

Croscombe Parish Council

Clerk's Report to 23 AUG 23

The submission was made in July to the external auditor, PKF Littlejohn. The material provided consisted of:

- Completed and signed AGAR Form 3
- Completed confirmation of the dates of period for the provision of public rights form
- Bank reconciliation to 31 Mar 23
- Explanation of any significant variances
- Copy of the separate detailed internal audit report
- Copies of the bank statements to 31 Mar 23 and 30 Apr 23
- Completed contact details form

The auditor raised a couple of queries about plans for the spend of the precept in the current year as well as the significant increase in staff costs in 2022-23. Two further pieces of information were provided – details of the 2023-24 budget and a detailed summary of staff costs for 2022-23.

The area near the old village shop which had been covered in gravel for access to a parking space has now been reinstated to grass.

The council's insurance company, Zurich Municipal, confirmed that a risk assessment must be carried out for any event on council land to which the public are invited. With that in mind, work was done with the orchard group to define an event plan for a picnic at the orchard and, based on that, a risk assessment. A Temporary Event Notice was obtained to allow the sale of alcohol. This experience, and in particular the production of the risk assessment, will make the planning and implementation of future events easier.

Terms of reference for an Orchard Management Group to address development and events related to the orchard, and to supersede the Orchard Working Group, were also drafted and will be presented to the next council meeting for approval.

The environment agency installed flood monitoring telemetry at the bus stop and have started to provide monitoring information.

An issue developed with the council laptop, where an automatic install of standard updates resulted in a recurring error on reboot. It had to be referred to Microbitz in Wells for repair, who identified an operating system corruption and repaired the laptop.

Fortunately, backup of parish files had already been set up with Microsoft OneDrive and no parish information was lost. Files are also being backed up to a hard drive.

Somerset Community Foundation, which had provided a sum of money towards the play area refurbishment, requested completion of an End of Grant report and this was done.

RosPA Play Safety carried out the annual inspection of the play area and submitted their report. They made some recommendations for remedial work, although none relating to any issue above low risk. The report will be presented to the next council meeting for consideration of next steps.

Information was provided by Somerset Council on a scheme related to community funded 20mph speed limits. There is an opportunity to work with the council to carry out a feasibility study then, if appropriate, proceed to a design and implementation. Those activities would have to be funded by the parish council. The information will be considered at the next council meeting.

Two interments were carried out in Croscombe cemetery during the period and appropriate confirmation paperwork sent on to registration offices.

A street bin disappeared from the corner of the George Inn building. It wasn't possible to establish what happened to it. Since that bin was the property of the parish, a replacement was procured and installed. The bins are serviced by the street cleaning team provided by the Somerset Council contractor Idverde. A report was also logged related to a missing/vandalised bin on Fayreway; a response hasn't yet been received.

Confirmation was sent to the council's bank, Unity Trust Bank, that the council qualifies to be covered under the government's Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS), which means that in the event of a failure of the bank the council would be eligible for compensation up to the sum of £85,000.

A VAT refund was claimed for the period Oct 2022 to Mar 2023 - £140.80 was recovered.