

**HOLCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL
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 6th June 2023 at Holcombe Village Hall**

Councillors Present Cllr Simon Brand (Chairman)
Cllr Elaine Emery
Cllr Simon Eade
Cllr Helen Kerr
Cllr David Roberts
Cllr Jon Stratford

In attendance: The Clerk Vickie Watts taking the minutes
There were no members of the public.

1. Public forum

There were no points raised.

2. Apologies for absence

Cllr Phil Gait, Somerset Cllr Edric Hobbs 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 2nd May 2023

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

Vote: 6 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstention

Action: Clerk to post on 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.

6. Co-option of Councillors

The Clerk confirmed that a resident had confirmed that he would be attending the July meeting and was keen to be co-opted.

Action: Agenda item for July.

7. Reports

1. PCSO – No report had been received. The Clerk confirmed that she had emailed the PCSO asking him to take action against 2 untaxed cars that were parked on Holcombe Hill and Stratton Road, one of which was actually on the pavement making it difficult to pass with a mobility scooter.

Action: Clerk to monitor

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2. Somerset Council report – Cllr Tony Robbins emailed a report. Some of the key features are:

Somerset plugs into new era of EV charging - Somerset Council is to be allocated nearly £4m of government funding to expand the county's electrical vehicle charging network. A business case will be produced to unlock £3.7m from the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) fund which will be used fill in the gaps in Somerset's rapidly expanding EV charging network. Data from Gov.uk indicates that there are now nearly 300 publicly accessible EV charging points within Somerset, which represents a 30% increase since the summer of 2022. Of these, 117 have been provided by the five previous councils in Somerset and the LEVI funding could add another 200 or more. Somerset Council's role is to work with the ChargePoint industry to improve the rollout of local charging infrastructure to ensure that there is good distribution and access for the 27% of Somerset homes that do not have off-street parking. As part of the LEVI process, potential on street charging locations will be mapped, and as all locations are different, and there are a variety of charging solutions, the aim is to make sure the right charge points are available in the right locations. The network will include car parks and on-street locations, as well as addressing the charging needs of our more rural communities, and tourist destinations. Planning for this network is underway, and if approved the first charge points being funded in this way could start being installed from summer 2024.

Somerset Council explores 'invest to save, invest to improve' programme for Adult Services - Somerset Council is considering undertaking a major transformation of how it delivers Adult Social Care in the county. The proposals describe how, as part of a review procured in November 2022, major opportunities have been identified to provide care that focuses more on promoting people's independence, improving outcomes for Somerset residents and driving savings in the costs of care services.

The review identified opportunities to focus more intensely on preventative services, community support and 'reablement' support for people leaving hospital. The proposals could lead to:

- 700 more people benefiting from reablement every year.
- 200,000+ fewer hours of homecare needing to be commissioned every year.
- 80 fewer residential placements needing to be commissioned every year.
- 100 adults with a learning disability moving out of a residential home and back into the community.

The 'diagnostic review' of care services, carried out by Newton Europe, identified opportunities to deliver recurring savings of £14.2m per year, stretching to a possible £17.2m. The majority of the savings would be delivered by more effective demand management. The council is now discussing commissioning Newton Europe to support a transformation programme at the cost of £3.5m a year for two years, but with guaranteed recurring savings of £10million per year. The current budget for Adult Social Care in Somerset is £186 million and accounts for 38% of the council's revenue budget.

Road deaths decrease in Somerset - Fatalities on Somerset's roads decreased from 25 to 21 over the 2022 calendar year. Whilst the drop is welcome, Somerset Council's Lead Member for Transport and Digital Cllr Mike Rigby has stressed the need for all road users to think safety first. The Council's road safety team receives police reports following injury collisions and carries out research to identify trends from them. They then look to improve safety across Somerset's network by analysing the data through the detailed annual Road Casualty Review. Evidence shows that most collisions involve one or more of the "fatal five" behaviours of Intoxicated driving (drink or drugs), Careless/Inconsiderate driving, Excessive speed, Mobile Phone use and Failing to wear a seatbelt. In 2022, 15 (75%) of the fatal collisions had a link to one of these behaviours recorded by the Police.

