**Holford Parish Meeting Annual Parish Meeting Minutes**

**Venue: Holford & District Village Hall**

**Date: Monday 17th April 2023**

**Time: 19.00**

**Chair: Emily Heckscher (EH)**

**Clerk: Karen Scott**

**Members of the Public: 23**

**Purpose of the meeting:**

EH opened the meeting and explained that the purpose of the meeting is to give the Parish Council and other local organisations an opportunity to let local residents know what they have been doing over the past year. It also gives the residents the opportunity to ask questions and to voice anything that they consider important to other residents. EH then asked the residents to complete the ‘Resident’s Survey’ and deposit them in the box provided.

**2. Parish Council Chair’s report** – See Chairs Report

***Questions:*** None

**3. Alfoxton Community – Jayaraja –** They moved in on 29th June 2020 during lockdown. Last year, they broke even. They have spent £53k on underground works on the building, mainly replacing the sewers. A new septic tank is required and they now have the relevant permissions to go ahead, They have opted for a ‘Bio Digester’. The next step will be updating the electrics to a 3phase system and it will be insulated to a high standard. Water no longer floods through the building if it rains, but further work on the roof is required. However, they are waiting on permissions for the Bat licence before work starts. They have just secured a donation to start repairs on the roof. If volunteers undertake the work, it will cost approx. £2500, however if the have to get contractors in, it will cost nearer £6000.

The work on the Coach House and Cottage is almost complete.

They had funding to start on the rear garden and an edible hedge has been planted. They are currently working on the walled garden and it will be restored and planted.

Volunteers are welcome – if you are interested, please get in touch via the website.

School groups and other groups visit to help out. Staff wise, there are 5 on a stipend and the rest are volunteers.

***Questions:*** The potholes in the private road have been filled in, but they make it very difficult for walkers. They will look at tamping them down more.

**4. Holford Community Speedwatch – Mo Young –** The speedwatch started in 2019 and they currently have 3 teams of 3 volunteers. They would like more volunteers and if you are interested, please get in touch. Please can residents complete the questionnaire.

**5. Quantock u3a – Mo Young –** The Quantock u3a is up and running; there are just over 100 members and meet on the 4th Monday of the month in various village halls around the area. There are a number of interest groups running now and if you are interested in finding out more, please see Mo and the display on the side of the room.

**6. Holford Gardening Group – Rachel Lewis –** The group meets on the 3rd Tuesday of each month in Holford Village Hall. They have a plant sale on Saturday 20th May from 10am to Midday. If you have a donation, please contact Rachel or others in the group.

There will be a Flower Show in August, please see the leaflets for the categories.

They also arrange Garden Visits.

**7. Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme –** A large part of what they do is public engagement and that is more about bringing nature to the people rather than bringing people out. They have a team of apprentices and they are always looking for interesting work. The landowner provides the cash costs and the labour is free.

Sadly, the project for the Crowcombe Car Park has had to be shelved. They are waiting for probate to be cleared and by the time that is likely to happen, the funds will not be available.

They have some grant money available for Hedge planting, orchards, historic heritage, black and white signs (they provide 75% of funds) and wildflower meadows.

The restoration of Hayman’s pool is scheduled for Autumn.

***Questions***: Is there a way of improving the car parking in Holford, such as alongside the road just up from the Dog Pound? Sadly not, there is currently no funding available plus experience tells us that expanding car parks just encourages more cars.

**8. Somerset Council – Cllr. Rosemary Woods –** In the elections there were 11 candidates for 2 places. Cllr Woods covers Watchet & Stogursey which has 8 active parishes. Cllr Woods majored on Adults and Health and is very well aware of the problems in the area. There are not enough carers in the community and the County has been awarded £19m to train carers. At the moment, it is often not possible to discharge a patient from hospital because there are not sufficient places for them or carers to look after them in their own homes.

Transport – The County have attracted money to improve bus services and Cllr Woods is working on resolving the issues that some areas (including Holford) do not actually have a bus service.

Local Community Networks (LCNs) have been introduced and Cllr Woods constituents are in 2 different LCNs. Currently the constituency boundaries are being reviewed and she expects that they will match the LCN boundaries.

Children in Care – there will be 4 more homes to house children in care which should result in a reduction of children sent out of the County for care.

***Questions***: Health information, currently the required forms are only available to complete on-line which isn’t always easy. Could they be downloadable? Cllr Woods will take this away for action.

**9. Somerset Bus Partnership – report read by EH.**

***Comment*: -**  It doesn’t sounds as if the bus company are looking at what is needed for the future.

***Comment:*** This was an informative and invigorating meeting.

1. **Previous Meeting minutes – approve and matters arising.** Minutes approved, no matters arising.

**Meeting finished at 19.40.**