

## **WEST QUANTOXHEAD ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY – 15<sup>th</sup> MAY 2024**

The Annual Parish Assembly was held in the Village Hall at 7.30 pm on the above date.

**PRESENT:** Councillor P Mote (Chairman)  
Councillors: Mrs A Cottrell, Mrs P Gibbons, Mrs S Sherry, Mrs H Stamp, W Robinson  
SCC Councillors Davies  
Mrs M Francis (Parish Clerk)  
4 Parishioners

The Chairman welcomed and thanked everyone for attending.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Cllr Woods and Cllr Philipson
2. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17<sup>th</sup> MAY 2023:** The Minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman.
3. **PRESENTATION ATWEST (Accessible Transport in West Somerset)**

Mr. Robert McDonald, Chairman of Atwest, recently gave a highly informative talk on the Slinky Bus transport service, which operates from Brunel Way in Minehead. The service is subsidised by Somerset Council and provides a range of transport options, including a shopping bus, group travel, and a travel club.

In addition to regular shopping trips, the Slinky Bus also organises excursions to various destinations such as Snowdrop Valley, Christmas light displays, pub lunches, and garden centres, making it a valuable and versatile service for the local community

They have been operating for 15 years, have 16 buses in total, 10 of which are in Minehead, 6 on Exmoor.

The Slinky dial-a-ride service is wheelchair accessible and available to those who register in advance. A small charge applies for each journey. This service is designed for individuals who do not have access to a regular bus route. Passengers are picked up as close to their home as is safely possible.

All Slinky drivers are fully qualified and trained to assist passengers on and off the vehicle. They are happy to help carry groceries if needed. Every driver is fully DBS-checked and has completed a comprehensive three-year training programme. To register for the service, please contact the office or visit their website. The team is known for being friendly and customer-focused.

#### **4. PRESENTATION FROM WEST SOMERSET MIRCO PROVIDERS**

West Somerset Micro Providers, supported by Somerset Council, offer tailored care and support services that enable individuals to live independently in their own homes. Whether with a single caregiver or a dedicated team, these services provide the assistance needed for people to maintain their quality of life in a comfortable and familiar environment.

West Somerset has an aging population, which has grown by 8.7% over the last decade. With families often living far away and access to IT being sporadic, many older residents face challenges in getting the support they need.

In response to this, Community Enterprise launched the Micro Providers initiative in 2007. This program consists of small, local partnerships that focus on building personal care relationships, offering tailored support to individuals in their homes. Services are either means-tested or privately funded.

All workers are fully insured and DBS checked, ensuring both safety and peace of mind for those receiving care.

Micro Providers are not an agency. Instead, you'll know exactly who will be coming to assist you and when, as the schedule is set directly by the client. This personal approach ensures continuity and familiarity. For more information or to receive support, please contact them directly.

## **5. SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT:**

Cllr Davies announced that Williton Library, the Children's Centre, and the Registrars' buildings are being sold, and all services will be moving to West Somerset House. A new Video Assistant Link (VAL) will be available at the reception, providing assistance for those who need help using the service. This will allow users to have face-to-face communication with the person they are trying to contact, making the process more efficient and accessible.

Somerset Council were setting up details regarding how stray dogs will be dealt with. Reminder that rubbish collections will be a day later due to Bank Holidays. Somerset Council were still in talks with the contractors regarding the recycling centre.

Cllr Woods submitted the following report:

My yearly report must be dominated by the fact that the Somerset Council is a financial nightmare. Prior to the setup of Somerset County some of the District Councils decided to invest in businesses to generate income, now the Council have since decided to sell them to relieve the financial situation. You might have heard that the April County meeting tried to stop one of the investments which the County believed at the time were delivering arms to Israel – this was completely wrong the arms that the company dealt with were being sold to the British Army so the County have issued a apology for this issue.

To remedy the financial situation, the County want to offload some of their expenditure onto the Parish Councils. The Council has decided to sell off some of their premises and you will notice that the Library is being sold off and this is set to be moved to West Somerset House, together with the Children's Centre and the Enterprise Centre. I have been informed that the Library has been marketed without going out to tender, I am trying to get this decision receded. This is still an ongoing situation with the layout of the West Somerset House being reconfigured to allow the Council Chamber being moved to the first floor with access via the lift and stairs. This will allow some of our meetings to be held locally.

This report relates to April/May 2024

My report this month, repeats the fact that Volunteer Drivers are still needed to convey people to hospital. If you have at least a ½ day a week available to help please volunteer. The Waste Collection in the County is subject to renegotiations between Suez and the Somerset Council because Suez are in danger of suffering a loss on its 24m contract. Roadside grass cutting is being reduced, wider verges are limited to a 1 metre swathe being mowed the rest being left to maintain biodiversity.

Bus Fares, Taunton will be moved to a £1.50 single adult fare whilst the rest of fares will be as is at £2.00 until December 2024.

**5. PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:** Councillor P Mote:

It was noted sadly that Richard Hughes had recently passed, after being a Councillor for many years. Helen Stamp had recently been co-opted onto the Parish Council, which was now at full compliment. Helen was currently arranging the Beacon Lighting for D Day on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2024. The National Trust ranger had kindly offered assistance with transport to the Beacon.

The grit bin on Hill Lane had been replaced, one was required for Weacombe Road. Both bus shelters roofs required replacing. The council was liasing with Somerset Council to have better signage on Luckes Lane / Weacombe Road junction, with road markings.

The precept had raised slightly by 14 pence a week, due to increased costs and the need to have reserves if required for an election

Business: We have various ongoing matters that the Parish Council are trying to deal with:-

- Hedge along the Avenue – trying to get cut back and unblock drains
- Permissive path to the Old Rectory was also blocked
- Overhanging trees along the A39 by the garage – trying to get cut back
- D-Day display in the Village Hall
- Weeds in Bracken Edge – currently asking Somerset Council to clear
- A new grass cutting contract had been put in place

**6. FINANCIAL REPORT: PARISH CLERK:** The Clerk read the following report:

There was currently £7,957.59 in the current account, which included the precept payment of £4,375.00.

The budget for 2024-2025 had been set at £4,212.20.

Precept – The tax base for 2024-2025 was 168.46.

Councillors agreed to request a precept of £4,212.20, meaning an increase of approximately 40% equating to £7.46 per property.

**7. REPORTS FROM VILLAGE ORGANISATIONS:**

**VILLAGE HALL** – The committee would welcome more hires and more help on the committee – please spread the word

**STAPLE DIET** – Please forward any reports / notices that you would like included

**8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS:**

A parishioner highlighted that the Parish Council did not fund the Village Hall, nor the Church, despite some misconception. Whilst all Councillors were Elected Members, they gave their time voluntarily.

The Chairman thanked all for attending and for the refreshments being served.

The meeting closed at 8.43 pm.

Signed: .....

Date: .....