

Minutes of Crowcombe Parish Council Meeting
Held on Thursday 5th November 2015 at Church House, Crowcombe at 7.30pm

Present : Cllrs B Druitt, D Lock, T Brooks, A Trollope-Bellew, M Smith and C Morrison-Jones (clerk). Also in attendance were Police Officer Andy Ware, SCC Cllr C Lawrence, Trish Kennedy (Church House Management Committee representative) and 1 member of the public.

99/15 Apologies : Kate Kenyon

100/15 Declarations of Interest / Dispensations : A Trollope-Bellew stated an interest, as landowner, in items 113/15 and 122/15 and as a SCC Cllr in item 115/15. M Smith declared an interest, in item 105/15, as a member of the Management Committee.

All councillors present signed a dispensation form, valid for the meeting on 5th November 2015 and any subsequent meetings prior to April 2016, to enable the precept discussions, item 117/15, to take place.

101/15 Public Participation : No public participation.

102/15 Police Matters : Police Officer Andy Ware introduced himself as the Beat Manager for Williton and Watchet. Police numbers have been reduced and this area is now covered by one beat officer, Andy Ware, and 2 PCSOs, Peter Bolton and Sue Thompson.

Available crime figures are for the Beat Area as a whole but recorded crime is down 34% on previous years. In September 27 crimes were recorded and 193 calls were logged from members of the public. People were urged to be vigilant following a spate of vehicle break ins at local beauty spots and reminded keep valuables locked away out of site. Andy left the meeting after this report.

103/15 County Councillor's Report : Christine reported that SCC were preparing the Mid-Term Financial Plan and it is difficult to balance the budget. It is likely that less finance will be able for the homeless but the hope is to work with more support groups with people facing long term issues. Christine explained that County Hall is currently sporting a 'purple glow' to support Pancreatic Cancer UK's 'Purple Lights for Hope' campaign to help raise awareness of this devastating disease. The situation continues to be disjointed but for some of Crowcombe there is now connection to super fast broadband; speeds are reported to be in the region of 28-38mb per second. There is no known timeframe for the rest of the parish to be connected.

There will be a consultation in place from 9th November-11th January regarding possible cuts to concessionary fares and subsidised bus routes. Although not thought to be impacting buses running through the village it may impact on other services, such as the park and ride in Taunton. Christine urged people to please look on the website and register their views.

On a lighter note - In order to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday next year her grandson Peter Philips is organising the Patron's Party on the Mall on 12th June 2106. 10,000 guests are to be invited drawn from the charities that Her Majesty is Patron of. To mirror these celebrations, Somerset is hoping to have 90 street parties across the county on the same weekend and Christine hoped Crowcombe would host one of them.

The Somerset County Council Civic Service is to be held in Crowcombe Church on 15th November. Christine has chosen to hold it in Crowcombe to showcase the importance of small rural communities to Somerset.

T Brooks raised the issue with Christine of dirty road signs and of foliage being left around roadside signs after hedge cutting, obscuring the signs. Christine remarked that it was technically highways issue but that she would speak with David Peake about the possibility of this problem being rectified.

104/15 District Councillor's Report : Anthony Trollope-Bellew reported that the Chinese President had signed an agreement regarding investment in Hinkley Point C during his recent state visit. This means that the development is probably going ahead but no decision is to be taken until next year. There are budget balancing issues, mainly due to Hinkley Point B's re-evaluation and West Somerset DC having to pay £1.6 million back to government that it never even received.

Devolution update – current thinking is that a Mayor is required for this to proceed but this is not something Devon and Somerset wish to have in place so discussions are ongoing.

Watchet paper mill will now definitely close. The roundabout development at Washford Cross is anticipated to be open by the end of the year.

105/15 Church House Notice Board : Trish Kennedy, as a representative of the Church House Management Committee, gave a brief outline of the plans to submit a second bid to the Lottery Heritage Fund for a grant to assist in re-pointing Church House - part of the bid process is to demonstrate how restoring Church House will benefit the wider community. The committee wish to erect two new notice boards – one in the car park covering the history of Church House and a second attached to the front of the building itself to carry notices of events in Church House. The Parish Council unanimously (M Smith abstained, ref item 100/15) agreed to the clerk writing a supportive letter regarding the planning applications for the notice boards on behalf of the Members.

Christine Lawrence also kindly indicated that she may be able to direct some funds to this project.

106/15 Councillor Resignation : Julie Long resigned from the Parish Council, effective of Friday 30th October 2015. WSDC has been informed and notices advertising the casual vacancy were placed on the Parish notice board and the notice board outside the Post Office on 5th November. If an election is not requested by the 26th November then the Council will be in the position to co-opt a new member. Discussions took place regarding possible people to approach if required.

107/15 Quantocks AONB Board : The Quantock Hills AONB Service wish to replace the notice board in the car park and requested input from the Parish Council regarding wording and images to be used. A draft text from the AONB Board was distributed amongst Councillors and a few changes to the proposed text were discussed . It was agreed that the clerk is to write supporting the installation of the new board with the amendments to the text required by the council.

108/15 Minutes – Parish Council Meeting, September 2015 : Item 98/15 was amended to read 'Cross' instead of 'Buttercross' regarding the benches in the village.

Subsequent to the alteration it was proposed, seconded and agreed that the minutes be adopted as correct. The Chairman signed the minutes.

109/15 Matters arising from the Minutes : Following the hedge cutting in Carters Lane by WSDC T Brooks reported there was damage caused to the curb stones by the flail machinery. A Trollope-Bellew agreed to meet with T Brooks regarding this with a view to following up with WSDC.

