

PITMINSTER PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Parish Council Meeting held at Angersleigh Village Room on Thursday 25th November 2021 at 1900 (7PM).

Present

Cllr Burnett (Chair), Whatmore, Lee, Neale, Chapman, Threlfall, and Garland
Mr. R Tyzack (Clerk to the Parish Council).

Members of public Mr Topping
Planning Officer Anna-Mari Galliot
Cllr Thorne
Cllr Wakefield apologised
Cllr Dawn Johnson apologised

1. Apologies

None

2. Declarations

None

3. Delegated planning applications to be RESOLVED

- **30/21/0049** erection of stable block with alterations and widening of gated field access to form visibility splay on land adjacent to Harpers Cottage Budleigh Road Trull.
Planning Officer Anna-Mari Galliot presented the application.

RESOLVED the application be approved.

REASON for granting permission.

The determining factors for consideration are the affects on the amenity of neighbours, the appearance of the development and the impact on the street scene.

The proposed stables are in principle acceptable in their scale and appearance and finish, it will be single storey in height so subservient in scale which will not adversely affect the character or visual impact of the dwelling with no impact upon the local landscape character. It is recommended that a condition be placed on any permission granted that the stable shall only be used for personal use to Harpers Cottage and not for any business or commercial activity.

The objection that the neighbour at Harpers Barn will see the stable and a request that the hedgerow be grown up is noted. The stable is a traditionally deigned building that would not cause adverse visual impact upon the character and appearance of the local area and as such this request is not reasonable.

The concern raised to the widening of the access and possible future development is noted. The widening and hard surfacing of the access is required to provide a safe means of access into the field and any future development would require planning permission that would be judged on its own merits. This objection is not a reason to refuse this application. It is recommended that conditions will be placed on any permission detailing the proposed surface details of the bonded surface to the new access, no surface water to drain onto the highway

and no gates shall open out over the highway in the interests of highway safety. The issue of potential noise emanating from the stables is noted. The proposal is for a stables that would cause minimal noise and or disruption to neighbouring properties and would not exceed the existing noise generated by the Motorway. The proposed stable would not adversely impact upon the amenity of neighbour property. The proposed development is thus in accordance with policies DM1 and DM2 of the Taunton Deane Core Strategy and policy D6 of the Taunton Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (2016). It is recommended for conditional approval. In preparing this report the planning officer has considered fully the implications and requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998.

4. Planning applications for OBSERVATION

- **30/21/0052 and 30/21/0053LB.** Erection of a detached outbuilding with associated works at Knights Farm Blagdon Hill (amended scheme to 30/21/0024LB).
Council decision. No Further Observations.

5. Matters arising

None.

6. Minutes

Minutes of meeting held on Thursday 21st October 2021 at 1900, already distributed were approved and signed after minor amendment to matter dealing with the Youth Club.

7. To receive request for donation to Somerset Wood

RESOLVED to donate a sum of £100.

8. Council Laptop

Clerk had distributed report from IT Know Howe. RESOLVED to purchase a new Laptop for a sum of circa £600.

9. Emergency Response email

Councillor Chapman reported he had the Council response document and will bring it up to date.

10. To receive latest CiL figures

Clerk tabled the latest spreadsheet. A further column will be added to indicate the date by which the use of the funds expires.

11. Website update

Clerk Reported he was adding photographs and it was hoped to go live in two weeks.

12. To receive and reports on AOR

Cllr Lee Reported on the outage of her email for 10 days. The Clerk had given support, but it had not achieved a result. This prevented her from joining the Zoom meeting. CDS Broadband is not available at her address.

Cllr Neale Reported on the request for stone to be laid at the muddy footpath. Due risk factors he was not in favor. He explained that this time of year some parts of the footpath network

would be muddy. This to be expected. He went on to report on the ditch by Lower Woodbrook which at long last had been cleared by Wessex Water.

Cllr Whatmore reported that Ian Gouge had set up a What's App Group. Speed watch had been carried out on only two occasions in the last month. He thought the momentum had been lost. He went on to report that now Fiber was available at Fosgrove, those who had indicated they would join when available should apply. Openreach might claim for the vouchers lost because of persons not joining by the expiry date of the voucher.

Clerk Reported on email from SALC and NALC issuing guidance for absence at meetings where a Cllr does not wish to attend due worry about Covid. RESOLVED that council will accept an absence due to Covid. Resolved council delegate all powers to the Clerk. Should it be required to hold a meeting remotely, Council will advise the Clerk of actions they wish the Clerk to take.

