

WEST HATCH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting of the West Hatch Parish Council held in the Village Hall on Tuesday 18th May 2021

21/01 Election of Chairman

Cllr Read was proposed as Chairman by Cllr Middleton and this was seconded by Cllr Lodge. It was unanimously agreed that Cllr Read should continue as Chairman for the forthcoming year. The Declaration of Acceptance of Office was duly signed.

21/02 Attendance and apologies

Councillors: Read, Kerr, Knight, Lodge, and Middleton

Public: 1 parishioner, Cllr J Thorne (SCC)

Apologies: Cllrs Bray and Harrison-Sleap, Cllr R Henley (SW&T)

21/03 Election of Vice-Chairman

Cllr Lodge was nominated as Vice-chairman by Cllr Middleton. This proposal was seconded by Cllr Knight. There were no other nominations and Cllr Lodge was unanimously elected as Vice-chairman.

21/04 Appointment of Councillors to head statutory, standing and other committees or working parties:

The Council approved the following appointments:

- a) Planning Committee – Cllr Lodge
- b) Conservation and Nature – Cllr Harrison-Sleap
- c) Footpaths – Cllr Kerr
- d) Finance – Cllr Middleton

21/05 Appointment of delegates or representatives to external Associations:

The Council approved the following appointments:

- a) Somerset Association of Local Councils (SALC) – Cllr Harrison-Sleap
- b) Somerset County Council – Highways Contact – Cllr Knight
- c) Village Hall representative – Cllr Kerr

21/06 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council meeting held on 30th March 2021 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

21/07 Matters arising from the minutes

- **Parish Council's response to Local Government Reorganisation Consultation (20/59)**

The Council has responded to the Local Government Re-organisation Consultation and has slightly favoured the Stronger Somerset Proposal.

- **Climate Emergency Funding Bids – Feedback from SCC (20/45)**

The Council has received feedback from SCC relating to the unsuccessful bids and this has been shared with the applicants.

21/08 To receive the annual accounts

The accounts for 2020/21 were received by the Council. Total receipts were £2912, and payments were £3218, resulting in a shortfall of approx. £300. However, the shortfall was a result of payments due in the previous year which were delayed due to the national lockdown and made in this financial year. The accounts for the previous year show a surplus of approx £700

21/09 To approve Section 1 of the Annual Governance Statement 2020/21

The Council approved Section 1 of the Annual Governance Statement 2020/21

21/10 To approve Section 2 of the 2020/21 Accounting statements

The Council approved Section 2 of the 2020/21 Accounting Statements.

21/11 To confirm that the Council wishes to certify itself as exempt from the limited assurance review

The Council confirmed that it was eligible to certify itself as exempt from the limited assurance review and that it wished to do so.

21/12 To review and confirm the insurance arrangements for 2021

The Council has received the renewal terms for its insurance which is due for review on 1st June. The renewal terms from Ecclesiastical Insurance are as the same as 2020 and it was agreed to renew the insurance which is brokered through Came & Company.

21/13 To review and confirm the risk assessment for 2021

The Council reviewed and confirmed the risk assessment for 2021

21/14 Parishioners' Forum

There were no issues raised

21/15 To receive reports from County and District Councillors (if present)

The report from John Thorne (SCC) had previously been circulated to the members but various points were discussed at the meeting:

Climate Emergency Funding – There is a possibility that a further tranche of funding may be available as bids totalling £3.6m were received and only £1m was available.

Local Government Reorganisation – The Secretary of State will announce his decision by 22/07/2021, following which a shadow executive of the proposed new organisation(s) will be established.

Broadband issues – CDS did not wish to become involved with Project Gigabit due to various complications. The Blackdown Hills Parish Network has launched a petition online to get Somerset included.

21/16 Discussion on communications with parishioners

The Clerk will be arranging for the letters to parishioners to be printed shortly and these will be delivered to addresses within the Parish. There has been some response from the email sent out and the contact details of the Village Network circulation list has been updated.

21/17 To consider the proposal for a Parish Litter Pick up

The Council considers that a Parish Litter Pick Up would be a good initiative provided that sufficient volunteers could be found. Cllr John Thorne suggested that the Council contact Otterford PC as they run a successful pick up 3 times a year and can advise on sponsorship and resources etc. Cllr Read agreed to action this.

21/18 Launch of fingerpost restoration initiative

Following the easing of Covid restrictions and better weather, Cllr Middleton will shortly be starting the restoration of the Parish fingerposts. He will carry out the structural maintenance but is looking for further volunteers to assist with painting. It was agreed that the Clerk would ask for volunteers via the email circulation list and noticeboards.

It is intended to restore the large post at the junction of Church Lane and Higher West Lane first.

21/19 Formal Expenditure Approval

It was resolved to make the following payments:

a) Clerk's Salary	£286.00
b) Came & Co	£218.00
c) Clerk's Expenses	£ 18.40
d) SALC – Training	£ 25.00
e) Remembrance Wreath	£17.00
f) Speed awareness signs	£94.62
g) Memorial Plaque	£58.30
h) CPRE	£36.00
i) Somerset Wildlife Trust	£30.00

21/20 Planning – to consider any planning matters arising

7/21/0002 Erection of a single storey extension to the front of The Old School House, West Hatch Lane, West Hatch: New plans have been resubmitted and conditional approval has been granted.

The council has been notified of possible unlawful occupancy on land at Meare Green. The District Council Planning Enforcement Officer has been notified.

21/21 Reports of Parish Council Working Parties

a. Report from Footpath leader

Cllr Kerr has carried out a survey of the local footpaths and has identified some issues:

- a) Bridge near Barton Lodge - needs some work but notice there are council warning signs up so presume someone is aware at council level.
- b) Bridge on from the Willows has collapsed on one side (it is two tree planks) – and needs replacing.
- c) Section of path between Park Farm and Swallows Barn -the landowner has agreed to do some ditching /remedial work to stabilise and dry it out. He will also replace the existing gates with ones that allow for easy pedestrian access.

b. Report from Trees/Conservation leader

No issues raised.

c. Report on Highway matters

Some pot holes have been repaired. The Council is still awaiting an update on work planned to remedy the damage caused by badger activity at Slough Green

d. Report from SALC representative

Nothing to report

21/22 Correspondence and matters of report.

- **Receipt of Precept**

The Clerk confirmed that the precept for 2021/22 has been received.

21/23 To agree date of next meeting

It was agreed to hold an Extraordinary Meeting of the Council on **Tuesday 6th July** at the Village Hall to update parishioners on the latest developments on the A358 improvements and the proposed garden development on previous Crown Estate lands at Orchard Portman.

The meeting closed at 9.05pm