

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

Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting
Held on Thursday 4th May 2017 in The Quantock Room, Crowcombe commencing at 7.30pm
(in a format to be presented for approval at the next meeting)

Present :

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

49/17 Election of Chairman

It was proposed and seconded that Cllr Martin Smith be voted as the Chairman which he duly accepted. The Chairman signed the declaration of acceptance of office form.

50/17 Apologies

Cllr J Laver, County Cllr C Lawrence

51/17 Election of Vice-Chairman

It was proposed and seconded that Cllr Tony Brooks be voted as the Vice-Chairman which he duly accepted. The Vice-Chairman signed the declaration of acceptance of office form.

52/17 Public Participation

None

53/17 County Councillor's Report

None

54/17 District Councillor's Report

A Trollope-Bellew reported that West Somerset have set their budget for 17/18. EDF have agreed a valuation of £20 million for Hinkley 'B' with the Valuation Office, which will reduce the savings required by West Somerset for 18/19 from £800,000 to £130,000.

The application to form a new council has gone to the Secretary of State, but 'on hold' due to the calling of the General Election. This may result in a new Secretary of State, but all parties are confident that the process will proceed in time for the deadline of May 2019

55/17 Declarations of Interest / Dispensations

A Trollope-Bellew as owner of the playground land

56/17 Minutes 2nd March and 12th April 2017

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

Signed :, Chair Date :

57/17 Highways

a) Updates

The pot holes have been filled in between Roebuck Farm and the level crossing

The clerk reported the grass verge cutting schedule for 2017, as informed by SCC:

A and B roads (including visibility splays) 8 May 2017 – 2 June 2017

C and unclassified roads 5 June 2017 – 28 July 2017

A and B roads(including visibility splays) early/mid-August 2017 (dependant on growth rate)

Environmentally protected sites Usually at the end of the growing season

b) Any issues to report

T Brooks reported having seen Japanese Knot Weed in verges in the parish. T Brooks to identify exact locations and report them to A Trollope-Bellew

c) Any accidents in the parish to report

None

58/17 Consider insurance renewal

The clerk reported that the council's insurance policy falls due for renewal on 1st June. Last year the parish council entered into a three-year long-term agreement with Hiscox. Councillors resolved to accept the renewal premium of £714.29.

59/17 Finances

a) Approve implementation of NALC approved pay increase

The chairman notified councillors of the National Pay Award for clerks, effective from 1st April 2017. Councillors agreed to implement the increase laid out in this agreement. Additionally, the chair reminded councillors that the clerk's annual review would fall due in July and asked if another Member would be prepared to conduct the review.

b) Consider contribution to PCC towards Annual Assembly costs

The PCC have taken on the organising of refreshments for the Annual Assembly, to be held on Sunday 7th May. Councillors resolved to contribute to costs, up to a maximum of £75, once final costs were calculated

c) Payments to approve

Clerks Salary & expenses £449.29

Mrs K Smith – internal auditor £30.00

Came & Company – insurance renewal £714.29

d) Receipts received

West Somerset Council. 1st half of precept £4,620

HMRC, PAYE refund £253

e) To approve Year End bank reconciliation, 31.3.17

The clerk had previously circulated the year end accounts that showed that the balance total held by the council as of 31/3/17, year-end, was £18,660.87. The accounts were unanimously approved by the Council and signed by the Chairman.

f) NatWest – authorise transfer of funds from current account to deposit account

It was resolved to transfer £7,000 from the current to deposit account. Letter of authorisation signed by M Smith and T Brooks

g) Any other financial matters

None

60/17 Consider Internal Auditor's report

The Internal Auditor, Mrs K Smith, had carried out the internal audit and found the internal audit control arrangements to be satisfactory. Accordingly, the Internal Auditor had signed-off Page 5 of the Annual Return without qualification

61/17 Annual Return – approve section 1, the Annual Governance Statement

Members agreed that replies to Questions 1 to 9 be “Yes”. The page was then signed by the Chairman.