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Of rising concern across the whole Avon and Somerset Police Area is a notable increase in the number of fatal collisions recording at least one vehicle crossing a road into the path of another one. In 2022, 10 (50%) of the collisions recorded involved this type of manoeuvre. In 2022, two deaths occurred on our Trunk Roads, 10 on A roads, three on B roads and five on our C class and Unclassified roads. Most of the collisions occurred on rural sections of the highway network. Of the collisions, analysis shows that 10 (50%) incidents, occurred in Sedgemoor District, five in Mendip, four in South Somerset and one in Somerset West & Taunton.

Council secures extra £5.4m for road maintenance after a year of challenges - Somerset Council has netted an additional £5.4m to carry out essential repair works across the county's road network. This year's extra funding from the Government recognises the unprecedented challenges facing authorities after a year of extreme weather conditions. A blistering summer followed by a winter of sustained flooding and freezing temperatures has led to a huge increase in defects on roads across the UK with standing water getting under surfaces and then freezing. By no means the worst hit, Somerset has a major programme of works to tackle. In January alone 4,347 safety defects (potholes, blocked gullies and other damage) were reported – nearly 50 per cent up on 2022. In total there were 27,671 safety defects for 2022/23, up 3,500 on the previous year. There has been the additional challenge of recent flash flooding. If you spot a problem on the road you can report it quickly and easily using our online report it function: <https://staging.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/report-a-problem-on-the-road/>

8. Planning Applications

There were none

9. Planning Updates

2023/0488 - Infill land with inert material following the removal of dead ash trees and forming new temporary vehicular access. Land At 366904 148861 Edford Hill Holcombe

It was noted that since the Parish Council meeting which took place on 2nd May a total of 94 objections and 1 letter of support had been lodged on the Somerset planning portal. Somerset Tree Officer Bo Walsh, Sophie Laurie of Somerset Wildlife Trust and Amelia Earley of Natural England had all objected. The determination deadline was the 25th May.

10. Finance

1. Bank Reconciliation

The Clerk had completed the bank reconciliation which will be checked by Cllr Emery after the meetings.

2. Consider quotes for new website and agree which provider to proceed with.

The Clerk presented 3 quotes from Aubergine, Parish Council Websites UK and Western Web. After consideration it was proposed that the quote of £645 + VAT from Western Web for a new website would be accepted. The ongoing hosting would cost £81 per year.

Vote: 6 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstentions

Action: The Clerk to thank companies that provided quotes and to instruct Western Web to conduct the work as per the specification

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3. Parish Council Payments:

The following invoices were presented for payment:

V Watts – Salary £414.68 and Expenses £20.46	£ 435.14
CPRE – The Countryside Charity. Annual membership	£ 36.00
Arthur J Gallagher	£ 477.27
Jeremy Weare Ltd – Spray and mulch orchard	288.00

It was proposed by Cllr Emery and seconded by Cllr Kerr that the invoices should be paid.

The following cheque was issued on 09/05/23 in line with the agreed quote:

Jeremy Weare Ltd – Jubilee Garden renovation	£4639.20
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Vote: 6 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstentions

Cllr Eade will liaise with Julia Evans regarding supplying top soil to Jubilee Gardens.

Action: Cllr Eade to liaise with Julia Evans regarding delivery of topsoil to Jubilee Gardens.

There was a suggestion that quotes should be sought to add further inscriptions to commemorate the Queens Platinum Jubilee 2022 and the Kings Coronation 2023 on to the small stone obelisk at Jubilee Gardens, which is currently inscribed with ‘Jubilee 2002’.

Action: Clerk to seek quotes from stonemasons. Agenda item for July.

There is £68 remaining from the Somerset Climate Emergency grant which funded the playing field orchard project. The Clerk to seek quotes for a plaque to mark the creation of the orchard, planted to commemorate the Queens Green Canopy 2022.

Action: Agenda item for July. Clerk to seek quotes.

