

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 3rd May 2018 at Church House, Crowcombe commencing at 7.30pm.

(in the format to presented to the next meeting for approval)

Present

Cllrs M Smith, T Brooks, A Trollope-Bellew, B Druitt, R Druitt
C Morrison-Jones (clerk)

49/18 Election of Chairman and receive the Declaration of Acceptance of Office

It was proposed, seconded, and unanimously voted, that Cllr T Brooks be elected as the Chairman of the parish council for the next municipal year, which he duly accepted. The Chairman signed the declaration of acceptance of office form

Although present, due to having lost his voice, T Brooks apologised but felt that he would be unable to successfully chair the meeting, so a temporary chairman for this meeting would be needed to be appointed

50/18 Election of a Temporary Chairman for this meeting, 3rd May 2018

Councillors unanimously voted for M Smith to act as chairman for this meeting

51/18 To receive any apologies of absence

Cllr J Laver was not present at the meeting

52/18 Election of Vice Chairman and receive the Declaration of Acceptance of Office

It was agreed to defer this to next meeting

53/18 Public Participation

None

54/18 County Councillor's Report

None

55/18 District Councillor's Report

- The Secretary of State has approved formation of new council. This will hopefully be passed by parliament by the middle of May. Then the shadow authority (all councillors of present 2 councils) have to meet and within 21 days the shadow executive (the 2 leaders & 3 others from each current council) must meet.
- The Boundaries Commission cannot get involved until the process has gone through parliament. The Boundary Commission will then report, giving equal weight to all submissions, with the final decision on the new ward boundaries being made by November. The new council comes into existence on 1st April 2019 and the elections for the new ward councillors will be on the 1st Thursday in May, 2019
- New warding – numbers have to be the same for all of the new wards (within 10% of 2063). Villages such as Watchet, Williton etc are too big for 1 councillor but too small for 2. The

original plan had Crowcombe warded with Bishops Lydeard. A lot of work has gone into the proposals. The now modified proposal shows that Crowcombe & Stogumber are split for the first time. Modified proposal wards Crowcombe, Bicknoller & Samford Brett with Bishops Lydeard, Lydeard St Lawrence, Cothelstone and Tolland to be 2 councillor ward with the provisional ward name being 'South Quantock ward'. The formal proposal comes out at the beginning of July, with the consultation running for July and August.

- Conversation by SCC about the unitary: it is only conversation at present. AT-B thinks that the present county is too big for a single unitary authority, but too small for two unitary authorities (each needs a population of 300,000 to function efficiently). All Local Authorities in Somerset have to make savings but SCC's problems are the most acute and ATB stated that he can see why the conversation has to be had. SCC have a statutory duty to provide social care & highways, which is in effect an open cheque book as they cannot cap the spend.
- Somerset rivers authority: currently trying to get a bill through House of Commons to make it a separate precepting authority

56/18 Declarations of Interest/Dispensations

ATB declared an interest in the play area (61/18) and footpath (60/18) as the land owner

57/18 Minutes, 7th March and 15th April 2018, to approve and sign

Councillors agreed that in the minutes of 7th March, the wording in the last line of ATB's District Councillors report would be changed from 'approved' to 'considered'

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

58/18 Casual vacancy on the council and the co-option of a new member

No one has come forward at this point. Councillors will continue to investigate possibilities for potential new councillors

59/18 Highways

a) Updates on previously reported issues

i) Highways have reported that the Irish Ford at Leigh is working correctly, despite it being noted and reported that the pipes under the road were blocked during the heavy rains over the Easter period. They have suggested that maybe the land owner could be approached regarding possibly straightening the stream to allow more direct flow by water through the pipes
ATB reported that the land owner has no problem straightening the stream but remembers that Highways originally requested the stream was bent as the power of the water was lifting the tarmac. ATB also noted that the pipes are only 1 foot diameter pipes and that is the problem. BD noted that it needs a grid fitting to pipes (like at Sampford Brett) to stop debris entering the pipes.