13. Agenda items next meeting

- List for AOR
- CiL

14. Co Option

Clerk confirmed statutory notices had been displayed on notice boards. A notice inviting members to come forward for Co Option had been in the latest Newsletter. Cllrs Resolved to Co Opt Peter Cordier to Pitminster Parish Council with immediate effect. He signed the Declaration of Acceptance and was handed the Public Register of Members Interests to complete.

15. Bank balance

Clerk reported the balance of £30166.87 as indicated by the Bank Statement which was signed by the Chair.

16. Resolve payments

RESOLVED to pay the invoices as written in the Agenda. Two invoices were added one for SWAT of £150.00 and one for Room Hire of £14.00. Checks signed by Cllr Threlfall and Neale and Whatmore.

17. Close meeting

There being no further business the meeting closed in 2025

Signed

Date Thursday 16th December 2021

Cllr Wakefield and Thorne had circulated reports prior to meeting. Attached below:

I would like to bring to your attention the following matters on behalf of District Cllr Dawn Johnson and myself:

1. Local Community Networks. The operation of these remains somewhat sketchy and is being fleshed out by the bodies set up to implement the One Somerset Unitary authority. Some details can be found on the One Somerset Business Case online (pages 72-77 in particular)

including details of the types of assets and services that may be delegated by the unitary authority to parish and town councils. Councillors might be interested (or concerned) to note that such delegated services could include minor highways functions (repairs, lining, signage), minor development control functions and planning, grass cutting and open space maintenance, fly tipping, street cleaning, abandoned vehicles, community libraries transport and safety, footpath lighting, local climate change initiatives, homelessness and social housing liaison and provision, environmental health issues, some licensing etc. This is definitely something to think about for all who serve as parish councillors both now and in future. There will of course be liaison between the parishes possibly managed by one or two councillors and we have no information currently as to what if any officer support will be available.

2. At Full Council on 19 October the decision was taken to set up at Town Council for Taunton as soon as possible and in any event by April 2023. This fulfils a commitment in the Lib Dem 2019 manifesto and is also a commitment of the One Somerset business case. There is to be a short consultation with the parishes surrounding the unparished area of Taunton (which area itself dates back to mid Victorian times) to find out if any of the now entirely built up areas of these parishes wish to be part of the new Taunton Town Council area and whether the parish councils to whom this applies are agreeable to a reduction in size. This does not of course include Pitminster Parish but you may be interested to note that this is happening. The consultation is due to be completed by 12 January 2022 so that progress towards setting up the town council will not be unduly delayed.
3. A358 upgrade Taunton to Ilminster. The online consultation has now closed and it remains to be seen what any report will contain and whether any of the views expressed will be taken into account as the project progresses. My input suggested that the main issues lie with the tailbacks at the Taunton and Ilminster ends of the road, as the rest of the road does not see large volumes of standing traffic except those vehicles waiting to exit the road, and with the long-awaited bypass for Henlade.
4. The workshop led by SWT Climate Change Portfolio Holder Cllr Dixie Darch took place in Trull Community Hall on 4 November, as I mentioned last time. It was good to see attendees from Trull, Blagdon Hill, Pitminster and Corfe. We were encouraged to think about how we can each act or change our behaviour to make a difference in respect of climate change and building resilience. I have attached at the end of this report her suggestions for community and parish council actions. There are definitely residents in this parish who have an interest in taking forward actions locally to contribute to making a difference. I would add a reminder that SWT have £100k to spend on trees and this is the season to plant. Can any land be found in this parish? Can the

free tree offer please be advertised to residents through the website or community networks?

5. We hope the Recycle More waste collections are working well in this parish. We have been pleased to see the blue bags being used enthusiastically and have had some positive reports too about both their fitness for purpose and about how residents are pleased to be able to recycle many more plastics now.
6. The Bus Service Improvement plan aims to improve bus services across the county as part of the Bus Back Better initiative. They are looking for representatives across the area and if someone in Pitminster Parish could be found to volunteer this would assist our parish in getting our needs on the radar. Can the PC assist with this please? Some buses would of course be better than none but they do have ambitious plans to provide a reliable and user-friendly service.
7. SWT have issued a press release about green homes grants being available to improve insulation and reduce heating costs. They are worth up to £10,000 for homeowners, or £5000 for tenants but the property EPC rating must be D or below and household income must be below £30k. Scheme will last until March 2022 and applications can be made by visiting www.heatsomerset.co.uk I would also mention that grants can be obtained (again means tested) from Somerset Community Foundation through its Surviving Winter programme. This scheme recycles winter fuel grants paid in by pensioners who do not need all (or any) of the £200 grant they receive (which itself is not means tested).

