

HOLCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL
MENDIP DISTRICT OF THE COUNTY OF SOMERSET

www.holcombepc.org.uk

Clerk: Vickie Watts, Gallant Hill Farm, Foxcote, Radstock, BA3 5YB
clerk@holcombepc.org.uk 07971 516916 - 01749 880428

In line with government guidance, recommended social distancing and self-isolation rules for those who are vulnerable during the Covid-19 pandemic, it was agreed that the June meeting would be conducted as a virtual meeting. This was achieved using "Zoom" software.

**Minutes from Holcombe Parish Council Virtual Meeting, which took place on
Tuesday 7th July 2020 at 7.30 pm.**

Councillors Present

Cllr Graham Crowe (Chair)
Cllr Simon Brand
Cllr Steph Chorley
Cllr Terry Dumbrell
Cllr Phil Gait
Cllr Anne Golledge
Cllr Peter Jennings
Cllr Robert Mitchell
Cllr Sue Robinson

In attendance:

District Cllr Ham (Part) and District Cllr Townsend (Part)
The Clerk, Vickie Watts taking the minutes and 4 members of the public

1 Public forum

No points were raised.

2 Apologies for absence

There were none.

3 Declarations of Interests and Dispensations

Cllr Brand declared an interest in Agenda item 7.2 the planning application 2020/1101/FUL - Proposed new dwelling with disabled access at Manor Byres Longleat Lane and would therefore be abstaining from discussion and voting on the matter.

4 Minutes of previous monthly meetings held on 2nd June 2020

The minutes have been circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting. It was proposed by Cllr Golledge and seconded by Cllr Jennings that the minutes for the Monthly Parish Council meeting accurately reflected the meeting and all and all Councillors who had attended the previous Meeting voted in favour of unanimously in favour of the Chairman signing them at the earliest opportunity.

8 For, 0 Against, 1 Abstentions

The Clerk to upload to the website.

VW

5 Action points from last meeting and matters arising.

All actions from the last meeting had been completed or will be mentioned later in the minutes apart from:

- The Flag pole risk assessment has been prepared by Cllr Crowe although he confirmed that he needed to see the warranty to ensure that all points were covered. The risk assessment will then be circulated to all Councillors ready for the document to be approved at next month's meeting.

GC
VW
Ag

At the June meeting it was agreed that there would be an agenda item at the July meeting to discuss when the flag should be taken down, however due to the recent high winds Cllr Brand had to lower the flag to prevent damage. It was proposed by Cllr Crowe and seconded by Cllr Brand that the flag would now be flown in with government guidance.

9 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions

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6 Planning applications

6.1 2020/1030/HSE - Installation of roof light on East elevation at 1 Holcombe Chapel, Longleat Lane, Holcombe, BA3 5DX

All Councillors had considered the plans prior to discussion. Cllr Dumbrell reported that the applicant had explained in the planning application that they wish to install the proposed roof light in the kitchen to provide more natural light. As part of the terms of the original planning permission (c.2005) when the chapel was converted, it was required that they sought planning permission to install any new windows or roof lights. The roof light proposed is a Velux centre pivot roof window (940 x 1180mm). Drawings were provided to indicate where the window would be located and it shows that the kitchen is not overlooked by any other buildings and would therefore not overlook anywhere itself. It would also comply with the Village Design statement. Cllr Jennings proposed that the application be recommended for approval which was seconded by Cllr Dumbrell.

9 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions

6.2 2020/1101/FUL - Proposed new dwelling with disabled access at Manor Byres, Longleat Lane, Holcombe, Radstock

All Councillors had considered the plans prior to discussion. Mr and Mrs Craddock attended the meeting along with Mr Lee Wright who represents them as their planning agent. He explained that the applicants have lived in the village for most of their lives and are very keen to stay there to maintain their links to family and friendships. There is now a need to be in a house which is equipped with disability features hence the decision to build within the grounds of their existing home which is large enough to accommodate the 2 dwellings. The build will be both economic to run and environmentally friendly.

It was questioned whether there would be a conflict with the new entrance for the new build on the neighbouring property which is also exiting onto Stratton Road. Mr Wright explained that a Highway consultant had been employed who had considered this and the visibility requirements.

After discussion Cllr Dumbrell proposed and seconded by Cllr Gait that the application be recommend for approval with a note asking for Somerset County Council Highways department to look at the potential clash of splays from the other recent application also exiting onto Stratton Road.