The clerk was requested to respond to Peter Owen outlining the above 2 points

ii) Highways have reported that the potholes and road surface along Roebuck Gate Lane will continue to be monitored

iii) Several blocked gullies at Little Quantock had been reported to the clerk. The Highways have noted that the Superintendent will take a look at the gullies you but clearance may have to wait until the whole of Crowcombe is cleared by the mechanical gully sucker, which is due in the next couple of months.

iv) Previously it had been noted that Peter Owen had offered to meet with the parishioners who had highlighted the presence of orchids in the verge near The Crowcombe Hall. Despite several attempts to arrange a date, the parishioners had not received a response. After correspondence from the clerk, Mr Owen has made contact with the parishioners with the offer of a selection of dates for consideration.

b) Any issues to report

- i) Gully by bus stop (Taunton side) needs clearing. It has also dropped and the grating needs lifting and building up

- ii) Gully (3rd one down) from the Court entrance is blocked
- iii) Gully outside Sunny bank needs relaying – danger to pedestrians
- iv) 2 potholes on corner of road by The Crowcombe Hall
- v) The issue of problems caused by parking in the village was raised-parking on both sides of the road is narrowing the road, particularly at the top of the village and opposite the pub and could prevent ambulances and fire engines getting through. Councillors suggested that this was mentioned in the PC's article for CAW to ask people to be more considerate when they park by ensuring that the road width is maintained to allow emergency services to pass through

c) Any accidents in the parish to report

None

d) Fingerposts - update and consideration of further support to maintenance of parish Signage

Mr & Mrs Reinholds had provided a progress report to councillors and within this it was reported that it had been identified that parts of some fingerposts (such as finials) need replacing.

Additionally, MS reported that a parishioner had queried the high financial reserves held by the PC, and couldn't it be spent on parish signage? Should more finances be released to fund repairs?

BD thought that it was right for the PC to release enough funds to purchase what paint is needed to complete the renovations

Councillors considered the suggestion raised regarding engaging paid labour to assist / complement the volunteers but felt that paid labour would not be as conscientious as volunteers who have an interest in conserving their local surroundings.

Councillors asked the clerk request that the volunteers provide a total costing for all the posts in the parish (including replacement parts etc as required) and then the PC can consider the funding options for projected total cost of the project.

BD offered to look at the sign at base of combe regarding the finger that is pointing the wrong way. It was suggested that maybe the volunteers could next concentrate on a post in the village to show people what is being done and engage wider support for the project from parishioners

60/18 Footpaths

a) New footpath to school – update

As JL was not present there was no update. Clerk to continue with applications for grant funding

b) Any issues with footpaths to report

None

61/18 Play Area

a) Weekly inspection reports

i. update on previously reported issues

- a) spinner bowl repair failed - no update on repair process
- b) rubber matting under basket swing-JL was previously tasked to approach the contractor. Not known if this was yet done
- c) swings have been removed off the chains to prevent use of this piece of equipment
- d) cladding on the tunnel coming loose

ii. new issues to report

- a) sand level in pit is low

b) Revised weekly inspection sheets

TB was thanked by councillors for new sheet layout; much more 'user friendly' to complete. Councillors agreed to switch to using the new sheets

c) Consideration of purchase of new equipment

Some parishioners have suggested that considering the aging demographic of the parish that less PC focus should be on the play area and funds be used for other parish matters. It was agreed to hold an informal play area site visit after the Kesteven Recreation Ground meeting in June to enable

councillors to consider the equipment as a group. Consideration would be given to this matter at a later meeting after the informal play area site visit had taken place

d) Any other matters regarding the playground

None

62/18 Proposed new ward boundaries following the formation of a new council

As the new warding proposals are not anticipated to be released until 4th July (and the consultation period will close before the September PC meeting), councillors agreed to defer the July PC meeting (scheduled for 5th July) to 26th July to allow enough time for consideration of the proposals

63/18 Consider War Memorial renovations

It was raised by a parishioner at the parish assembly that the names on the war memorial are illegible and need re-engraving and they considered that it would be a poor reflection on Crowcombe if these names were lost

ATB noted that the memorial is listed, so options open for restoration of the names are limited. Re-cutting the names is not a solution as stone is too soft (it can only be cut once and is very costly and the re-engraved names wouldn't last long). A metal plate, engraved with the names, to overlay the existing area on the memorial is not allowed as the monument is listed. The only viable solution appears to be an adjunct stone with the names carved onto it, but would this need WSDC permission to place an additional stone?

