WEST HATCH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting of the West Hatch Parish Council held in the Village Hall on Wednesday 26th July 2023

**23/27 Attendance and apologies**

**Councillors: Read (Chairman), Finlayson, Haskins, Knight, Middleton, Sullivan and Walters**

**Public: 7 parishioners including Mrs S Read (Tree warden)**

**Apologies: Cllr Wakefield, (Somerset Council)**

**23/28 Declarations of Interests and Dispensations**

No declarations of interests were made.

**23/29 Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes of the Annual Parish Council meeting held on 17th May 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**23/30 Matters arising from the minutes.**

* **Update on Footpath T31/34**

The application to remove Footpath T31/34 has been submitted to Somerset Council and will be looked at shortly. The Council considers that it is important that a ROW Officer attends the site, and the Clerk will contact Somerset Council to arrange this.

* **Litter picking event. (23/24)**

Several parishioners have indicated their interest in the event and after a short discussion it was agreed that a group litter picking event should be arranged for the end of the summer and following that, individuals would be responsible for maintaining a small section of the Parish on a regular basis.

It was agreed to purchase 10 sets of equipment, i.e., litter pickers, hi vis tabards, gloves etc and the Clerk will arrange this. The Clerk will contact interested parishioners to agree a suitable date.

* **LCN Update**

The inaugural meeting of the Chard and Blackdowns LCN will take place on August 2nd and Cllrs Read and Middleton will attend on behalf of the PC.

Priorities for the LCN will be discussed at the first meeting and the PC is keen that the priorities should include:

No further development east of the M5,

Emphasis on conservation elements, including increasing the area of the Blackdowns AONB,

Support for Parishes affected by the proposed A358 dualling,

Lobbying for 20mph Speed limits in rural areas.

The minutes of the LCN meeting will be circulated when available.

**23/31 Parishioners’ Forum**

A parishioner raised a concern regarding a letter received from National Highways regarding land that may be required for the A358 scheme and asked the PC for help in responding to the letter. It was agreed that Cllrs Read and Sullivan will visit the property and discuss how the parishioner could respond.

The condition of Frost Street was raised by a parishioner as the road is fast degenerating into a farm track with the sub surface fully exposed in places and needs resurfacing. Part of Frost Street lies within Neroche Parish, and it was agreed that the Clerk would liaise with Neroche Parish Council to gain their support before contacting Highways with the resurfacing request.

Recent roadworks by Lumens (a private contractor) have resulted in the grass triangle at the junction of Frost Street being badly damaged. The Local Area Manager for the contractors will be contacted and asked to make good the damage.

**23/32 To receive reports from County Councillors (if present)**

Neither Somerset Councillors - Ross Henley and Sarah Wakefield were present but their monthly report had been circulated previously to the members and published on the website.

It was agreed that in future the monthly report would also be circulated via the Village email circulation list.

**23/33 A358 Update**

There has been no further news or updates regarding the A358 improvement scheme, but the Council and Community of Parishes are in a position to Register as an Interested Party as soon as the Development Consent Order has been submitted.

**23/34 To discuss the provision of a dog waste bin.**

This issue was raised at the Annual Parish Meeting as the amount of dog waste bags being left at the entrances to Thurlbear Wood has increased recently and is becoming an eyesore.

The Council has been advised that the cost to install a dog waste bin would be approx. £450 and that emptying is charged at £7.33 per empty.

A parishioner has recently put up notices asking dog owners to take the waste home, and this has had some success and in the first instance, it was agreed that the Council would put up similar signs in its name and monitor the results. Thurlbear Woods has become very popular with professional dog walkers, who it is thought leave most of the rubbish.

The clerk will contact the Forestry Commission for their approval to erect the signs.

**23/35 Formal Expenditure Approval**

It was resolved to make the following payments:

1. **Clerk’s Salary £325.00**
2. **Twenty is Plenty signs £253.56**

**23/36 Planning – to consider any planning matters arising.**

No new planning applications have been received.

**23/37 Reports of Parish Council Working Parties**

* 1. **Report from Footpath leader.**

No new issues to report.

* 1. **Report from Trees/Conservation leader**

The diseased trees along Prey Lane have been reported to Somerset Council under Ref 675017 but the problem is not serious enough to be fixed at present. It will continue to be monitored.

There is a large Horse Chestnut Tree in Frost Lane which appears to be diseased, and the merits of applying for a Tree Protection Order on it were discussed. The Tree Warden will carry out an inspection on it.

c**. Report on Highway matters**

In addition to red pothole markings, some yellow markings at the side of several lanes have appeared and parishioners have asked what the significance of these are. The Clerk will contact Highways asking for clarification as to what the markings represent.

d. **Report from SALC representative**

SALC has grant funding available for Health & Wellbeing initiatives and projects.

It is understood that the Village Hall wish to install an audio loop to benefit those with hearing difficulties and the Clerk will investigate whether an application can be made for funding from this initiative.

**23/38 Correspondence and matters of report.**

* **Community Funded 20mph Speed limits**

Somerset Council has introduced an initiative giving communities the opportunity to self-fund the introduction of 20mph speed limits. The cost of this is likely to be in the region of £15000, which makes the scheme unfeasible for parishes such as West Hatch. The Parish Council will continue to push for the implementation of 20mph speed limits through the LCNs.

* **Progress on superfast broadband installation**

The Council has been advised that there has been a delay in the project and that Airband are now looking to deliver the service in early 2024.

**23/39 To agree date of next meeting.**

Wednesday 4th October at 7.30pm

Cllr Sullivan submitted his apologies in advance of the meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.15 pm.