110/15 Highways –any issues to report : 2 weeks ago there was a collision in the village between the Riddlers bus and a landrover between Church House and the Pub. No reported injuries.

111/15 Banking : Following the resolution passed in September (ref, item 90/15) a letter to NatWest requesting the removal of past councillors from the signatory list and the addition of new councillors and the clerk was signed by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman and Clerk. In addition the new signatories signed the Natwest Form to be added to the accounts. This paperwork, together with the individual Identification forms that are outstanding, should now enable the clerk to request NatWest to make the changes agreed.

112/15 Finances :

- a) **Payments :** It was agreed to pay the following invoices: Clerk's salary and expenses £384.71, HMRC – clerk's NI/PAYE £62.00, WiserHosting – website hosting provider £28.80, SALC – in anticipation of training fees £50
- b) **Receipts :** 2nd part of precept, £3750, was received from WSDC on 12/9/2015
- c) **Expenditure to Date :** The clerk reported that the bank balance total held by the council as of 12/9/15 to be £16,713.58 consisting of £10,808.71 in the current account, £3222.67 in the deposit account and £2682.20 in the amenities account.

113/15 Play Area : No issues were reported with the play equipment. However concerns were raised about the short (approximately 3 metres) stretch between the hedge and the tennis court near the tunnel that was not fenced sufficiently to stop children accessing the car park. It was unanimously agreed that A Trollope-Bellew would approach Simon Date with a view to him erecting a short stretch of post, rail and sheep fencing to secure the area.

Concerns were raised regarding older children in the village climbing the play equipment inappropriately and their unruly behaviour. M Smith also pointed out that the tennis club are experiencing similar issues with the court fencing being climbed. It was suggested that this behaviour would probably not be so much of an issue over the winter months but if the warmer spring weather brought a re-occurrence than discussions should be restarted on how to best manage the situation.

The playground inspection rota was amended with A Trollope-Bellew taking on the duty for January instead of March.

114/15 Planning Application Updates : The application for 'Hooks' to change the roofing materials on the veranda has been approved. The application for works to trees belonging to 3 Kings Acre has been partially approved and an amended surgery schedule granted for the remaining trees.

115/15 Somerset County Council 'Listening & Learning' questionnaire : The matters raised on the on-line questionnaire were discussed and a Parish council view formed on the answers. The clerk was requested to complete the on-line survey on behalf of the Parish Council, using the answers agreed. Councillors were also requested to view the survey individual and each answer on a personal level.

116/15 Winter Salt / Grit collection : Somerset Highways Department is holding its annual salt / grit collection day on 21st November. Each parish can nominate one person to collect up to 10 20kg bags of salt for distribution around the parish. T Brooks volunteered to collect this year on behalf of Crowcombe.

117/15 2016-17 Budget / Precept preliminary discussions : The clerk had prepared a budget forecast for the rest of this financial year and for next year together with a range of possible precept requests and the impact these would have on Band D household in Crowcombe. There are concerns that, as the WSDC budgets are squeezed, parishes will be expected to take responsibility for more of their facilities. The anticipation is that the Parish Council may become responsible for the car park in the future and so this must be accounted for when considering funds held. In addition the reserves allocated for the playground will be spent by the end of the year, again an additional expense to budget for. After discussion it was voted (4 for, 1 against) for the clerk to prepare a proposal for discussion at the January meeting based on a 15% increase on last year.

118/15 Clerk's Report : One quote has now been received for the bus shelter and has been forwarded to the Insurance Company handling the claim. A second quote for the structure itself has also been received – still awaiting the quote for a highways approved contractor regarding erection costs. The chairman reported that he had been approached by a member of the public hoping that the shelter would in place before the winter who had also indicated that they may be able to provide funding to bridge the gap between the sum insured and the final cost of replacement. West Somerset Rights of Way had contacted the clerk to inform that it was planned to resurface the stone steps by Pencarrow House. The Council will be kept informed on the progress of this project. The clerk reported that she had recently taken on the clerk role at Stogumber and Pawlett Parish Councils in addition to Crowcombe. Training and travel expenses can be now shared between Councils, reducing costs to Crowcombe.

119/15 Future meeting Dates : Future meeting dates for the Parish Council were agreed as Thursday 7th January, Thursday 3rd March and Thursday 5th May.

120/15 SALC Training Dates : A list of future training dates with SALC was produced. Some new councillors still have yet to attend the 'Good Councillor' course – it was asked that they consider suitable dates and ask the clerk to book their places. The clerk had also identified courses that she would like to attend.

121/15 Matters with the permission of the Chairman : concerns were raised regarding the parking of a Berrys coach in the village and recreation ground car parks on several occasions recently. The coach was locked and no driver present. It was decided that the clerk should write to Berrys requesting an explanation.

As mentioned in Christine Lawrence's report, Bob reported that super fast broadband has now reached part of the village with anticipated speeds of 28mb per second. It is not know when the rest of the parish will be connected.

No nominations were put forward for Quantock Hills AONB Joint Advisory Committee.

122/15 Grimes Farm – discussion of letter regarding possible future development : A Trollope-Bellew left the room before this item was discussed, ref item 100/15.

The clerk warned that forming an opinion on the letter, ref 98/15, at this stage could be viewed as the Parish Council having a prejudiced opinion when a formal application is applied for, and therefore exclude them from comment at that vital stage. As the letter was addressed to Bob personally it was agreed that the response should be a personalised Chairman's letter explaining that it would be inappropriate for the Council to express a view at this point in time.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 10.08pm

The next Parish council meeting will be held on Thursday 7th January 2016 at Church House, commencing at 7.30pm