

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 / 01479 880428

**Minutes from Holcombe Parish Council Meeting, which took place on
Tuesday 4th April 2023 at 7.30 pm at Holcombe Village Hall**

Councillors Present Cllr Phil Gait (Vice Chairman)
Cllr Simon Eade
Cllr Elaine Emery
Cllr Helen Kerr
Cllr David Roberts
Cllr Jon Stratford

In attendance: The Clerk Vickie Watts taking the minutes
There were 7 members of the public.

I. Public forum

1. A member of the public said that she had written to the Parish Council last month regarding concerns over the Cookswood development. The initial application was for 147 timber lodges and a pool to be used as a holiday resort but it appears that this has changed to 122 holiday homes that can be used 365 days. They questioned why the parish council had not challenged the changes, which were more than non-material changes. The implications of the development will have more of an impact on Holcombe both visually and as a result of the increase in traffic than Stoke St Michael.

Cllr Gait explained that the Parish Council had already written to the new Somerset Council asking that the Parish Council or Somerset Councillors be consulted on all non-material amendments.

Another member of the Parish said that the Non material amendment was made subjectively by the planning officer, he said that he felt the planning procedure was not followed as this was clearly more than non-material. What can be done to stop this from happening again?

Alan Townsend said the Local Government ombudsman can review the case but would have no power to change the outcome. A local parish did fund a judicial review (JR) challenging the Mendip District Council Local Plan which was successful but this was at a cost of approx. £40K. Undertaking a JR would require serious investigation.

The Parish Council will keep a close eye on the development.

2. A resident asked if hatching could be implemented at the junction of Stratton Road and Charlton Road to allow pedestrians a safe area by preventing cars from cutting the corner.

Action: Clerk to raise request with Somerset Highways

3. Another member of the public asked if the Speed Indicator could be moved up the hill to ensure that traffic was reminded of the speed limit as it approached the main crossroads.

Action: Clerk to ask Somerset Highways to approve an additional location

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4. Alan Townsend attended the meeting to say that the Coleford and Holcombe Community Magazine has received great support and the editorial contributions has increased by 80%. However, the downside of the success is that the costs of production have also increased. Advertising has increased but there is a concern that at present there will not be sufficient funds to cover the cost for the full year. It has been discussed that the cost of each magazine should be increased to £1 per copy.

2. Apologies for absence

Cllr Simon Brand, Somerset Cllr Edric Hobbs and Tony Robbins sent apologies which were accepted by the Chair.

3. Declaration of Interests and dispensations

Cllr Kerr declared an interest in agenda item 10.8 payments.

4. Approve Minutes of previous meeting held on Tuesday 7th March 2023

The Clerk had circulated the minutes prior to the meeting. Cllr Kerr proposed that they were an accurate record of the meeting and should be approved which was seconded by Cllr Gait. The minutes were duly signed.

Vote: 5 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstention

Action: Clerk to post on the website

5. Action updates from the last meeting

Actions had been carried out or would be discussed later in the meeting as an agenda item apart from:

1. Clerk to progress adding Cllr Gait to the bank mandate as 4th signatory

Action: Clerk to complete outstanding tasks

The Clerk confirmed that the street light which had been removed from Kingsway will be replaced and is scheduled to be done in the near future.

6. Co-option of Councillors

Mr Jon Stratford attended the meeting and explained that he had lived in the village for 24 year and that public service was important to him and was demonstrated with previous service in the military and the police force. Jon said that he was keen to play an active role in the community and now had time to become involved with the Parish Council.

It was proposed by Cllr Kerr and seconded by Cllr Eade that Jon should be co-opted.

Vote: 5 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstention

Action: Clerk to process paperwork, set up email and notify MDC. Continue to advertise the vacancies

7. Reports

1. PCSO – A generic area newsletter had been received in March which highlighted what the neighbourhood policing team have been concentrating on during the month. There was no mention of Holcombe within the report and no crime statistics given for the Mendip East area.

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2. Somerset Council report – No report had been received.

