WEST HATCH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting of the West Hatch Parish Council held in the Village Hall on Wednesday 31st July 2024

**24/27 Attendance and apologies**

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

**Public: D Kerr (WHVH), Mrs S Read (Tree Warden)**

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

**24/28 Declarations of Interests and Dispensations**

No declarations of interests were made.

**24/29 Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes of the Annual Parish Council meeting held on 29th May 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**24/30 Matters arising from the minutes.**

* **Update on Forestry Operations at Thurlbear Woods and to agree next steps (Min 24/08)**

A planned meeting with Forestry England was cancelled as the meeting was advertised as a public meeting and this was not as agreed. About 80% of the damage has now been repaired but there are still copious amounts of small timber on the woodland floor. It was agreed that Forestry England officials would be invited to the next Parish Council meeting to answer questions from the Parish Council, who will be seeking assurances that future felling operations would be carried out more sensitively and with greater awareness of the concerns of the community.

* **Update on new Parish Council website (Min 24/23)**

Parish online have started working on the new website. The address will be westhatchparish@gov.uk.

Every Councillor will have access to a Council specific email address which will enable a separation between Council and personal emails.

There is the option for photographs of the Councillors to be displayed but it was agreed that this would not be needed.

The Clerk is continuing to liaise with the new provider, and it is hoped that the new website would be available in September.

**24/31 Parishioners’ Forum**

Douglas Kerr of the Village Hall committee advised the Council that he had received information regarding the 80th commemorations of VE Day next year. It was agreed that the Parish should celebrate this event and the Village Hall will sign up to join in the national celebrations. It is suggested that a Beacon of Peace is lit at 9.30pm.

**24/32 To receive reports from County Councillors (if present)**

Unfortunately, Cllr Wakefield was unable to attend the meeting due to an Executive Meeting overrunning in Frome and no report was available.

**24/33 To discuss Parishioner’s request for a defibrillator to be in the Slough Green area and update on defibrillator at the Farmers Arms**

At the Annual Parish Meeting, a parishioner requested the Council considers placing a defibrillator in the Slough Green area of the Parish. There is currently a defibrillator at the Farmers Arms and the Parish Council considered that there was insufficient need for 2 defibrillators in such a small area. The possibility of moving the defibrillator was discussed but there is no location in Slough Green where the defibrillator could be easily attached.

The Clerk advised the Council that the defibrillator at the Farmers Arms required new batteries and pads, the total cost of which would be approx. £ 375 excluding VAT. The Battery would last for 4 years. It was agreed that the Clerk could order these items without delay.

**24/34 LCN Update**

The AGM of the LCN has taken place and the Chair and Vice Chair have been re-elected. The absence of a dedicated LCN link officer has hampered communication within the network and working groups but a permanent Link officer has now been appointed.

One aim for the future is to improve engagement with the wider community and stakeholders in order for the LCN to reflect the community wishes and to assist the working groups make progress with their aims.

**24/35 To agree a date for the next Community Litter Pick**

The Clerk has suggested two dates in September for the Community Litter pick – 7th or 14th September. She will gauge interest from parishioners and make the necessary arrangements.

**24/36 To adopt new Financial Regulations.**

The proposed new Financial Regulations were circulated to members shortly before the meeting and as several members had not had time to carefully consider the regulations it was agreed to delay their formal adoption until the September meeting.

**24/37 Formal Expenditure Approval**

It was resolved to make the following payments:

1. Clerk’s Salary £350.00

**24/38 Planning – to consider any planning matters arising.**

The Council has received notification of the following application:

47/24/0004: Erection of an extension to the side, construction of first floor, replacement doors and windows and replacement and re-siting of garage at Perrington Lodge, West Hatch Lane, West Hatch.

The Chairman and two other Councillors will arrange a site visit after which the Council will agree its response.

**24/39 Reports of Parish Council Working Parties**

* 1. **Report from Footpath leader**

No report as Cllr Haskins was unable to attend the meeting.

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

Concern was expressed at the timing of the verge cuts which has resulted in some flowers being cut before the seeds have been dispersed. The Council considered the possibility of designating some areas of the Parish ‘ A no-cut area’ if visibility and other safety issues allow. The Clerk will enquire from Highways if this is possible.

Three fields of Crown Land in Church Lane have recently been planted with trees. The Council wish to confirm why the trees were planted and who is responsible for the maintenance of the area.

* 1. **Report on Highway matters.**

There have been two recent road closures in the Parish, but the information given regarding the reasons for closure has been inaccurate and contact telephone numbers etc are incorrect. It appears that remedial works to repair broken drains near Crinkle Birr and Hoops Green Cottage has been carried out but there is remedial work still to be undertaken at Prey Lane and Cold Lane. The Clerk will contact Streetworks and ask for an explanation.

* 1. **Report from SALC representative.**

SALC is looking to elect new members to the Board of Directors. No member of West Hatch Parish Council wishes to apply.

**23/40 Correspondence and matters of report.**

* **Somerset Tree Register**

One single quantifiable metric within the Somerset Tree Strategy is to plant 240ha. of new woodland every year for ten years and to collate accurate information regarding how many trees are being planted and where, A Somerset Tree Register has been introduced.

This register is open to all and everyone who plants a tree is encouraged to input the details on the Register and advise the Parish Clerk so that the Parish is aware of any new plantings.

The Register can be found online at: [Somerset Tree Planting Register](https://somersetcouncil.citizenspace.com/climate-and-environment/woodland-creation-engagement-survey/consultation/intro/) .

* **Consultation on changes to Council Tax Reduction scheme**

A consultation has been launched on proposed changes to the Council Tax Reduction (CTR) scheme for working age taxpayers in Somerset.

The proposals for the new scheme include:

* Reducing the level of support for working age applicants
* Introducing a flat-rate non-dependant deduction of £10 a week
* Restricting the maximum support to Band D Council Tax levels
* Restricting the time awards of Council Tax Reduction can be backdated to one month

The consultation can be completed at:  [https://somersetcouncil.citizenspace.com/comms/ctr](https://emea01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fsomersetcouncil.citizenspace.com%2Fcomms%2Fctr&data=05%7C02%7C%7Ca53d2604282f4cca9ddd08dcb13bed76%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C638580118154857139%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=2dXDq2rEBLfQ%2FtyBEFQJ8bCY0i%2FTfSIsiLEOoWQHjUQ%3D&reserved=0)

**23/41 To agree date of next meeting.**

The Village Hall is unavailable for the scheduled date of the next Council meeting; therefore, the next meeting will be held a week earlier and take place on **Wednesday 18th** **September at 7.00pm.**

The meeting closed at 8.45pm