

Combe Florey Parish Council

<p style="text-align: center;">Date of Meeting: Tuesday 14th May 2024 7:00 pm At Combe Florey Village Hall</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Written by: Gemma Coombes (Parish Clerk)</p>
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Annual Parish Meeting Minutes

Councillor's Present

Cllr Robin Cleverly (Chair)
 Cllr Simon Hawes (RFO)
 Cllr Adriana Truby
 Cllr John Passingham

In attendance

Parishioners x 10

2023/1) Welcome by Chairman - Robin Cleverly

The chairman, Cllr Robin Cleverly welcomed the parishioners in attendance. He introduced the councillors: Simon Hawes RFO (responsible financial officer), Jacquey Newton – Village Hall representative on the Council (absent). Jana Truby – Planning John Passingham – Footpaths and Highways
 This is the first of two meetings required to be held. This is the Annual Parish meeting with the Annual Parish Council meeting to be held in two weeks' time. The agenda for this meeting is to understand priorities for this year and although the meeting has an agenda this is flexible depending on the needs of the parishioners.

2023/2) Apologies for absence

Cllr Jacquey Newton
 Cllr Andy Sully sent his apologies

2023/3) Adoption of Minutes

The minutes from the 09th May 2023 were taken as read. It was proposed to adopt the minutes by Cllr Cleverly and seconded by Cllr Truby, All in favour of adopting the minutes. Signed by the Chairman.

2023/4) Chairman's Report

The past year has been mainly business as usual. We have received just 7 planning applications over the year– which were all supported by the Parish Council. Apart from minor works, the more major applications were for a new log cabin at Hollycombe, an extension at Kings Cottage, Seven Ash, and repair works to the railway embankment at Osman's Cottage. All have been approved; only one remains pending – an application for a temporary agricultural worker's dwelling at Yarde Farm. Work on the village garden has been proceeding. We put in a new bench last summer, and have recently employed a gardener who is gradually restoring some order. We were pleased to welcome back for the third year an enthusiastic group of Squirrels (junior scouts) who also used water from the pump when planting pansies and primroses as part of their community service and gardening badges. There has been some discussion at the PC meetings about dog fouling throughout the parish and the need, or not, for a waste bin. We decided to refer this to the annual meeting and it is on the agenda for later tonight. The Parish Council supported the defibrillator project with a £1000 donation and I am pleased to note it is now full operational, and even more pleased that it hasn't been needed yet, although the one in Trebles Holford has been taken to an emergency. I would like to conclude this report with thanks to members of the parish council and the clerk for their work during the year. Before handing over to Simon for the financial report, on behalf of the parish Council I would like to present this portrait to the village hall.

2023/5) Financial Report

Cllr Hawes opened his report saying he wished to cover three topics:

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Signed: [Chairman]

State of the Parish Council Finances.

The Parish Council is in good financial health. We are ahead of ourselves this year and the annual audit reports have been sent and have been audited already, this will be discussed and adopted at the Annual Parish Meeting.

The precept has been held at £4000 for the last 10 years. After the bills are paid we broadly match the expenses and the incomes, this year we have spent about £500 more than last year. Each year we try to undertake a project, this year we have been supporting the defibrillator and have added £1000 to their kitty.

We are a small council and if we had a large expense come in this could mean that the precept could have to raise as we don't keep large reserves.

If there is any suggestions on what you want to see money spent on please come forward.

There is some financial uncertainty regarding the financial difficulties of Somerset Council but the future impact of this on small parishes like Combe Florey is unknown at present.

Internal audit and RFO

Sue Greenway has done the internal audit of our books for the last few years and has done a great job; she was happy to do the job for this year but would not be doing it next year. If there is anyone who would like to do this please let us know.

The RFO is also happy to allow someone else to do this role if anyone wishes to. A parishioner suggests that in other Councils the Clerk undertakes this role. However the Clerk for this Council is not prepared to undertake this role due to other responsibilities and will tender her resignation if that is the case.

CIL

We received £5082 of CIL money this year and this was against two developments.

Each year we have to make returns to show how we have spent this funding. This has to be spent in 5 years. It did take a long time to get the money from Somerset Council and the RFO is seeing if we could claim it against retrospective projects.

2023/6) Police Report

The Police were not here in person but they submitted a report. There is an increase in shed breaks.

2023/7) Somerset Council report (Cllr Mike Rigby / Cllr Andy Sully)

Cllr Sully submitted a generic report that was read out but this did not cover off any of the bigger questions that directly impact Combe Florey.

2023/8) Report from local groups

1. Parochial Church Council

The Vicar has left and this is causing some issues.

