

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

Minutes from Holcombe Parish Council Meeting, which took place on
Tuesday 11th November 2021 at 7.30 pm at Holcombe Village Hall.

Councillors Present Cllr Simon Brand (Chair)
 Cllr Phil Gait
 Cllr Fran Dawe-Lane
 Cllr Sue Robinson

In attendance: District Cllr Philip Ham and District Cllr Alan Townsend
 There was 1 member of the public

1. Public forum

- 1.1 A member of the public said that they had emailed the Council some time ago to raise concern over the narrow pinch points in Charlton Road and requested that signs stating 'Single Track Road Ahead' be installed. They were surprised that warning signs for the Ducks had already been installed when they only appear on the road periodically whereas the narrow pinch points are always present.

The Clerk confirmed that the email had been received and apologised if it had not been acknowledged. The narrow pinch points had been raised with Sara Davis the Somerset County Council Highways Engineer who had agreed that a sign could be installed to warn drivers. This would need to be installed prior to the junction of Charmborough Lane which would be in the parish of Coleford or Kilmersdon depending which side of the road the signs were placed. There was already a sign in Holcombe to warn drivers as they left Holcombe. This action will be pursued along with the other points which will be discussed later in the meeting.

- 1.2 Cllr Robinson asked if a notice could be posted on Facebook and included in On the Map asking dog walkers to stop throwing bagged dog waste over the fence into the gardens bordering Budds Lane.

Action: Clerk to post request on Facebook and OTM

2. Co-option of Councillors

A member of the public has confirmed that they would like to become a Councillor. The Clerk will forward forms for completion.

Action: Clerk to send forms and add to the December agenda

3. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Simon Eade and County Cllr Mike Pullin which was accepted by the Chair.

4. Declaration of interests and dispensations

There were none.

5. Approve Minutes of previous meeting held on Tuesday 5th October 2021

The Clerk had circulated the minutes prior to the meeting. Cllr Dawe-Lane proposed that they should be approved which was seconded by Cllr Robinson.

Vote: 4 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstentions

6. Action points from last meeting and matters arising

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

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Cllr Brand confirmed that he had spoken with the volunteer gardener regarding her concern that the neighbour's privacy had been compromised as a result of the pruning work in the garden. It was agreed that the situation would be re-assessed in the spring when foliage starts to bloom to establish if any work is required.

7. Reports

7.1 PCSO report

The Rural Beat North quarterly newsletter had been circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting, which gave statistics on crime in Holcombe and the other villages plus highlighted current policing priorities.

7.2 Somerset County Council

No report had been submitted.

7.3 Mendip District Council

District Cllr Townsend had asked the Clerk to circulate a brief outlining that the Gladman appeal for 63 houses on Anchor Road, Coleford had been upheld. The Inspector's report summarised the main reasons for refusal – harm to the landscape character and appearance, highway safety, sewerage issues, ecology, heritage, effects on neighbours, and planning policy but dismissed them all. He accepted the position of Wessex Water that they have a statutory obligation to take sewerage off the site despite the Parish Council detailing all the history of overload. Apart from the obvious visual impact which the Inspector minimises, he dismissed the significance of the Elm tree because Mendip did not place a TPO on it despite Coleford Parish Council requesting it twice.

The worst issue is that of planning policy. Parishes have been working in good faith with Mendip over some 5 years on the Local Plan Part 2 (LPP2) to establish preferred locations for future developments within villages. The final updated version of LPP2 was issued by the Planning Inspectorate to Mendip on 1-9-21 and approved by Cabinet on 4-10-21. This was hailed by Mendip as providing a “clear way forward”. Except it does not. It has failed to address the additional housing requirement on Mendip published in July 2019 and therefore does not provide a 5 year forward supply of housing land. This opens the door to any developer to propose anything anywhere and the only defence is to prove that the harm significantly and demonstrably outweighs the benefits. The Inspector took the view that the benefits of more houses in Coleford and associated economic benefits outweighed the harm, which he had already minimised in his view. The fear is that we are now back in the planning ‘free for all’ that Mendip experienced around 2014 when LPP2 was previously out of date which resulted in developments at Chilcompton, Rode, Norton St Philip and Beckington.

