

MINUTES OF CROSCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

HELD REMOTELY ON

WEDNESDAY 14TH JANUARY 2021, 7:30PM

PRESENT: Cllrs G Parker; S Fawcett-Fice; C Sully; M Rogers

IN ATTENDANCE: G Pettitt (Parish Clerk), Cllr Nigel Hewitt-Cooper

01. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TO CONSIDER THE REASONS GIVEN

Cllrs J Cansdale & J Morris

RESOLVED: Proposed Cllr Rogers; 2nd Cllr Parker - to approve the reasons given for Members' absence

02. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

02.01 There were no declarations of interest

02.02 There were no requests for dispensation

02.03 There were no grants for dispensation

03. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cllr Rogers - has spoken with Cllr Morris, who will let the council know soon of his decision on when he may be able to return to council business. Cllr Rogers will write to Cllr Dyer-Gibbins to ask for reason for absence from meetings. Council noted the repercussions on other members when there is a low turnout to Full Council meetings. Council noted that a Councillor is automatically removed if 6 months consecutively are missed without the reason being approved; the post then becomes vacant.

Cllr Rogers noted that village notice boards are in need of attention.

Meeting decided noticeboards to be allocated to councillors to maintain information: Cllr Parker - the shop and bus stop boards; Cllr Sully - the Pound board; Cllr Rogers - Sommerville Cottages board.

Cllr biographies to be provided for the website

Cllr Rogers will be seeking a volunteer to perform the defibrillator monthly checks. Cllr Rogers volunteered himself to mend the Pound bench.

07. Reports - Grant Application - this item was brought forward to enable the speaker to leave early. Ian Byworth, Chief Executive of CAB Mendip, presented a request for consideration by Council of a grant payment to CAB Mendip in support of its work in the community. This year CAB work has increased but funding has reduced. An estimated 30 Croscombe area residents are thought to have sought advice. Though many volunteers support the service, costs are in the region of £80 per hour and estimated up to £3,000 locally. Council viewed the service favourably and agreed an application should be submitted.

04. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No members of public present

05. LOCAL AUTHORITY REPORTS

- **Avon & Somerset Police:** Noted
- **Somerset County Council:** Noted report submitted by Cllr John Parham
- **Mendip District Council:** Cllr Nigel Hewitt-Cooper was welcomed to the meeting. He gave a verbal update of COVID-19 cases in Mendip, which remains lower than the South West as a whole and much lower than nationally. R value ranges between 1.2 - 1.5. There is a Mendip helpline and the vaccination program is underway. Access to fast broadband is expanding across the district. Cllr Hewitt-Cooper noted that the two different bids for a Unitary Authority structure have been submitted to the Government. A consultation will probably start in February. The hold on planning by the Environment Agency because of high phosphates in the area means that there are now approximately 1,500 planning applications backed up. Officers are choosing the few that can still be administered, but if land supply is not used it will be taken away. The District Council will be audited in the near future. There is currently a fiscal shortfall of £1.4m being met by reserves.

06. MINUTES OF CROSCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL HELD Thursday 10TH December 2020

Noted: item 07. Flooding Committee should read Flood Committee

RESOLVED: Proposed Cllr Fawcett-Fice; 2nd Cllr Parker - Minutes of 10th December 2020 approved with the above amendments. Meeting agreed that the minutes can be signed digitally.

07. REPORTS

- **Flood Committee**
 - Andy Lambart, lead Flood Officer of Somerset County Council is preparing a Section 19 Flood Report. Covid restrictions and Christmas have delayed feedback from the community on the October flood. An article is being prepared for Roundabout. The large scale maps cannot be utilised during lockdown.
- **Staffing Committee**
 - Members present agreed to the Clerk's overtime of 26 hours to catch up with backlog of work being paid. Noted that hours are being monitored and a report will be given next month as time may need to be increased. Members agreed to purchase a pay-as-you-go mobile phone for council business. Cllr Fawcett-Fice to investigate allowances for home working.

