

MINUTES OF CROSCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL FULL COUNCIL MEETING

Held at the Church Rooms, Church Street

on

Tuesday 13th February, 2024, at 7:00 pm

Present: Cllrs A Ford, B Gudzelak, A Hargraves, C Jackson, M Rogers, H Shergold (Chairman)
Attending: Cllr Martin Lovell (Somerset Council); J McGhee (Parish Clerk)); one member of the public (P Hodge)

1. WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. PUBLIC FORUM

The member of the public indicated he would speak during the discussion on the Flood & Environment Working Group meeting.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE; ABSENCES

Cllr Starnes (absent).

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members to declare any interests, including Disclosable Pecuniary Interests they may have in agenda items that accord with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011 s33(b-e).

(NB - this does not preclude any later declarations).

None.

5. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

- i. To confirm and sign minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 9th January, 2024 (Appendix 1).

RESOLVED Approved.

6. PLANNING

- i. To consider application below

No. & Officer	Detail	Type
2024/0106/FUL Kelly Pritchard	Full details Response Date: 19 Feb 2024 Erection of two storey extension to dwellinghouse & change of use of land from agricultural to domestic curtilage land. Middle Thrupe Farm, Thrupe Lane, Masbury, Shepton Mallet. Mr & Mrs Stirling.	FULL

The Council considered this application, taking into account a conversation between the Chairman and a neighbour of the applicant and some email remarks from the applicant, relayed by the Clerk. Council considered on balance that the development would improve the housing stock and amenity in that part of the parish and instructed the Clerk to apply a comment to that effect on the Somerset Council planning portal.

7. FINANCE

- i. To approve (or not) bank account reconciliation to 07 Feb 24 (Appendix 2). **RESOLVED** Approved.
- ii. To note cashflow from 03 Jan 24 to 07 Feb 24 (Appendix 3). **RESOLVED** Noted.
- iii. To approve (or not) budget for 2024-25 (Appendix 4). **RESOLVED** Approved.

8. CLERK'S REPORT

- i. To note Clerk's Report (Appendix 5). **RESOLVED** Noted

The Clerk reported on a number of items verbally.

Confirmation was received from the Estates department at Somerset Council that the existing lease for the play area on Fayreway, although having an end date in 2014, remains valid. An electronic copy was provided to the Clerk.

A villager had raised an issue with a dog bin regularly full and left with litter on top of it at the east end of Fayreway. The Clerk had posted a photo of the bin along with a request to dog owners to take litter home if a given dog bin was full; this was posted to the Council and community Facebook pages and seems to have led to an improvement. The Clerk will also look into replacing a dog bin which went missing from the middle of Fayreway, at Somerville Cottages, some time ago, and the feasibility of moving one existing bin to help ease the situation.

Councillors were invited to provide updates to their biographies on the Council website which the Clerk will apply along with new links to Register of Members' Interests form on the Somerset Council website. A proforma invoice for new goalposts for the playing field has been requested from the supplier. When received, payment will be raised by the Clerk and the new goalposts should arrive in two to three weeks. An email was received from parliamentary candidate A McGuire asking for information on the Council's top three areas of concern; Clerk will forward the email to councillors who will consider and respond as appropriate.

9. LOCAL AUTHORITY REPORT

- i. To note report from Somerset Council (Appendix 6). **RESOLVED** Noted.

It was also noted, supplementary to the report, that Somerset Council's request to central government for a nearly 10% rise in council tax had been refused, and that subsequent to recent flooding in the village a

drop-in session had been organised in the village hall for the afternoon/evening of 21st February with various agencies including Somerset Rivers Authority, Somerset Council's Civil Contingencies Unit and the Environment Agency.

10. CEMETERY AND PLAY AREA MAINTENANCE

- i. Acceptance or not of offer from incumbent contractor of three-year contract fixed at 2024 price.
Council resolved to accept the offer; Clerk to confirm to the contractor.
- ii. Cemetery gates – report from Cllr Jackson.
Cllr Jackson has been away; deferred until the next Council meeting.

11. PARISH QUESTIONNAIRE REPORT

- i. Discussion of survey results (Appendix 7).

The Chairman spoke to the key results of the parish survey.

There were no very strong feelings expressed, rather a series of wishes which the Parish Council will bear in mind going forward.

