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| Combe Florey Parish Council | | |
| **Date of Meeting:**  Wednesday 02nd May 2018 7:00 pm  At Combe Florey Village Hall | | **Written by:**  Gemma Coombes (Parish Clerk) |

# Annual Parish Meeting Minutes

**Councillor’s Present**

**In attendance**

Gemma Coombes – Interim Parish Clerk

Parishioners x 7

Cllr Robin Cleverley (Chair)

Cllr Peter Taylor,

Cllr Adriana Truby

Cllr Simon Hawes

Cllr Geoffrey Eggleston

1. **Welcome by Chairman**

The chairman welcomes the parishioners and thanked them for coming. The chairman introduced the parish councillors and they all gave a brief introduction of what areas of the parish council they will be looking after.

1. **Apologies**

None

1. **Adoption of Minutes**

The minutes from the 03rd May 2017 were taken and read. All happy with the minutes as read. Signed by Chairman

1. **Welcome by Chairman**

This time last year we were in a state of considerable flux. Three councillors, including the Chairman, had just resigned and a call for volunteers had had limited success. In order to keep the council going district councillors Jane Warmington and Peter Watson volunteered to be parish councillors and took on the roles of Chair and vice-chair respectively. A fourth councillor resigned over the summer, leaving just two councillors resident in the parish.

Following the campaign to attract more councillors and after advertising three casual vacancies I am happy to report that we are now up to the full complement of five. The clerk, Claire, also resigned last year but I am pleased to say that at the last PC meeting Gemma Coombes was appointed as full-time clerk, after a couple of months helping Jane on an interim basis.

Last year there was discussion about abolishing the Parish Council and reverting to an annual Parish Meeting instead. The pros and cons were presented many parishioners were opposed. This whole discussion became irrelevant as it transpired that as a parish larger than 150 electors the Parish Council legally cannot be disbanded.

We have received 14 planning applications over the year they have now all received approval, or conditional approval, except for Greenacre Farm which had an application for a barn conversion refused, and again on appeal, the Farmers’ Arms which re-application is still pending an application last week for tree pruning.

The work on keeping the village tidy has been gone well and I would like to make a special note of thanks to the volunteers who help, especially John Passingham and Richard Ashton, and also to Mark Perry who is paid to keep the verges and junctions clear. The village garden is one area that is showing signs of neglect (after many years of careful nurturing by Nielsen and Julie Smith). I appeal to all of you when walking past just to nip in there and pull up a weed, prune a shrub, or deadhead some flowers.

I also asked Jane Warmington who was chair for most of the year for any comments to add the Chairman’s report and she sent this:

“I would like to record Peter Watson and my thanks for Combe Florey’s response to the call for more local representation to support both you and Peter on the Parish Council.  We hope that with a new team you can establish good working relationships with the Village Hall Committee, the Parochial Church Council and the Farmers Arms when it reopens which are important and particularly so in a small village.  We are pleased that the Parish Council is now on a strong footing supported by your new Clerk and set to remain part of the lowest tier of local government.”  

To conclude I would reiterate that this is a new-look council with only one survivor from the beginning of last year (and that includes the clerk) I would like to stress at this point that we are keen to do our best for the parish; some of us are a lot more experienced than others and we rely on your help and support to keep everything running smoothly. We are here to help the parish and especially take advantage of the PC’s official status to lobby the higher levels of government and facilitate any parish projects – this of course includes our whole-hearted support for the village hall. My personal preference is for conciliation and I hope to avoid some of the ill-feeling and them-and-us attitudes that have existed in the past. In this regard as a new Chairman of a new council I would like to draw a line under the past so we can move on.

1. **Financial Report**

Responsible Financial Officer to be appointed, this role is governed by Legislation. CFPC opted on 5 Oct 2016 to adopt code of best practice as set out by National Association of Local Councils this is a prescriptive set of requirements for Financial Conduct and Reporting

We have a new external auditor appointed by Secretary of State this was previously Grant Thornton LLP and is now PKF Littlejohn LLP. Guidance has been received for preparation and review of accounts to 31 March 2018 Simon Hawes to consider opportunity to avoid audit and have limited review (size exemption for smaller councils)

The budget, the 2018/19 budget / planning schedule has been located and it represents very much a business as usual budget. Parish Council Finances are relatively small and straightforward. All amounts following are rounded to nearest £50. Our income is £4,450 (precept = £4,000 + £450 payment from Taunton Deane for transmission to PCC= £4,450) our anticipated expenditure. Cash Reserves were assumed to be £6k

· Clerk = £1,735

· Election costs = £200

· Insurance = £420

· Burial ground = £300

· Village Tidying = £650

· Village Garden = £300

· Misc (includes contingency) = £500

The cash balance as per Lloyds as at 31 December 2017 was £8,166.23. The cash balance have improved over the last few years, predominantly because no full time Parish Clerk had been employed. Receipt of this years 2018/19 precept has further increased the cash balance. As at 10 Apr2018, the Cash Balance per Lloyds had grown to £11,406.23. This overstates the true position, as there are a number of liabilities which require settling (eg: Gemma’s payments, sundry invoices etc)

Insurance, letter dated 19 April 2017 from AoN, the Renewal date 1 June 2017 with a premium of £409.93 the long term agreement which gives us discount of 5% committed until 1 June 2018 but if we EVER withdraw, we have to repay all the discounts. The council risk incl Legal liabilities, money, theft by employees, accidental wrongdoing by council officers, libel, slander at the moment the policy is legal expenses - £250k, officials Indemnity - £500k, personal Accident – capital £100k and weekly benefit £20, Set limit for property cover (assets). A further Letter dated 28 July 2017 states that AoN has withdrawn from Local Councils market. BHIB Ltd will supply renewal quotation. The renewal offers opportunity to consider if historical policy is appropriate? Total cost of assets listed is £1,523.43

