

Minutes of Crowcombe Parish Council Meeting
Held on Thursday 3rd September 2015 at Church House, Crowcombe at 7.30pm

Present : Cllrs B Druitt, T Brooks, K Kenyon, A Trollope-Bellew and C Morrison-Jones (clerk). Also in attendance was Debbie Dennis (village agent).

91/15 Apologies : Martin Smith, Dennis Long, Julie Long

92/15 Declarations of Interest/Dispensations : A Trollope-Bellew, as owner, stated an interest in the play area.

93/15 Public Participation : No public participation.

94/15 Debbie Dennis – Introduction of new Village Agent: Debbie introduced herself and gave a brief summary of her role: The village agent scheme is organised through the Community Council for Somerset and is a signposting and referral agency to provide support for vulnerable people within a community. Amongst the main aims are to help keep people in their own homes for as long as possible, to alleviate fuel poverty and to assist with transport needs. The agent works on a referral basis and so the word needs to be spread amongst the village that she is here to help and what assistance is on offer. It was suggested by the council that an article in CAW would be an appropriate way of achieving this and possibly a presence at the monthly 'soup kitchen' held at Church House – Maggie Inglis would be best placed to advise on both of these suggestions.

95/15 Police Matters : No police presence and no report had been submitted.

96/15 County Councillor's and District Councillor's Reports : No report submitted by County Councillor.

District Councillor (A Trollope-Bellew) : Devolution is the buzz word currently in local politics. 6 authorities in Somerset (not BANES or North Somerset authorities) and 11 in Devon are submitting a joint bid to government following on from Cornwall's success in becoming the first county with devolved powers.

The papermill in Watchet is under threat. Closure will affect WSC business rates revenue. 179 people are employed, including a large proportion of the area's volunteer firefighters – there is some concern as to which other employers would be prepared to take on staff that may have to leave at a moments notice if an emergency arose.

£313,000 cut in Hinkley Point B funding which negates the savings made by the amalgamation of services for West Somerset with Taunton Deane. A referendum to increase rates in West Somerset has not been ruled out at this point.

There are hopes of a positive announcement in October with regard to joint EDF/Chinese funding for Hinkley Point C to coincide with a state visit by the President of China.

87/15 Minutes APCM 2nd July to Approve and Sign : It was proposed, seconded and agreed that the minutes be adopted as correct. The Chairman signed the minutes.

88/15 Matters arising from the Minutes : The chairman reported that the finger post at the far end of the village had been re-erected.

Most of the 30 mph sign posts have now been replaced with metal poles.

The hedge running behind the car park in Carters lane has now been cut back – debris was not cleared up after the work was finished. It was agreed that A Trollope-Bellew would raise this issue with WSDC.

89/15 Highways : Concerns were raised that the road surface at the top of Crowcombe Combe , just before the cattle grid, is breaking up particularly on the left hand side as the hill is descended. This is a particularly a concern as the approaching bad weather will cause further deterioration.

90/15 Banking : It was proposed, seconded and agreed to adopt the resolution that the authorised signatories in the current mandate to be changed in accordance with the council's wishes and that the current mandate be amended.

It was agreed to defer the signing of the new bank mandate to the next meeting in November when there will hopefully be more members of the Parish Council present.

91/15 Finances:

- a) **Payments :** It was agreed to pay the following invoices: Clerk's salary and expenses £312.63, HMRC - clerk's NI/PAYE £61.80, West Somerset Council - uncontested elections May 2015 £100.00, Grant Thornton – annual audit fee £120.00, Mr S Date – tree felling in the play area £456.00
- b) **Receipts :** none
- c) **Expenditure to Date :** The clerk reported total monies held by the council to be £14,013.65 consisting of £8109.14 held in the current account, £3222.67 in the deposit account and £2681.84 in the amenities account.
- d) **Clerk's payroll :** In his absence, Martin Smith was thanked for the time he had spent in setting up the payroll for the clerk. In the future, the process should prove less arduous.

92/15 Play Area :

- a) **Weekly Inspection Reports :** A Trollope-Bellew reported that he had to remove one of the tyres as it had been pushed over, exposing the metal spikes that anchored it.
- b) **Play Area Maintenance :** No issues reported
- c) **Litter Bins :** It was previously suggested that maybe a litter bin be provided for the playground area. However it was felt by the members of the council present that, based on previous experiences elsewhere, the presence of a bin actually led to more littering in the area surrounding the bin rather than encouraging people to take their rubbish home with them.
- d) **Inspection Rota:** The new rota for playground inspection duties was agreed:
September – Tony Brooks, October – Kate Kenyon, November – Dennis Long, December – Bob Druitt, January – Julie Long, February – Martin Smith, March – Anthony Trollope-Bellew

93/15 Planning Applications Updates : The clerk reported that the application for Denzel Cottage had been approved. In addition an application for works to trees with a preservation order had been lodged for 3, King's Acre. The council members present agreed that no site visit was necessary. The clerk was to write to West Somerset Council to convey the councils support for this application.

94/15 Vacancy for a Parish Council representative on the West Somerset Standards Advisory Committee : After discuss regarding the four proposed candidates it was proposed, seconded and agreed to select Loretta Whetlor as the council's preferred candidate. The clerk is to convey the council's vote to West Somerset.

95/15 QWW Area Panel Survey : Crowcombe is no longer in the QWW Panel – has been moved to the Dunster panel. The clerk is to return the questionnaire un answered with a covering letter.

96/15 Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities : The clerk explained that the transparency code is applicable to all smaller authorities with a turnover of less than £25,000 and, from 2017, will mean that the requirement for an external audit will be removed as all documents regarding the finances and running of the council will be easily accessible by the public. In the majority of cases this will be achieved in practice by publishing on the parish web site in accordance with a predetermined time schedule.

Crowcombe is already ahead of many parishes in its effort to comply with the code's requirements. There will be grants available from NALC to enable councils to comply, but on review of the criteria for the grants, Crowcombe would not be eligible as compliance is already in progress and has involved minimal additional expenditure.

97/15 Clerk's Report : Clerk is booked for training with WSDC on 8th September (Code of Conduct) and with SALC on 2nd & 9th October (The Essential Clerk).

Bus shelter – 3 firms were contacted and agreed to provide the required quotes for replacement but only one actually has materialised, so other contractors are to be approached in order to achieve the three quotes demanded by the insurance company.

A letter has been written to WSDC, as requested at the last PC meeting, regarding the Top 5 priorities. No response has been received at present.

As covered earlier on in the meeting, the hedge on Carters lane has been cut and the 30mph sign posts have been replaced.

98/15 Matter with the permission of the Chairman : Bob Druitt stated he has been invited to the licensing of the Reverend Ben Flenley as Associate Vicar and the commissioning of the Reverend Kathryn Flenley as a priest on Monday 5th October in the Parish Church of the Holy Ghost, Crowcombe.

Ben German has offered to wash and wax the two benches at Hagley and Buttercross. This will require their removal for a short period of time. Those Councillors present felt that it was a very kind offer.

British Telecom – no progress has been made with the exchange as yet although super fast broadband has been promised in Crowcombe by the end of September.

The Chairman read out a letter from Jonathan Denton and Tom Keeling regarding a potential new application for development at Grimes Farm. It was felt by the council members present that this was a matter best discussed with a full council present and as such it was suggested that it be discussed in more detail at the next Parish council meeting in November. The clerk was asked to contact Mr Denton, explaining the council's decision to defer discussion.

The request to erect a marquee on the cricket ground in October as part of a wedding reception was granted.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 8.48pm

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on Thursday 5th November 2015 at Church House, commencing at 7.30pm.