

Croscombe Parish Council

Clerk's Report to 30 Apr 24

The internal auditor, Eleanor Greene of Do the Numbers, visited the Clerk's home to carry out the internal audit of the Parish Council. This was done over several hours on 8th April and included requests for, and supply of, a range of information in addition to a dossier compiled for the purpose. The auditor provided a completed and signed-off Annual Internal Audit Report 2023/24 (Page 4 of AGAR Form 2) giving the Council a clean bill of health. She also provided a supporting report with a number of remarks/recommendations which will be implemented in the coming year. Both reports have been forwarded to councillors. Her recommendations included:

- The Clerk's working hours should be formally approved at the start of each year along with hourly rate and councillors should satisfy themselves that salary payments are appropriate.
- All receipts and payments should be approved and minuted; this will be done by each meeting being provided with a cashflow with receipts/payments and councillors formally approving that cashflow.
- Members of the public should not be named in the minutes.
- Each page of minutes should be signed.
- All documents which are approved in a meeting should be held in hard copy with the copy of the relevant agenda.
- Any contract worth over £500 must go to open tender and the winner should be clearly minuted.
- The goalposts recently procured cannot be donated directly to the school, but can be to e.g. a PTA. This will be clarified and confirmed at the next meeting.

A great deal of work continues to be done by the Flood & Environment Working Group. The report into the flooding in 2024 produced by Paul Hodge and Tanya Tyreman was completed and forwarded to Somerset Council's Local Lead Flood Authority Team by the Clerk, emphasising the Parish Council's full support. The request was made that this be incorporated fully in the Section 19 report which that team has to produce on the flooding as a requirement of the Flood and Water Management Act of 2010. The team responded positively to the Council's approach. The structure of the Flood Group is being redeveloped and so too, extensively, is the Flood Plan, with lessons being learned from recent village experience. There will be a proposal of updated Terms of Reference and a new Flood Plan, and these will be provided to the Council for approval when ready. Councill representation on the Flood Group will have to be decided.

Training videos for the Parish Council defibrillators – A Lifepak CR Plus at the phone box opposite the George Inn and a Zoll AED Plus at the village hall – have been sourced and publicised via the Parish Council and Croscombe Zummerzet Facebook pages and as a post on the Parish Council website.

Insurance quotations have been requested from three providers, including the incumbent, with a request that they be provided in time for the meeting on 7th May.

There will be a double-interment of ashes in the cemetery in May.

A webinar was attended by the Clerk with HMRC on activities necessary to migrate to the new tax year. An end of year submission was made, P60 issued, software updated and records migrated to the new year.

A submission was made to Unity Trust Bank to add Cllrs Hargraves and Starnes as signatories. This has to be sent as hard copy because of the requirements of Unity Trust for certain supporting information. Timescales were alleged as up to ten working days, but Unity Trust had to be pursued on this and promised that appropriate login details would be provided during the week ending 3rd May.

A parishioner asked for assistance in the removal of post-flooding and other debris at the foot of Jack's Lane and Old Street Lane. The Clerk completed an online report to Somerset Council's Highways Department and to that department's credit the debris was cleared, as reported by the parishioner, the next day.

A message of moral support was sent to those attempting to procure the Amulet Theatre in Shepton Mallet as a community facility.

A new dog bin was finally procured, and installed at Somerville Cottages by Cllr Jackson. Both Somerset Council and Idverde, its street cleaning contractor, have been updated to ensure that the bin is included in the weekly schedule. Fittings for attaching the existing bin at the east end of Fayreway were also purchased and it is hoped that bin can be moved soon.