

## PARISH OF ODCOMBE

### **Minutes of THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF THE PARISH OF ODCOMBE HELD ON MONDAY, 15th APRIL 2024 (7:30 P.M. – 7:40 P.M.)**

Cllr D Rennie (Chair)  
Cllr R Parr  
Cllr C Francis  
Cllr. F Cumming  
Cllr R West  
Cllr B Dufty  
Cllr D Peters  
Cllr K Perry  
Mr Terry Heath (Clerk)

#### **1. Apologies for absence**

An apology for absence, was received from Cllr D Peters

#### **2. Minutes of the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2023**

The minutes of the Annual Parish meeting, held on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2023, were duly approved.

#### **3. Annual Report of the Parish Council**

A report from the Parish Council Chairman, Cllr. D Peters was read out:

This year Odcombe Parish Council has been staffed with a full compliment of councillors and has held all scheduled meetings; attendance has been excellent throughout.

There have also been a very significant number of meetings with members of the public, County Council officials, contractors, Village Hall Committee members, clerks and members of other parish councils and others as the work of the Parish Council has progressed. These meetings are most often attended by the clerk but also by Parish Councillors on occasion.

It has been a year of progress and development in a range of areas.

The Odcombe village sign is now in place and seems to have met with general approval. This project would have been completed earlier if there had not been difficulties with the original contractor.

LED lighting is now successfully installed at the Village Hall car park and our electricity usage has been re-rated for both the lighting and the defibrillator in the Lower Odcombe telephone box. Savings look to be in the region of 75%, which was at the higher end of expectations. The village's two defibrillator units, both of which have been used on a number of occasions, are also managed by the parish Council.

The Village Hall car park resurfacing project is also now finished and was completed on time and on budget. The cooperation of the Village Hall Committee ensured that the project ran smoothly and with minimal inconvenience to car park users.

As part of further work to improve the appearance and durability of fixtures at the recreation ground, we are in the process of completing the repainting of all of the signposts, seats and railings and play equipment and are in the process of renewing the signage in all areas. We are also currently considering quotations for line painting in the car park.

We have also commissioned a new contractor for the maintenance of the recreation ground and expect that an adjusted approach to the grounds-keeping will improve things even further.

Following residents' concerns regarding heavy goods vehicles traversing the village, it was agreed to implement a Traffic Regulation Order in the village to limit the weight of vehicles using roads through the village. This was a significant project which involved a legal process and replacement of signage in a number of locations. It was completed with the assistance of Somerset County Highways Department.

The Parish Council has worked on developing relationships in number of areas for the benefit of residents. Notably, the Clerk has established very good working relationships with the clerks and chairs of neighbouring parish councils, something which looks likely to prove very beneficial as greater cooperation will be required with the impending reduction in services from Somerset Council.

We have also worked to develop a positive working relationship with the Village Hall Committee and were grateful for their cooperation during the car park resurfacing project and for their offer of a financial contribution to the forthcoming line painting at the car park.

We have also now established a proper working relationship with Odcombe Football Club which has ensured that the parameters for the use of the recreation ground are now understood by all. The Parish Council now has a much clearer understanding of their requirements and pitch maintenance work carried out by football club members is also now properly insured.

The Parish Council is also working hard to develop communications and now has a popular Facebook page that enables more timely reporting of important matters and facilitates readers to feedback on our postings. It has also enabled us to produce a monthly post or report that acts as a supplement to the quarterly newsletter report. It is possible that many readers of the Facebook page may not have previously been readers of the newsletter.

We have also increased the effectiveness of the Parish Council through developing the operation of the working parties to make the best use of councillors' expertise. This is most notable in the work of the Planning Working Party where any planning-related matters are first considered by councillors with direct expertise before being referred to the whole Council. Likewise, the Finance Working Party works closely with the clerk to scrutinise and comment on financial matters before discussion at full Council.

Other positive developments that have taken place over this year include the opening of an interest bearing account that ensures that earmarked funds are not losing value through inflation, and we have started a very necessary review and refresh of all of our policies. A grant of £1000 was also made to the church for grounds maintenance

Moving forwards there are a range of matters to consider.

The impact of the devolution of services from Somerset Council is going to become an important and pressing issue as the year progresses. The Parish Council has already been involved in a number of meetings and consultations on this, but it is going to grow in significance as the picture becomes clearer during this year.

We are also currently considering further enhancements to the facilities at the recreation ground with a possible upgrade to the BMX track and also investment in repair or replacement of some of the play equipment. There is also the possibility of further investment in the car park area.

The Parish Council website is also now due a major refresh which will be a significant project for this year.

**4. Open Session**

No issues were raised during the open session.

**5. Date of next Annual Parish Meeting**

It was AGREED that the next Annual Parish Meeting would be held on 21st April 2025.

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