8 For, 0 Against, 1 Abstentions

Mr and Mrs Craddock and Mr Wright left the meeting

6.3 2020/0242/FUL - The conversion of free house looking at the change of bar area and seating areas into new farmshop and kitchen layout. New side extension for added seating area and re shuffle of layout for micro pub. New first floor configuration to allow external entry and added second accommodation. Duke of Cumberland Inn Edford Hill Holcombe Shepton Mallet BA3 5HQ

All Councilors had considered the plans prior to discussion. Cllr Dumbrell had looked at the application and noted that the MDC planning portal did not include the consultee list, design and access statement and there was no public notice outside the actual pub to notify parishioners. It was noted that the:

1. Proposed work would comply with the Village Design Statement
2. Proposed work would increase opening hours of Farm Shop beyond present licensing hours
3. Customer traffic attracted would increase considerably in number and extent over opening hours
4. Proposed work would not increase fixed plant noise
5. Proposed work would not increase flood risk
6. The creation of a Farm Shop would be a positive addition to the village amenities;
7. The application form is vague about the effect on employment. You would have expected some gains but the application form states no increase.
8. The application form implies that it will create 2 dwellings where 1 now exists.

A member of the public asked if an application to make it an Asset of Community Value should be submitted to protect the pub. This was discussed, but is usually used to stop the loss of a pub or similar but the proposals are to keep a small pub onsite so it was felt that this was premature.

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After discussion it was proposed by Cllr Jennings and seconded by Cllr Robinson that the application be recommended for approval

9 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions

It was agreed that District Cllr Townsend would ask Mendip District Council why there was no consultee list or design and access statement displayed on the planning portal and why there is no notice outside of the pub to inform members of the public.

AT

7 Planning updates

There were none.

8 Reports

8.1 **PCSO** – No report had been received.

8.2 **Mendip District Council report** - District Cllr Townsend attended the meeting and provided a detailed report from the Mendip Cabinet meeting held on the 6th July:

Finance - an overspend for 2019/20 of £95k is expected. This is easily funded through reserves. This year will be a challenge with a forecast £4.7m overspend, with some £1.85m spent on COVID, and it is not clear how much will be covered by central government.

Local Plan - the Local Plan Single Review is scheduled to be submitted in September 2023. There will be a further hearing on Local Plan Part 2 by the Inspector in September 2020 to review the allocation of 505 houses in the north west of the District.

Social Housing - It is planned to provide new properly affordable greener homes to rent. Funding was allocated for a due diligence exercise to examine Mendip-owned sites for the potential to develop 4 or 5 for quick wins in partnership with a housing association.

Weed Management Plan - The policy to ban Glyphosate is not proving easy to implement as it is clearly the cheapest most effective solution. The search for alternatives continues, including involving Parish Councils in a community weeding programme.

Electric Vehicle Charging Points - Feasibility studies are to be carried out by potential suppliers to establish the best locations from a user and a power supply perspective. Initial plans are to install 4 across Mendip car parks. A wider County strategy is expected to be published in September.

Parish Liaison - a new head is being funded to work closely with Town and Parish Councils "to identify ways to work together to address local needs and aspirations" and to help deliver on objectives such as:

- creating a network of local walking and cycling routes
- encouraging carbon absorption, e.g. tree planting schemes
- encouraging people to buy local food
- develop Neighbourhood Plans and Village Design Statements

Cllr Brand asked how the role of the Parish Liaison officer role would differ from that of the District Councillor and was this a precursor to Unitary? Cllr Townsend said that it did appear that the roles were similar but agreed to ask for a job specification. It had been identified at the Parish Forum meetings that there was a need to strengthen communications between Parish/Town councils and the District Council.

AT

District Cllr Townsend said that Sara Davies of Somerset Highways had asked for a list of road signs that need to be cleaned. All Councillors to give this consideration and email the Clerk with the location of any that require attention.

ALL

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District Cllr Ham had circulated a detailed report by email which said that as chair of Scrutiny the last few months have been difficult, all meetings on line, empty offices, officers doing unfamiliar jobs, millions of pounds being paid out in grants and loans, however some companies who don't have rateable premises or work on the back of others have been unfortunate. i.e. Marquee companies, events and hospitality businesses. MDC have managed to rescue some but not all.

