

**Minutes of Crowcombe Parish Council Meeting**  
**Held on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2016 at Church House, Crowcombe at 7.30pm**

**Present :** Cllrs B Druitt, D Lock, T Brooks, K Kenyon, M Smith and C Morrison-Jones (clerk). Also in attendance was SCC Cllr C Lawrence, Mr J Laver and one member of the public.

**20/16 Apologies :** A Trollope-Bellew

**21/16 Declarations of Interest / Dispensations :** M Smith in item 29/16 as a member of the management committee of Church House.

**22/16 Public Participation :** Wendy Loosemore, driver of the Berrys school bus, requested that the Parish Council give permission for the bus to be parked in the Village Hall car park during the day in school term time as, due to mobility problems, she is having to rely on people to drive her up and down the village to collect the bus. She gave the Parish Council a letter from a neighbour supporting this fact and said that Berrys were prepared to make a donation towards the Village Hall if parking could be allowed. The Chairman advised that the car park is leased to the Village Hall committee and therefore they should be approached regarding this request. It was thought that their AGM is on 10<sup>th</sup> March so this may be an opportune time for Mrs Loosemore to raise the request. The state of the pavement on the Right hand side from the pub up through the village was raised, particularly a sunken manhole cover opposite the Carew Arms.

**23/16 Councillor Co-option:** The clerk informed councillors that West Somerset Council had confirmed that no petition for election had been received regarding the casual vacancy. It was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed that Mr Jim Laver be co-opted to the Parish Council. Mr Laver signed an Acceptance of Office document and was given a Register of Members Interests form to complete and return to the clerk.

**24/16 Police Matters :** no police presence, but a report was submitted by PCSO Bolton: Please remember that this is the time of year when there are break ins on outbuildings and sheds, the most recent being yesterday in Dulverton – be aware!  
Recorded crime statistics for the whole beat area (Minehead, Williton and Wellington) 2015 v 2016:  
408 total recorded crimes, just under 10% down year on year

- ASB 190 = 42% down on last year
- CRIME 253 = 20% down on last year
- GENERAL 569 = 145 down on last year
- PUBLIC SAFETY etc 831 = 13% down on last year
- TRANSPORTATION 386 = 16% down on last year

**25/16 County Councillor's Report :** Christine distributed a press release from Somerset CC outlining an ambitious vision for the county that included, amongst other things, the desire to create a Somerset University and a garden town. Work is also under way exploring devolution which, even if full devolution does not occur, has resulted in cooperation between authorities and triggering ways to work together and save money.

A budget of £75 million has been agreed for investment in roads (with a large proportion towards the A358 / A303 improvements), schools and economic development and news was received last week of an additional £2.9million from central government which will be invested in key frontline services, highways and to replenish reserves.

The Chairman thanked Christine for the recent work done on the gullies between West Bagborough and Combe Florey bridge – even during the recent heavy rains there was no flooding of the road.

However it was brought to Christine's attention that, despite one week's work being carried out, the repairs carried out at Green Hills have brought no improvement and the quality and value of the work was questioned (minute item 30/16 iii).

**26/16 District Councillor's Report :** No report received

**27/16 Minutes – Parish Council Meeting, January 7<sup>th</sup> 2016 :** It was agreed that the minutes be adopted as a true record. The Chairman signed the minutes.

**28/16 Matters arising from the Minutes :**

- Parish Path Liaison Officer: The Chairman reported that the records and equipment had been returned by the Mr and Mrs Wilson now that they had given up the role. The clerk reported that Sarah Evelyn had agreed to take over the role and M Smith offered to take the equipment to give to Mrs Evelyn.

**29/16 Church House Interpretation Panel :** As part of the application for lottery funding for Church House, permission is to be applied for an information panel in the car park . The Church House management committee has been advised by West Somerset DC that the fee for the application would be halved if the application was done in the name of the Parish Council. It was unanimously agreed to proceed with the application on behalf of the Church House with the cost of the fee being reimbursed to the Parish Council by the Church House committee.

**30/16 Highways –any issues to report :**

- i. Flaxpool Hill – a lorry hit the bank whilst pulling over to let a bus pass at the beginning of last week. No injuries reported.
- ii. The gullies on the top half of The Combe have been cleared but not the pipes so water is still flooding down the road
- iii. As mentioned in item 25/16, despite one week's work having been carried out the road drainage repairs on the A358 at the bottom of Greens Hill (next to the Copse) have brought no improvements to the recurring flooding on this stretch (actually it has possibly increased the flooding here, as the water cannot get away). The quality and value of the work was questioned. Clerk to write to Highways
- iv. The post supporting the 30mph sign at the top of the village is rotten and has broken
- v. The 20 mph sign by Church House is upside down

*Christine Lawrence left the meeting at this point to attend another Parish Council meeting*

**31/16 Finances :**

- a) **Payments :** It was agreed to pay the following invoices:
  - i. Clerk's salary and expenses £385.18
  - ii. HMRC – clerk's NI/PAYE £62.00
  - iii. Playground Inspection Company (annual inspection) £85.00 (£62.50 + £12.50 VAT)
  - iv. West Somerset DC (Church House information panel application fee) £192.50
  - v. Information Commissioner (data protection registration) £35.00
  - vi. S.A.L.C (Preparing for Audit training, clerk to attend 23.3.16) £25.00
- b) **Expenditure to Date :** The clerk reported that the bank balance total held by the council as of 29/1/16, adjusted to allow for un-presented cheques (£667) , to be £14,541.11 consisting of £9,302.24 in the current account, £3223.48 in the deposit account and £2682.39 in the amenities account.
- c) **Review of Internal Controls document :** this had been updated and was discussed and approved.

