

Crowcombe Parish Council  
The Orchard, Biscombe, Churchstanton, Taunton TA3 7PZ  
Tel: 01823 601495  
Clerk: Claire Morrison-Jones

Minutes of Crowcombe Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> July 2017,  
at Church House commencing at 7.30pm.  
(in a format to be presented for approval at the next meeting)

Present :

M Smith (chair), T Brooks (Vice), B Druitt, K Kenyon, A Trollope-Bellew, D Lock  
C Morrison-Jones (clerk)

**75/17 To receive any apologies of absence**

J Laver and SCC Councillor C Lawrence

**76/17 Public Participation**

None

**77/17 County Councillor's Report**

C Lawrence has previously sent her apologies for not being able to attend, due to illness. She had reported to the clerk that she is now Cabinet member for Health and Wellbeing again, so she can report on that at the next PC meeting. She also stated that she really enjoyed her two years as Chairman of the Council and was very grateful for the support that the Parish Council gave her.

**78/17 District Councillor's Report**

Anthony Trollope-Bellew reported that progress by Devon and Somerset towards devolution has paused - John Osmond, leader of SCC, was leading talks and is no longer on the council following elections in May. However, the Government minister responsible has stated that rural mayors are now 'off the agenda'.

The formation of a new council is currently in limbo – it was hoped for a decision in June but the General Election and Grenfell Tower disaster have delayed the process

MS asked whether the recently reported increase in the estimated build costs of Hinckley C would have any local effect? ATB confirmed that if costs have risen, it doesn't effect West Somerset, only EDF. WS has a better deal in regard to related infrastructure funding than other authorities with new power stations scheduled for construction in the UK.

**79/17 Declarations of Interest/Dispensations**

ATB- playground (82/17) & potential footpath to school (86/17), as owner of both areas of land involved)

**80/17 Minutes, APCM 4<sup>th</sup> May and 11<sup>th</sup> June 2017, to approve and sign**

It was agreed that both sets of minutes be adopted as a true record. The Chairman signed the minutes.

**81/17 Highways**

**a) Updates**

i) Pound Orchard/Carters Lane overgrown pavement – this has been reported previously and the clerk was assured WS would clear the vegetation.

ii) Roadworks - Roebuck crossing to Roebuck Farm. Contractors have been on site now for the 3rd time, this time some of the previously patched areas have been dug up and redone. However, the patches are not sealed properly and some edges of the repair are already lifting. ATB suggested that first time was a temporary job and this time is the final repair?

iii) Road from the Blue Ball to Little Quantock - Road closed signs and barriers are still up but no work appears to be being carried out.

Clerk to investigate / report these issues

**b) Any issues to report**

**i) Refurbishment of historic finger posts**

SCC no longer have the funding available to maintain the historic fingerposts in the county.

Highways are running training sessions (safe highway working procedure, materials to use etc) for volunteers to enable the historic fingerposts to be surveyed and ultimately repaired and maintained. Three volunteers have already come forward within the parish but more are needed

**ii) Verge cutting in regard to sensitive flora and fauna**

The clerk had received an email from a parishioner voicing concerns that a group of orchids had been destroyed on the verge near The Crowcombe Hall carpark with the thought that the PC had responsibility for verge cutting. The clerk had responded that verge cutting did not fall within the remit of the PC but it would draw Highways attention to the problem.

ATB indicated that Highways have a system to inform contractors of sensitive issues and TB informed councillors that historically there was also patch of orchids, marked with a stake, on the verge of the main road by the tennis court.

**iii) Parking on Tower Hill, Williton**

The clerk had been contacted by Williton PC requesting support with the issue of cars parking outside the Methodist Church on Tower Hill, Williton. ATB felt that police think parking there acts as traffic calming and are therefore supportive of no change to the current status.

Councillors however agreed that it is a main 'A' road and as such should have free flow of traffic. It was therefore resolved to write to Williton PC to support it in its attempt to restrict parking.

**iv) The 30mph sign at Crowcombe Combe is damaged and now on the ground.**

v) Bishops Lydeard roundabout. Trees / branches are overgrown and covering the new direction signs.

**c) Any accidents in the parish to report**

i) 30.5.17 Roundpool Lane at the bottom of Higher Ashfield Covert. Car crashed into tree. 2 people injured

ii) 28.6.17 Green's Layby, Flaxpool. A358 closed in both directions. 2 cars involved. 1 person airlifted to hospital

iii) TB reported car debris on crossroads by bus shelter in last couple of days, indicating a collision

**82/17 Play Area**

**a) Weekly inspection reports – any issues highlighted**

MS had noted a couple of issues - it was identified that these are on the schedule of repairs and are to be taken in hand by TB.

The issue of the grass cutting was raised – it is long & needs cutting better/more regularly.

