

Luccombe Parish Council

Minutes of a Meeting held at 7:30pm on Weds 26^h Feb 2025 in Luccombe Village Hall, Luccombe

Present: Cllr Dascombe (Chair) (JD), Cllr Harding (Vice Chair) (MH) Cllr Gande (RG) Cllr Stapleford (JS) Cllr Mullis (RM), Somerset Cllrs Pugsley (SP) and Nicholson (FN) from 19:55, Dr Flind (Clerk)

SP and FN left at 20:31

The meeting commenced at 19:30

1. Election & Declaration of Chairman	Cllr Dascombe was elected to the position of Chairman until someone else can be found to take on the role.	
2. Election & Declaration of Vice Chairman	Cllr Harding was elected to the position of Vice Chairman to replace JD.	
3 Co-option of Councillors to fill vacant seats	Cllr Mullis was co-opted as a new Councillor. We still need two more Councillors to fill vacant positions and the Clerk will re-advertise the position.	Clerk
4. Apologies & Declarations of Interest	No apologies given. All Councillors present	
5. Minutes	It was resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 27 th November 2024 be accepted as a true and accurate record.	
6. Matters Arising	Nothing to report	
7. Somerset Council Reports	SP reported on the budget cuts to staffing at Somerset Council and said that the cuts to the highways department would not be as drastic as previously feared and that a lot of cuts won't be made by redundancy, but by not filling empty posts. He suggested that the new plan to increase the range of car parking charges was very unpopular and not properly thought through. The Government has given the Council permission to raise Council Tax by 7.49% (above the cap of 5%) in order to avoid bankruptcy. Exmoor National Park have developed a new partnership plan (aka a business plan) and he suggested that Councillors review and comment on the draft plan. Consultation closes on the 10th March. The Council has not previously received any correspondence about this. Clerk to circulate info. The LCN continues to meet and the next meeting is on Thursday 6th March. Clerk to circulate info. Cllrs asked about the potholes on the Pyles Mill road and the drains at Chapel Cross and were advised to report them on the Council's reporting system which has been expanded to include more categories. The Clerk raised the issue of the subsidence on Stoney Street. This was recently reported via the SC system (Report reference: 834092) and received a reply that "The problem has been inspected, and no repair will be made at this time... because the problem is not a safety issue and not severe enough for us to fix it". SP and FN said that Somerset Council	Clerk

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	were aware of the severity of the issue, it was being discussed in meetings and they would keep pushing for a solution.	
8. Members Reports	JS reported on the meeting with Robert Manicom from the National Trust (NT) about the turning space at the top of Stoney Street. Due to issues with the footpaths belonging to different entities they can't move the gate further up but they can make the area wider by cutting back the hedges, digging out the banks and replacing the gate with a wider one in the same position. Drivers will be expected to open the gate, turn around in the entrance to the woods and then come out and close the gate again. NT will put signage in place to let people know there is a turning spot further up the road and that they must close the gate. Cllrs agreed this is not ideal but a step in the right direction. It is not clear when the work will be completed as NT very busy clearing fallen trees due to the recent storm damage on the estate. JD raised concerns about a broken gate next to the cattle gird in West Luccombe. Clerk to photograph and report to Somerset Council.	Clerk
9. Planning	MH received a planning notice about work at Horner Farm: a prior notification for the proposed extension to an existing access track into a field. The Clerk had not received this info, but subsequently received a decision notice saying that prior consent was not needed which may explain why LPC was not consulted.	
10. Review & Adoption of Parish Policy Documents	The Clerk revised and circulated updated versions of the following documents to the Council prior to the meeting. The policies were not changed but were reformatted and checked for errors and inaccuracies. • Risk Assessment • Financial Regulations • Standing Orders • Code of Conduct • Statement of Internal Control and Annual Review of Effectiveness All Councillors agreed to adopt the revised documents and they were signed off by the Chair. Clerk to add the new versions to the website.	Clerk
11. Wychanger Orchard Update	MH and JS reported on their site meeting at Wychanger Orchard with the National Trust. The site is proposed for use as a community orchard by NT and is currently being developed for this purpose, although not officially open at this stage. NT would like to graze livestock (probably sheep) on the ground from April-July and people could not access the field for 28 days after this due to risk from faeces etc. They may be able to adjust these dates so that it is available in time for school holidays. At the site meeting, Cllrs discussed the idea of fencing off a part of the field for children to play in, perhaps with goalposts and a few benches but not play equipment. NT said that wherever this is sited this must not disturb archaeological remains highlighted in their geophysics survey. The site is accessed from a road gate round the corner from Wychanger Cottage or in the corner next to the residents' car park behind Staddons. This access is particularly treacherous, and NT suggested the Council could create a safer entrance here at their own cost. JS to discuss with P Farmer. NT have offered to pay for a bridge over the stream in the	

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	middle of the site. JS keen to talk to local parents and establish how and when the site may be used or accessed by families and what sort of equipment they might like to use e.g. goal posts or benches. Dogs are not allowed on the site. It was suggested that the field is in fairly poor condition and would benefit from topping and/or rolling.	JS
12 .Members of the public QT	No members of the public were present at the meeting	
13. Finance	a) Bank Reconciliation - Statements signed and dated by JD b) Grass Cutting Tender – A contractor was appointed from 3 applicants. Clerk to notify them and organise works and payment schedule c) Councillors approved a bank transfer of £1,500 from the reserve account to the current account to cover running costs until the next meeting in May. Councillors approved the Clerk's expenses of £16.27 for 2 defibrillator signs for the Village Hall. Councillors approved a future payment of £35 for the Clerk's AGAR Training course with SALC. Councillors approved a future payment of £318 for replacement battery and pads for the defibrillator which will need replacing this year. Councillors approved a payment for the Village hall hire to be made in this financial year. d) The Clerk wanted to revise the schedule of regular payments for the next financial year before year end, but will speak to the new grounds maintenance contractor about how they wish to be paid before making the final revision. Schedule to be approved by Councillors via email.	Clerk
14. Items for information or future agendas	Nothing to add	
15. Date & venue of next meeting	To be held at Luccombe Village Hall in Luccombe on Wednesday 28th May 2025. Meeting closed at 21:19	

Signed.....

Date.....

Signed.....

Date.....