WEST HATCH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting of the West Hatch Parish Council held in the Village Hall Wednesday 29th March 2023

**22/88 Attendance and apologies**

**Councillors: Read, Finlayson, Kerr, Knight, and Walters**

**Public: 2 parishioners, Cllr R Henley (SCC)**

**Apologies: Cllr Middleton**

**22/89 Declarations of Interest**

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

**22/90 To consider co-option to fill Parish Council Vacancy.**

**It was agreed to co-opt Ben Haskins to the Council to fill the vacancy that occurred following the death of Nick Harrison-Sleap.**

**22/91 Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council meeting held on 25th January 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**22/92 Matters arising from the minutes.**

* **Update on Footpath T31/34**

Cllr Kerr has met with the Footpath Officer and Somerset Council are now aware of the issues. A further visit will take place when the weather has improved, and the path can be walked.

**22/93 Parishioners Forum**

A parishioner has requested that the Council consider implementing a regular litter picking event. The Chairman asked that Councillors give this matter some thought as to how it can be arranged, and it will be discussed further at a later meeting.

**22/94 To receive reports from County Councillor and District Councillor**

Cllr Ross Henley gave his last report as a District Councillor prior to the formation of the unitary council. It is hoped that the transition will be seamless, and most officials will be carrying out the same roles as previously in either the District or County Council.

It is unlikely that the first meeting of the LCNs will take place before late summer as administrative support needs to be recruited, although Ross Henley mentioned that some LCNs were considering getting together informally to discuss priorities etc prior to this.

**22/95 A358 Update**

There has been some concern amongst parishioners on how National Highways has been engaging with local landowners regarding the use of their land for environmental mitigation purposes. The letters have been lacking detailed information and can appear to be confrontational in tone. It was agreed that it would be useful if the Parish Council could establish a database of parishioners who have received such letters so that a united response could be given if necessary. The Clerk will ask for information via the Village email network.

The Chairman will contact Gideon Amos, the Liberal Democrat prospective parliamentary candidate for his views on the scheme.

**22/96 Local Government Reorganisation – Update**

The vesting date for the new Council is 01/04/2023.

The new telephone number is 0300 123 2244 and the website address is: [www.somerset.gov.uk](http://www.somerset.gov.uk).

**22/97 To confirm the Council’s response to the Community Involvement Consultation.**

A working party of members has met to discuss the consultation document and the Council agreed that it supports the points raised. The document details how Somerset Council will engage with the community on such matters as planning etc.

Parish Councils will continue to be statutory consultees for most planning applications.

**22/98 Formal Expenditure Approval**

It was resolved to make the following payments:

1. Clerk’s Salary £325.00
2. Clerk’s Expenses £ 18.76
3. West Hatch Village Hall £1251.00 (grant for defibrillator)

**22/99 Planning – to consider Parish Council’s response to Planning Application 47/23/0001 – The Old School House, West Hatch.**

Cllr Kerr declared a personal interest in this application and left the meeting. The application is for a single storey extension to the side and a double storey extension to the front of the property.

It was agreed that a site visit should be undertaken, and Cllrs Knight and Walters will accompany the Chairman.

Cllr Kerr then rejoined the meeting.

**22/100 Reports of Parish Council Working Parties**

* 1. Report from Footpath leader – Cllr Kerr has now met with the Rights of Way Officer and discussed several issues 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.
	2. Report from Trees/Conservation leader – Sheila Read will contact Somerset Council to advise that she has taken on the role of Tree warden for the Parish. She is investigating whether the Yew trees in the Churchyard should be registered on the ancient tree register.

The poplars on the edge of the road near to Griffin Lane are dying and should be removed, and it is thought that the land belongs to highways. The Clerk will investigate the issue.

The free trees supplied by the District Council have now been planted.

* 1. Report on Highway matters –Several potholes in Church Lane have been marked for repair but the general state of the roads within the Parish remains poor. The Clerk will contact Highways to report the state of the roads and enquire whether the roads are scheduled to be resurfaced.
	2. Report from SALC representative – No items of report

**22/101 Correspondence and matters of report.**

* **Receipt of VAT Refund**

The Clerk confirmed that the refund of VAT paid had been applied for and the sum of £212.25 received.

* **Update on King’s Coronation Plans**

Cllr Kerr updated the meeting on the plans to celebrate the Coronation on May 6th.

The annual plant sale will take place as usual in the morning, followed by a hog roast and bonfire in the afternoon and evening. The Village Hall committee would like to give all the children in the Parish a coronation mug and it was agreed that the Parish Council would contribute towards the cost of these.

**22/102 To agree date of next meeting.**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 17th May. The Annual Parish Meeting will also be held on that date.

The meeting closed at 8.55 pm.