WEST HATCH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting of the West Hatch Parish Council held in the Village Hall on Thursday 12th May 2022

**22/01 Election of Chairman**

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

**22/02 Attendance and apologies**

**Councillors: Read, Harrison-Sleap Kerr, and Middleton**

**Public: 4 parishioners**

**22/03 To co-opt to fill vacancies on the Parish Council**

**It was unanimously agreed to co-opt George Knight and Kate Walters to the Council. Both members signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office and formally joined the meeting.**

**22/04 Election of Vice-Chairman**

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

**22/05 Appointment of Councillors to head statutory, standing and other committees or working parties:**

The Council approved the following appointments:

1. Planning Committee – Cllr Reid, to be assisted by Cllr Kerr
2. Conservation and Nature – Cllr Harrison-Sleap, assisted by Mrs Sheila Read
3. Footpaths – Cllr Kerr
4. Finance – Cllr Middleton

In addition it was agreed that Cllrs Read and Kerr would lead on Local Community Networks (LCNs) and Cllrs Read and Middleton would lead on the A358 Improvements.

**22/06 Appointment of delegates or representatives to external**

**Associations:**

The Council approved the following appointments:

1. Somerset Association of Local Councils (SALC) – Cllr Harrison-Sleap
2. Somerset County Council – Highways Contact – Cllr Knight
3. Village Hall representative – Cllr Kerr

**22/07 Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council meeting held on 31st March 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

**22/08 Matters arising from the minutes**

* **Purchase of additional speed signs**

Additional signs have now been bought and installed, following a request from a parishioner at the Annual Parish Meeting. There are now 8 ‘Twenty is Plenty’ signs throughout the Parish.

* **Update on Platinum Jubilee Celebrations**

The Jubilee Beacon has been registered and will be lit at 9.45pm on Thursday 2nd June.

There will be an Open Gardens event on Friday 3rd June, and a Cake Making Competition and Refreshments served in the Village Hall.

A Church Service of Thanksgiving will take place on Sunday 5th June followed by a hog roast with games and music in St Andrews Field. Carriage rides will also be available.

* **Update on Meeting with Rebecca Pow (MP)**

The Chairman has requested an update from Rebecca Pow with regards to her attempts at arranging a meeting with The Secretary of State for Transport. He has not yet received a response.

* **Update on latest Community Liaison Meeting with National Highways**

The latest Community Liaison Forum took place on 10th May, at which National Highways announced that it had made a number of changes to the initial plan and that a supplementary consultation on the changes would run from 25th May - 26th June.

A meeting of the Community of Parishes will be held at the end of May to discuss how best to present its case to the Planning Inspectorate.

**22/09 Update on formation of Local Community Networks (LCNs)**

The new Unitary Authority wishes to establish Local Community Networks which will bring more governance to local parishes. Cllr Read has held an initial meeting with neighbouring Parishes with a view to establishing an LCN of local parishes with common interests. A further meeting will be held in June.

**22/10 To receive the annual accounts for 2021/22**

The accounts for 2021/22 were received by the Council.

Total receipts were £9610, and payments were £3504, resulting in a surplus of approx £6100. The surplus is a result of a grant of £6500 that the Parish Council received during the year, and which is earmarked for community improvements which will be overseen by the Village Hall.

**22/11 To receive the internal audit report for 2021/22**

The internal audit report was presented to the Council. There were no areas of concern. The Council’s internal control document was reviewed and approved

**22/12 To approve Section 1 of the Annual Governance Statement 2021/22**

The Council approved Items 1-9 of Section 1 of the Annual Governance Statement 2021/22.

**22/13 To approve Section 2 of the 2021/22 Accounting statements**

The Council approved Section 2 of the 2021/22 Accounting Statements.

**22/14 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. The Certificate of Exemption was signed by the Chairman and Clerk.

**22/15 To review and confirm the insurance arrangements for 2022**

The Council has received the renewal terms for its insurance which is due for review on 1st June from its existing brokers. The current insurance provider, Ecclesiastical, no longer offer a policy for small Parish Councils and the premium for the alternative policy suggested by the broker, was in excess of £600.

In view of the increased premium, the Clerk has sought alternative insurance cover and has received a quotation from Zurich Insurance of an annual premium of £214. The Clerk confirmed that the cover was suitable for the Parish Council and it was agreed that the quotation should be accepted and insurance arranged with Zurich Insurance.

**22/16 To review and confirm the risk assessment for 2022**

The Council reviewed and confirmed the risk assessment for 2022

**22/17 Parishioners’ Forum**

There were no issues raised the parishioners present.

The Chairman wished to place on record the thanks of the Parish Council to David Lodge and Liz Bray for their support and contribution to the Council during their time as members.

The Clerk will write on behalf of the Council to John Thorne, the outgoing County Councillor, thanking him for his service to the community.

**22/18 To receive reports from County and District Councillors (if present)**

Ross Henley, the new County Councillor and existing District Councillor , was unable to attend the meeting to give a report.

**22/19 To confirm receipt of Precept 2022/23**

The Clerk confirmed that the precept of £3350 had been received

**22/20 To agree new signatories on the bank account.**

The Council agreed that George Knight, Kate Walters and Nick Harrison-Sleap should be appointed as the signatories of the Santander bank accounts.

**22/21 Formal Expenditure Approval**

It was resolved to make the following payments:

1. **Clerk’s Salary £299.00**
2. **Zurich Insurance £214.00**
3. **Speed awareness signs £154.44**
4. **Grant re pizza oven and fruit trees £1061.46**
5. **Grant for trees £1588.80**
6. **CPRE £36.00**
7. **Somerset Wildlife Trust £30.00**

**22/22 Planning – to consider any planning matters arising**

The Council has received one planning application:

***47/22/0002 -*** Erection of garden store at The Old Vicarage, Church Lane, West Hatch.

Members of the Council will visit the site to discuss the proposal in due course.

**22/23 Reports of Parish Council Working Parties**

* 1. Report from Footpath leader.

An issue has been reported on Footpath 31/26 and it has been suggested that the footpath should be diverted through St Andrews Field to solve the issue. Cllr Kerr will explore the issue further.

* 1. Report from Trees/Conservation leader

The import of Cedar and some pine trees has been banned to help protect against the threat of the tree pest Pine Processionary Moth.

* 1. Report on Highway matters

The pot holes in Church Lane have been repaired. There has been extensive marking of defects throughout the Parish. The Give Way markings at the junction of Church Lame and West Hatch Lane will be repainted shortly.

The Council is still awaiting an update on work planned to remedy the damage caused by badger activity at Slough Green

* 1. Report from SALC representative

Nothing to report

**22/24 Correspondence and matters of report.**

* **New Code of Conduct**

The Local Government association (LGA) has produced a new Code of Conduct for local government. The Clerk will compare the new Code with the Council’s existing Code and the Council will consider whether to adopt the new Code at its next meeting.

**22/25 To agree date of next meeting**

Thursday 28th July 2022 at 7,30pm

The meeting closed at 9.10pm