

Minutes of Crowcombe Parish Council Meeting
Held on Thursday 7th January 2016 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 was SCC Cllr C Lawrence.

01/16 Apologies : Kate Kenyon due to work commitments

02/16 Declarations of Interest / Dispensations : A Trollope-Bellew stated an interest, as landowner, in items 14/16 a) vi.

The dispensation form signed by all councillors present on 5th November 2015 was still valid, to enable the precept discussions, item 17/16, to take place.

03/16 Public Participation : No public participation.

04/16 Councillor co-option: It had been hoped that, in order to achieve a balance to the Parish Council, a female candidate could be co-opted. However, councillors reported that although approaches had been made to possible candidates, no female parishioners had agreed to take on the challenge. However parishioner Jim Laver had expressed an interest in becoming a councillor. A message was left for him at the beginning of the meeting to, if at all possible, to attend the meeting in order to be officially co-opted. As he was unable to attend, the required time of 60 days within which a councillor could be co-opted had elapsed so it was agreed, in order to comply with regulations, to display another public notice advertising a vacancy. If no petition for election is received within the required time frame then it was agreed by the councillors present to co-opt Jim Laver to the Parish Council at the next meeting on 3rd March 2016.

05/16 Police Matters : no report submitted

06/16 County Councillor's Report : Christine opened by thanking Crowcombe for the use of the Church for the Chairman's Civic service in November and passed on her appreciation to the Church with all their help, together with a donation to the PPC for £250.

Christine reported on the consultation process on accessible patient transport. There is currently help with transport is available for up to three months after treatment has ceased but moves to reduce funding are being seriously considered. She left some leaflets for placement in the village shop to highlight the issues to the village.

Somerset County Council's budget is still several million pounds adrift and moves are being made to see if working together with several other authorities can save money and result in more efficient services with a better use of resources.

The move towards super fast broadband is progressing with 50% of Crowcombe now eligible. However Crowcombe Heathfield was unfortunately omitted during the drafting of the roll out programme and British Telecom feel they have no responsibility to include them unless the connection is privately funded. This is still a work in progress.

07/16 District Councillor's Report : Anthony Trollope-Bellew reported that the final investment decision regarding Hinkley Point C still has yet to be reached.

West Somerset District Council's budget is now balanced for 2016/17 but by the 2018/19 financial year major cuts will be needed.

Anthony informed the meeting that as of the April 2017, West Somerset District Council will not be running public toilets. However it is hoped that most parishes and towns that currently have the facilities will take over their maintenance and upkeep. However more and more facilities will cease to be maintained by the District Council and parishes will have to step in to continue their upkeep. Particular warning was given to the parish of Crowcombe regarding the car park behind Church House and the potential for future resurfacing requirements.

The devolution debate regarding Devon and Somerset continues and the merits of appointing a mayor are still being discussed, in particular if it will restrict the powers available to the resulting authority.

08/16 Minutes – Parish Council Meeting, November 2015 : It was proposed, seconded and agreed that the minutes be adopted as correct. The Chairman signed the minutes.

09/16 Matters arising from the Minutes :

- a) **Obscured signs .** Christine Lawrence was asked if her previous enquiries to David Peake (Highways) regarding foliage obscuring signs had been productive. The Parish Council was advised that funding was very tight and sign maintenance was not a priority – had the Parish considered employing the services of a lengthsman to carry out basic maintenance tasks around the parish?
- b) **Hedge cutting surrounding car park .** A Trollope-Bellew reported that he had spoken to WSDC and it was agreed that both the inside and outside of the hedge would be cut at the same time in the future.
- c) **Playground fencing .** A Trollope-Bellew reported that the additional fencing (minute 113/15) had been organised with Simon Date and as soon as the ground was dry enough would be erected
- d) **Salt /Grit collection.** T Brooks had collected the winter salt supplies provided by Somerset Highways and distributed to strategic points within the parish. He reported that there were still a few sacks from previous years present in some locations. The council thanked T Brooks for his time in doing this.
- e) **Bus Shelter.** The bus shelter has now been replaced, in time for the winter weather. Thanks were given to the clerk for her persistence in organising the replacement.
- f) **Berry Coach parking / Village Hall Car Park.** It was reported that the Berry's coach had resumed parking in the Village Hall Car Park during the daytime, despite previous correspondence requesting that the practise was stopped. It was unanimously agreed that the clerk, on behalf of the Parish Council, should write to Berry's informing them that, as the leaseholders of the car park, the Parish Council does not give permission for the coach to be parked there and that the practise should be stopped.

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

10/16 Quantocks AONB Board : The Quantock Hills AONB Service had provided a mock up of the replacement board incorporating the alterations proposed by the Parish Council at the previous meeting. It was unanimously agreed to approve the proposed new board and the clerk is to write to confirm acceptance of the layout.

11/16 Parish Path Representatives : The clerk had received an email from Somerset CC that Mr & Mrs Wilson, the current Parish Path Liaison Officers for Crowcombe, wished to stand down. The volunteer does not have to be a Parish Councillor but ideally would be a parishioner who spent a reasonable amount of time walking the local paths. Potential names were put forward by councillors. It was agreed the A Trollope-Bellew would approach the suggested parishioner and took with him the role description paperwork and application form in the anticipation that the request would be accepted.

12/16 Stogumber Neighbourhood Plan Consultation : The Chairman provided the background to the Stogumber Neighbourhood Plan, informing new councillors that Stogumber had originally invited Crowcombe to draw up a joint plan. However the Council in place at Crowcombe at the time had declined the invitation, deciding that it was too much work for potentially, at that time, little gain.

