over the Cookwood development. Cllr Townsend suggested that the Chair liaise with the Chair of Stoke St Michael Parish Council as the development is in their Parish, regarding any further action.

2. Apologies for absence

Cllr Simon Eade, PCSO Robert Nell and Somerset Cllr Tony Robbins sent 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 3rd January 2023

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: 4 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstention

Action: Clerk to post on the website

5. Action updates from the last meeting

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 Revd 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

Elaine Emery attended the meeting and explained that she had lived in the village for 3 ½ years and had made many friends during that time. As a regular dog walker, she often interacts with residents which means she could be a point of contact for the Council if co-opted. Elaine has been involved with Holcombe Hive, opening the Playing Field gate, helping to organise the 2022 Jubilee events and is currently involved with the working party on planning this year's Coronation celebrations.

It was proposed by Cllr Kerr and seconded by Cllr Gait that Elaine should be co-opted.

Vote: 4 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstention

Action: Clerk to process paperwork, set up email and notify MDC. Continue to advertise the vacancies

7. Reports

1. PCSO – A generic area newsletter had been received in February 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 Councillor Ham said that this meeting would be the last for him as a Mendip District Councillor as with the unitary Council coming into effect on the 1st of April there will be no more Mendip. He said he had represented Holcombe for 16 years and had shared the role with various District Councillors during that time. He thanked the District Councillors past and present along with the Parish Councillors for their support and kindness which have made the role enjoyable. He will be continuing as Somerset Councillor for the neighbouring ward and looked forward to working in conjunction with Somerset Councillors Edric and Tony when required. He wished Holcombe Parish Council all the very best for the future. Cllr Brand thanked Cllr Ham for his hard work over the years.

District Cllr Townsend said that it was also the last meeting for him after 8 years as a Mendip District Councillor. As part of the Townsend team now producing the Coleford and Holcombe Community Magazine he would still be very much involved with both villages.

PLANNING

Local Plan – an Extraordinary Meeting of Full Council was called on 09-02-23 by the Opposition to request an explanation of the circumstances which have cost the Council £60,000 in its unsuccessful defence of a Judicial Review of its failings on Local Plan Part 2. The JR specifically related to the mis-handling of the allocation of 505 dwellings in the north east of the district. Additional questions were asked about the failure to produce a 5 year housing land supply and what the programme is to rectify the shortfall. The effects of this failure are evident with 3 sites within a few miles of here, Gladman at Coleford, White Post and now Stoke, all being approved on greenfield sites not designated in LPP2 despite massive opposition. A new Local Plan has to be in place by 31.03.28 - that's 5 years away, does this mean another 5 years exposure to unwanted development? The final Full Council meeting of Mendip DC on 27th February made no mention of the Local Plan problems.

White Post – the Planning Board on 15th March will be reconsidering the application for 270 houses immediately to the south of the existing built-up limit. Although the site was removed from the Local Plan by the Judicial Review it will be difficult to argue that the development would cause Significant and Demonstrable harm as the site immediately behind the White Post was approved at appeal.

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Enforcement – Mendip Enforcement reacted rapidly to the report of extensive groundworks being carried out to the west of Great House Farm at Leigh. Contact was made with the landowners who agreed to halt work pending the submission of a planning application.

Cookswood – Stoke Parish Council have been asked for their views on reports of possible planning contraventions.

HIGHWAYS

On 14th February Highways surfacing manager was given a guided tour of issues in Coleford, Holcombe and Stoke. Common Lane, Ham and also Stoke Bottom were included, where immediate issues have been actioned and work is in progress to make good other defects before surface dressing in the summer. Highways have also been asked to look into another pothole developing at the far end of Stratton Rd.

3. County Council report – Cllr Robbins did not attend but had submitted a full report which had been circulated and is available upon request.

Cllr Hobbs attended and also thanked District Councillors Philip Ham and Alan Townsend for their work over the years. He said that as a new Councillor to this area he hoped that he would be able to tap into their knowledge to assist with future issues when required. He went on to say that he looked forward to working with Cllr Ham as the neighbouring ward councillor in the future. Cllr Hobbs confirmed that he had been appointed as Vice Chair of planning for this area.

4. Update on Unitary – There was nothing to report.

8. Planning Applications

2023/0167/VRC - Removal of conditions 3 (Delivery Hours) condition 9 (Parking) on consent 2020/0242/FUL (The conversion of a free house into a farm shop and kitchen cafe. Attached micropub and side extension for added seating areas. First Floor alterations for 2 separate staff accommodations.)