8. Planning Applications

There were none

9. Planning Updates including discussion around the approval of varying the conditions for the Playing Field car park ref: 2023/0068/VRC

Mendip District Council planning office have confirmed that application to remove the conditions at the playing field car park had been approved which meant that the car park can now be open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The car park is to be used for personal use only and for activities or events associated with the Playing Field, Village Hall, Church of St Andrew in addition, the Parish Council confirmed that the car park can be used whilst dropping off and picking up children from the school buses.

The Parish Council thanked all the people who had taken on the task of opening and closing the gate to the Playing Field at the weekends over the last couple of years.

Action: Signage to be updated on the playing field gate

10. Finance

1. Bank Reconciliation

The Clerk had completed the bank reconciliation which will be checked by Cllr Gait at the end of the meeting.

2. Consider year-end accounts 2022/23 - This was a duplication of agenda item 10.3

Agenda items 10.3 to 10.7 will be considered at the next meeting.

3. Approve year end 2023 accounts

4. Review and Agree reserves

5. Annual Audit – Agree resolution that Holcombe Parish Council meets the criteria for 2022/23 and wishes to be an exempt authority, not subject to the limited assurance review, for that year. Sign the Certificate of Exemption

6. Consider and approve section 1 of the Audit - Annual Governance statement 2022/23

7. Consider and approve section 2 of the Audit - Accounting statements 2022/23

Action: Add items 10.3 to 10.7 to the agenda for the next meeting

8. Parish Council Payments:

V Watts – Salary £427.16 and Expenses £20.46	£447.62
Simon Brand – Sydenhan Oak sleepers for Jubilee Gardens	£838.50
Les Allen – removal of the dog waste bin	£70.00
Citizens Advice Mendip – Donation	£500.00
Village Hall	£72.00
Helen Kerr – TENs licence	£21.00

9. Playing Field Payments

There were none.

It was proposed by Cllr Kerr and seconded by Cllr Emery that all payments should be made.

Vote: 5 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions

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14. Highways

1. Update on installation of Speed indicator device (SID)

The Parish Councillors were all disappointed that the speed indicator device does not seem to be working as expected. The reliability is a concern with questionable speeds being shown which do not match the speed of the vehicles traveling up the hill. The unit also doesn't react and display the speed until very late. This may be due to the alignment/visibility but needs investigation. There is also concern that the unit is positioned in such a way that it is almost in the path of oncoming traffic. After discussion it was agreed that the Clerk would contact the supplier and ask them to address the issues highlighted.

Action: Clerk to ask the supplier to address the problems with the unit.

2. Update on existing issues already reported to Somerset Highways

The Clerk had received a response from Somerset Highways Engineer regarding Mendip Amendment order but there was no explanation on how this could be applied to address inconsiderate parking in Holcombe. A further email had been sent requesting more information.

Action: Clerk to progress

3. Report of new issues

It was mentioned that there was an issue with water running under Bector Lane, down to Marsh Lane and comes out opposite Tibbetts where it then runs down the road.

Action: Clerk to report to Somerset Highways

15. Councillor Reports/Updates including Playing Field, Village Hall, SALC, etc

There were no reports.

16. Meetings/Training to attend

08/05/23 from 10 until 12 noon - Litter pick with refreshments served in the hall after the event.

Action: Clerk to book the equipment, hall and refreshments.

29/04/23 from 10 until 3pm Somerset Association of Local Councils (SALC) AGM

Action: Cllr Gait and the Clerk to attend

17. Correspondence

An email had been received requesting that the Parish Council purchases a sign warning of Toads Crossing in Dark Lane.

Action: Clerk to investigate cost. Agenda item for the next meeting

An email had been received from a resident at Scott's Close requesting that residents be allowed to walk dogs on the path around the Holcombe Playing Field. It is recognized that this is an emotive subject but the decision lies with the Playing Field committee.

Action: Clerk to ensure that a decision is made promptly by the Committee.

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18. Next meetings:

Parish Council meeting Tuesday 2nd May 2023 at 7.30pm

Meeting closed at 20.45hrs