Scrutiny has continued its work around deprivation and Covid 19 has meant this work has become more important recently. The access group have been taking cycling and walking path paper through to encourage usage going forward into the new norm. MDC are also looking at the missing links on the old rail links Frome to Radstock and the Strawberry line from Cheddar through Shepton Mallett and on to Evercreech. MDC are also looking at Bus services, Mendip community transport with a survey going out to all parishes. All this work is being done so we have schemes ready to implement when government transport money comes forward promised for late autumn.

Gypsies and Travellers arriving in Mendip during lockdown has caused a lot of work, concern, and due to a letter from the Secretary of State, confusion, as we all know none of us could travel, but they could and MDC had to provide drinking water and mobile toilets....they had them come from Sussex and Surrey and stayed 12 days before moving on. It put local communities and doctors surgeries at risk, arguments are still going on!

Kilmersdon School has stayed open for key workers and vulnerable children all the way through including Easter holidays, recently joined by reception and year one. These classes with social distancing, classroom size and a split site meant the school was full! We are now looking how to get everyone back in September, it looks like it will be split times for different year groups, and updates will follow through weekly newsletters.

No Parking. After lengthy negotiations Cllr Ham managed to get NO PARKING outside Coleford Coop on the grounds that social distancing queuing was essential on the pavement outside the Co-op which meant that customers leaving the store had no option but to walk in the middle of the highway around parked cars, which was hugely dangerous, and near misses had been witnessed.

Boyles Cross. MDC agreed to give the land known as Boyles cross back to Frome Town Council after 46 years and said they are only too willing to return other assets anywhere in the district.

8.3 **Somerset County Council report** – County Cllr Philip Ham had circulated a detailed report by email. The key points of which follow:

Corona Virus Update: Whilst every death is undoubtedly an absolute tragedy, the situation in Somerset has been throughout the pandemic relatively quiet compared to the rest of the Country. As at 26th June, the number of confirmed Covid cases in Somerset was 795 and the number of Covid-attributed deaths 195. At 0.6, the R Value for the South West was the lowest of all English regions, with the national average being 0.7-1.0. Of Somerset's 200 Care Homes, only one currently has any Covid19 cases within it.

Outbreak Management Plan: Somerset's Outbreak Management Plan has been developed, agreed and will shortly be posted onto the SCC website. The Plan outlines the measure in place and the actions which will be taken should a local outbreak of Covid 19 occur in the County including Test and Trace. Public Health England rated Somerset's plan as exemplary and it will be used as a benchmark nationally.

SCC Financial outcome for 2019/20: Positive financial results and a major boost to reserves have put Somerset County Council in a strong position. In the last financial year, SCC increased its reserves to £76.2m across the board and delivered efficiencies that enabled a £6.4m underspend on the total budget.

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SCC Covid 19 Finances: SCC estimates additional costs of around £47m to help communities deal with coronavirus. To date the NHS Clinical Commissioning Group have reimbursed approx. £6 million and the Government have allocated an additional £26m to Somerset. It is expected that a further Government award to help close the small shortfall will be made shortly. Major expenditure has included: Paying a 10% increase to all care home providers to help them stay financially viable through the crisis – £3.1m; Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – Government provides just 22% of the PPE required by schools, nurseries and key workers in Somerset, Somerset County Council is funding the remaining 78% – predicted cost £6m; Setting up and running a new care home in Yeovil – £1m each; Supporting nurseries and childcare settings to enable them to financially survive – £2.1m; Running social care services seven days a week – £1m; Supporting District Councils with additional homelessness costs – £0.8m; Supporting our supply chain on major building projects – £2.3m. Plus a whole host of other costs that add up!

Climate Change: SCC have become founding Members of a new network which has been established by UK100 to campaign on climate change. The 21 councils involved in the Network represent 14.3 million people in total, a quarter of the population (25%) and two fifths (41%) of England by area. The network is to focus on rural communities who face unfair barriers in trying to decarbonise – it is often harder to attract funding for projects which don't fit traditional cost benefit analyses and which often favour urban concentrations with less overall carbon reduction impact.

One Somerset: The business case to move to a Single Unitary authority across Somerset will be available on www.onesomerset.org.uk from 7th July and will cover in detail the reasons for the recommendations and the substantial benefits to the residents of Somerset. The business case will pass through SCC's Scrutiny Panel and Cabinet before being considered at Full Council on the 29th July. Engagement and consultation activities will continue through July and into the Summer.

