



**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held via Zoom  
Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> August 2020**

**Present**                    **Sue Isherwood, Chair**  
                                  **Sue Reece, Councillor**  
                                  **John Millbank, Councillor**  
                                  **Jo Tucker, Councillor**

**In attendance**        **Mark Smith, Website Administrator**  
                                  **Chris Harris, Clerk**

Before the meeting proper commenced Liz Hughes and Rowan Stewart, representatives of the Roughmoor Road group, an informal alliance representing residents concerned with possible developments on Church Commission land adjacent to the road, presented a detailed summary of potential issues regarding accessibility, environmental concerns and the needs of the local community to ameliorate the impact of any large scale development of the site. They offered a number of possible solutions to matters such as access, protection of biodiversity in line with MDC's climate change priorities, educational needs for local children and other ideas for the benefit of the whole community. Many of the suggestions were in line with those the Parish Council had raised in previous years, and were very favourably received by Councillors. Some useful discussion and suggestions for further research followed as, until there is more certainty regarding the detail of any development and more clarity on the group's requirements, formal action at this point would prove difficult. Both representatives and the Council were in principle happy to work in tandem going forward so that the needs of the community would be met, as far as is practicable.

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Ros Wyke, Councillor  
Guy Timson, Councillor  
Cllr Graham Noel, Somerset County Councillor.  
Cllr Tucker arrived late to the meeting due to connectivity issues.

**2. Declarations of Interest and Dispensations**

**2a Declarations of interest from Councillors on items on the agenda**

Cllr Reece declared an interest in Item 11 c iii, Lynchcombe Lane  
No other declarations or written requests were received.

**3. Minutes of the meetings held on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020**

The minutes of the meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020 were reviewed and agreed as a correct record.  
Cllr Tucker was able to join the meeting at this point.

**4. Roughmoor Lane Proposal**

On behalf of the Council, Cllr Millbank thanked the Roughmoor Road representatives for their comprehensive and detailed presentation at the beginning of the meeting, adding that it had made a substantial contribution to the community's position regarding future development of the site.

Cllr Isherwood confirmed that the required number of houses allocated to the village under current legislation is around 40 by 2026; however, she was also clear that recent government edicts may impact this figure and that it is currently unknown what the Church Commissioners have planned for the site going forward. She noted that having a Neighbourhood Plan in place would have added substantial weight to the arguments made; unfortunately recent attempts to rekindle the process had been hampered due to the current coronavirus pandemic. She also noted that traffic management issues will be key to any development in the area but that, without any current detail on what is planned, it was difficult to assess needs and consequences at this point. However, the council was fully in agreement with the idea of a 'green corridor' and safer pedestrian access in the

area, and Cllr Isherwood suggested that liaison with the Tree Group would be beneficial to both parties. She also suggested that the group develop a presence on the community website, perhaps including an online survey to clarify local support for their suggestions.

Liz Hughes and Rowan Stewart left the meeting at this point.

## 5. Website Update

Mark Smith presented the following update:

- Work on streamlining the website continues.
- While usage has fallen since its peak in April, it is still considerably higher than in previous years indicating a continued interest and trust in the information now being provided.
- Mr Smith reported that one recent website workshop raised a question about the old '.org' Westbury community website, that appeared top of the list on general browser searches. The Council noted that the old '.org' website had been commissioned originally by the Friendly Society, and Cllr Reece would discuss it with them.
- The question had been raised of listing village businesses on the website: other councils have done so with the appropriate disclaimers, but it does raise concerns about unfair promotion on what is a '.gov.uk' website. After some discussion, it was felt that the council would not pursue this option at this point, but it may be something to revisit in the future.
- Attendance at the three recent website workshops had been good, and raised the question of how and in what format future workshops should be organised. Councillors suggested that Mr Smith put some information out in the weekly EPC newsletter and see what the response is, and move ahead accordingly.
- Mr Smith had been asked regarding arranging online ticketing via the website and has contacted Tickbox regarding appropriate facilities. Bookings for most events are done through the shop at the present time. Councillors felt that, if interest was strong enough, this is something that can be pursued. **Update:** Mr Smith had approached the shop regarding online booking but it was felt that, in the current circumstances and while they continue to be very busy, it was not something they wished to do at this time.

Councillors thanked Mr Smith for his continuing efforts and support for the website and the community at large.

## 6. Emergency Planning Committee Update

Cllr Reece gave her regular update on EPC activity.

