WEST HATCH ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

 Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of the West Hatch Parish held in the Village Hall on Tuesday 14th May 2019

**ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES**

**Public: 8 parishioners, G Midworth (Clerk to the Council), Cllr J Thorne (SCC), Cllr Ross Henley (Somerset West and Taunton Council)**

**Apologies: K Read, E Bray, R Wheatley**

**MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

**The minutes of the Annual Parish meeting, held on 15th May 2018 were approved and signed as a correct record.**

**REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PARISH COUNCIL**

The Chairman’s report was read to the parishioners.

1. Thanks

As in past years the work of many individuals goes towards the success of the Parish Council and in particular thanks are due to:

§ All the Councillors for their unstinting support.

§ David Lodge as Vice Chair and for all his work on planning applications.

§ Mike Biccard, who is standing down from the Council, particular thanks to him for his work on the footpaths and signposts. He has indicated that he will continue to support this work in the future.

§ Robert Wheatley, again for the ever improving WH Parish Website & repair of notice boards.

§ Our County and District Councillors - John Thorne and John Williams.

§ John Williams was not re-elected at the recent Council elections and I would like to pay particular tribute for his work as Leader of TDBC and for his support of the Parish. His work will be much missed

§ Last but not least to Gillian Midworth, our Clerk, without whom the Parish Council would be totally ineffective.

2. Finance

The Parish Council considered its budget for the forthcoming year. The budget was set at £2710 which will be funded by a precept of £2640, an increase of £77 on last year, the balance coming from reserves which, at the beginning of the year, stood at £2434 after expenditure on the defibrillator. The majority of the items of expenditure in 2019/20 are expected to be in line with previous years.

2. Principal issues during the year

a. Boundary changes – The PC supported the proposed changes to the ward boundaries arising from the merger of South Somerset and Taunton Deane Councils. The Parish is now part of the Hatch and Blackdown Ward.

b. A358 dualling – Highways England have set up a Community Liaison Forum, the first meeting was held on 26th February. WHPC was represented by Councillors Middleton and Read, the value of the Forum has yet to be tested. A second consultation on the preferred route took place during the year and the PC made a written response and held a meeting with the HE Project Manager, David Stock. No new information has been forthcoming but an announcement on the preferred route is expected by the end of June; construction is unlikely to start before 2022.

b. Village name plates – The Meare Green village sign was installed but was too large and in an inappropriate position. Subsequent deliberation with Somerset County Council has been unsatisfactory. The cost of a new sign and moving it would fall to WHPC. The sign has been hit by a vehicle and damaged. The PC took the decision to replace the sign with a smaller version however the positioning is still considered dangerous and unsatisfactory. An onsite meeting with SCC is awaited with a view to providing a new sign more appropriately sited.

c. Defibrillator – The defibrillator has been purchased, installation and training are expected to be completed shortly. The website will be updated and a formal opening arranged. Our thanks are due to the support of the Farmers Arms in making this enhancement to the community possible.

d. Planning matters - A number of planning applications have been supported by the PC and approved by the planning authority. The exception is Meare Green House - a further application for changes to the original plans were submitted, which were not supported by the PC but subsequently went on appeal by the applicant to the Planning Inspector in central government where the appeal was upheld.

e. Fingerposts - The PC is considering a Fingerpost Restoration Project, training is available from SCC but costs will be a major consideration.

**MATTERS RAISED BY PARISHIONERS**

**No issues were raised.**

**TO RECEIVE THE ACCOUNTS OF THE VILLAGE HALL**

**The latest accounts for the Village Hall were presented to the meeting. The accounts show income from lettings of £1539, and general expenses of £1434. The reserves stand at £2350, a reduction on previous years due to the cost of replacing the heaters at £3512.**

**The meeting closed at 7.40pm.**