Registration Services: Birth registrations are now making a phased return in Somerset following the gradual easing of coronavirus restrictions. The service, run by Somerset County Council, had to be put on hold in March at the start of the nationwide pandemic lockdown due to Government instructions but now parents can book appointments to register the birth of babies born before 31 March 2020. The number of appointments will be limited at first, as safety measures must be put in place in buildings to protect the public and members of the registration service staff. With the service suspended for many weeks, there is a large number of births to be registered and parents of babies born after 1 April are asked to stay patient for now until more offices are open. Further Updates will follow – please check www.somerset.gov.uk/births-ceremonies-and-deaths/register-birth

Library Services: Somerset Libraries are planning the phased re-opening of library buildings with the aim to start welcoming people back in July. It won't be business as usual straight away, however, and Somerset County Council's library buildings will look and feel quite different, as some processes temporarily change. Social distancing measures will be in place and a 'personal shopper' service will be available as customers will not initially be able to browse. Staff will be available to select items for customers based on popular titles, specific interests and favourite authors. Full details of which libraries are planned to open and when that's finalised will be available soon via the Somerset Libraries website (www.somersetlibraries.co.uk) Importantly there will be no overdue charges as a result of items borrowed just before buildings closed on the 19th March due to COVID-19!

Commonplace: A new interactive online mapping tool has been launched to enable members of the community to flag up areas of concern in a specific area where changes to walking, cycling and travel could make a positive difference. This work aimed at building on a number of temporary measures, including pedestrianised high streets which have already been introduced to encourage Social distancing and positively support the safe movement of pedestrians and cyclists. The map can be accessed at <https://somersetcovidactivetravel.commonplace.is/> An indicative figure of £482,000 for Somerset has also been published from the second tranche of funding where further new schemes will be considered.

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9 Discuss One Somerset Unitary proposals

District Cllr Ham explained that he had just received the business case from Somerset which he will circulate for consideration. There is no business plan from the District Councils as yet.

Cllr Brand explained that he was nervous that we only receive snippets of information. Is the Parish Council in a position to be able to comment? If we are to respond then Councillors will need to read information provided and meet to discuss. Does the Council have the time, expertise and access to the information needed to comment?

It was noted that half of the Councils in the country have gone to unitary. It would be interesting to see supporting information on spending and savings. Cllr Ham will seek this information.

PH

It was agreed that the Council would not respond to the surveys until further information about the proposals has been considered. This will be an agenda item for August meeting to decide if we should respond.

Ag

It was agreed that Cllr Gait will attend the SALC virtual meeting on 20th July 4-6pm to discuss the Unitary debate.

PG

Member of the public left the meeting at 21.00hrs

10 Plans for reopening for the Playing Field and Village Hall and discuss if emergency funding is required

- 10.1 Holcombe Playing Field: The Playing field committee decided not to open on the 4th of July but to wait for an opportunity to review and discuss with the full committee at a virtual meeting. An announcement was made on Facebook to say that it would remain closed and parishioners voiced their discontent. Several parents said that the park should have been opened with the responsibility being with them as parents.

A virtual meeting was held on Monday 6th July. By that date guidance for managing playgrounds and outdoor gyms had been provided by the API (Association of Play Industries) which proved to be incredibly helpful and weighed up the welfare and benefit of children with the risk of infection. During the meeting it was agreed that the park would be opened the following day with signage explaining that the equipment had not been sanitised and a list of guidance for users. Notices will also be displayed on Facebook and the village website.

VW

- 10.2 Holcombe Village Hall: The Holcombe Village Hall committee are hoping to meet virtually using Zoom on 16th July 2020 at 7pm to discuss what they need to do to ensure that the hall is safe and ready to when they decide to open. Cllr Brand asked that whatever the outcome of the meeting could the committee ensure that there is a dialogue with parishioners via Facebook or the website to explain why the decision was made; and if the hall is to remain closed express when the decision will be reviewed.

