

Croscombe Parish Council

Clerk's Report to 18 Jul 24

Following the co-option of Paul Hodge and Louise Tully as councillors at the meeting on 18th June, the following actions were carried out.

- Declaration of Acceptance of Office forms signed and filed.
- Email addresses set up and successful logins confirmed.
- The website was updated throughout to show the names and contact details of the new councillors.
- Register of Members' Interests forms were issued to both councillors, completed and sent on in PDF format to Democratic Services at Somerset Council.

Democratic Services were also requested to refresh the page on the Somerset Council website which holds links to councillors' ROMI forms for public access, because several were missing or no longer relevant. Once that has been done, links will be reinstated from the councillors' bios on the Parish Council website to the ROMI forms on the Somerset Council website.

Following the resignation of Martyn Starnes as a councillor, Democratic Services at Somerset Council were notified. The statutory notice inviting electors to request a by-election if at least ten of them so desired was posted. After the statutory notice period of fourteen working days, the Elections Team at Somerset Council confirmed that no such request was received, so a notice was posted to the usual channels inviting parishioners to put themselves forward to be co-opted as a councillor. One application was received and the co-option process will be addressed at the council meeting on 30th July.

A conversation was held with a Unity Trust Bank agent to achieve clarity on those authorised to access the account at various levels and to resolve an issue with the mechanism to approve payments. An update was provided by the bank on those allowed to view the account and submit/approve payments. Some of those listed are no longer relevant. This will be discussed at the meeting on 30th July so that the list of signatories and authorities can be brought completely up to date. In the meantime, a request was submitted to and implemented by Unity Trust to change the payment approval level from triple authority (i.e. payments have to be approved by three people – the submitter and two others) to dual authority. This will retain an appropriate level of scrutiny but make the submission/approval process less sensitive to the availability of approvers.

Unity Trust have also implemented a facility for someone to be an account administrator, which would mean that information on authorisations would be visible online. A request will be raised with them to make the Clerk, who currently submits and approves payments, the account administrator.

A number of broken links from the Parish Council website to Somerset Council's website were highlighted automatically by Ionos, the web service provider. These were either edited to appropriate Somerset Council web pages or removed completely if an appropriate page was no longer available.

A complaint was raised by a neighbour of the Pound Fold allotments about a minor construction which had been done and seemed to infringe a fence on their property. Contact was made with the allotment holder by the Clerk and the two parties put in touch with each other. They resolved the issue amicably between them.

The council's registration with the Information Commissioner's Office was renewed to ensure it conforms to the requirements of the Data Protection Act.

Following a complaint from a parishioner about loose manhole covers, representing a noise nuisance as well as a possible danger given the number of HGVs going over them, the issue was raised online by the Clerk with Somerset Council's Highways Department. A reference was received for the complaint and their response is awaited.