

**HOLCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL**  
**MENDIP DISTRICT OF THE COUNTY OF SOMERSET**

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

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

**Minutes from Holcombe Parish Council Meeting, which took place on  
Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2022 at 7.30 pm at Holcombe Village Hall.**

*Councillors Present*      Cllr Simon Brand (Chair)  
                                 Cllr Simon Eade  
                                 Cllr Phil Gait  
                                 Cllr Helen Kerr

*In attendance:*            District Cllr Alan Townsend  
                                 There was no member of the public

**1. Public forum**

There were no points raised.

**2. Co-option of Councillors**

There were none. Cllr Sue Robinson had emailed her resignation with immediate effect. A letter of thanks has been sent thanking her for her efforts over the 5 years as Councillor. An email had been received from Cllr Dawe Lane also resigning which had been acknowledged by email. All present were encouraged to seek potential new Councillors.

**3. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from District Cllr Philip Ham.

**4. Declaration of interests and dispensations**

There were none.

**5. Approve Minutes of previous meeting held on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2021**

The Clerk had circulated the minutes prior to the meeting. Cllr Gait proposed that they should be approved which was seconded by Cllr Eade. The Clerk to upload to the Parish website.

***Vote: 4 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstentions***

**6. Action updates from the last meeting**

All actions had been carried out or would be discussed later in the meeting.

**7. Reports**

7.1      PCSO report

No report received

7.2      Somerset County Council

County Cllr Mike Pullin did not attend and no report had been received.

7.3      Mendip District Council

District Cllr Townsend and Ham submitted the following report:

On 20<sup>th</sup> December Mendip's Full Council voted to adopt the updated Local Plan Part 2 (LPP2) however neither Cllr Ham nor Cllr Townsend supported this vote as the plan fails in 3 of its 5 key objectives – the most significant being to produce a forward 5 year supply of housing sites. They were told that was because the Government changed the rules during the updating process.

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This was true, the rules were changed to increase the requirement on Mendip to produce 600 houses a year from the original 420 as part of the Government's aim to rectify the national long term housing shortage. This change was announced 30 months ago but the LPP2 updating process did not change to embrace the new requirement and as a result LPP2 is out of date. The implications are immediate as Coleford discovered. Where the Local Planning Authority cannot demonstrate a forward 5 year supply of housing sites the National Framework rules are invoked which requires objectors to prove that any proposed development would cause Significant and Demonstrable Harm sufficient to outweigh the benefits of producing new housing. This is a very low bar for a developer as Coleford discovered. The fact that the site on Anchor Road was not included in the new LPP2 had little weight. The implications for any other such sites within Mendip are obvious and cause for concern.

At Full Council the public and Members expressed concern that the site allocation process in Norton St Philip and Beckington in particular had been seriously flawed and open to legal challenge. Opposition Members formally proposed a Motion to defer adoption of LPP2 to allow the Council to seek further advice to satisfy Members that it was not legally vulnerable. The Motion was heavily defeated and Council then voted to adopt LPP2. Within days the Council received formal notification of the intention of the offended villages to proceed with a Judicial Review. We believe Mendip's defence is very thin and are recommending that they do not defend the action and put at risk many tens of thousands of pounds of our money.

We are urgently seeking from Mendip its proposals to put in hand a plan to rectify the 5 year housing land shortage. The bland response that "Officers will review in the coming months how the requirements and timescales for plan review can be progressed as a joint workstream in transition to the new Somerset authority" is not acceptable and will provide no protection to our villages from speculative development. Appeals submitted against Mendip's refusals at Leigh on Mendip, Stoke St Michael, Chilcompton and White Post will show how vulnerable we are.

The Unitary authority have set up Scrutiny panel of which Cllr Ham is a representative.

**8. Planning Applications**

There were none.

**9. Planning Updates**

There were none

**10. Discuss Calendar of future events for publication**

Cllr Dawe-Lane had compiled a list of village events for publishing in On the Map, for the Parish notice board and website. Cllr Brand will update the spreadsheet to include the 6 events to be hosted by Holcombe Hive during the year and circulate for all Councillors to review and comment.

*Action: Cllr Brand to update and circulate.*

**11. Discuss the ongoing care of the Floral Gateways**

Two volunteers have put themselves forward as willing to take on the responsibility for maintaining the floral displays at the entrances to the village. After discussion it was agreed that the Clerk would approach the Farm shop and the Holcombe to ask if they would be prepared to take on the displays close to them. If they agree the 4 displays would be cared for by 4 volunteers, thus reducing the workload. It was agreed that the Parish Council would fund all plants and materials.

*Action: Clerk to approach the pubs and ask if they will take on the display*

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**12. Update on the Community Tree planting event**

The playing field committee have agreed where the trees are to be planted. The Clerk will contact the supplier to follow up on the email sent seeking advice on the planting requirements, latest date for planting etc. On the day of planting the Parish Council will mark out the intended plots so that families can come and plant a tree. Light refreshments will be available at the barn. A letter will be sent to neighbouring home owners in advance to explain what is being planted, the mature height of the trees etc to alleviate any concerns on the day.

*Action: Clerk to contact the supplier for more info and draft letter for residents.*

**13. Finance**

13.1 Bank Reconciliation

Cllr Gait checked the bank reconciliation at the start of the meeting and found it to be in order.

13.2 Consider budget & precept for 2022/23

All Councillors had considered the spreadsheet which had been circulated prior to the meeting. After discussion it was proposed by Cllr Gait and seconded by Cllr Kerr that the precept for 2022/23 should be increased by 5% making the total £12,458 which equates to 56p per week on a band D property.

*Vote: 4 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstentions*

*Action: Clerk to notify MDC of the agreed precept.*

13.3 Parish Council Payments

The following invoices were presented for payment:

V Watts – Salary £244.94 and Expenses £25.46	£270.40
Holcombe Playing Field - Reconnecting communities grant (£388.93 for folding tables £79.9E 9 hot water urn paid by Steph Chorley)	£435.00
E on – Lychgate electricity	£ 44.86
Holcombe Village Hall Hire	£ 54.00

Cllr Kerr proposed that all payments should be made which was seconded Cllr Gait.

*Vote: 4 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstentions*

**14. Highway**

14.1 Consider purchase of a Speed Indicator Device for use on Holcombe Hill

The Clerk had started to compile a spreadsheet showing all relevant data for the 3 devices alongside each other for ease of comparison however two of the suppliers are yet to respond and therefore the data is incomplete.

*Action: Clerk to compile the spreadsheet and circulate. Agenda item for February meeting*

14.2 Update on existing issues already reported to somerset Highways

There were no new updates from Somerset Highways

*Action: Clerk to contact Sara Davis for an update on all issues ahead of the next meeting*

14.3 Report of new issues:

There were no new issues.

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

Somerset Association of Local Councils – There is another round of funding for Reconnecting Communities with grants available up to £2500. Cllr Brand is putting together a join application with Coleford PC for the platinum jubilee events.

*Action: Cllr Brand to submit application form to SALC*

**16. Meetings/Trainings to attend**

17 & 25/01/22 @ 10 – 5pm	Carbon Literacy Training - PG & FDL to attend
11/01/22 @ 6pm	MDC Parish Forum held virtually

**17. Correspondence**

New Somerset Council – Parish elections 4<sup>th</sup> May 2022. No action required  
MDC – Notice of Adoption of Mendip Local Plan Part II. No action required  
MDC – Notice of costs relating to the Parish elections. No action required

**18. Next meetings**

Parish Council meeting – Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2022

Meeting closed at 21.20hrs