VW

11 Councillor Reports / Updates

- 11.1 Highways – The Clerk confirmed that she had contacted Sara Davies who emailed to say that due to the coronavirus progress had slowed. She recapped on some of the points previously discussed. The Clerk will work with Sara Davies to ensure that each item is progressed over coming weeks as the volume of traffic begins to return to normal. Proposals which had been discussed included:

VW

- Dropped kerbs,
- Extending the 30mph limit on Brewery Lane,
- Installation of survey technology to monitor number and type of vehicles passing through the village at a given location,
- Signage to highlight the turning into Common Lane
- Signage warning of ducks on Charlton Road and
- The potential implementation of weight restrictions on Charlton Road from Ash Farm to the main cross roads with Brewery Lane, Stratton Road and on Holcombe Hill from Stowell, Edford Green up to the same cross roads.

The Clerk reported that as agreed at a previous meeting, she had made contact with local companies regarding HGV's to gather information about their HGV movements and how implementing a weight restriction on Holcombe Hill and Charlton Road might impact on their business.

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After the letter had been sent the Clerk received many phone calls from concerned businesses about potential HGV restrictions within the village. The Clerk reassured callers that at this point it was about gathering information for review. This will be an agenda item for August meeting when it is hoped all businesses will have responded. Ag

- 11.2 Playing Field – Cllr Chorley confirmed that the RoSPA annual play inspection had been received with some minor low risk matters highlighted. The base of the flag pole was highlighted as a risk. It was agreed that it would be reviewed to see what would be required to reduce the risk.

District Cllr Townsend and County Cllr Ham left the meeting at 20.45hrs

12 Finance

- 12.1 Income – It was agreed that due to time constraints this would be adjourned until the August meeting Ag

- 12.2 Bank Reconciliation - The bank reconciliation had been prepared by the Clerk and will be delivered to Cllr Golledge to be checked. AG

- 12.3 1st Quarter Budget Review - It was agreed that due to time constraints this would be adjourned until the August meeting Ag

- 12.4 Parish Council Payments:

V Watts – Salary & Expenses	£306.70
SALC & NALC Annual affiliation	£276.77
Sue Robinson – Emergency kit for St Andrews	£135.85
Mendip Times – VE Day advert	£25.00
Geeking IT simple – Monthly licence	£47.78
A Mason – Internal Audit	£35.00

- 12.5 Playing Field Payments:

Play Safely Limited – Annual inspections £185.40

It was proposed by Cllr Dumbrell and seconded by Cllr Golledge that the payments should be made. Cheques to be signed by Cllr Crowe and the Clerk at the earliest opportunity.

9 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions

Cllr Jennings asked if Geeking It Simple could look at the set-up of Outlook which appears to not be displayed in full. When he called directly, they said that it was not included within the package currently subscribed. The Clerk believed that they had agreed to help with the initial set up of the system and this problem has occurred since joining the council. Clerk to contact Geeking IT simple to discuss. VW

13 Consider improving the path in Jubilee Gardens

The Clerk had received a complaint regarding the condition of the path through Jubilee Garden. The Clerk said that the path had become uneven as a result of the adjacent tree roots and the paved area was slippery at times.

It was agreed that the Clerk would report to Somerset rights of way. If it transpires that it is the responsibility of the Parish Council then the Clerk will seek quotes to repair the path. VW

Cllr Golledge kindly offered to wash the paving area. AG

14 Discuss ways of reducing dog fouling throughout the village

The playing field committee have reviewed the signage at the playing field and have agreed that they need to be updated to advise that the only access for dogs is across the footpath from the second gate on Charlton road to the car park. The signs will show the route of the footpath which will be publicised in On the Map, the Facebook and website. VW

Further discussion on preventing dog fouling in the village to be discussed at the August meeting. Ag

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15 Consider ways of marking VJ Day

VJ Day is 15th August 2020. It was agreed that this would be kept under review to establish what, if anything could be done to mark the event. The Clerk will order a wreath to be laid on the day.

16 Discuss how future meetings will be conducted.

It was agreed that this might, in time take the shape of an amalgamation of Councillors being present at the hall (once open) and some via Zoom. This can be discussed again as restrictions ease and risk reduces further.

17 Correspondence

- 17.1 Application to erect a memorial for Colin Reakes – From Curtis Ilott. Approved
 - 17.2 Application for additional inscription for Rita House – From Curtis Ilott. Approved
- The Clerk will notify Curtis Ilott that both applications have been approved.

VW

- 17.3 Mendip Local Plan Part 2 examination September hearing – It was agreed that no-one would attend.

Next meetings

- 18** Tuesday 4th August 2020

The meeting concluded at 21.50hrs