

**MINUTES OF CROSCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL
FULL COUNCIL MEETING**

**Held at the Church Rooms, Church Street on
Tuesday 25th February 2025, at 7:00 pm**

Present: Cllrs A Hargraves (Chair), L Tully, P Hodge, J Owen, C Jackson

Attending: Debbie Widdows (Parish Clerk) Cllr M Lovell (Somerset Councillor); 2 members of the public

1. WELCOME

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. PUBLIC FORUM

Nothing was raised.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr A Ford and Cllr B Gudzelak.

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). There were none.

5. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

- i. To confirm and sign minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 14 January 2025 (Appendix 1).

The word "*not*" to be inserted before the words "*be provided*" in point 8.

Resolved. Confirmed as amended.

6. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

There were none

7. FINANCE

- i. To approve (or not) bank account reconciliation at 21 Feb 25 (Appendix 2).

Resolved. Approved.

- ii. To approve (or not) receipts and payments identified in cashflow from 06 Jan 25 to 21 Feb 25 (Appendix 3).

Resolved: Approved.

- iii. To approve (or not) paid clerk hours for month of February, 20 hours for D Widdows (Appendix 4).

Resolved: Approved.

8. CLERK'S REPORT

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

Resolved. Noted.

9. LOCAL AUTHORITY REPORT

- i. To note report from Cllr Lovell of Somerset Council (Appendix 6).

Cllr Lovell gave his report and highlighted:

- Somerset Council is reviewing their parking policy. The Corporate and Resources Scrutiny Committee were not happy with the suggestions, eg Sunday parking fees, these will be revised.
- Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) – it has been suggested that Croscombe Parish will be part of St Cuthbert's Out Parish, with villages on the east and north sides of St Cuthbert Out, Westbury Sub-Mendip and Rodney Stoke, all part of that division. Once submitted, this will go out to Parishes for comment.
- There is an LCN meeting on Monday, 24th February.
- Wells Town Council devolution has gone ahead (larger Town Councils are being considered priorities) and how this will impact Croscombe is not known. Shepton Mallet Town Council will be taking over Shepton's markets, such as their Friday market. It is early days and difficult to tell how the villages will be affected.

The report was noted.

10. WORKING GROUP UPDATES

- i. Flood Group (Appendix 7)

The report had been sent to Councillors previously by Cllr Hodge. He briefly went through the report and highlighted:

1. The Environment Agency met with contractors on 24th February and they would like to do a culvert survey in March. It had not been realised that the culvert had split. They are going to do this partly by camera.
2. Adoption of flood barriers. There needs to be 59 barriers in place which will cost more than £4000. The Flood Group has applied for a grant but need to raise 20% of the total. The barriers will be owned by Croscombe Parish Council.

Action: Clerk to follow up on tax implications of donated money.

3. The Parish Council can ringfence money raised for the flood group in the bank account.
4. It is not clear who owns the culvert, it may be Somerset Council. This will be determined through the survey.
5. Flood Attenuation Pond negotiations were still underway. Shepton Mallet have their attenuation ponds cleared twice a year.
6. Some drains are still blocked in Croscombe.

Action: A letter will be drafted by PH to Somerset Council. To be submitted by the Clerk.

7. Tessa Munt arranged a meeting with the Chairman of the select committee for Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) at Yeo Valley Offices. Cll Hodge asked the following question:

Our village of Croscombe near Wells floods because the culvert carrying the River Sheppey is too small. Riparian owners are responsible for maintenance but who is responsible for improvements?

A new culvert needs to meet the new standard of coping with 1:150 year flood is out of the question but at the moment it can't cope with a 1:5 event flooding 20 properties.

Who is responsible for improvements? All we ask is advice on what improvements could be made eg more open channel?

Alistair Carmichel undertook to answer the question, but as yet, none has been received but Cllr Hodge has asked Tessa Munt to expedite the answer.