In Conclusion we need to progress on preparing accounts for 2017/18, CFPC has ample funds at this time. RFO’s opinion is that it’s not the role of the PC to sit on excess funds as council tax payer’s money designed to be spent for benefit of all parishioners. We are earning no interest. A detailed monthly projections required but if current underlying cash is say,c £11,400 less one year’s annual expenditure of c£4,500 this makes available funds = £6,900. If £2,000 was made available to the Village Hall, this would leave £4,900.This might suggest, depending on the size of “buffer” that the PC felt appropriate, some level of further funding was available for any other project that the PC felt appropriate

1. **Somerset County Councillor (Mike Rigby) report**

Did not attend but had been invited

1. **Police report (Louise Fyne, PCSO)**

Louise has covered the area for 9 years and is going where is needed, she is now covering a larger area so if she is not seen here for a while she is needed in other areas.

The crime reports are sent to us for us to report back to the parish at the meetings, there has only been one issue in Combe Florey lately and it is reported as domestic. There has been an increase to sheep worrying in general area, it is important that people keep track of their dogs and they only have to be among the sheep to be classed as worrying. It is important you need to have control of your animal in a public place. There have been reports on poaching in surrounding area as well.

Please contact her if you leave here a message if she can’t get to your call or email her and you can find her details on the Avon and Somerset website.

1. **Report from Parochial Church Council**

Matthew is in attendance. They are keen to work with the PC and help build a community together. They are hoping to have some major building work done in next 2 years at St Peter and St Pauls this is for roof and tower, this is a grade 1 listed building. They are here for everyone regardless if you attend church on a regular basis or not.

Financing for work required is being looked at currently to do both roof and tower, total cost is approx. £250,000 and this is an estimate while waiting for a surveyer. Funding is the next question, it is important to maintain the church as a historical artefact. They have approx. £25,000 of current money to put in.

1. **Report form Village Hall**

Phil Greenway is speaking on their behalf, since 1957 and has had various improvements since then. The village hall committee is 10 people. There is a number of groups that use the village hall on a weekly basis so it has a good basis. £3k is earned from hiring and it costs about £3k to run it so there is a number of events to help raise additional income, this generates approx. £3.5K and this helps do other things and helps do repairs. They have £16k in reserves and some of that is funding to help the new build. The extension has planning and building regs to build the new storage room so the main hall is free. This work is starting at end on June and will cost approx. £16.5k. They are still fundraising for this project.

The village hall is also the polling station and is part of Somerset emergency plan to provide sheltered housing if needed or to be an emergency police headquarters

1. **Report on Village Pub Progress**

Tim and Jane the current landlords of the pub are here to speak. NFU have appointed a very good contractor to restore the pub, there have been some issues but these are being overcome slowly and they are now ahead of schedule. The thatcher can start in the next few weeks. The scaffolding should be down in next few months. Once the scaffolding is down they will be happy to show people around if people let them know they would like to come. They have chosen to come out of the blue ball where they were temporally residing due to high business rates.

If there is anything the parish council can do we would be happy to help as it is important to keep the pub alive in the village. The church would like to bless the pub.

1. **TDBC Report**

Peter Watson has said about the possible changes to boundaries in wards to ensure approx. 2000 people per ward per councillor. 27th of Aug is the time to make views known about the new boundaries. From a Combe Florey point of view, it should not make any difference. Library is up at Bishop Lydard parish council next week, there has been a lot of work done and volunteers involved. This library is costing approx. £14,000 per year, it could be taken on locally but would be a large raise in precept to do this.

1. **Public Forum, discussion and general questions:**

**Establish parishioners’ priorities for forthcoming year.**

A parishioner raised the proposed donation of £2000 from the parish council to the village hall. The contract for the extension is only for the shell not the kitting out to of the new build. They will also need to have a new hard-wired fire alarm system to meet fire regulations, they need to keep a certain amount in reserve.

The council have a surplice for £2000 after what is need to be kept in reserve. The council have no power to give money to the fabric of the church but can give it to the grounds. This is a very grey area. Neither the church or the village hall has asked for any money. There is such a large spend for the church to find and it would help the case of the church when applying to the heritage fund. This can be seen as a token of good will to church to help the running.

The surplice is wanted to be spent to the parish and benefit of the community.

It is asked for a feeling of the room. Show of hands for giving the £2000 to the parish council 18, Show of hands for giving sum to go to PCC is 17. Once the budget is done we may be able to come up with a sum of money to help PCC if possible to do so in a way that is legal. This will be on the agenda to be voted on by the parish council at the next meeting. We can make a charitable donation under section 137 of the charitable donation act but this would be capped. There is a very grey area and it is not common for a parish council to support the church.

There is broad support to offer money to both the village hall and PCC.

Freeholds owned by the Parish Council, it is being flagged up by a parishioner that there are freeholds the parish council own. The land at the pound was considered to be owned by the council but this is disputed by the joining land owner. The Parish garden is owned by the council but there are no deeds for this. There is also a strip of land by honey ball lane but this is felt to be owned by the adjoining land owner.

Village sign that has been broken is currently in Robins shed, some enquiries are being made as to how to fix this, the foundry that originally made the sign have been approached for quotes and we are still waiting for that. SCC have said it could cost £500 and if we have it done by the people who do their work would be a long wait.

Car under tarpaulin at end of coggins lane is being seen as dangerous as well as the cars outside of the gate house.

Church working group have said the narrow lane by the church needs widening as it is not disabled access.

Meeting closed at 20.48

1. **Next Parish Council Meeting:**

To include matters raised at this Annual Parish Meeting

Date: Friday 18th May 2018 at 6.00pm

Location: Combe Florey Village Hall