

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting
held on November 13th at the Beambridge Inn

Please note that these are DRAFT minutes and will be considered for possible amendment and subsequent approval at the next meeting.

[A] Apologies: Councillor Mansell

[B] Councillor Wren and two members of the public were welcomed.

Councillor Gwil Wren outlined the difficult situation regarding County finances with a possible deficit approaching £100 million. If a balanced budget cannot be set then a section 114 (bankruptcy) notice may be issued by the chief financial officer. In extreme cases of bankruptcy commissioners may become involved. There are a number of pressures increasing the pressure, notably investments not yielding sufficient return and the costs of adult and social care. It may be necessary to sell some assets and all expenditure of more than £100 will require individual approval. It may also be necessary to “mothball” County Hall block A for example. Emergencies will continue to be addressed but routine maintenance may be put into abeyance. Some concern was expressed over the position of parish councils and future income and support. It was agreed to consider a contingency sum and a precept “safety” sum at the December meeting. There may be job losses but no decisions have been made. It MAY be necessary to consider only statutory responsibilities. Mr Ross asked if it was statutory to maintain roadside ditches in the light of recent flooding and Councillor Wren replied in the affirmative.

ACTION 1: The clerk to contact Somerset Association of Local Councils to ascertain possible financial impact on parishes.

DONE: Reply awaited although it is thought that parishes will be asked to take on certain responsibilities at present centrally financed. It is therefore important that contingency sums are preserved.

ACTION 2: Place contingency sum and a precept “safety” sum on the December agenda.

Item 1: There were no disclosures of interest by members on agenda items

Item 2: Minutes of the previous meeting were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record. A question had been raised by a parishioner regarding minutes of meetings. After consideration of the legal requirements and present practice, it was considered unnecessary to change the way the council operates, except that prior sight and approval of councillors will be sought before public access even in draft form. Therefore, clearly marked draft minutes will be available and circulated to councillors a few days after the meeting, well within the legal requirement, and then made available for those members of the public wishing to receive them but still signed and dated accordingly at the following meeting.

Signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting

Date

Item 3: Matters arising from the previous minutes. There were no outstanding matters. Councillor Howe abstained from related comments.

Item 4: Police Liaison. There was no police report available

Item 5: Planning, Infrastructure and Development

[a] Mr Simon Ross raised the recent issue of flooding around Wrangcombe Road, mentioning the significant damage to properties. Condolences were expressed for the latter, and it was agreed by all that any excess water must be removed from roads, and repairs to potholed roads undertaken.

Somerset Council is responsible for keeping highways clear but offers of voluntary help would be appreciated. The wider area has significant issues with “water retention” or flooding and the Parish Council offered its support in this matter.

ACTION: The Clerk will contact Highways officially to ascertain [a] their reaction to the problem and [b] any possible and urgent remediation

DONE: 22nd November and reply awaited

ACTION: Clerk to include issues at Wrangway Bridge and the Monument entrance to the above action. The latter involves a road drain which is malfunctioning allowing floodwater into Hemyock Place

DONE: 22nd November and reply awaited

[b] The Clerk thanked Councillor Mansell for his support in dealing with the underpass graffiti at Ford Street, confirming receipt of a “submission number” from National Highways. However, no action has been undertaken.

ACTION: Clerk to follow up the submission FMS5105889 with National Highways on October 17th

DONE: No reply

Item 6: Financial Issues

[a] Funding request from Citizens Advice. It was agreed that no financial support can be offered although their work was valued.

[b] Half Yearly reconciliation. The balance at November 20th is £21067.16

[d] E20 cancelled and replaced by E23. The original payment to Somerset Association of Local Council failed. The payment has been resubmitted successfully and the necessary documentation signed.

[c] No invoice has been received for the temporary installation of a roadside camera at Holywell Lake. The clerk/finance officer will therefore make budgetary allowances for such future receipt.

ACTION: Set sum aside as contingency

DONE: November 21st

Item 7: Somerset Council. There were no other matters to discuss.

Item 8: Any other urgent business

[a] Draft minutes protocol. A question had been raised by a parishioner regarding minutes of meetings. After consideration of the legal requirements and present practice, it was considered

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unnecessary to materially change the way the council operates, except that prior sight and approval will be sought before the public can access them. Therefore, clearly marked draft minutes will be available and circulated a few days after the meeting, well within the legal requirement, and made available in final form for those wishing to receive them and signed and dated accordingly at the following meeting.

[b] Comments were received from parishioners present with reference to the previous minutes and some continuing lack of clarity with regard to highway changes on the A38 at the Holywell Lake junction.

ACTION: Clerk to contact Highways and Somerset Council to ascertain contemporary thoughts or decisions on the changes at the Holywell Lake/A38 junction

DONE: 21st November and reply awaited

[c] The issue of “Assets of Community Value” with reference to the Holywell Inn was raised by parishioners present. It was confirmed that this property, which has undergone some material changes in the past, is at present on the market. Successful application for an ACV would mean an initial moratorium of six weeks to allow interested parties to make an offer and a further period of six months to raise funding. However, this would not put an obligation on the vendor to progress with a sale to that party. The initial six-week period starts from the notice of intention to put the property on the market and it was thought that this may have been late September. Mr and Mrs Payne outlined the desire of the community for it to remain a local asset for the seventy-two dwellings in the village but the support of the Parish Council would be welcomed. Councillor Greenshields confirmed that the Parish Council would offer whatever possible support it could. Mrs Payne raised the issue of a local poll to ascertain the level of support and Councillor Greenshields commented favourably on this as it would be better, and hopefully more successful, that the matter is progressed by local residents.

ACTION: The parishioners to undertake further research into an ACV application and the Parish Council to research legalities supporting such.

Date of the next meeting:
7.00pm on December 11th at the Beambridge Inn

Signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting

Date