The report was noted.

ii. Orchard Group

Progress on actions from previous meetings

1. LT's brother was not in a position to help with the survey of the Orchard as he no longer has liability insurance. A survey is likely to cost about £1,000. The OWG does not wish for the ring-fenced funds to be used to fund the assessment, as they do not feel that the report is necessary. They requested the Parish Council to fund it instead.
Action: LT to explore less expensive orchard assessments.
2. No events planned yet as it was a bit early in the season. The CPC decided, if there was a need for a restriction and there would be no more than 4 – 6 events per year, at least one would be at the village hall/playing field, subject to the respective permissions being secured.
3. Other uses for the cemetery field were suggested, such as a woodland burial site.
4. The maintenance plan for the orchard was handed out stipulating what will be done for maintenance carried out by volunteers. Attached as Appendix 8.
5. LT reported that Chris Brown, (of Shepton Mallet Landscapes) has offered to deliver training to the OWG and other volunteers to enable them to carry out maintenance of the orchard.
Action: Clerk to confirm insurance.
6. The OWG suggested soil testing, but the Parish Council thought this was unnecessary and this will be discussed at the next OWG meeting.
7. Alternative pedestrian access routes to the community orchard should be explored in order to seek to obviate the need to access the orchard via Thrupe Lane. It should be ascertained who the owner of the land adjacent to the orchard is, as access may be possible from West Lane or Poundfold Lane. The Parish Council was not sure if the landowners would allow access as this would be over private land. If a path to the orchard could be found it would be a nice place for children to visit.
Action: TH to speak to land owner.
8. The OWG did not find Cllr Hargraves' report satisfactory as it contained information which was not submitted in the completed questionnaires. LT asked for the whereabouts of the completed questionnaires.
Action: Cllr Hargraves to confirm that the questionnaires had been destroyed.
Cllr Hargraves to respond to the OWG feedback.
9. The OWG requested CPC permission to write its own report of the results of the 2024 community orchard survey.
Action: The OWG to draft a report of the results of the 2024 orchard survey and submit it to the CPC.

iii. Play Area Group

Cllr Jackson reported back that some parents believe a stop watch is not the right thing to purchase as a stopwatch on anyone's phone could be used instead. He went to the play group at Gurney Sale to look at the ball shoot they have which is quite desirable..

11. UPDATES ON ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

- i. Development of Croscombe emergency plan. (Cllr Owen)
 - a) Training offered by Stoke St Michael on Tuesday 4th March.
Action: JO to develop Croscombe's emergency plan.
- ii. Candidates to head up traffic working group. (All)
Action: Carry forward to next meeting.
- iii. Submit precept to Somerset Council. (Clerk)
This was done
- iv. Letter of thanks to Sandersons.(Clerk)
This was done.
- v. Tasks of the OWG
 - a) Meet with the farmer to discuss the proposed expansion of the community orchard and discuss the following: (Cllr Hargraves)
 - When the design for the expansion is received, to discuss with him.
 - Ask him to better position put the electric fence. He has blocked it off in the past to make it difficult to get to the orchard from the gate. The sheep get over the electric fence, wander about the orchard and jump back over again. A combination lock was installed previously.
 - b) Engagement of tree specialist to assure that the current orchard design and layout is acceptable and proposal for expansion are carried out. The OWG has refused to spend money on a specialist.
 - c) After any remedial work suggested by tree specialist, discussions need to take place between Dinder Estates (DE) to secure DE approval of the 50% expansion of the Community Orchard.
Action: Cllr Hargraves to meet with DE.
 - d) Produce plan/proposal for Orchard Events. (OWG). This was discussed under item 10 (ii) (2).
Action: LT to submit plan to CPC
 - e) Produce plan/proposal for Orchard Maintenance. (OWG) This was discussed under item 10(ii) (6).
Action: Carry forward to next meeting.
 - f) Review working groups' Terms of reference. (CPC)
Action: everyone must look at this and bring any ideas to the next meeting.
 - g) Identify other uses for the rest of the cemetery field. (CPC)
Action: everyone must look at this and bring any ideas to the next meeting.
 - h) Responses to questions issued to the OWG. (Cllr Tully) this was discussed under item 10(ii) (9).
 - i) LT reported that the new notice board would cost £700.

12. MATTERS OF REPORT – ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

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Date of next meeting 8 April at 7:00pm in the Church Rooms.

Meeting closed at 20:19