

BEERCROCOMBE PARISH

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Beercrocombe Parish held at Beercrocombe & Curry Mallet Village Hall on Tuesday 9th May 2023

ATTENDANCE

The Chairman of the Parish Council, Clerk to the Parish Council, Somerset Council Councillor and 6 parishioners.

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 9th May 2022 were received and approved.

REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

Mr. Plumbly gave the following report:

The last year has been eventful with the jubilee, a state funeral and King Charles' coronation. Three Prime Ministers too. Luckily the village has not been subjected to the same upheavals though the deaths of Malcolm Cavill and Mike Davey within a month of each other and the departure of Gill and Tony Read diminish our community. We are pleased to welcome Tracy and Shaun in the Stables and Kezia and Josef in Pippins and hope they will enjoy living here and be able to participate in our shared lives.

Steven Jones, who stepped in as a temporary non-stipendiary minister four years ago after the long interregnum, retired last July and thanks were given to him and his wife Jill for their energy and contribution. Reverend Joanna Porter has taken over after to replace Paul Reynolds who left seven years ago.

The formation of the New Somerset unitary council on 1st April passed without significant noise, though the challenges of living with a large deficit budget will strain maintenance of services and the investment needed to make our whole community function well. Our roads were re-dressed last year though holes have started appearing already on certain sections. The local community networks (LCNs) that are planned will not be developed until later in the year. The new Somerset Council website uses the words "so local communities have a voice and decisions are taken with the benefit of local knowledge and experience*" appears a positive statement when providing support to the Community of Parishes concerned with the A358 development. I believe the use of 'for' instead of 'with' would have been more encouraging.

The dog bin opposite Mushroom Farm appears oversubscribed and we have engaged with the council to provide advice in ensuring the overflow and the poo bags left round the village are not a health hazard.

The annual plant sale at St James' produced £685 last year and the church spring clean in March on a lovely sunny morning in April, was well attended. The village enjoyed the concert given by Gregory Steward and arranged by Mark Humble in May in the church. The bus shelter garden produce raised £75 and the 100 club produced £560 of net receipts last year which all go towards the church income. The village green also looks good thanks to the mowing team, those who have planted and maintained the barrels and provided and decorated the Christmas tree.

The Parish Council's financial situation is in good order and thanks go to Paul Jervis for his audit of the accounts.

My thanks go to Gillian for her diligent planning, recording, advice to me and in navigating the unfamiliar paths of local government. I would also like to thank all my fellow councillors for their support and help during the year and for the volunteers who look after our village assets.

REPORTS FROM PARISH INTEREST GROUPS

Neighbourhood Watch

Mr Rastrick reported that the Parish had not suffered any instances of crime but that there had been two thefts of catalytic converters in Curry Mallet and one in Barrington. The target vehicles appear to be Toyotas and Hondas.

Advice from the Police is:

Avoid parking half on the pavement, & half on the road. This may provide easier access to the underside.

If you have access to a garage, use it.

If you park on your drive, install security cameras.

Park in CCTV areas, or well-lit car parks.

Park close to walls or fences, without blocking pedestrian access.

Park in a well-lit area.

Mark & register your Catalytic converter with a marker kit.

Get a garage to weld the mounting bolts.

Fit a car tilt alarm.

Roads and Footpaths

Mr. Harvey delivered his report on roads and footpaths as follows:

Roads.

Last summer all the roads in Beercrocombe Parish, Radigan Lane and Elmbridge including the whole of Beer Street were surface dressed and are now in good order. There is still one issue outstanding in regard to the collapse of the railings into the ditch along Broadmead Road which is awaiting repair by Somerset Council Roads Department. The temporary hazard signs have caused the reduction in the width of the road and as a result slight damage has been caused to the road surface and verge opposite. Hopefully this issue will be resolved shortly. Beercrocombe now has some of the best

road surfaces of any village in the area. The Chairman has dealt with the issues involving the school bus and the village green.

Footpaths.

The only issue relating to footpaths involves replacing the footpath sign at the entrance from Beer Street onto the L5/14 which had collapsed due to the rotting of the signpost. This has been reported but the work remains outstanding to replace the signpost.

Village Hall Report

In this 1st full year following lockdown, bookings returned to pre Covid levels.

Our main job, as reflected in our charitable objectives, is to provide facilities for the community users who book the hall – and to keep it in a good state so that it meets their needs as well as our obligations under the Trust Deed – which is our main governance document.

As well as the Trust Deed we need some other governance documents to meet the requirements of the Charity Commission and potential funders, so we have reviewed these and created a Financial Control Policy, a Reserves policy and a Safeguarding policy.

Despite the concerns we have over running costs being higher than income we have managed to do a little better than break even in cash terms in that part of our budget. We did put up our rates by £1 an hour mid-year and this has helped us keep solvent. We are therefore using the funds we received previously during Covid to invest in improvements and refurbishment to the Hall.

This year the major areas of investment have been the new carpets and new locks plus a replacement door to the meeting room. We have also repainted some windows and doors – but still need to do some more repairs etc to the main door and repaint the cladding around the store room when the weather improves. We have also had terminal damage to one of the hall's fluorescent lights caused by a stray ball, so we are replacing these with LEDs. Heating units have or are being rewired. The roof is being inspected by an independent surveyor who will be giving us a written report on its condition and the likelihood on the need to replace it. Once the survey has reported we can set out a plan of action to cover those aspects along with the need to repaint the main hall in the coming year.

We also introduced Wi-Fi this year though it has not had any effect on usage.

At last year's AGM the issue of getting a licence for the Bell to use the car park, as set out in the Lease with the Duchy, was raised. The leaseholder CMPC have now picked up the requirement to do this with the new owners of the Bell.

The team delivered two excellent fundraisers with 'book and bap' mornings. We hope we can continue to offer such opportunities for the people from our villages to get together.

The financial position is still sound, we have secured from the new Somerset Unitary Authority a 100% discount on our business rates – normally charities only automatically get 50%.

Rent that the Parish Council negotiates with the Duchy is up for review toward the end of this year (April 2024 being 5 years from the current lease coming into force).

There is much to do to keep the hall as up to date decoratively as we can – and getting professional help with decorating and repairs remains a struggle so we will be calling for volunteers to help us with some of the decoration and grounds work over the next few months.

Village Trust

Mr. Harvey reported:

Two meetings took place of the trust between May last year and April this year. In this period grants of £200 each were made to three children leaving school this summer. The offer of a grant of £100 for the Queens Platinum mentioned in my report last year was not needed. A similar grant for the Kings Coronation celebrations in the village has been offered. There is a notice in the Bus Shelter advising how children can apply for a grant of £200 when leaving school.

Beer and Curry Takeaway

Mr Burrough reported that a digital copy of the Takeaway is published on the Beercrocombe website: Beercrocombe.org.

QUESTIONS FROM PARISHIONERS

There were no matters raised.

The meeting closed at 7.35 pm.