It was noted that the floral displays which are located at the entrance to the village are overgrown and neglected. The Councillors present agreed that a working party could be put together to complete the renovation.

Action: Clerk to complete a check on the 5 floral displays to establish what needs to be done. Agenda item for July.

4. Playing Field Payments

There were none.

14. Highways

1. Consider whether to purchase Auto Speed Watch (ASW)

The Clerk confirmed that she had spoken with the Tim of Auto Speed Watch who explained how the ASW unit worked, should be installed and the cost. After discussion it was agreed that the Clerk and Cllr Stratford and Roberts would make further enquiries to present at the July meeting.

Action: Clerk, Cllr Stratford and Roberts to investigate. Agenda for July.

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2. Update on existing issues already reported to Somerset Highways

The Clerk will speak with Philip Ham to establish if Sara Davies has responded since their lengthy meeting when they discussed highways issues and what could be done.

Action: Clerk to speak with Philip Ham. Copy Somerset Cllrs Hobbs and Robbins into the correspondence.

3. Report of new issues

The Speed Indicator Device has not yet been collected.

Action: Clerk to contact the supplier to request collection

It was asked whether the work currently being completed to create a new road layout at the junction of Bector Lane with Frog Lane had been authorised.

It was agreed that Cllr Brand would contact the Chair of Stoke St Michael Parish Council (SSM PC) to establish if they had received further updates from Somerset Planning department regarding Cookswood and in particular if they had received notification of the road works currently being carried out. Cllr Brand will also make contact with Cookswood to request a visit to discuss the development.

Action: Cllr Brand to contact SSM PC and Cookswood

15. Review the following policies:

The Clerk had circulated the following policies which had been updated to reflect the change to the unitary status. The documents were based on Somerset Association of Local Councils templates and no changes had been suggested since the last review.

1. Code of Conduct
2. Planning policy
3. Complaints procedure
4. Communications and social media policy
5. Data protection policy
6. Email content privacy notice

It was agreed that the policies would be considered at the next meeting to allow Councillors sufficient time to review.

Action: Agenda item for July

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

Village Hall – Cllr Gait attended the recent AGM on behalf of Cllr Emery. The minutes had been circulated.

Somerset Association of Local Councils (SALC)– The Clerk confirmed that she had recently attended a meeting hosted by SALC which launched a fund available for well-being projects. There were two types of applications, small grants of up to £2,500 with a straightforward application process and larger grants of up to £35,000 which was more detailed. It was agreed that Cllr Kerr and Cllr Emery would work with the Clerk to submit an application for a new bench which would encourage social engagement, interaction with nature and generally promote well-being, to be installed at Jubilee Gardens.

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Action: Cllr Kerr, Emery and the Clerk to complete the application

17. Meetings/Training to attend

Somerset Association of Local Council Training dates had been circulated and all Councillors were encouraged to attend.

Action: Cllrs to consider attending

03/07/23 – Pre-Local Community Network meeting 4-5pm via TEAMS. Cllr Gait to attend.

31/07/23 – Local Community Network meeting 7pm @ Pilton Village Hall. Cllr Gait to attend.

18. Correspondence

07/05/23 – A letter from a resident had been received which highlighted concerns that a Councillor had been seen visiting the site subject to planning application 2023/0488, prior to the meeting held on the 02/05/23. The Chair spoke with the Councillor in question and responded by email to the resident on 10/05/23. On the 12/05/23 the resident wrote accepting the explanation given by Cllr Brand. No further action required.

02/06/23 - Somerset Council emailed to notify of the Licensing Policy consultation. Cllr Brand to respond on behalf of the Holcombe PC

06/06/23 – Email received from Somerset Cllr Dyke apologizing for not attending the meeting arranged to see the playing field orchard, created from the Somerset Climate Emergency Fund. She explained that she had requested for the appointment to be rearranged earlier that week due to an unexpected, unavoidable clash, but the request was not actioned. This was the second occasion that Cllr Dyke had not attended a planned meeting.

19. Next meetings:

Parish Council meeting on Tuesday 4th July 2023 @ 7.30pm

Meeting closed at 20.55hrs