Coleford Parish Council has instructed a Planning Consultant to see if there are any legal loopholes in what the Inspector has done. If there are any possibilities that we may have a chance to challenge him in the Courts through a Judicial Review. Questions have also been raised with Mendip District Council regarding the appeal and the Local Plan Part II. Any response will be passed to Holcombe Parish Council for your information.

Highways - District Cllr Townsend said that the 2 sites of flooding at Stoke Bottom and the large pile of dumped stone by the bridge have been reported to Somerset Highways.

District Cllr Ham reported that he had spent 5 hours with Somerset County Council Highways Engineer Sara Davis travelling around the local villages trying to address various issues. There was a conversation around the difficulties of creating a dropped kerb at the junction of Common Lane with Holcombe Hill. She remains adamant that the request for creation of dropped kerbs must go through as a Small Improvement Scheme.

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Unitary – District Cllr Ham said that the change orders are currently being studied. The rural local community networks (LCN) look like they will have to be a large rural geographic area to meet the required population. It is not yet known where the boundaries will be. Frome Town Council are now piloting an LCN which is being followed to ensure that other LCN's can be set up effectively and learn from any issues that are highlighted.

A Local Government organisation has now been set up with advisory board to advise on the joint committees which include Somerset Association of Local Council, Society of Local Council Clerks, Highways, Education, Health etc until the vesting in 2023. Progress is starting to happen.

8. Planning Applications

There were none.

9. Planning Updates

There were none.

10. Finance

10.1 Bank Reconciliation

Cllr Dawe-Lane had checked the bank reconciliation after the October meeting and found it to be in good order. The same will be done at the end of this meeting.

10.2 Consider budget & precept for 2022/23

The Clerk had circulated the spreadsheet showing the first draft of the budget for 2022/23 to help calculate the Precept required from Mendip District Council. It was noted that the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations could attribute considerable expenditure to the years budget. It was agreed that Cllrs Brand and Dawe-Lane will produce a list of the predicted costs for circulation so that it can be further discussed at the next meeting.

Action: Cllr Brand and Dawe-Lane to circulate predicted costs for the Platinum Jubilee celebrations. Agenda item for the next meeting

10.3 Parish Council Payments

The following invoices were presented for payment:

V Watts – Salary £367.41 and Expenses £35.06	£ 402.47
Holcombe Hive (Reconnecting communities grant)	£1355.00

Cllr Dawe-Lane proposed that all payments should be made which was seconded Cllr Robinson.

Vote: 4 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstentions

10.4 Playing Field Payments

There were none.

11. Review Policy on Audio/Visual recording and photography at Parish Council meetings

The Clerk had circulated the draft policy for consideration prior to the meeting. Some minor amendments were proposed by Cllr Brand and seconded by Cllr Robinson which all Councillors supported.

Vote: 4 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstentions

Action: Clerk to make the amendments and circulate to all.

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12. Update on the Tree planting project (Funded by Somerset County Council's Climate Emergency Fund)

The Clerk confirmed that the grant application to create a mini orchard on Holcombe Playing Field had been accepted by Somerset County Council. The Funding agreement had been received which would need to be signed. Cllr Brand to speak with the Playing Field committee to come up with a scheme to plant the trees.

Vote: 4 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstentions

*Action: Clerk to ensure the agreement is signed. Cllr Brand to speak with the Playing Field Committee regarding the planting scheme
Agenda item for the next meeting*

13. Update on the Tree Survey completed by Hillside Trees Limited

The Clerk to liaise with Cllr Brand to establish which tree has been omitted from the survey.

Action Cllr Brand and Clerk to liaise regarding the missing tree.

14. Highway

14.1 Report of new issues: - There were no new items reported.

14.2 Review response from Sara Davis SCC Highways engineer on outstanding requests and what can be done.

The following update had been received from Sara Davis:

Relocation of the existing 30 mph limit on Brewery Lane

This is in hand, but unlikely to be implemented until next year.

Action: Clerk to chase up in January 2022

Relocation of the existing 30 mph limit outside the Farm Shop, Holcombe

Cllr Pullin had asked if the existing 30 mph gateway could be re-sited further back along the lane. This has been considered and Somerset Highways believe it would not be appropriate to move the gateway from its existing location.

