WEST HATCH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting of the West Hatch Parish Council held in the Village Hall Wednesday 25th January 2023

**22/70 Attendance and apologies**

**Councillors: Read, Finlayson, Kerr, and Middleton,**

**Public: 3 parishioners, Cllr S Wakefield (SCC)**

**Apologies: Cllrs Knight and Walters**

**22/71 Presentation by Airband Representative**

**Faye Cross, the Community Engagement Officer for Airband addressed the Council.**

**Airband will be providing fast fibre broadband of at least one gigabyte to the area by the end of 2023 and the coverage will extend to 768 properties.**

**No detailed plans were available, and the Council requested more information on the scheme including a start date for the work and how the infrastructure is to be delivered, i.e., by pole or cable.**

**Parishioners are encouraged to check whether their property falls within the scheme and register their interest with Airband** [www.airband.co.uk](http://www.airband.co.uk)**.**

**22/72 Declarations of Interest**

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

**22/73 To consider co-option to fill Parish Council Vacancy.**

**Two parishioners have declared an interest in filling the current vacancy, but only one parishioner was present at the meeting. It was agreed to defer the decision to the March meeting.**

**22/74 Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council meeting held on 30th November 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**22/75 Matters arising from the minutes**

* **Changes to contract with LCN (website provider) 22/46**

The changes to the contract with LCN have now been completed and as a result the website address has changed to: <https://www.westhatchparish.org.uk>, reflecting the SSL security. The cost of the migration and web hosting for one year was £150 but a refund of this amount has been received in respect of the unused years of the previous contract so there has been no real cost to the Council.

The new website address will be publicised in the Parish Magazine and on the Village email network system.

* **Changes to Banking Arrangements (22/64)**

The Clerk has started the process of applying for an account with Unity Bank. It was a suggested that the Clerk explores accounts offered by Nat West and Lloyds which offer free banking to Parish Councils.

**22/76 Parishioners Forum**

A parishioner queried why the footpath through the field adjacent to St Andrews Cottage was being diverted. It was explained that the current footpath emerges on to the corner of the road and the proposed new route through St Andrews Field would have a safer exit onto the road. The parishioner mentioned that there was a water metre in the current field that he still needed access to, but this should still be permissible in accordance with any existing terms of access.

**22/77 To receive reports from County Councillor and District Councillor**

Sarah Wakefield, the County Councillor had previously submitted a report which had been circulated to the Council. Plans for the new Unitary Authority are progressing well, with the CEO and 7 Executive Directors having been appointed.

The proposed composition of the LCN groupings has been agreed and each member of the LCN will have a vote. West Hatch will be in the Chard and Blackdowns Group which mainly comprises rural parishes of a similar size.

Responding to a request from the Clerk, Cllr Wakefield advised that there would be four Planning committees covering the four areas of the County – North, South, East & West, each committee made up of 13 Councillors.

**22/77 To agree budget and precept for the financial year 2023/24**

The Council approved the budget previously circulated and agreed to maintain the precept for 2023/24 at £3350p.a. This equates to £25. 58p.a per Band D property.

**22/78 A358 Update – Delay of Development Consent Order application and Community of Parishes update.**

National Highways has delayed its submission of the Development Consent Order to enable a review of the environmental mitigations proposed to be carried out.

In anticipation of the DCO being lodged, the Community of Parishes (CoP) have drafted a statement detailing the CoP’s concerns and the alternative proposals for the scheme, which has been sent to every MP whose constituency covers the route.

**22/79 Local Government Reorganisation – Proposed LCN boundaries**

The proposed LCN boundaries have been agreed by the County Council and West Hatch is included in the Chard and Blackdowns group. This group includes Ashill, Neroche, Hatch Beauchamp and Stoke St Mary and the Council is generally happy with the grouping. It is envisaged that the LCNs will meet between 6 and 8 times a year and will include representatives from the Police, NHS, and local schools.

**22/80 To consider whether the Parish Council should request a modification to the Definitive Rights of Way map in respect of the Restricted Byway T31/34.**

The Explore Somerset Footpath map erroneously shows T31/34 running for approx. 100 metres along the hedge of the Countryside Stewardship field no 7740. The Definitive map shows the ROW running up to an impassable stream bed. Efforts to clear the Byway in 2005 were unsuccessful and the byway is currently shown as blocked on the map.

There is an alternative footpath T31/4 adjacent to T31/34 and it was agreed that the Council should explore the possibility of removing T31/4 from the Definitive Map.

Cllr Kerr is due to meet with a SCC ROW Officer shortly when this issue will be discussed.

**22/81 Formal Expenditure Approval**

It was resolved to make the following payments:

1. Clerk’s Salary £325.00
2. West Hatch Village Hall £150.00

**22/82 To consider request from the Village Hall committee to temporarily remove the Millennium Book from Somerset Heritage Centre for display at a future Village Hall event.**

The request from the Village Hall has been withdrawn and access to the Millennium Book at the Somerset Heritage Centre is no longer required.

**22/83 To consider how the Parish will mark the coronation of King Charles**

The Village Hall committee will lead on planning and arranging any celebratory activities. The Clerk has received details of Coronation Mugs that are available to purchase, and it was agreed that the Council would pay for these.

**22/84 Planning – to agree Parish Council’s response to Planning Application 47/22/0006 – Variation of condition No 02 of application 47/13/0013 to increase the height at the ridge and for changes to the cladding and the addition of photovoltaics to the roof of the agricultural building at Abbey Wood, Griffin Lane, West Hatch**

A site visit was undertaken by Cllrs Read and Finlayson. The property is both higher and larger than allowed for by the original planning consent. The Council consider that the height of the building is acceptable but that the footprint of the building should be reduced to 12.192m in accordance with the original plans. This is possible as the modular design of the building will allow for the removal of one section.

The Council also believes that, for aesthetic reasons, the West elevation should not be all corrugated steel sheeting as now proposed, but be timber clad above 1.8m of painted corrugated steel sheeting, to match the steel sheeting on the roof.

The Council has no objection to the addition of photovoltaics to the roof.

It was agreed to submit a response to the Planning Department on this basis.

**22/85 Reports of Parish Council Working Parties**

* 1. Report from Footpath leader – Cllr Kerr has several issues that he is waiting to discuss with the new Rights of Way Officer, including the diversion of footpath 31/26 through St Andrews field, the inaccessibility of T31/34 (Prey Lane) and a missing bridge at T31/1.

Cllr Middleton has met with the landowner, a representative from Neroche Parish Council and the Somerset Rights of Way Officer to discuss creating a Right of Way along the field running from Bens Copse to Sturms Wood. All parties are happy with the proposal.

* 1. Report from Trees/Conservation leader – No items of report
  2. Report on Highway matters –No items of report.
  3. Report from SALC representative – No items of report

**22/86 Correspondence and matters of report.**

* **Continuation of Burial Ground Grant for 2023/24**

The incoming Somerset Council has confirmed that the Council will receive the burial ground grant in 2023/24.

**22/87 To agree date of next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 29th March 2023

The meeting closed at 9.10 pm