62/17 Annual Return – approve section 2, the Accounting Statement

The Council considered the information prepared and signed by the Clerk that had been previously circulated. The statement was approved, and signed by the Chairman

63/17 Play area

a) Weekly Inspections – any issues to report

No additional issues bar those bought up in the annual inspection

b) Formulate a schedule of repairs following extra-ordinary playground meeting

A Trollope-Bellew offered to chase up S Date regarding the repairs on the car park fence and additionally ask him to rectify the issues highlighted in the annual inspection with the gate and sign posts.

Councillors agreed, in addition to the ongoing maintenance, to focus on overhauling one major piece of equipment per year in order to try and extend its safe lifespan. This year it was decided to focus on the junior multi-play apparatus. T Brooks agreed to carry out an examination of this piece of equipment and report back at the July meeting with suggestions of the refurbishment required.

Grass mats – it was resolved to give J Laver the authority to organise the lifting and re-laying or the remainder of the grass mats

c) Consider grass cutting arrangements for the remainder of 2017

In the absence of an alternative quote being obtained, it was resolved to ask Woodland South-West Ltd to continue with the grass cutting for the remainder of the 2017 season

d) Confirm rota for weekly playground inspections

The following rota was agreed:

May-ATB, June-MS, July-TB, August-KK, September-DL, October-JL, November-BD

e) Any other matters regarding the playground

The chairman reported that it may be possible for the parish council to obtain a grant from the village shop towards the grass mat re-laying in the playground. Councillors agreed that to apply for the grant as soon as appropriate

64/17 Planning

None

The clerk left the meeting whilst the following item was discussed

65/17 The Pensions Regulator – requirement to choose a pension scheme

The Chairman explained the background to the changes in the workplace pension rules, and that the Council would need to offer a pension scheme to its Clerk on its Staging Date of 1st October 2017 should she request to join one. There followed a discussion about whether the Council should make voluntary employer contributions to any such pension scheme, as this might influence the Clerk’s decision. The Chairman explained that were the Clerk employed full time and earning enough to qualify for mandatory employer contributions, the minimum employer contributions would be as follows:

1/10/17 - 5/4/18 1% out of a combined minimum contribution of 2% (employer + employee)

6/4/18 - 5/4/19 2 % out of a combined minimum contribution of 5%

6/4/19 onwards 3% out of a combined minimum contribution of 8%

The Councillors decided on a majority vote that the Council should not commit to pay employer contributions on a voluntary basis, on the basis that taxpayers’ money was involved, that it would risk setting a precedent for future generations of Parish Council, and that there were alternative ways of rewarding good performance by the Clerk, e.g. via salary and expenses.”

66/17 Reports from Members of meetings attended as representatives of the parish council

None

67/17 New footpath to school

Deferred until July meeting as J Laver not present to update Members

68/17 Flying Scotsman passing through parish

The clerk reported that PC Munro had been in contact to enquire if the parish had any events planned to celebrate the visit of the Flying Scotsman at the end of the month? It was expected that the visit would attract a significant number of visitors along the route and was additional police support required by the parish? Councillors were not aware of any celebratory events being planned and so it was felt not necessary to ask for additional police assistance

69/17 Clerk's report

- i. New village agent has been appointed for Crowcombe, Izzy Silvester. Did councillors have suggestions of any groups she should make contact with?
- ii. Temporary closure of footpath by Pencarrow was in force from 27th April for 5 days to allow the steps to be repaired. Work is now complete and the path is open
- iii. Somerset Remembers November 2018- the clerk had received a letter from HM Lord-Lieutenant of Somerset, Mrs Anne Maw, regarding the County Commemoration to mark the centenary of the end of the First World War in 2018
- iv. The Kesteven User Groups Annual meeting has been set for Sunday 11th June in the Quantock Room, commencing at 10am

70/17 Topics for future meetings

Broadband in the parish: B Druitt reported that he had received emails from villagers who were having problems with speeds dropping to 10mbs, even with the new box having been installed.

The chairman reported that he had never received the 40 mbs promised by BT and had been informed by an engineer that the new box by Hagleys Green is still not working correctly.

The chairman offered to take this up with BT and hoped to report back at the next meeting

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 9.35pm

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on Thursday 6th July 2017 at Church House, commencing at 7.30pm