

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

Minutes of the Crowcombe Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> July 2018 at  
Church House, Crowcombe commencing at 7.30pm.

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

**Present:**

Cllrs T Brooks (Chair), J Laver, M Smith, A Trollope-Bellew, B Druitt and R Druitt  
Bill Jenman, Landscape Partnership Development Officer of Quantocks AONB  
Carina Gaertner, Working Wetland Catchment Project Manager  
1 member of the public (finger post volunteer)  
SCC Cllr C Lawrence

**County Councillor Report:**

SCC Cllr C Lawrence apologised, but she was only able to stay for a very short time, so her report was brought forward to the beginning of the meeting  
She reported that SCC has a very busy childrens department. There are currently 525 children in care in Somerset and the budget is already massively overspent. Some financial help will be received from the LGA but it is statutory work so it has to be done  
CL was pleased that the grant for the footpath had been awarded to the PC – it is believed that this is the first one awarded in West Somerset from the Hinkley Mitigation Fund  
CL was pleased that all the Highways repairs on list from previous meeting done, please let her know after this meeting if there is anything the PC needs help with  
TB- reported that he had cut back the verges at the cross roads at the top of the village as visibility was very poor. It had been cut back by Highways earlier in the yea, but really needs doing more regularly. CL offered to ask Highways if it could be monitored and cut more frequently if necessary

*CL left the meeting at this point*

**Presentation 1:**

Bill Jenman, Landscape Partnership Development Officer of Quantocks AONB, regarding the new Landscape Partnership Scheme

*Mr Jenman explained that he started at Easter as the Development Officer for the Landscape Partnership Scheme, and the project covers an area twice the size of the ANOB*

*The landscape is changing, as is landscape management. There is a lot of development, particularly on the Bridgwater side and a lot more visitor / recreational pressure on the whole area....this needs to be managed. There are access pressures, particularly on the hill.*

*The project has now passed stage 1 and has 14 months to complete the stage 2 bid for £2.6 million over 5 years, starting in January 2020*

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*The project list will be finalised by Easter 2019 and the finalised bid submitted in August 2019. All the projects have to have a common theme that tie them together- the golden thread. The project team are keen to increase the digital enrichment and interaction of the projects (eg develop apps for phone that gives historic background etc when visiting areas)*

*Aims of the project: community engagement work, opportunities to get involved, habitat and species monitoring., advice on historic landscape management, archaeological digs. There is also a possibility to create a conversation about the vision for the Quantocks in 50 years' time. Actively looking for sites for archaeological sites to dig....any suggestions please from Crowcombe residents?*

*Mr Jenman asked those present for suggestions as to who the project should talk to. Currently carrying out visitor surveys (this was last done in 2003)*

*Mr Jenman offered to come back at a later date to discuss specific projects that will impact Crowcombe, but briefly he explained that it is proposed to move the Crowcombe car park on the Quantocks to a position adjacent to the cattle grid as repairs to the original carpark surface are deemed too difficult. Moving the car park would require planning permission, but it is hoped that its entrance would incorporate the existing layby, so minimising alterations to the road. Any new build is dependant on a satisfactory method of 're-wilding' the existing car park being found. It is also thought that resurfacing work would be needed at Dead Womans Ditch and at the Withypool Car Park*

*The project team are actively encouraging public ideas and suggestions - any ideas or questions please contact Mr Jenman:*

*Mr Bill Jenman, Project Development Office for the Quantocks ANOB*

*Email: [WJenman@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:WJenman@somerset.gov.uk)*

*Tel: 01823 451 884*

## **Presentation 2:**

Carina Gaertner, Working Wetland Catchment Project Manager, regarding the Natural Flood Management Flood Risk Scheme for Stogumber and Crowcombe

*This is a 3-year government funded project (Environment Agency) to reduce flooding in the Doniford catchment area. £400,000 already granted funding*

*Aim is to deal with any surface water entering the streams and was prompted by past flooding in Williton in 2000*

*Ms Gaertner explained that to protect houses downstream you have to deal with the surface water up stream. The project is aiming to do this naturally; tree planting, woody debris dams, hedgerow planting, aerating soil etc. Some improvements are for the short term to help whilst longer term measures (ie tree planting) establish*

*Birds also like standing water and the Wetland Trust are looking to preserve current areas and also restore habitats for birds and fish and want to create a more natural river environment*