Councillors requested that the contractor clarify the schedule for the rest of the year and consideration should be given next year to requesting that cutting is arranged to coincide with specific, high usage dates (eg half term week). Also, to consider cutting every two weeks in May and June, times of peak growth. S Date, fencing contractor, had noted that strimming is damaging the bottom of the posts, stripping away the treated outer layer and letting wet / rot take hold.

**b) Grant application – update**

Following the May meeting, the chairman completed a grant application to the Village Shop for funding towards the re-laying of the grass mats in the playground. A grant for £1,500 has subsequently been awarded to the Parish Council. MS has written letter of thanks on behalf of the Parish council to the Village Shop

**c) Schedule of repairs – update**

Councillors had previously agreed to one major piece of equipment per year to be renovated. This year it was decided that this should be the climbing frame / tower. ATB/ TB/ S Date had met on site and to discuss the replacement / repair of the upright posts on the open side of the equipment and it was felt that there were two options. It was agreed that the clerk would contact the inspection company for their opinion on the best way to carry out the repairs necessary.

It was noted that it would be sensible to install a rubber mat at the base of ramp. Clerk to clarify with JL as to the schedule for the relaying of the remaining grass mats, as authorised at a previous meeting.

Playground entrance gate -S Date has slowed down the closing speed & widened the closing gap at the top, as indicated necessary in the inspection report.

The chairman holds the only set of keys to the padlocked gates at the playground. It was agreed that a spare set of gate keys be cut and held by an additional councillor.

**d) Any other matters regarding the playground**

None

**83/17 Finances:**

**a) Payments to approve**

Clerks Salary & expenses	£375.64
A Trollope-Bellew, Upper Townsend rent 2016 & 2017	£20.00
SALC – membership renewal	£127.13
Crowcombe PCC – grant towards parish meeting expenses. Chq written 16.6.17	£68.76

**b) Receipts received**

Grant from the Village Shop for playground repairs	£1,500
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**c) To approve bank reconciliation**

The clerk reported that the balance total held by the council as of 31/5/17 to be £19,915.42 consisting of £7006.67 in the current account, £3224.92 in the deposit account and £9683.83 in the amenities account

**d) Any other financial matters notified to the clerk prior to the meeting**

The clerk reported that the Annual Return and associated papers have been sent to the external auditors, Grant Thornton, and the statutory notices regarding the commencement of the period for the exercise of public rights have been displayed as required

Councillors requested that JL be added to authorised signatory list – clerk to bring necessary paperwork to amend the bank mandate to the next meeting

**84/17 Planning – any planning issues brought to the attention of the clerk prior to the meeting**

None

**85/17 To Receive Reports from Members of Meetings attended as representatives of the Parish Council**

ATB reported that he had attended the SALC West Area meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> June. Most of the meeting was of more relevance to parishes south of the M5, focusing on the proposals to dual the A358 from Southfields to Taunton.

**86/17 New footpath to school – update**

JL was not present to provide a progress report. Councillors requested the clerk to write to the governors of the school to ask if they would support (in principle, not financially) the PC if it were to progress this project. WS holds £2,000 s106 money on behalf of Crowcombe and this could be applied for to fund the project.

**87/17 Broadband in the parish – update**

MS reported that the new box at Hagleys Green has now migrated to live. A lot of help to reach this stage had been received from Nathaniel Lewis (via Cllr Christine Lawrence) and, whilst it has not solved all the problems, some councillors reported an increase in speeds.

**88/17 Clerk's Report**

i) Notification received from Highways that Vellow Road, Stogumber, 130 metres east of the junction with Vellow to Vellow Wood Cross will be closed eastwards for a distance of 80 metres from 17<sup>th</sup> July for 5 days to enable drainage works to be carried out

ii) Notification received from Highways that Leigh Lane, from the junction with Leigh Lane to Water Lane, and Lower Vexford to Leigh Lane will be closed for a distance of 105 metres from 21<sup>st</sup> August 2017 for 5 days to enable earthworks to be carried out

**89/17 Topics for future meetings**

DL reported that the original bus stop shelter is looking ‘tired’ and needs tidying up and re-staining. His offer to undertake the necessary work was gratefully received by councillors.

**90/17 Employment matters**

Clerk’s annual appraisal. JL had previously agreed to lead on this matter. In his absence, it was agreed that the clerk’s appraisal to be discussed separately by Councillors.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9pm

**Next Meeting:**

7<sup>th</sup> September to be held at Church House, commencing at 7.30pm

Claire Morrison-Jones, Clerk

**Members are reminded that the Council has a general duty to consider the following matters in the exercise of any of its functions: Equal Opportunities (race, gender, sexual orientation, marital status and any disability), Crime and Disorder, Health and Safety, and Human Rights.**