- Traffic Working Group
 - Three tasks identified: survey of village concerns; assessment of nearby villages and their methods of addressing road safety; obtain evidence supportive of safety measures through videos, photos and Speedwatch data. Recommendations will be brought to Full Council. A poster is in production to invite residents to register their interest.
RESOLVED: Proposed Cllr Rogers; 2nd Cllr Parker - Cllr Sully as a member of the Traffic Working Group
- Clerk
 - Clerk asked that parishioners be encouraged to contact her through email rather than Facebook, to ensure a reasonable paper trail.
 - Noted that thumbnail images of Croscombe on the website are merely holding images until a logo is approved.
 - Training - Three SALC Essential Clerk courses are being run in February @ £30 each. Clerk will also attend free training on the Council accounting package - Scribe.
RESOLVED: Proposed Cllr Rogers; 2nd Cllr Parker - That G Pettitt attend the three training sessions.
 - Cllr Parker and Cllr Rogers will both attend the initial Rural Alliance zoom meeting to discuss the effect of potential change for parishes under a Unitary Authority.
 - Adopt-a-path - G Pettitt noted that I Baker has produced data on this. Cllr Sully has this and will move the initiative forward. Cllr Sully suggested Adopt-a-path be on February's Full Council agenda
 - Cllr Sully will print the poster re. Covid-19 for the playground and G Pettitt will laminate
 - NatWest - continues to be a problem changing signatories. Currently hoped to be accepted within 10 days.
 - **Budget Review**
Cllr Parker noted that items for village Flood Equipment (about £100), can be purchased within the £4,000 allocated to projects. Members agreed to add a category for Grants in 21/22 budget with £750 allocated, taken from the unspecified £4,000 projects budget. Council suggested that village amenities and groups could apply through this. The proposed precept represents a rise from £7,500 to £7,800 which represents a £1.39 increase on Parish portion of Band D Council Tax, from £29.40 to £30.49
RESOLVED: Proposed Cllr Rogers; 2nd Cllr Fawcett-Fice - to approve £200 grant to Mendip CAB
RESOLVED: Proposed Cllr Rogers; 2nd Cllr Parker - to approve the 2021-22 budget with a precept of £7,800
 - **Playing field lease** - G Pettitt to contact Somerset County Council

surveyor to gather more information on their suggestion that the council move from renting the playing field to a lease at a cost of £1,000 e.g. what area of the playing field would be covered by the lease as it is understood that the school leases part of it

- **Playground** - quotes to be obtained to repair the swings - to be operative for the summer
- **Burial Ground** - some sinkage occurred during October floods. Cllr Rogers arranged for Maggs Funeral Directors to survey the area, as it is just top soil erosion, the firm have kindly offered to make the site good for no fee.

08. **The Way Forward** - Meeting agreed no need to address this

09. **Planning**

- 5 Coombe Cottages single storey side and rear extension: **RESOLVED:** Proposed Cllr Rogers; 2nd Cllr Fawcett-Fice - To approve.
- **RESOLVED:** Proposed Cllr Rogers; 2nd Cllr Fawcett-Fice - to affirm approval of the two planning proposals to fell a willow at Berwald Cottage and pollard a tree at Dyers Cottage that were approved by email.
- Noted former applications approved by MDC
- **Planning Committee** - not enough councillors present to discuss this - deferred to next meeting.

10. **NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH** no report - deferred to February Full Council

11. **PARISH COUNCIL EMAIL LIST** - Cllr Sully reported this is being launched through council initiatives by inviting residents to register interest. This will be fully GDPR compliant.

12. **COMMUNICATIONS** - 2021 Census - Cllr Sully will promote this to residents. Cllr Sully also to find out from Roundabout about the level of coverage the council can be offered each month.

13. **SCC CLIMATE FUND** - it was too short notice to prepare an application for this season. However there is an appetite for initiatives that can be prepared for next year.

CLOSE

The next meeting will be Thursday 11th February 2021

Signed

Date