*Little interventions throughout the whole catchment will produce results and slow down flow. Store water on land upstream before it reaches Williton and then it is slowly released downstream*

*Ms Gaertner asked if councillors felt there were any have flood issues that need addressing and also how the project team are best to engage community support?*

*For further information, please contact Ms Gaertner*

*Ms Carina Gaertner, Working Wetland Catchment Project Manager*

*Email: [Carina.Gaertner@wwt.org.uk](mailto:Carina.Gaertner@wwt.org.uk)*

*Tel : 07557 971449*

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*TB thanked both speakers for coming and sharing their project details with the parish council. Parishioners are encouraged to make contact with the speakers if they have questions or a wish to raise suggestions*

*B Jenman & C Gaertner left the meeting at this point*

**76/18 To receive any apologies of absence**

None

**77/18 Public Participation**

None

*The published agenda of the meeting was altered slightly to allow the finger post volunteer to discuss the project with councillors and then leave the meeting*

**78/18 Declarations of Interest/Dispensations**

Interests declared by:

ATB-agenda items 10 (as land owner), 11 (as landowner),13 (relatives on memorial), 16b&c  
BD-agenda item 16c

**79/18 Minutes, 3rd May 2018, to approve and sign**

The minutes for the PC meeting held on 3rd of May 2018 were approved by councillors and signed by the Chairman as a true record

**80/18 Highways**

**a) Fingerposts - update and consideration of further support**

TB thanked the volunteer for coming to the meeting and for all their work. The problems with rogue painters from Exmoor has now been resolved but the four posts painted in error by them haven't been done to a high standard. It was noted that the trained volunteers working on the Crowcombe posts apply for permission to SCC before they start work on each post – it doesn't appear that this process was followed when the posts were done by the other painters. The Ashfield post has now been completed and the Crowcombe volunteers have done 9 of the 18 posts in the parish – this include re-doing 2 of the posts done by the Exmoor volunteers as they had just overpainted dirt, algae etc rather than cleaning the posts first (the other 2 done by the Exmoor volunteers are not done in the correct grey, but the work is of an acceptable standard so will be left for now)

A spreadsheet of costs to complete the project had previously been circulated, including estimates for the replacement components required. These estimates didn't include labour costs to fit the replacement parts

Councillors considered that the project was a worthy one, and the posts were an asset to the parish, an as such was a good use of parish funds.

Councillors asked the volunteer to request that Mill Farm Engineering carry out a site visit (combined with a meeting with TB) to generate a formal quote for the necessary replacement components, and also release details to councillors of the locations of previous work done on other fingerposts in order that the quality of their work can be assessed. Additionally, to ask if they can recommend a contractor (and quotation) to install the replacement parts (it was not considered necessary to consider buying replacement collars as the damaged fingers being removed could be re-fashioned in to collars).

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The clerk was requested to write to Highways to confirm that, if the PC repaired and restored the fingerposts (using the SCC trained volunteers to ensure the required standard of work was adhered to), the repairs could then be ‘gifted’ to Highways to ensure that the PC was not held responsible in the future for any liabilities associated with the fingerposts

The volunteer also reported that the ANOB had asked if they could re-paint the reverse of the AONB gateway sign at Ashfield. Councillors agreed that this would be a good idea, but that the AONB should be contacted to request that they re-post the sign (and check the legs of the other 2) before re-painting as the wooden legs are rotting through.

Councillors thanked the volunteers for all their work on this valuable project

*The fingerpost volunteer left the meeting at this point*

**b) Updates on previously reported issues**

i) in between meetings the hedge along path Carters Lane/Pound Orchard was reported as overgrown and cut back by Highways

ii) the gullies around Little Quantock were cleared at the beginning of June

iii) the deep pothole outside the village hall has been repaired, but not the shallower one

iv) the dropped gully by the bus shelter has been repaired

v) the pothole outside Sunnybank has not yet been repaired

**c) Any issues to report**

The area previously occupied by the BT telephone box (now removed) needs tidying up as it is a trip hazard. Clerk to ask Highways who is responsible for making good the area

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

None

**81/18 County Councillor’s Report**

See above report delivered before the two presentations at the start of the meeting

**82/18 District Councillor’s Report**

A Trollope-Bellew’s report covered three main points:

- The new council is in the process of being set up now that parliamentary approval has been gained. The shadow executive and shadow authority are now set up- these will both ensure that there is a smooth transition from two councils to one.