There has been various activities throughout the year, including harvest suppers.

Thanks to those who erected the Christmas tree that looked stunning.

The PCC are unable to pay the Parish Share this year due to poor financial health. The Church is open daily during daylight hours.

Planning and open afternoon on June 15th.

2. Village hall

Update on the Village Hall was given by the village hall chairman. Normal activities were started again last year with regular meetings. They held a local quiz night for the defibrillator group to raise funds and this year it was for the Village Hall.

There was a plant sale in spring and in Autumn there was a cake sale and near Christmas, there was a Christmas fair that had various people selling their wares to the public.

Book marts are held monthly. Last year marked the 10th anniversary of this being held with a total raised of 15k over the 10 years.

Regular cleaning is now in place and the electrics have been updated along with a new retaining wall at the bottom. There have been ash trees cut down. They are updating their fire exit as soon as the weather improves and after that they are looking to update the car park area. The Village hall can currently have 60 people here and after the fire doors have been done it could be permitted to take 100.

The AGM is on the 29th of May.

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Signed: [Chairman]

3. Defibrillator group

A report was sent out and has been also sent to local press.

The renewal date for the defibrillators is Oct 2027.

The fund raising is trying to do something people want and enjoy to do and this is without stepping on the toes of the Village Hall or PCC.

Trebles Holford defibrillator did get taken to an emergency. It was not used but it was there as support to the family till the emergency services arrived and the lady was taken to hospital.

Two new committee members.

There was a training event last year and there will be a session at the WI next time but this will be open to the public. Continual reviews of your first aid is always beneficial as the more you do the more you take in.

Know your what3words, it helps the emergency services.

2023/9) Need for a dog waste bin the Parish

This has been looked into for some time. The bin cannot be on private land, but has to be on Council-owned property. Two potential sites have been identified and the cost was approx. £800 for two bins. The Council no longer supply the bins which now have to be obtained from an external contractor. The cost of emptying is £8 per time. This could end up being costly for the Parish Council depending on how often this gets emptied.

The main problem areas are along the stream and Coggan's Lane.

We live in an environment where dog poo is really antisocial, but a dog waste bin is not going to change the owners' behaviour. The expense is potentially a large ongoing overhead cost and not one the Parishioners in the room were willing to undertake.

This will be removed from the agenda at the Annual Parish Council Meeting.

**2023/10) Public Forum, discussion and general questions:
Establish parishioners' priorities for forthcoming year.**

Cllr Cleverly opened the floor to the public.

Bridge collapse near pub

There was a suggestion to help with the bridge by the pub as it is falling into the water. As the SCC have no money to do a lot of services is this something that we could get involved in.

Community email groups

If anyone wants to be added to the community email address then please email the village hall and you will be added.

There is also an email distribution list for the mins of the Parish Council, the Clerk will be happy to add you to this if you email the Parish Council.

Should there be a WhatsApp group? Cllr Truby is happy to create the link and send the link out via the community email.

Footpath issue.

The ongoing issue with the footpath to Ash Priors is causing problems as it has now been ploughed up and is totally unusable. This has been ongoing for 5 years. The contact at Somerset Council has now left and we are not sure if she has been replaced. The suggestion was made to write to the rural payment agency who pay the single farm payments, and use this as a penalty.

Updates on broadband

There has now been an agreement for a pole outside Kai Ringle. This means Airband now have a route from the end of the Village to the other side. There have been Airband signs going up in the last few days.

State of the bank

The state of the banks in Honeyball Hill was raised, The mud and the stone coming off the banks brought down by the deer means the school bus could not run and there were children having to cross the A358 road. As a village maybe we can help the children crossing the road, although this is not a long term solution.

The issue of the mud is a difficult situation to address as Highways say it is a land owner issue and the land owners say it is a deer control issue.

Deer fencing is £60-£75 per linear meter, this large amount of money has to come from somewhere.

Every land owner would need to check their deeds to see if the bank is owned by them right down to the tarmac. The bank is secure and it is the deer bringing the mud and stone down into the road.

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Signed: [Chairman]

Whatever the solution is would need to be universal and all land owners would have to be compelled to do this. Some land owners are attempting to lay new larger hedges but this needs a large amount of materials to do this.

Can we approach highways to pay for the cost of deer fencing along the verge? Is it for Highways to find the solution rather than the land owner? As highways came and cleared the road before we hope we have created a precedent and they will come and do it in future.

Meeting closed: at 20:35

2023/11) Next Parish Council Meeting:
Date: Tuesday 28th May 2024 at 7pm
Location: Combe Florey Village Hall
Next Annual Parish Meeting:
Date to be set next year.

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Signed: [Chairman]