- the Parish Council should be more accessible to parishioners and enable information about Council actions and plans to be disseminated as widely as possible
- there is a desire to extend the 20mph speed limit in the village (see also comments in item 14 below)
- the idea of a convenience store/community shop was welcomed; Council to bear in mind
- the idea of a local produce market was welcomed; the Chairman to raise this possibility at the next village hall meeting
- the Parish Council website should have up to date services information and links for those who may need them
- the Council should investigate and action better path maintenance; Cllr Jackson to consider how a review of paths would work

12. PLAY AREA PHASE 2 – HANDLING OF VAT

A discussion was held around the possibility of managing fundraising and procurement for Play Area Phase 2 equipment by discounting the VAT, which would be collected by the Council at a later date. This would prevent delays in the Phase 2 development arising from the need to wait for VAT reclaim. Council approved this way of managing the development; Clerk will monitor to ensure no adverse impact on Council cash flow.

13. DEVOLUTION OF ASSETS AND SERVICES FROM SOMERSET COUNCIL

- i. Report by Cllr Shergold from LCN meeting.

The Chairman referred the meeting to the remarks on Somerset Council budgeting from Cllr Lovell contained in his report, which were also raised at the LCN meeting. Somerset Council will have to sell assets to meet the budget shortfall. The Chairman mentioned a number of severe actions to close the budget gap including things like closing recycling centres and selling commercial assets. The possibility of a 'Highways Steward', a maintenance engineer operating across multiple parishes and doing a range of work, was mooted but at an annual cost of £50,000 this was deemed too expensive for the Council to consider, even working in concert with other councils. Council will continue to consider the development of working groups for specific purposes within the village.

14. MOVE OF SPEED RESTRICTION – OLD STREET LANE AND JACK'S LANE

The Clerk reported an extended conversation with a representative of Traffic Management at Somerset Council

on the feasibility of moving the 'end of speed restriction' sign further up Old Street Lane. The exercise would not be straightforward involving multiple agencies and a probable Traffic Regulation Order. It would cost in the region of £10,000, and would have to be funded by the Parish Council. Council viewed this cost as prohibitive and decided not to proceed.

15. DEFIBRILLATOR TRAINING

- i. Report from Cllr Shergold on discussion with C Howes

The Chairman has had a conversation with C Howes on defibrillator training; discussions will continue and the Chairman will report again at the next meeting.

The Clerk has sourced several training DVDs supplied with the village defibrillators, and will look into the availability of online training videos from reputable organisations.

16. FLOOD & ENVIRONMENT WORKING GROUP

- i. Meeting of 1st February and River Sheppey Communities Report (Appendix 8 – Sections on Croscombe Sub-Catchment and in particular page 66 on river management opportunities in the Croscombe sub-catchment).

An update was provided on the FEWG meeting held on 1st February by Paul Hodge, and subsequent actions/recommendations, and the Chairman spoke to the River Sheppey Communities Report.

PH and Tanya Tyreman have been interviewing flood victims; the interviews have been anonymised for confidentiality. They visited 17 households, 5 of which had been flooded to several feet with the rest to several inches. Flood victims were pleased to be able to relate their experiences. A comprehensive report will be produced as a result of these investigations which is likely to include a number of recommendations including:

- review of flood plan
- 5/6 flood wardens – people not directly affected by flooding
- a number of other 'flood friends' to assist in helping flood victims under direction of the wardens
- a couple of people manning phones to provide a central communications channel
- training on traffic control to prevent vehicles moving through floods and causing a wash

The Chairman thanked PH and TT for their efforts.

The Chairman spoke to the River Sheppey Communities Report and in particular the recommendations on page 66 for the Croscombe catchment area. She went through the recommendations and pointed out that the most important of these, from the point of view of those at the FEWG meeting, was the final one.

RM.C.13, referring to the rebuilding of the culvert on Long Street.

There will be another meeting of the FEWG at the end of February.

- ii. Appointment of new members of FEWG – Richard Cronin, Peter Graham, Claire Harethwaites, Philippa Levinson.

RESOLVED Council approved the appointment of the new members.

17. MATTERS OF REPORT – ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

None.

Date of next meeting – Tuesday, 26th March 2024. 7:00pm in the Church Rooms.

CLOSE 20:26