- Unitary authority- SCC has an issue with funding as it has several open ended statutory obligations. District Council leaders have met with SCC. Will forming a unitary really save such large amounts that have been mentioned?

- Michael Goves has set up commission into AONBs and National Parks. This may lead to a possibility to expand Exmoor NP / the Quantocks AONB or possibly even combine the two areas

**83/18 Casual vacancy on the council and the co-option of a new member**

The vacancy had been re-advertised as required, with WS receiving no call for an election.

The PC is therefore again free to co-opt a new member

Councillors reported no luck in asking people in the village, and it was agreed to approach various other potential members before the next meeting

**84/18 Election of Vice Chairman**

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

**85/18 Footpaths****a) New footpath to school****i. Hinkley C Mitigation grant application**

The clerk reported that a grant has been awarded to the PC by the Hinkley C mitigation fund, administered by SCF, for £4800, to fund the construction of a new footpath running from the Carew Arms to Pound Orchard to enable pedestrians to keep off the road

**ii. Planning permission**

After consultation with WS, it has been ruled that planning permission needs to be sought before construction of the path can be started. TB and JL to complete and submit the planning application form on behalf of the PC

**iii. Any other matters concerning the new footpath**

None

**b) Any issues with footpaths to report**

None

**86/18 Play Area****a) Weekly inspection reports**

BD and RD reported that they had completed their months, JL is due to inspect for August  
**update on previously reported issues / any new issues to report**

After an informal site meeting held by councillors in June, the below issues were noted as needing further investigation:

- a couple of benches showing signs of decay
- the tunnel cladding on left lifting slightly
- rubber matting needed at bottom of ramp
- cost to be obtained for replacing swings (to then enable a decision to be taken in regard to possible fundraising options)
- re-lay matting under basket swing as it has stretched out of shape
- silver birch needs felling as dead (cut off and make a seat out of the stump?)
- more sand needed for the sandpit

JL offered to gain quotes for the above matters, for councillors to consider at a later meeting

- a short length of fencing is needed between the tennis court and the road fence. ATB offered to take this item on

**b) Vandalism in the play area**

At the end of May the bug house in the play area was vandalised. An article was put on the website and in Caw to highlight the vandalism and the bughouse is due to be reassembled.

**c) Consider future maintenance issues / purchase of new equipment**

JL to gain quotes as above in item 11 a

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

None

**87/18 Consider the parish council's response to the proposed new ward boundaries consultation**

Councillors expressed the view that it would be a shame to lose the historic links with Stogumber, and that they had reservations about being warded with Bishops Lydeard, a

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significantly less rural parish than Crowcombe that experiences different issues to those encountered by Crowcombe. The clerk was requested to submit a response that outlined the above concerns

### **88/18 War Memorial**

JL reported that he was in the process of acquiring costings for price for an indent for a separate stone to sit next to memorial.

### **89/18 Defibrillator**

Councillors agreed that a defibrillator will fit outside shop without restricting access up the ramp. The shop is happy for it to be sited there as long as the PC will guarantee that the shop has no responsibility for it. An electrician would be needed to tap into the light outside the shop for a power source (the defibrillator cabinet has to be slightly heated to prevent the gel pads from freezing in cold weather)

MS reported that the shop committee have agreed in principle to give a grant to cover the cost of purchase of a defibrillator. Councillors agreed to proceed with the purchase of a defibrillator unit (to be delivered to TB) and its installation and MS offered to complete the grant application form.

### **90/18 Finances:**

#### **a) Approve implementation of council employees NALC approved pay increase, backdated to 1.4.2018**

Councillors resolved to approve the recommended pay increase, back dated to 1.4.18

#### **b) To approve bank reconciliation, 31.5.18**

The clerk had previously circulated the accounts that showed that the balance total held by the council as of 31/5/18 was £26,568.87, with £6,028 of that total amount being held in earmarked reserve funds. The accounts were unanimously approved by the Council and signed by the Chairman.

