

Pitcombe Parish Council.

Minutes of the Pitcombe Parish Council meeting held on 9th January 2024

Present Councillors Richard Waller, Neville Hartnell, Mark Hutton, Charlotte White, Annette Hobhouse

In attendance 3 members of the public and County Councillor Lucy Trimnell.

2024.01 Apologies received from County Councillor Tom Power, Anne Tuck, Mark Groom

2024.02 Declarations of Interest - None

2024.03 Minutes of the last meeting Not available, to read and be signed off at next meeting, 13th February 24. **Action Clark to circulate to councillors.**

2024.04 Matters Arising Anne Tuck informed councillors (by email prior to the meeting) of an acknowledgement **letter from Historic England** considering the application for Listed Status for a building at the BSG site.

Flood signs. Richard has been approached by residents in Pitcombe to see if it would be possible to obtain 2 "Road Flooded" road signs to be placed by residents (at times of flooding) between Church Lane and the Railway Bridge. He is attempting to engage with relevant agencies and asked Lucy Trimnell for her support to identify if it was possible to obtain any through Somerset Council.

Flooding Richard had attended an online meeting hosted by the Somerset Rivers Authority and he gave a brief overview of the content. He will approach Bel Deering (Community Engagement Worker) to ascertain if she could assist with the drawing up of any action plans which may be beneficial for the community, in engaging relevant agencies to support mitigation factors.

Mark had attended a meeting arranged by the LCN (with Pitcombe resident Lucie Reader), which was expected to be related directly to flooding, but transpired to be a presentation from Somerset Prepared with the content being how a community should develop plans for responding in an emergency, despite Town and Parish Councils having no duties or powers to respond under the Civil Contingencies Act 2005. There is no statutory responsibility for town and parish councils to plan for an emergency response; however, the Government encourages communities to consider risks and to make simple "self-help" contingency plans with assets and volunteers from the community. The 2022 UK Government Resilience Framework provides further detail. The Somerset Prepared website also holds information and templates for action plans etc.

Mark Informed the meeting that Lucie had shared with him a draft copy of a "Pitcombe Flooding Action Plan", which she is working on and will be shared later. Lucie has stated she would be willing to be the contact for Pitcombe in any plans the parish council may decide to create. The parish council would need to engage with willing residents for Hadspen and Cole, in a similar role.

Annette discussed a plan developed by Rimpton Council which she had become aware of, which would be useful to share. It is likely that the parish council will be instrumental in developing a "working party" to progress with action plans i.e. what assets (people, buildings, machinery, transport etc) have available to call upon during an "unexpected event".

2024.05 Reports received from County Councillors Lucy Trimnell. Lucy reported concerns and examples about vandalism and anti-social behaviour at the BSG site. A resident also gave some feedback. The police have been informed. Richard Waller will pass the concerns onto the bursar at

Kings School (Richard later circulated the bursar's response to councillors, Kings were already aware and had engaged the police).

The number 1 bus route is likely to be at risk.

Somerset Council is continuing with its consultation regarding "the financial emergency" and has started work on a draft document framework for Asset and or Service Devolution.

Regarding Pitcombe Bridge Lucy informed the meeting that she had heard from the team working on this. They have stated that remedial works are still intended to take place, but cannot, yet give any indication as to when the work will take place. It is not yet scheduled. Residents in attendance informed the meeting that the recent rainfall had caused further damage. It was agreed that it would be useful to forward photographs of the most recent damage to Lucy. A resident also offered the services of an engineer to carry out an independent inspection on behalf of the parish council.

2025.06 Planning Applications None.

2025.07 Footpaths A new rights of way map has been circulated by Somerset Council. **Action To be forwarded to Susan Fone.**

Charlotte advised the council that the path on Lancombe Lane has dropped (most likely because of rainfall). She will update Susan Fone.

2025.08 No temporary road closures reported.

2025.09 Correspondance - Councillors. Michael Fysh has resigned. Richard wished to record the appreciation of his support and engagement of the parish, council, and residents over his time as a councillor.

As a result of this Richard had sought advise and it had been agreed that those people who had offered their services as a councillor in recent months could be called upon, and on this basis, Rob Shylan had joined the meeting as an observer (at the end of the meeting Rob confirmed with Richard that he would like to join the parish council).

Charlotte has also indicated that she would like to withdraw from the parish council but has agreed to remain until another councillor can be identified. (Preferably from Pitcombe – to ensure representation across the parish).

2025.10 Finance Considerable debate took place regarding the level of the precept which needed to be decided at this meeting (in order to meet council tax deadlines) despite not knowing, despite asking, what (if any) services which the parish council may need to purchase in the future from Somerset Council, depending upon the outcome of various Somerset Council meetings taking place up to the end of February and then public consultation, in what is being described as " a financial emergency ".

In concluding the discussion, the parish council decided to increase the precept for 24/25 to 10%, also on the understanding that reserves (15/16k) will likely be called upon during the coming year to fund as yet, unknown expenses, depending upon the outcomes from Somerset Council.

No cheques for approval

Financial reports circulated by clerk before the meeting, which councillors agreed and identified no concerns at this point of the financial year. The Clerks salary and national uplift had been built into the budget.

2025.11 BSG site Richard had attended a meeting on behalf of the PC which was attended by MP Sarah Dyke amongst others. The meeting covered the historical content and brought Sarah Dyke up to date. Sarah Dyke plans to arrange a meeting with Ian Wilmshurst and Richard has asked for an update when it takes place. There is no update considering the progress of the sale of the land, nor the public consultation that took place regarding the objects etc.

Community Review although the parish council had probably missed the opportunity of the offer of sending an expression of interest from the Somerset Community Council (offered in November 23 particularly welcoming applications from Parish/Towns from the former West Somerset and Sedgemoor District areas) in looking what this might entail, it would revisit this at a future date.

LCNs (Local Community Networks) Due to limits of time, it was decided that this should be placed on the February agenda. In the meantime, councillors should read the minutes of the last meeting, to decide how engaged the parish council should be in these meetings and expectations of participating in workshops etc. The next LCN meeting is on 22nd February at Charlton Musgrove Village Hall.

2024.12 Any Other Business

Parking at Elm Field. There has been no further contact from PSCO Mya who Richard met on site in October 23. **Clark to be asked to email Mya for feedback/ progress.**

Website. Annette expressed concern that the website appears not to be kept up to date and that it should be used more frequently to keep the community informed. I.e. Minutes and agendas aren't regularly posted. Annette is willing to consider supporting the update of this. **PC to decide how we support the management of the website in conjunction with the clerk.**

A371. Mark informed the meeting that the council had this week, now placed slow signs on the road approaching the bends towards Grove Farm, but he is still awaiting contact from John Nicholson to arrange a site visit (with a local resident and Mark) to discuss the concerns and condition of the drains and gullies on the bend opposite Hadspen Barn which again have deteriorated for the 4th time since last summer.

Meeting concluded at 9.20pm.

Next Parish Council meeting Tuesday 13th February 2023 at 7.30pm