WEST HATCH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting of the West Hatch Parish Council held in the Village Hall on Wednesday 4th October 2023

**23/40 Attendance and apologies**

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

**Public: Cllr Wakefield (Somerset Council), D Kerr (WHVH)**

**Apologies: Mrs S Read (Tree Warden)**

**23/41 Declarations of Interests and Dispensations**

No declarations of interests were made.

**23/42 Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council meeting held on 26th July 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**23/43 Matters arising from the minutes.**

* **Update on Footpath T31/34**

The Clerk has received correspondence from Somerset Council regarding its application to delete Footpath T31/34 from the Definitive Map. A Right of Way can be extinguished in cases where the path is no longer needed by the public, but the Council does not generally support applications for extinguishment unless they are part of a wider package with compensating public benefit. If an application is accepted to proceed, the average cost would be in the region of £1500-£2000, which would be the responsibility of the applicant.

In view of this information, the Council agreed not to pursue the application further at this time.

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

Arrangements are proceeding and following feedback from parishioners, a Sunday afternoon has ben suggested as a suitable time. The filled bags of rubbish will be collected free of charge by idverde.

* **LCN Update**

The inaugural meeting of the Chard and Blackdowns LCN took place on August 2nd and Keith Read was elected as Chairman of the LCN, with Sarah Wakefield elected as Vice-Chair.

The next meeting will take place In October when it is hoped that several working groups will be established to work on the priorities identified.

The minutes of all LCN meetings are available on the Somerset Council website.

* **Problems with dog waste at Thurlbear Woods – Update (23/34)**

The Forestry Commission has refused permission for the Parish Council to erect a sign requesting that dog waste bags are taken away from the area as it will put up its own sign. If this is not in place by the end of October, the Clerk will follow it up.

**23/44 Parishioners’ Forum**

A parishioner asked whether the Parish Council could investigate if parishioners could use the car park of the now closed Nags Head at Thornfalcon so that they could access the bus services and bus stop at the Nags Head.

The Parish Council agreed that it would not be feasible to pursue this suggestion as the building in question is not within the Parish, the owners are unknown, and the car park is currently blockaded by concrete to prevent unauthorised parking. There is no evidence of demand to use the bus service into Taunton, as parishioners would have to cross on foot the busy dual carriageway on the return journey, and this is not a safe option.

A parishioner has raised the issue of erecting a horse warning sign on Village Road, Hatch Beauchamp, in the vicinity of Oldway Lane and Griffin Lane, as horseriders do not feel safe riding that stretch of the road. When the Council received a similar request in 2015, it was advised that Somerset Council had strict criteria for installing new warning signs and the Clerk will ascertain whether this criteria is still in place.

**23/45 To receive reports from County Councillors (if present)**

The monthly report from the Somerset Councillors was circulated to the members and published on the website prior to the meeting and no issues were raised from the report.

Cllr Wakefield advised the Council that Taylor Wimpey has submitted an outline planning application for approx. 150 homes on land at Ruishton not previously allocated for development. There are concerns that this application could be seen as ‘testing the waters’ and should it be approved, give rise to an application being submitted on the land at Orchard Portman (previously the Crown Estate), owned by Taylor Wimpey.

**23/46 To discuss and agree action with regards to the effects of the recent works carried out by Connor Utilities in the Parish**

Following work carried out by Connor Utilities, several subsidence pits formed and were marked for repair by the project manager. Unfortunately, the project manager was removed from the site before the repairs could take place and the matter is now in the hands of Somerset Council. Connor Utilities need to respond within a certain timescale advising when the works will be carried out.

**23/47 A358 Update**

Parishes affected by the proposed A358 improvements have been invited to meet with National Highways to agree a joint position statement, prior to the Development Consent Order submission. The Parish Council has accepted the invitation and Cllrs Read, Middleton and Sullivan will be attending the meeting.

It is understood that National Highways will be using the supplementary questionnaire of the latest consultation as its starting point and the Parish Council will use its response to that consultation as its starting point.

Parishioners continue to receive correspondence from National Highways regarding land that may be used for environmental mitigation purposes and the Parish Council will continue to represent and aid parishioners who need help in liaising with National Highways.

**23/48 Formal Expenditure Approval**

It was resolved to make the following payments:

1. Clerk’s Salary £325.00
2. Clerk’s Expenses £ 17.50
3. SALC – Affiliation Fees £ 82.10

**23/49 To agree attendance at the Remembrance Service – Sunday 12th November.**

It was agreed that Keith Read will attend the service and read the names of the fallen and Douglas Kerr will lay the wreath assisted by a young parishioner.

**23/50 Planning – to consider any planning matters arising.**

No new planning applications have been received since the last meeting.

**23/51 Reports of Parish Council Working Parties**

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

Cllr Haskins has now taken over the responsibility for footpaths from Douglas Kerr.

The new Rights of Way Officer for the Parish is John Melrose.

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

There is a tree line on West Hatch Lane, bordering Boons Farm, where the trees need to be pruned or reduced, as the trees are now approx. 40ft high. It is understood that the owner is the RSPCA, and it was suggested that the Parish Council should politely request that the RSPCA attend to the matter.

c**. Report on Highway matters**

Parts of West Hatch Lane have been extensively patched, although Church Lane and Frost Street remain in an unsatisfactory condition. The clerk will contact Highways, to request a safety inspection of both roads.

d. **Report from SALC representative**

Nothing to report.

**23/52 Correspondence and matters of report.**

* **Cyber Security Support**

The Parish Council has been invited to sign up to the South West Cyber Resilience Centre, which is a centre led by police officers, funded by the Home Office. It provides guidance to organisations to help with cyber security and membership is free. It was agreed that the Parish Council should join.

* **Community Emergency Plan**

The Clerk and Chairman recently attended a presentation by Somerset Prepared, which encouraged Parishes to draw up a simple Community Emergency Plan. It was agreed that the Parish Council should consider this, and the Clerk will look into this further with the assistance of Cllr Finlayson.

**23/53 To agree date of next meeting.**

Wednesday 29th November at 7.30pm

The meeting closed at 9.20 pm.