Duke Of Cumberland Inn Edford Hill Holcombe

The Chair outlined the 2 conditions that were attached to the original application and which are the subject of the latest application as well as providing the rationale as stated in the applicant's submission to Mendip District Council (MDC). It was noted that the MDC planning website showed 1 person supported the application with 3 people objecting, which had been considered. He stated that he had met the applicant to understand the wider context of the removal of these conditions and explained that some deliveries did breach the times prescribed but these were relatively infrequent and were due to problems with the suppliers. In addition, some of the deliveries were personal items not related to the business which were delivered by Amazon and other couriers. As for the siting of the bins, these had been kept in the car park since 2010 and had never caused any major problems. The applicant accepted that sometimes the bins did overflow but this was caused by the cancellation/postponement of bin collections rather than the creation of more refuse on behalf of the business. After much debate about the breaches of the conditions and the impact on the business and neighbours, the council approved the application by majority vote.

Vote: 3 For, 0 Against, 1 Abstention

Action: Clerk to notify the planning office of the decision

9. Planning Updates

There were none.

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10. Consultation on Notification – Somerset Council Statement of Community Involvement

After discussion it was agreed that the Councillors did not have the expertise to comment on the consultation and therefore no response would be submitted.

11. Consider quotes received for renovation work at Jubilee Garden

The Clerk had sought 3 quotes for the renovation work and after a discussion about the merits of each it was decided that Jeremy Weare would be approached in the first instance to conduct the work subject to a site visit to confirm the price and arrangements. All Councillors present agreed that providing the meeting with the contractor goes well, then they should be instructed to complete the work.

Vote: 4 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstention

Action: Clerk to arrange the meeting with the contractor

12. Discuss whether to replace the dog waste bin on Holcombe Hill and consider cost to replace or remove.

After discussion it was decided not to replace the bin on the grounds of cost. It was proposed by Cllr Brand and seconded by Cllr Kerr that the quote of £70 to remove the damaged dog waste bin and post from the hedge at the top of Holcombe Hill, would be accepted. The Clerk would then promote that the bin had been removed via social media and Coleford and Holcombe Community Magazine and highlight the location of other bins in the village that can be used for dog waste. If in time it is deemed that a replacement bin is required then this can be discussed at a later date.

Vote: 4 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstention

Action: Clerk to instruct the contractor

13. Finance

1. Bank Reconciliation

The Clerk had completed the bank reconciliation which will be checked by Cllr Gait at the end of the meeting.

2. Parish Council Payments:

The following invoices were presented for payment.

V Watts – Salary £238.92 and Expenses £20.46	£259.38
Julia Evans – Jubilee Gardens expenses	£67.30

3. Playing Field Payments

The following invoices were presented for payment.

Tim Candy – Hedge cutting	£180.00
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It was proposed by Cllr Kerr and seconded by Cllr Gait that all payments should be made.

Vote: 4 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions

14. Highways

1. Update on installation of Speed indicator device (SID)

The Parish Councillors were all disappointed that yet again the installation did not take place as planned on Sunday 5th March. The supplier confirmed that they will be back on Sunday 12th March to complete the installation. Clerk to ask them to confirm the time so that the trained councillors can

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attend. It was agreed that if the unit was not installed within the next 4 weeks, then the Council would seek to terminate the contract and look for an alternative supplier.

Action: Clerk to ask for the time of installation

2. Update on existing issues already reported to Somerset Highways

The Clerk had written to the Somerset Highways Engineer asking for clarification on what a Mendip Amendment order was, how long it would take to get and whether there would be a cost involved but no response had yet been received.

Action: Clerk to progress

3. Report of new issues

The light which required repair on the road between Kingsway and Scott's Close has still not been completed.

Action: Clerk to follow up

The road signs used for recent work on Longleat Lane are still in situ on Stratton Road, Kingsway and Longleat Lane.

Action: Clerk to request they be collected

The gate on the end of the footpath which runs behind Longleat Road is no longer secure as the post has rotted.

Action: Clerk to report to Somerset Rights of Way

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

There were no reports.

16. Meetings/Training to attend

08/05/23 from 10 until 12 noon - Litter pick with refreshments served in the hall after the event.

Action: Clerk to book the equipment, hall and refreshments. Promote nearer the time on social media and notice board.

17. Correspondence

2 x letters from residents regarding concerns relating to potential breaches of planning conditions at Cookwood Developments. Addressed under Public Forum earlier in the meeting.

Action: Clerk to respond to residents with intended action

18. Next meetings:

Annual meeting of the Parish Tuesday 28th March at 7.30pm
Parish Council meeting Tuesday 4th April 2022 at 7.30pm

Meeting closed at 20.45hrs