

# **BEERCROCOMBE PARISH**

## **ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Beercrocombe Parish held at Beercrocombe & Curry Mallet Village Hall on Monday 12th May 2025

### **ATTENDANCE**

The Chairman of the Parish Council, Five Parishioners, Clerk to the Parish Council, and Richard Wilkins, Somerset Council Councillor.

The Chairman of the Parish Council chaired the meeting.

### **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2025 were received and approved.

### **REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PARISH COUNCIL**

The Chairman of the Parish Council gave the following report: Somerset Council's ongoing financial challenges have not yet greatly impacted the parish though the growing proportion of its budget spent on adult and social care will mean less is available for road repairs, buses and other areas. Nevertheless the voluntary work from members of the village needs to be recognised. There is more council communication than before with regular LCN updates, 'Somerset prepared' resiliency planning meetings and correspondence and also a Somerset 'monthly round' email. While these go to council members anyone can access them if interested.

The issues at the start of the year included sporadic flooding of Stock's Lane by Elmbridge. John Down cleared the open culvert between the drain and the Fivehead river and, with some later work by the council to clear the drain, the flooding has not yet reoccurred. John has also carried out the reforming of the footpath by Mushroom farm, cleared the ditch along the whole length of Broadmead Road and filled in numerous potholes on verges and passing areas with road planings. Our grateful thanks must go to John for his work.

The proposed dualling of the A358 was finally stopped in the autumn. SCC said they were 'disappointed' in the failure to invest in Somerset infrastructure and a Henlade bypass.

The phone box/library, installed in 2000, needed repainting and repair and, while this cost £513 for new materials, the considerable labour was provided by villagers rather than subcontracting the work. The PV powered LED provides the only street lighting in Beercrocombe!

The Local Community Networks (LCNs) met every two months and our 'Moors & Levels' group have been well attended in person or on line. The discussion groups continue to be regarding health and wellbeing which looks at mental health, loneliness and physical health and Highways Active travel focusing on footpaths/cycleways though mainly between Somerton and Bridgwater. The proposal to create a 'Grail trail' between Hatch Beauchamp, Bridgwater, Langport, South Petherton and Glastonbury didn't raise the required funding.

We have not yet moved to the Ilminster and Crewkerne LCN but continue to monitor discussions should we need to effect a change.

Bob Burrough managed to set up a new website after the failure of the previous supplier. It runs till May '27 at a small cost.

The proposed sale of the Bell pub has created a positive community response and the council felt it important to make a financial contribution to set up a community company as a vehicle to manage the process.

Frances & Martin Saunders very kindly offered to host a village BBQ which was attended by over 50 people. We have planned to do this again on 14th June this year and it will be an annual event funded by the parish council.

The annual plant sale at St James' in May raised £616 while the church spring clean was postponed till the autumn.

The village green also looks good thanks to the mowing team who live around it and the barrels are maintained by Jayne Mann and others. Thanks to Niki and Simon Maggs for the donated Christmas trees on the green. Also, to Sally Gillichan who sorts the books in the phone box and keeps it tidy.

The Parish Council's financial situation is in good order and thanks go to Keith Thomas 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 during the past year.

Although there are 62 properties in Beercrocombe Parish, there are only 13 members in the Neighbourhood Watch Group and Mr Rastrick is keen to encourage more members to join.

## **Roads and Footpaths**

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

### **Roads.**

During the past 12 months various repairs and patching has been carried out by Somerset Council together with some residents of the parish in particular Henry Cole and James and John Down. Hopefully the main problem of flooding in Stocks Lane may have now been resolved. James and John have also carried out work to the ditches alongside Broadmead in particular. Also, work has been carried out on the road side verges by John Down which are not covered by the Somerset Council Highways Department repair teams.

### **Footpaths.**

During the past 2 months work has been carried out on footpath L5/13 which runs alongside Mushroom Farm. John Down's digger driver has made a superb job of re-instating the footpath which had been badly damaged as a result of the ditch alongside the footpath flooding. The soil from the ditch which has been cleared and made deeper has been used to raise the level of the footpath. This work was carried out with the agreement of Will Vigus who allowed access to the footpath for the digger. Grass seed has been put down on the footpath and is growing well. Hopefully this work will prevent further flooding as water will be able to move freely through the ditch and under the road culvert. The Frog Street by-way L5/20 remains an issue in parts where it goes through the middle of the stream and is the responsibility of the Somerset Council footpaths officer to resolve and not the Parish Council. I can remember a meeting with the footpaths officer some 15 years ago when an officer could not see any way to resolve the issue.

## **Village Hall Report**

Mr. Plumbly gave a report on behalf of the Village Hall Committee

1. As part of our five-year plan, the installation of infra-red heating, 24 PV panels and a 10kW battery was completed in November. All work was competitively tendered. The financial benefits will take a year or so to be fully understood as its only in sunnier months that the export tariff is effective but initial findings show we are using stored power and exporting to the grid. The export rate is not as good as initially offered but we have greener energy and cost-effective heating.

Donations for this work came from National Lottery, ACRE, Somerset Community Fund, Beercrocombe Village Trust and Beercrocombe Parish Council plus donations from user groups and an anonymous donation. Chris Dale applied to numerous bodies which generated £24,900 to undertake this work – an incredible result from his hard work. He has also raised money to provide the SMBC with motorized mat equipment and, this month, another £7k to undertake insulation of the roof of the main hall.

2. General running costs are now about £8,000-£10,000 a year with the four main items being:

- Utilities £2099
- Cleaning £1912
- Duchy rent £1169
- Insurance £1086

3. Financial status.

Bank balance at the end of March was £17,553 (March '24 was £17,806) of which £12,000 are currently free reserves for use for maintenance and investments.

The hall is used on average 10 hours a week and does not cover its running costs meaning a notional annual deficit of £2,000-£3,000.

The committee has run fund raising events gaining approximately £2,300 meaning our deficit for the year was an operational loss of £253.67 (last year's loss was £1,834.41)

Conclusion

While our reserves are sufficient to allow us to run the hall, the longer-term prospects are challenging as we need to find more user groups to increase the rental income. Curry Mallet and Beercrocombe parishes provide annual grants to the hall and these are most welcome.

### **Village Trust**

Mr. Harvey reported:

The AGM of the Trust took place on the 12th March 2025 and Graham Harvey was appointed Chairman, Maureen Longstaff Treasurer and Stephen Parsons was appointed Secretary. The other member re-appointed was Claire Mitchem. A grant was made to the Beercrocombe PCC of £75.00. The next meeting will be held in September 2025. A resume of the last meeting was posted in the Bus Shelter and there is information on how young persons can apply for the grant of £200.00.

### **Website**

Mr Burrough reported that the domain name of the website changed during the year to [www.beercrocombe.org.uk](http://www.beercrocombe.org.uk) which gives better security protection. Usage of the website has increased with in excess of 500 visits to the site.

The Beer & Curry Takeaway is published on the website.

### **QUESTIONS FROM PARISHIONERS**

Questions were put to the Somerset Councillor regarding Rights Of Way, Broadband and the planned roadworks and closure affecting J26 of the M5.

The meeting closed at 7.45 pm.