#### **c) Payments to approve**

Clerk's Salary & expenses	£407.82
HMRC	NIL- refund of £11 to be reclaimed from HMRC
SALC charity trustee training course, £55.chairman's training course, £30	£85.00
M Reinholds finger post reimbursements	£97.21
A Trollope-Bellew Upper Townsend ground rent	£10.00
Primary Care Supplies defibrillator	£1,498.00

#### **d) Receipts received**

30.4.18	WSDC	1st half of precept	£4,875.00
9.7.18	SCF	Footpath grant	£4,800.00
11.7.18	Tennis Club	Ground Rent	£25.00

#### **e) Confirmation of receipt of Hinkley C mitigation fund grant**

TB signed the grant receipt form, verifying that the grant for £4800 has been received in the PC's bank account

#### **f) Annual Return – update**

The clerk reported that the Annual Return, together with the certificate of exemption from a limited assurance review, had been submitted to the auditors on 30th May and the required documents posted to the Crowcombe website. The period for the public inspection commenced on 4th June and ran until 13th July

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

None

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**91/18 Planning****a) Updates on previously considered planning applications**

Leigh Mill-it was noted that, although the planning committee reached a decision on this application last month, CPC has not yet received confirmation of this, nor has it been posted on the WS website

*ATB left meeting at this point due to a declared interest*

**b) Consider application ABD/07/18/001**

Prior approval for proposed change of use of agricultural buildings to 2 No. Dwelling house (Class C3). Green Hayes, Station Road, Crowcombe, Taunton, TA4 4BU

BD, RD and TB had carried out an informal site visit earlier in the week. Several matters were of concern to councillors and it was resolved to oppose the application due to concerns over the lawfulness of the barn, access to the site, drainage/waste water provisions, parking, curtilage and building operations

*BD left meeting at this point due to a declared interest*

**c) Consider application 3/07/18/008**

Erection of extension to garage. Tennis Court House, Crowcombe, Taunton, TA4 4AQ

RD and TB had carried out an informal site visit earlier in the week and reported back to those councillors that had been unable to visit the site  
Councillors resolved to support the application

*BD & ATB re-joined the meeting at this point*

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

details of the below application were received by the clerk after the meeting agenda had been issued

**Planning application 3/07/18/009**

**Watermead Farm, Water Lane, Stogumber, Taunton, TA4 3TT**

**Erection of side extension to form annex for dependant relative**

Councillors considered the details of this proposal and resolved to support this application

**92/18 To Receive Reports from Members of Meetings attended as representatives of the Parish Council.**

TB reported that he had attended three meetings, all organised by SALC, on behalf of the parish council:

- Meeting with the boundary commission to explain the proposed warding for the new council
- Chairman's training
- GDPR training

**93/18 General Data Protection Regulations**

The clerk and TB have both attended the SALC briefing on GDPR, and the briefing notes had been circulated to councillors

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Councillors agreed that this process would place a significant impact on the council's resources. SALC had advised that it was a process that would take some time to complete and the councillors agreed that the process should be started by the clerk categorising each category of interface that the PC would have with the public and start the process of compiling a database to log these interactions, focusing at present on electronic data held. Specific GDPR policies would be agreed at later meetings. Councillors also considered data security implications and the PC could take measures to ensure the security of personal data held by the PC

#### **94/18 Deaf Plus visit to Crowcombe on 30<sup>th</sup> August**

Deaf Plus had written to ask permission to visit the Church House car park on 30<sup>th</sup> August with their information van. Councillors noted that the car park was a public car park, so permission from the PC wasn't required, but welcomed the van's visit and hoped that it would prove useful to parishioners

#### **95/18 Clerk's Report**

i) the PC has received an invitation to attend the freshers event on Friday 21<sup>st</sup> September (6.30 - 8.30pm) in the Crowcombe Hall and to prepare a display/information outlining the parish council's role and activities in the parish. Councillor welcomed the invitation and agreed that the details of the information to be provided would be discussed at a later date.

ii) With the continuing hot weather, Somerset Waste Partnership and their collections contractor Kier have agreed that all waste collections from now on will start at the earlier time of 6am to help ease the pressure on crews and vehicles. We would be grateful if you could let your residents know of the change, which will stay in place until cooler weather returns. Posted on website

iii) The next Dunster area panel meeting is on 30<sup>th</sup> July, commencing at 7pm at Williton

#### **96/18 Topics for future meetings**

None, apart from those mentioned in above agenda items

#### **97/18 Employment matters**

It was noted that the clerk's annual review fell due at the beginning of July. The clerk had also raised concerns with councillors that whilst the work load had increased significantly since she commenced her employment in 2015, her allocated working hours had not been altered to reflect this.

Councillors agreed to carry out the review and discuss workload, with a view to reporting back at the September meeting

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 10.55pm

The next parish council meeting is scheduled to be held on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> September, at Church House, commencing at 7.30pm