John Thorne

• **Covid stats** - The infection rate in Somerset recently soared by 33 per cent in a month and reached record highs (nearly 900/100k) but has now begun to fall again and by the weekend it was 453.7/100k. Somerset is now below the South West's 490.4/100k for the first time in several weeks but still above England's 388.6/100k, both of which are on the rise. The latest R number range for the South West by the weekend was 0.8-1.0 which is on a par with most of the rest of the country. Somerset continues to have one of the highest vaccination rates in the country with nearly 96 per cent of the eligible 18+ population having at least one vaccination and 92 per cent have been double jabbed. About 65 per cent of 16-17-year-olds have been vaccinated. There have now been nearly 66,400 cases in Somerset and 927 deaths attributed to Covid since the start of the pandemic.

• **Covid vaccinations** - The large drive-through vaccination centre which was at Taunton Racecourse is now operating on the Firepool site, in Taunton. It will continue to take walk-ins from the age of 16 and is open seven days a week but has reduced its opening hours to 8 am to 6 pm. Please reassure anybody in a priority group that they can still book their jab if they have not had it already. More info on vaccination centres is here <https://www.somersetccg.nhs.uk/health/local-services/health-services-during-coronavirus/covid-19-vaccinations-in->

[somersex](#). Mobile vaccination units are continuing to use the racecourse site as a base for the time being.

- **Somerset Coronavirus helpline** - Please keep promoting the Coronavirus one-stop helpline number 0300 790 6275. The service is open from 8 am to 6 pm every day of the week.

- **Local Government Reorganisation 1** - The draft Structural Changes Order which the Secretary of State will lay before Parliament has been published and I sent out a briefing note on it for parish clerks. However, a further period, which expired last Thursday, was allowed for any additional comments which the county and district councils might want to make around the issues of the number of unitary councillors and the date of both parish and unitary elections. As I write this, we still seem no nearer hearing the answer to those two points. Parliament goes into recess on 16th December so it is assumed that we must hear before that date = but I'm not holding my breath!

- **Local Government Reorganisation 2** - Following on from the parish councils conference held last month where fewer than half of the parish councils in Somerset attended, I am told a number of similar events will be held in the coming months, each with a focus on a particular aspect of the reorganisation. The next is due in the New Year. I have provided the project team with email addresses for all the parish clerks in our division so you should not miss out on an invitation this time. I have also asked for the slides which were used at the first event to be circulated. In the meantime the first meeting of the Local Government Reorganisation Joint Committee which is overseeing the implementation plan and development of the new council's constitution and budget has been held. The main thing they decided was that the new council will be called 'Somerset Council'. A joint advisory committee created to work on the design of local community networks (LCNs) met today in Donyatt Village Hall with all parish councils invited to attend and meet the members between 3 pm and 5 pm. The next one is in Stoke St Gregory on 16th December. A joint scrutiny committee has also been proposed but may not be set up until January/February because it has to be agreed by each of the five councils. SCC agreed it at our full council meeting yesterday (Wednesday). Two pilot LCNs are already working, one on Exmoor to deal with highways matters and the other in Frome to tackle children's health and wellbeing. A new LGR website has been launched www.newsomersetcouncil.org.uk which includes information about public events supporting the development of the unitary council. Unlike the previous link I was given, I have checked that this one works.

- **Rural broadband** - The delivery of superfast broadband via CDS was last week rated 'Red' in a Quarter Two performance review presented to the county's cabinet. It is the only red rated key performance indicator (KPI) in this quarter. The explanation given is that the project is 'still at an early stage of mobilisation for a complex civil engineering project which is being delivered against a changing background' and its successful delivery requires the co-operation and commitment of many different parties. According to county's definition of its Key Performance Indicators, a red rating is given because: 'Performance is

off target and outside tolerance. Project is off target'. I am therefore seeking answers to what steps the council is taking to improve the CDS KDI so that it becomes 'green' or on target. The explanation given above would have also applied to the Gigaclear contract in its early days but I do not recall seeing a 'red' KPI at that time, despite the fiasco that was happening with the contract.

- **A358** - The statutory consultation ended on Monday (22nd). I attended two of the three consultation events at Taunton Racecourse and the Holiday Inn. Several hundred people also took the opportunity, despite atrocious weather for the first one. Several themed webinars covering different aspects of the project have been held online and there were webchats, a virtual exhibition, and telephone surgeries. A paper copy of the consultation material was also available, one per household. I formally submitted my views to National Highways, which in summary are that the dualling should be no more than that, turning it into a standard dual-carriageway which would allow most, if not all, of the existing local connections to remain. The formal county council response was, unsurprisingly, that they support National Highways and are not challenging the design standard, which is now being referred to as a 'high quality dual-carriageway' rather than an 'Expressway' as it was first mooted. All responses must be considered before a planning application can be submitted for a Development Control Order (DCO), which is expected to happen in the summer of 2022. Anybody who made a formal submission becomes an 'interested party' and can take part in the DCO public inquiry by presenting to the hearing and questioning witnesses.

