Combe Hay Parish Council

**Minutes of the**

**ANNUAL MEETING OF RESIDENTS 2024**

held on Wednesday 15 May 2024 at 7.30pm in Combe Hay Church.

**Present:** District Councillor (Fiona Gourley), Village Agent (Chantelle Young), Chairman (Malcolm Austwick), twenty one residents and Clerk (Olga Shepherd)

1. Cllr Paul Wontner

Cllr Paul Wontner welcomed everyone for coming to the meeting. He explained that the purpose of this meeting is for the PC to update on their areas of responsibility and to give all opportunity to raise issues. He reminded everyone that a questionnaire will be issued at the end of the meeting.

1. BANES- Cllr. Fiona Gourley

Fiona Gourley gave an overview of the District Councilors activities. She mentioned that herself and Matt McCabe have celebrated one year since being elected in 2023. Matt McCabe has since become a Cabinet Member for Built Environment, working on the Local Plan. Fiona has been appointed as member advocate for rural communities, especially buses (WECA), trying to improve the services. She mentioned that Westlink services need to be improved in Combe Hay. Fiona also sits on Planning Committee.

Fiona thanked everyone who supported the campaign to object to the planning application for Sulis Down development, which has been rejected at the Planning Committee in April 2024. The Applicant has 6 month to appeal. Fiona said that she is an active advocate for Village Agents scheme and is delighted that Chantal Young who helps struggling people is here at the meeting.

1. Village Agent- Chantal Young

Chantal introduced herself and said that her role is within West of England Rural network to support people living in rural areas. Her role is to ensure that people find suitable help and she helps them to connect to appropriate authorities for support and facilitates adaptation to stay at home instead of hospitals and institutions. She helps to apply for appropriate financial support and home care. She mentioned that Peasedown St John has a Wellbeing Hub. She invited residents to talk to her after the meeting.

1. Chairman’s report

Malcolm Austwick has been elected as Chairman again for year 2024/25. He reported that six PC meetings were held in 2023/24. There are same Cllrs as there were in the last year. The main business of the parish council is planning applications- a total of 15 planning application were received - 3 of which were for trees and 2 objections were submitted by the parish council. Sulis Down was the major concern this year. The Chairman thanked everyone who supported the PC in objecting to this development. 1,500 objections were submitted on BANES planning portal from many residents. Private donations received from Combe Hay residents helped to conduct the drone survey and pay for the legal and planning support.

The Chairman remarked on good will of Combe Hay community – people make an effort here. This year we have had a donation for new gazebo, a resident has offered use of his mower for the maintenance of the cemetery, litter picks has been organized as well as the summer events. People volunteer to help opening the church each morning and evening. The PC Photo project was wonderful! Lift shares are organized to Wellow primary school for Angelina – our Ukrainian guest.

Next year more work will be needed for the Sulis Down, purpose of this meeting is to ask what do people want the parish council to focus on? We are keen to hear from you! Environmentally is there anything we can do? Are people interested in a communal energy supply? Lift sharing scheme?

Special thank you was addressed to David Barrow who works very hard maintaining the village grounds - the triangle of top of the village, the cemetery and the railings. The Noticeboard has been renovated by David too. We want to say Special Thank You!

When the 20mph signs were installed, the Welcome to Combe Hay sign was removed by BANES. We will be replacing these with new signs made from wood from a tree on the Combe Hay Manor Estate. They will be erected on same places.

1. Highways- Janet

Cllr Janet Young has updated on the following:

* + We had numerous complaints about potholes. Residents are asked to report on FixMy Street portal or contact BANES number, option 9
  + Speedwatch – questionnaire will contain some questions to understand if there is any interest in conducting speedwatch.
  + Neighbourhood watch – Janet and Andy Boyce have done it for many years and now looking for volunteers to attend meetings.

1. Assets/Cemetery- Crock
   * Update of cemetery and additional land was received from Cllr Crock Harrison:

Crock said that David Barrows makes the life of the Parish Councilors very easy. His work helps to save the parish council a lot of money and we are in control. David needs some help as it is a lot of work for one person. Help needed for managing time of grass cutting, the holes in the cemetery wall need to be filled. Crock mentioned that the cemetery has a set of rules and it is only for the use of the village residents, not their relatives.

1. Events and Communications- Paul Wontner

Big date for your diary – 5th July – hog roast, band, entertainment. Bring your friends! Bring your own drinks. There will be dancing. Michelle Wontner will create a playlist. Catering and logistics has been done by Gillian and David. A lot to be involved with. Sunday picnic on the Paddock. Ice cream van, tractor ride. Cost or the whole weekend £35/household. £10 per head for guests. Paul mentioned that two new Ukrainian guests now live in the village.

The meeting finished. Food and drinks were provided by the parish council.