

Combe Florey Parish Council

Date of Meeting: Tuesday 12th March 2024 7:00 pm At Combe Florey Village Hall	Written by: Gemma Coombes (Parish Clerk)
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Parish Council Meeting Minutes

Councillor's Present

Cllr Robin Cleverly (Chairman)
 Cllr Jacquey Newton (Vice Chair)
 Cllr Simon Hawes (RFO)
 Cllr Adriana Truby
 Cllr John Passingham

In attendance

Gemma Coombes – Parish Clerk
 Cllr Mike Rigby – Somerset Councillor
 Parishioners x 5

2024/18) Welcome by Chairman

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

2024/19) Apologies for absence

None.

2024/20) Declarations of Interest

Nothing declared.

2024/21) Approval of last meetings minutes

The minutes from the 09th January 2024 will be carried forward to next meeting for approval.

2024/22) Public participation

Nothing raised outside the agenda.

2024/23) Matters Arising / Matters brought forward from Annual Parish Meeting

1. Dog waste bins

Two sites have been suggested as possible locations: near the sewage plant in Coggan's Lane, and next to the wall between the village hall and the burial ground.
 The cost of installation for 2 waste bins will be £700 (ex VAT). Emptying is £7.82 per visit (ex VAT) so ca £400 per year for weekly emptying, pro rata for less often.
 Due to their close proximity the parishioners in the room suggested having just one bin.
 This will be carried forward to the May Annual Parish Meeting to allow more parishioners to have their say.
 If you would like exact locations please contact Jacquey.

2024/24) Somerset Council report (Cllr Rigby)

Cllr Rigby is now on the planning committee.
 The Somerset Council budget for the year requires the selling of some assets. 80-90% of the budget will go on adult social care and services. Half of all councils will struggle to set a balanced budget for next year. 9000 people in care are taking up 80-90% of the budget.
 Inflation rates are 20% and council tax can only be raised by 5%.
 A lot of cuts have been suspended till next year as parish councils need to understand what is expected of them and what the costs will be. Small councils are going to be limited in what they can do due to the size of the precept. Services such as like public toilets, play grounds and libraries will be the first things to go but these these are not relevant for Combe Florey.
 Somerset Council are helping fund the Tata battery factory at Bridgwater via a grant from the government and the business rates will be re-invested once this has been received.

Cllr Rigby will see if he can smooth the way for Airband to come to Combe Florey.
 No update on the footpath situation.

2024/25) Policing Report

There have been lots of shed thefts and there is an upturn in rural thefts. Nothing specific to this parish.

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Signed: [Chairman]

2024/26) Planning**1. Current planning applications**

- I. No current planning applications and nothing pending.

2. Other planning matters

Nothing raised.

3. Planning applications protocol

This matter was raised by Cllr Passingham. Planning Officer Cllr Truby provided the councillors with a document on the roles of a parish council within planning.

The issue raised by Cllr Passingham was that the PC should have informed Somerset Council that its support for the recent application was given without being allowed to access the site. The PC's planning officer however did visit the site and discuss the plans with the applicant. After discussion it was noted that the PC has no right of access and all site visits are at the discretion and invitation of the land owner. The PC will continue with its normal procedure: discuss the plans at a site visit where possible and appropriate, and consider the application at a properly constituted, and public, parish council meeting before submitting comments to the council. The PC's main role in planning is to represent the opinions of the local community.

2024/27) Finance**1. Account balances**

- I. Current account - £12978.00 this is before the current payments are taken out. Precept has again been set at £4000.

2. CIL funding

£5000 still to spend and this is included in the above balance. Covered in the Jan mins.

3. Defibrillator rental renewal costs – request to fund £250 per year

A request had been received from the Defibrillator Group that the parish council provide £250 of funding support to them per year, rather than a lump sum of £1000 in four years' time. The Group raised the funds (£4000) for the initial rental and installation of 2 defibrillators with a contribution of £1000 from the PC, and is now raising funds for the next instalment due in 2027. As this is a 4 year rental agreement there was always unease from the parish council how this would be funded after 4 years. We understood that fund raising would be sufficient to cover this in 4 years' time.