It was noted that the PC discussed this very same issue in the last quadrennium. Then the names on the memorial were recorded and are in the church so are recorded and will not be lost

Councillors resolved to ask JL, due to his expertise in this area, to lead on getting a quote for an additional stone with the names engraved on it

64/18 Consider Insurance renewal, 1st June 2018

The clerk reported that Hiscox Insurance, via the brokers Came & Company, have quoted £742.86 for cover for the next year, commencing 1st June 2018. The council had previously committed to a three-year long term agreement, which ends on 31st May 2019. Councillors resolved to accept the renewal premium

65/18 Finances:

a) Payments to approve

C Morrison-Jones	clerk's salary & expenses	£501.54	
Came & Company	insurance renewal	£742.86	
M Reinholds	finger post reimbursements	£62.74	(inc VAT of £10.46)
Mrs K Smith	internal auditor	£30.00	
SALC	membership renewal	£126.01	

b) Receipts received

26.4.18 WSDC, first half of precept £4,875.00

c) Review of Schedule of Risk Assessment

It was agreed that the item was now truly reflective of the position. Chairman's & member's allowance was marked not applicable. The document was then approved by councillors and signed by chairman & clerk

d) To approve Year End bank reconciliation, 31.3.18

The clerk had previously circulated the year end accounts that showed that the balance total held by the council as of 31/3/18, year-end, was £23,155.91, with £5,728 of that total amount being held in earmarked reserve funds. The accounts were unanimously approved by the Council and signed by the Chairman.

c) Any other financial matters notified to the clerk prior to the meeting

NatWest have confirmed that RD has been accepted as a signatory on the PC bank accounts and DL has been removed

66/18 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

67/18 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 and the clerk.

68/18 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

69/18 Annual Return - to confirm that the Council wishes to certify itself as exempt from the limited assurance review

It was agreed by councillors that the PC wished to certify itself as exempt from the limited assurance review. The document was signed by the chairman and the RFO

70/18 Planning

- a) **Update – application 3/07/17/019. Land to south of Higil Lea, Crowcombe, TA4 4BF
Change of use of agricultural land for siting of pop up cafe, toilet facilities and
storage trailers with the erection of canvas yurt and formation of track and parking.**

MS reported that on the 26th April he attended the Planning Committee meeting and spoke on behalf of the PC against this application. The District Councillors unanimously (bar one abstention) voted to support the case officer's recommendation to refuse the change of use application. Councillors thanked MS for speaking on behalf of the PC

- b) **Any other planning issues brought to the attention of the clerk prior to the meeting**

None

71/18 To Receive Reports from Members of Meetings attended as representatives of the Parish Council.

None, bar MS speaking at the planning committee as previously reported (minute 70/18 a)

72/18 Defibrillator-update

MS reported to councillors that the shop committee has supported, in principle, a grant application for the purchase of a defibrillator

It was noted that there was a red phone box in private ownership in the village that appears unused. TB offered to approach the owner with request that it could be used to house a defibrillator.

Waiting until the outcome of TB's investigations, the clerk was requested to then approach BT to see if telephone is to be disconnected as had been previously indicated would be happening. If it is to be disconnected, could the box be retained and used by the community?

73/18 Kesteven Recreation Ground - confirm date of User Group Meeting

The meeting date has been set at Sunday 3rd June at the Quantock room, The Crowcombe Hall to commence at 10am. Afterwards there is to be an informal site meeting of councillors to inspect the playground equipment

74/18 Clerk's Report

- a) The clerk reminded councillors the General Data Protection Regulation comes into force in May. The ICO has said previously that “the GDPR is a journey rather than a destination and will be looking to councils to demonstrate that they are committed to making progress towards embedding the right processes and procedures.” SALC advice has been for parish councils not to take action until they have received official guidance and the clerk is to attend

a training event on 22nd May, taken by NALC's Head of Legal Services, to learn what steps the parish council needs to take, and will report back to councillors regarding actions that need to be taken.

- b) Temporary Closure of Water Lane. Water Lane from 25m either side of Water Bridge a total distance of 50 metres. This order will enable Crestmoor Construction to carry out repair works to an unstable wall in this road. The Order becomes effective on 14 May 2018 and the works are expected to last for 12 days.
- c) Leigh Farm to Leigh Lane, 16th - 20th July to repair parapets for Somerset County Council owned bridges/ retaining walls. One of these sites falls within the parish of Crowcombe and the closure of Leigh Farm to Leigh Lane is required to ensure the safety of contractors carrying out these necessary works.

75/18 Topics for future meetings

None

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 21.47

Next Meeting:

26th July to be held at Church House, commencing at 7.30pm