- **HGVs and Fulwood Farm** - Hopefully, this issue has now been resolved. As I understand it, the issue may have been an operator who tried to game the system. Because there was no specific planning approval condition to limit the number of HGV movements to the site it could be argued that the 80 or more a day that were being experienced was acceptable. The council pointed out that the information submitted with the planning application and included in the design and access statement, the noise management plan, and the transport statement referred to around seven HGVs daily. Therefore, the planning application was approved with that level of vehicle movement and the associated impacts being taken into consideration. A Planning Contravention Notice was served on the operator who acknowledged there were occasions in July and August when HGV movements to Fulwood Farm 'were above that identified in the planning documents'. An understatement, I know! However, following the council's intervention the limit of seven has been acknowledged and there have been few complaints in recent weeks, County has been continuing to monitor the situation as recently as last week and have not found excessive movements taking place.

- **Bus services** - The bus service improvement plan (BSIP) was approved last month and sets out the plans which were submitted to the Government with a bid for a share of the £3 billion allocated to the national 'Bus Back Better' initiative. Somerset's plans are costed out at £163 million. None of it is rocket science! The plans include making sure

larger communities are served more often, providing later buses in key corridors up to 11 pm at night so people can get home after a night out, extending demand responsive services such as the Slinky Bus, real time info at bus stops, and working towards electrification as soon as possible as part of the carbon net zero target. The BSIP is available here <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/transport-strategy>. There will be a further round of consultation coming up because while the outcome of the funding bid is awaited, work has started on developing the legal mechanisms which will help deliver the BSIP plans such as an Enhanced Partnership between the council and the bus companies, and feedback will be sought by the consultants who are working with county on this.

- **Park and Ride** - The introduction of free fares and the return of Saturday services has seen passenger numbers soar. In the first six week average passenger journeys more than doubled from 2,701 to 5,724 per week.

- **Winter road gritting** - The county's gritting fleet has received 20 new snow blowers and four new snow ploughs. Three extra weather stations have been installed to give cold weather warnings. A map of the roads which are gritted can be found here <https://www.travelsomerset.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Winter-Service-2019-2020-With-Domains.pdf>. Gritters go out when road surface temperatures are predicted to drop below 1°C and ice or snow is expected.

- **Carbon literacy training** - All parish councils are being offered free 'carbon literacy training' to help councillors and clerks understand what they can do locally to help combat climate change effectively. An organisation called ClimateGuide has been commissioned to deliver a series of seven workshops - unfortunately, the county have only told me about this after three workshops have already been held, so there are only four more to go. The email to use if you want to attend a session is climateemergency@somerset.gov.uk.

- **Climate change website** - County has launched its new climate emergency webpage which can be found here <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/climate-emergency>. It provides a hub for anybody wanting information about their work towards tackling climate change and includes the latest environmental news for Somerset, information and tips for individuals and organisations on how they can reduce their carbon footprints, and details about the actions Somerset's local authorities are taking.

- **Recycle More** - Expanded recycling services in Taunton Deane started on 1st November. Residents should have received two letters from Somerset Waste Partnership sent out in advance to explain how it works, and the new blue bags were being distributed right up until the last moment. A comprehensive range of engagement activities by Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP) was undertaken, including Facebook Q&A sessions. Although, considerable confusion was expected during the early days because more than half of Taunton Deane residents have seen their collection days change, about 55,000 households I believe, SWP is claiming that about 98 per cent of residents are putting out material on the right days and in the right containers. Despite that claim, I have

been hearing of quite a few missed collections across our county division.

- **Rowbarton traffic lights** - Work to replace 40-year-old traffic lights at the junction near the railway station has finished and the new traffic lights have been switched on. Traffic should be able to flow much more efficiently and there is also greater safety for cyclists and pedestrians.

- **Queen's Platinum Jubilee** - A website has been launched here <https://platinumjubileesomerset.org.uk> to help anybody who would like to play a part in celebrating the Queen's 70-year legacy. The Platinum Jubilee Somerset website features lots of information about how you can get involved in Somerset, either through the Queen's Green Canopy scheme, by registering a beacon, or by organising a street party.