After discussion the Parish Council decided that it was not willing to fund £250 per year at this stage, but would be prepared to donate up to £1000 in four years' time in the event of a shortfall. There was a vote taken by the Parish Council on this with all in agreement.

4. Bank Reconciliation and Cash Days Books

Payment schedule was circulated and signed by chairman, daybook and cashbook also signed.

5. Remittances

- I. None

6. Invoices for payment

Cllr Hawes read out the invoices for payment. The below are items that were known of at the time of the agenda.

- a. Parish Clerk wages and expenses (December 2023 – January 2024 inclusive) £239.80 (minus amount payable to HMRC for PAYE) – This was approved in Jan meeting
 - b. Parish Clerk wages and expenses (February 2024 – March 2024 inclusive) £239.80 (minus amount payable to HMRC for PAYE)
 - c. HMRC (Clerks PAYE) - £46.60
 - d. Payment to Chris Johns for Village Garden services. £90
- All proposed by Cllr Hawes , seconded by Cllr Cleverly. All in favour.

2024/28) Highways and Footpaths**1. Footpath maintenance in Parish**

Footpath 7/2 (to Ash Priors) is in a mess again due to the amount of rain with sheep walking all over it, and ploughing of the top section. Cllr Passingham has been in frequent contact with the footpath officer at Somerset Council noting that any damaged footpath should be re-instated within 14 days.

The mud and the rocks on Honeyball Hill caused by deer crossing have now been cleared and the road cleaned. However this is unlikely to be a long term fix while the large herd of deer remain. Preventative work, e.g. erection of deer fencing, is expensive and unlikely to be effective.

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2024/29) Village Maintenance / Garden**1. Plans for next phase in Garden project.****I. Future employment of Chris Johns for garden maintenance**

There was no response to our tender process for a gardener for the village garden. After the last meeting Chris Johns met councillors in the garden and agreed to work on a temporary basis until formal approval could be given. He charges £15 per hour and plans to visit in 2 hour blocks about twice a month depending on the season, or about 20 times a year (about £600). He is flexible about requirements.

Cllr Cleverly proposed that we retain him on this basis. This was seconded by Cllr Truby and agreed by all.

The Squirrels have planted some plants in the garden.

2. Trees felled in conservation area – update from Cllr Newton

The tree officer at Somerset Council has been contacted about the five trees felled without permission. Cllr Newton proposed that the PC send a letter to the land owner saying due process was not followed and we would like new trees planted to replace them. Cllr Hawes said this is unlikely to work as this is the role of planning enforcement at Somerset Council rather than the responsibility of the PC, and suggested that the Council should be encouraged to prioritise this and take this up with the landowner.

3. Manhole opposite gatehouse visibility – update from Cllr Newton

This has been reported by a couple of people but the Somerset Council's response is not one of care or intention to act.

2024/30) LCN update on last meeting

The meeting was dominated by discussion surrounding the closure of one or both of the local recycling sites in Williton and Minehead and not a lot was achieved.

2024/31) Village Hall - Status report

Cllr Newton has not been able to attend the last couple of meetings however paperwork has suggested some new fire exit plans, this is still ongoing.

2024/32) Topics for future meetings

Nothing raised

2024/33) Correspondence / General updates

Somerset Council have issued a notice that it plans to make speed limit changes including (*inter alia*) the reduction to 40mph from the station roundabout at Bishop Lydeard past Combe Florey as far as the West Bagborough junction. There is no indication when this will come into force.

2024/34) NEXT MEETING:

1. Annual Parish Meeting 14th May 2024 @ Combe Florey Village Hall. Time 7.00 pm
2. Annual Parish Council Meeting 28th May 2024 @ Combe Florey Village Hall. Time 7.00 pm

Meeting closed at 20.21

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Signed: [Chairman]