- d) **Review of Schedule of Risk Assessment** : The clerk and Councillors went through the schedule detailing when each item was last reviewed and future actions. Tree testing -it was reported by the clerk that it had been recommended two years ago that a resonance test should be carried out in two years time on the oak tree in the playground. J Laver stated that there had been a landmark case recently regarding tree risk assessment and by next meeting he should have more details to report on. It was agreed to discuss the oak tree testing next meeting when more information was available.
- e) **Review Assets Register** : The chairman informed Councillors that he had received a request from the cricket club to assist with VAT recovery on the purchase of a new all weather wicket. It was agreed that this was not possible and the clerk was to respond to the cricket club. The clerk updated the councillors to the position of the Asset Register. In particular, the presence of the cricket score box and all weather wicket were questioned. The clerk agreed to investigate this matter further. It was agreed, in light of the recent cost of replacing the bus shelter, to increase the combined value of the two bus shelters to £3,500. In addition, the valuation of gates and fencing was questioned and it was agreed to seek a quote for the cost of replacement to ensure that the current valuation was sufficient. It was reported by the clerk that the glass in notice board was damaged – D Lock offered to see if he could carry out the repair.
- f) **Audit arrangements for Smaller Authorities** : The clerk explained that, as long as the annual turnover of the Parish Council remained under £25,000, from 2017 the council would not be obliged to carry out an external audit. However, a decision had to be reached, covering the next five financial years, that if an external audit were to be necessary, whether to remain with the designated local authority auditors or to seek alternative arrangements. It was unanimously agreed to remain with the designated auditors if an external audit proved to be needed in the next five years.

### 32/16 Play Area

- a) **Weekly Inspection Reports** : some minor issues were reported with the equipment. These were also picked up in the annual inspection and a plan of repair was set in place (see minute 32/16 b)
- b) **Annual Playground Inspection** : councillors went through the report. A few ‘amber’ issues had been identified but the majority of the issues had been reported as low or very low risk. It was agreed that the clerk should seek quotes to repair the identified defects that required repair by professional playground contractors. It was agreed to bring together a working party when the weather improved to address the issues raised that were able to be resolved by volunteers.

### 33/16 Planning Application :

- a) **Application 3/07/16/001 Roebuck Farm, Crowcombe TA4 4BN  
Change of Use and Conversion of Barn to Holiday Unit**

Four councillors and the clerk attended an informal meeting at Roebuck Farm on 27/2/16 to view the site and discuss plans with the agent and applicant. Information gained from this meeting was discussed at the Parish Council meeting and it was agreed that the parish council had no objection to the application as it was a good use of bringing back to life an unused building. Clerk to write to WSDC on behalf of the council.

- b) **Other planning issues: Leigh Mill**

J Laver reported that Leigh Mill, had recently been demolished and he had been in contact with the Enforcement Officer.

*\* subsequent to the meeting it was discovered that whilst the site is included in the Historic Environmental Record, the structures on the site are not protected as either a listed building or as a scheduled monument and their removal would not require permission.*

**34/16 Transparency Code Compliance :** The clerk reported progress in preparations to ensure compliance with the transparency code publication scheme. The grant scheme for 15/16 is now closed for applications but it the council agreed to submit an application for financial assistance towards the costs involved with complying with the code when the scheme reopens for 16/17.

*An additional member of the public joined the meeting at this point*

**35/16 Queen's Birthday Celebrations, 11/12<sup>th</sup> June :** Councillors agreed that the Parish Council wishes to support and promote a celebratory party. Due to costs, it was agreed that a street closure was not suitable but it was suggested that the Village Hall and recreation ground could be a suitable venue. M Smith offered to approach the Village Hall to see if they would be agreeable to this and also to place notices in the Post Office to try and generate offers of help. It was agreed to write a short item for insertion in CAW. The clerk is to contact other village organisations to look to generate some co-sponsorship (financial or otherwise).

It was agreed to review after the publication of CAW when hopefully offers of help have been generated.

**36/16 Annual Parish Meeting and Annual Parish Council Meeting :** It was agreed to hold the Annual Parish Council Meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> May at 7.30pm in the Quantock Room, Village Hall.

Parish Council meeting dates for the rest of 2016 were agreed to be July 7<sup>th</sup>, September 1<sup>st</sup> and November 3<sup>rd</sup> all at 7.30pm.

M Smith offered to ask the PPC if any plans for a village church service and reception before the beginning of June to enable the Annual Parish meeting to tie in with this, as has been done for the previous three years. If no service was planned then a suitable date would be decided to run the Parish meeting as a stand alone event.

**37/16 Clerk's Report :**

- i. Sarah Evelyn has now taken on the role as Parish Path Liaison Officer.
- ii. West Somerset Rights of Way have been given approval by English Heritage to improve the stone steps, using local red sandstone. It is hoped that the work will start soon.

**38/16 Matters with the permission of the Chairman :** The matter of the damage wall adjacent to the Church House car park was raised. A Trollope-Bellew had offered to pursue this at the previous meeting. As he was not present at this meeting the Chairman agreed to enquire if any progress on ownership of the wall had been made.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 21.35pm

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2016 at the Quantock Room, Village Hall, commencing at 7.30pm