In discussion of the plan presented by Stogumber, two items raised comment

- I. If in the future Stogumber built a new school, this may have a negative impact on the facilities at Crowcombe
- II. Councillors welcomed the suggestion to improve, in conjunction with Crowcombe, the Stogumber / Crowcombe cross roads on the A358 (page 13, transport)

It was noted that Stogumber was the only parish in West Somerset to have drawn up a plan. The clerk was requested to write to Stogumber in support of the plan, drawing attention to the two points raised above, and congratulating them on their progress in the development of their Neighbourhood Plan. Crowcombe will watch their progress with interest.

13/16 Highways –any issues to report : This item was brought forward and discussed after item 06/16 to enable Christine Lawrence to be updated before had to leave to attend another meeting. The issues raised below were noted by Christine and, where action is required, she offered to pursue them with Highways on behalf of Crowcombe.

- I. Work on the gullies between Bagborough and the bridge on the A358 has finally commenced. Traffic lights and a digger are in situ.
- II. The gullies on The Combe are still blocked and water is flooding down the road even though new pipes have been installed previously
- III. The gullies at Green Hill are still blocked from Red Post to the layby on the left hand side. Work has been done on the right hand side but why not the left?
- IV. A pot hole is appearing in the road opposite 1 Brendon View
- V. The gully next to the bus shelter (Crowcombe village side of the crossroads) is blocked
- VI. In Roebuck Gate Lane the new drainage is working well – please can it be extended?
- VII. Also in Roebuck Gate Lane, some potholes are starting to develop at the edges of the road that cause a problem when passing vehicles have to pull over
- VIII. At Crowcombe Heathfield in The Avenue, near the gate on the right hand side pot holes are appearing
- IX. In Crowcombe Village the top of the speed limit sign post is rotten, preventing the top screw of the sign from holding fast, and therefore the sign is upside down
- X. Ownership of the demolished wall next to the car park still has not been established – it was questioned was the original site developer? A Trollope-Bellew offered to pursue enquires into this

14/16 Finances :

- a) **Payments :** It was agreed to pay the following invoices:
- I. Clerk's salary and expenses £318.96
 - II. HMRC – clerk's NI/PAYE £62.00
 - III. Wood-Land Southwest Ltd (Grass cutting) £510.00 (£425 + £85 VAT)
 - IV. Fowler Timber Products (replacement bus shelter) £1,980.00 (£1,650 + £330 VAT)
 - V. Church House (room hire for 2015) £157.00
 - VI. Anthon Trollope-Bellew (ground rent at Upper Townsend) £20.00
- b) **Receipts :** £1,400 was received on 19th November, settlement cheque from Came & Company regarding bus shelter insurance claim
- c) **Expenditure to Date :** The clerk reported that the bank balance total held by the council as of 30/12/15, adjusted to allow for un-presented cheques, to be £17,588.51 consisting of £11,683.10 in the current account, £3223.21 in the deposit account and £2682.20 in the amenities account.
- d) **Purchase of New Minutes Book :** The current minutes book used by the Parish Council is now full. A ring binder is considered sufficient legally but it was unanimously agreed by those present that it would be a shame not to continue in the tradition of minute keeping already established. It was therefore agreed to authorise the clerk to purchase a new binder in the same style as the old one (preliminary internet research had determined that it would cost in the region of £95 + VAT to replace like with like).

15/16 Play Area – Weekly Inspection reports : No issues were reported with the play equipment. M Smith is scheduled to do the weekly inspections for February, T Brooks for March. The Clerk confirmed that the annual playground inspection by the Playground Inspection Company was booked for January 2016.

16/16 Planning Application :

**3/07/15/007 The Homestead, Flaxpool Hill, Crowcombe TA4 4AW
Amendments to Barn 3 of Application 03/07/09/006**

The amended plans for barn 3 were discussed by those councillors present and another site visit was not thought to be necessary. The amendments were considered marginal with little impact on the view from the road.

It was unanimously agreed that Crowcombe Parish Council had no objections to the revised plans. Clerk to write to WSDC on behalf of the council.

17/16 2016-17 Budget / Precept Setting : As agreed at the previous meeting in November the Clerk had prepared figures for the January meeting based on a 15% increase on last year. Following further discussion of the budget and the parish's future financial liabilities it was unanimously agreed to set the precept request for 2016-17 at £8,800 which will result in a charge of £36.98 for a Band D property, a 14.53% increase on the previous year. Clerk to forward signed paperwork to WSDC.

18/16 Clerk's Report :

- I. The replacement bus shelter is now finally in place, in time for the winter weather. Although this had taken some time to realise, the full cost of the shelter (minus the excess) had been met by the insurance company. Thanks go to B Fowler for an excellent job on the rebuild.
- II. Clean for The Queen. Correspondence received from WSDC that there will be projects to clear litter to coincide with the run up to the Queen's 90th birthday on 21st April.
- III. The clerk advised she booked onto the SALC 'preparing for audit' training course on 23rd March
- IV. Quantock Hills Joint Advisory Panel – Parish representatives
The clerk had been notified that only 3 nominations had been received so no elections were held. The appointed representatives are Mrs N Bradshaw (Kingston St Mary), Mr P Grandfield (Holford) and Mr S Packman (West Bagborough). 1 vacancy was remaining, to be filled by a representative from Sedgemoor District.

19/16 Matters with the permission of the Chairman : As raised by the County Councillor in her report at the November meeting, on 12th June street parties to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday are planned nationally. It was hoped that Crowcombe would host one of these parties. It was agreed to discuss in more detail at the March meeting but in the meantime for councillors to gain villagers opinions on a party and think about who could be approached to organise / host such an event.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 21.17pm

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on Thursday 3rd March 2016 at Church House, commencing at 7.30pm