WEST HATCH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting of the West Hatch Parish Council held in the Village Hall Wednesday 28th September 2022

**22/40 Attendance and apologies**

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

**Public: Two parishioners**

**Apologies: Cllr Knight**

It was resolved that the absence of this Councillor be recognised as approved absences for the purposes of s.185 Local Government Act 1972.

**22/41 Declarations of Interest**

**There were no declarations of interest made in relation to the items to be discussed**

**22/42 Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council meeting held on 26th July 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

**22/43 Matters arising from the minutes**

* **Twenty is Plenty**

The replacement signs have been purchased and are in place. Sheila Read has been in contact with Cllr Caroline Ellis (County and District Councillor) who has responsibility for this area to discuss the national campaign for a 20mph speed limit.

* **Fingerpost restoration**

The restoration of the first fingerpost has been completed. There are 2or 3 others that just require re-decorating, and this will be carried out when the weather permits.

* **Update on meeting with Rebecca Pow (21/82) and A358 Consultation**

The Chairman held an online meeting with Rebecca Pow, and representatives from Highways England. The update provided by National Highways and the correspondence from Rebecca Pow received following this meeting will be published on the website.

The Community of Parishes has met with members of Sparkford Parish Council who have provided advice on how the COP should present its case to the Planning Inspectorate. The support of the local MP was considered important.

Cllr Read will be meeting with officers of Somerset County Council shortly to look at SCCs role outside the immediate environs of the A358, particularly in relation to improvement to the local road network affected by the A358 improvements.

National Highways have committed to ensure that environmental mitigation is in place before starting to build the road. Several landowners in West Hatch have received correspondence relating to compulsory purchase of fields for this purpose. This issue will be picked up by the Community of Parishes.

* **Update on Village Hall Grant expenditure**

Plans are still in progress. Some of the hedging may need replacing and additional fruit trees will be purchased. The Village Hall committee are looking to commission a memorial metal seat.

**22/44 Parishioners Forum**

A parishioner raised concerns regarding the inaccessibility of the footpath in Prey Lane. Cllr Kerr will raise this issue with Somerset County Council. The Chairman pointed out that the Taunton Deane Council had investigated at length the condition of Prey Lane in 2014 and attempted unsuccessfully to renovate a part of it at considerable cost. They had abandoned the attempt noting that nature had reclaimed the original path many years ago'.

**22/45 To receive reports from County Councillor and District Councillor**

Unfortunately, the County Councillor and District Councillor was unable to be present and no report had been submitted.

**22/46 To discuss and agree changes to the website including change of contract with LCN, the website provider**.

Following a meeting held with members of the Parish Council and other interested parties, some changes to the website have been proposed to make the site more user friendly.

An issue raised was that currently the message ‘not secure’ appears when opening the site as the current contract with LCN does not include an SSL certificate (which authenticates a website’s identity). It would be possible to switch to a new contract with LCN which incorporates this feature at a cost of £66pa for a two-year contract and a transfer fee of £90.00. The Council would receive a pro rata refund in respect of the unused term of its existing 5-year contract.

The Council agreed to the changes to the website and to the change in contract with LCN.

**22/47 To discuss Parish Council’s response to the consultation on the formation of Local Community Networks**

The Council discussed its response to the consultation on the formation of Local Community Networks and it agreed that none of the suggested groupings were ideal due to their size and the fact that West Hatch would be separated from other local Parish Councils, which have similar priorities and aspirations.

The Chairman has already met with local Parishes with a view to forming an LCN and it was agreed that he should continue to liaise with these Parishes with a view to forming a core group within the LCN that can advocate for the local parishes and have some influence within the LCN.

The Council’s response to the consultation will be published on the website in due course.

**22/48 Formal Expenditure Approval**

It was resolved to make the following payment:

1. Clerk’s Salary £299.00
2. Paint for fingerposts £242.06
3. SALC – Affiliation Fees £ 84.28
4. West Hatch PCC £ 210.00

**22/49 Planning – to consider any planning matters arising**

Some parishioners have raised concerns regarding the development at Abbeywood.

The building currently under construction has received planning consent – Planning Application 47/17/0013 refers.

**22/50 Reports of Parish Council Working Parties**

* 1. Report from Footpath leader – There has been a change of personnel within the Rights of Way team and Cllr Kerr is hoping to speak to the new Officer and will raise the issue of Prey Lane.
  2. Report from Trees/Conservation leader – Unfortunately several of the trees obtained via the free tree initiative have failed to thrive. The Lime trees have been the most successful.

Report on Highway matters –The road markings on the A358 have now been completed but several parishioners have raised concerns with regards to the right turn into West Hatch Lane where the turning box seems to have been reduced in width and does not provide a safe refuge from passing traffic. The Clerk will raise this issue again with Highways.

* 1. Report from SALC representative – Additional staff have been appointed, including a health and wellbeing officer. This will enable more training courses to be run, including training on health and wellbeing issues. There will be grant monies available next year to enable community focussed activities to address health inequalities.

**22/51 Correspondence and matters of report.**

* **Airband Community Liaison Officer**

Unfortunately the Airband Community Liaison officer was unable to attend the meeting but will be present at the next Parish Council meeting to provide an update on Airband’s plans.

* **Slough Green Noticeboard**

A new noticeboard has been installed at Slough Green. The Council thanked Spud Middleton and David Lodge for arranging this at no charge.

* **Village Hall accounts**

The Village Hall accounts were presented to the Council. General income was £984, with outgoings of £1077. However, the Village Hall received Covid recovery grants and other grant income of approx. £19000, so currently the finances are on a secure footing. The priority of the Village Hall committee is to make sure that the fabric of the building is sound. Plans for the forthcoming year include decorating and the installation of new lights. Solar panels are being considered to reduce energy costs.

* **To agree representation at Remembrance Service**

It was agreed that Cllr Read would announce the names of the fallen and that Cllr Kerr would lay the wreath at the Remembrance Service to be held at Hatch Beauchamp Playing Field on Sunday 13th November.

* **Receipt of Burial Ground Grant**

The Clerk confirmed that the usual Burial Ground Grant of £210 had been received from the District Council.

**22/52 To agree date of next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 30th November

The meeting closed at 9.25 pm