Signage

The new pedestrian sign has been ordered to replace the one which disappeared at the bottom of Holcombe Hill just before the Farm Shop and will hopefully be delivered by the end of the financial year (April 2022)

Action: Clerk to chase up in March 2022

Pinch points on Charlton Road

There is already a road narrowing sign in situ on Charlton Road (as you leave the village heading towards Radstock) outside the property known as 'Goodwood'. There is not one coming from the opposite direction, so additional signage could be installed. The proposed location for such signage would fall within the Parish of Kilmersdon or Coleford, so their permission would need to be given.

Action: Clerk to confirm with Sara Davis that this should be commenced. Clerk to write to Kilmersdon and Coleford Parish Councils for permission if required.

Dropped Kerbs required at the junction of Common Lane and Brewery Lane

As previously advised, this does not sit within the remit of Traffic Management.

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Alyn Jones the Director of Economic and Community Infrastructure Operations also replied to say that the advice provided by Sara was correct and that there is no funding available from the County Council to deliver dropped kerbs in the Parish area. He said that the request from Holcombe to create a number pedestrian crossing points would require more in-depth design consideration (pursuant to Government Advice LTN2/95) and approval probably including safety audit as pedestrians are being encouraged to cross the carriageway.

Mr Jones went on to say that these types of schemes have historically been funded through our small improvement schemes programme; which is not open to applications at this time whilst the current programme is completed. He confirmed that the Parish Council could fund or contribute towards the delivery. He would ensure that the SCC Highways team helps to advise on how best to proceed.'

Inconsiderate Parking at Holcombe Farm Shop

This is being dealt with by the planning office. It is understood that the Area Highways Office and the owner of the shop are working together on this.

Traffic Calming

It was stated it's not that Somerset County Council won't consider speed bumps and chicanes, but any implementation of such will be determined by the problems experienced and the suitability of the location. These sorts of traffic calming measures are out of the scope of the Traffic Management Team and would need to be put forward by our County Councillor as a potential Small Improvement Scheme once it re-opens in the future.

Speed Indicator Devices

The Parish Council is able to purchase their own Speed indicator devices (SID) and the current guidance (V4) along with the Memorandum of Understanding has been supplied and circulated to all Councillors for consideration.

More information needs to be gathered on the type of SID to purchase, maintenance, insurance and training

***Action: The Clerk, Cllrs Robinson and Eade to gather more information to present at the next meeting
Clerk to write to the PCC to ask their view on Auto Watch.***

Clerk to write an update for OTM and Facebook updating the parishioners on the points discussed.

14.3 Update on the Bus Back Better project.

Cllr Brand confirmed that he had read the report which was full of extensive analysis but it doesn't give any solutions or decisions at this point. Somerset Bus Partnership are looking for representatives to report views on the Holcombe service. It was agreed that the Council will continue to follow this and try to find an appropriate representative.

Action: Clerk to find a representative to attend meetings and be a voice for the Holcombe bus service

15. Discuss and agree proposal to provide every household in the village with a footpath map

A grant of £500 has been received to support Cllr Gait's proposal to provide Holcombe residents with a pocket size laminated footpath map of the village to encourage residents to explore the rights of way routes throughout our countryside.

It was agreed that the map will include the sites of bins for dog waste and the country code.

Action: Cllr Gait to progress

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

No reports were provided.

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17. Meetings/Trainings to attend

06/11/21 @ 1 – 6pm	Levels Climate Forum’s SCOP26+ - PG & FDL to attend
15/11/21	SALC Chairman training – SB to attend
17 & 25/01/21 @ 10 – 5pm	Carbon Literacy Training - PG & FDL to attend

18. Correspondence

An email had been received requesting that a banner advertising Stoke St Michael Primary School open day be displayed at the Lychgate. After discussion it was agreed that the banner should be permitted until the 15th of November.

Action: Clerk to notify the school that it is acceptable

19. Next meetings

Parish Council meeting – Tuesday 7th December 2021

Meeting closed at 21.45hrs