- It is now 19 weeks since the Emergency Planning Committee (EPC) issued its first communication to the village in relation to the coronavirus pandemic.
- The EPC continues to go through Government advice and scan wider information on a daily basis to include in the newsletter.
- Publication of the newsletter has been reduced to once a week on Mondays, although additional newsletters will be produced if and when the need arises.
- The Village Hall survey produced 82 responses. The results were published in the newsletter and on the website.

Councillors thanked Cllr Reece for her report and once again gave their thanks to her, Mick Fletcher and all the volunteers who are continuing to provide a vital service to all in the community.

## 7. Update on impact of Coronavirus pandemic on Parish Council business

Councillors discussed the current situation on the following matters.

**Village Hall:** The Chair reported that there will be a meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> August to discuss preparation for opening. Councillors agreed that, as the Chair is already a member of the Village Hall Committee in another capacity, it would be appropriate for her to report back from that committee to the Parish Council going forward

**Community Shop:** Cllr Reece reported that there was nothing new to report at this point.

**Robert Glanville Playing Field Trust:** In the absence of Cllr Timson there was no formal report, although Councillors commented that those using it were being very sensible and it was being maintained in very good order.

## 8. Reports from the Somerset County Councillor and Mendip District Councillor

There were no reports from the Somerset County Councillor or the Mendip District Councillor.

## 9. Local Government Reorganisation

The Chair noted that she had not drafted a response as agreed at the last meeting as things had moved on apace since then. Another substantial document had been received from SCC which seems to show significant bias in favour of unification and was not impartial. The latest suggested developments would have an impact on the Parish Council with the plan for Parish Council 'clustering', although no viability planning or financial details have been offered. The document is not a formal consultation and nothing is expected from the PC at this stage. However and subsequently, a response from the four District Councils stating their opposition to the plans for unitary status had also been received indicating their plans for further action. The Chair suggested that Councillors revisit the initial document and give some thought to what powers PCs should have – consolidations, gains or extensions – going forward, for discussion at the next meeting. In the meantime the Chair will discuss the latest developments with the Leader of MDC for further clarification.

**Action: Chair**

In addition to this, the latest announcements from Central Government regarding the significant relaxation of planning law raised considerable concerns, although again details were sparse. For discussion at the next meeting

## 10. Clerk's Report

- Shamrock Stables (Item 10cii previous minutes). Agenda Item – various interested parties have been contacted and have responded.
- State of Parish Roadways (Item 13 previous minutes). The Clerk had written to the Leader of MDC who was to present a response at this meeting – to be carried over to the next meeting.
- Traffic and Speeding through the village (Item 14 previous minutes). The Clerk wrote to Cllr Pullin twice but has received no response. Councillors requested the Clerk contact him again, or seek other avenues of information.

**Action: Clerk**

- Councillor Recruitment (Item 16 previous minutes). Agenda Item. In progress, one application received.
- Clerk Recruitment (Item 17 Previous Agenda). Agenda Item. In progress, two applications received.

Mark Smith left the meeting at this point.

## 11. Planning

### 11a Planning Applications to be considered:

2020/1387/HSE Extension and Swimming Pool, Hollybrook House
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Councillors noted once again that the local Dark Skies policy had been ignored, in an application with large areas of additional glass. Councillors considered that, despite the size of the application, it would have minimal visual impact and did not appear to impinge on any neighbouring properties. As such the Council had no objection to this application.

2020/1293/FUL New build, Shirbern House, Crow Lane
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A number of issues were raised by this application.

- It appears to present significant overdevelopment of a relatively confined space within the conservation area of the village.
- Much of the land surrounding both properties will be dominated by vehicular parking with restricted turning areas, leaving little amenity space for each property not in keeping with their relative sizes.
- The amount of hard landscaping given over to vehicular parking would create significant amounts of rainfall run-off, much of which would fall into neighbouring properties including the public house garden.
- Crow Lane is narrow with restricted access and turning. An additional building of this size will increase traffic on an already difficult road, particularly given the number of parking spaces being allocated to both properties.
- The site is in an historically mixed and varied neighbourhood, part of the character and essence of the conservation area. Councillors felt that, on balance, a new build on this site would not contribute positively to this special character in either its siting or proximity to other buildings.
- The proposed building is on land previously owned by the local public house and is very close to the current boundary. Suggested fencing seemed inadequate to mitigate against any future

disputes regarding noise ingress due to the geography of the site, given the elevated position of the proposed building.

- While the existing presence of slow worms on the site is recognised and steps given for their protection, the suggestion that they will be released back onto the land once build is completed is unlikely to result in a re-established colony due to the significant reduction in suitable amenity land available.
- The Council once again noted the lack of any details regarding lighting and window screening in line with local policy on Dark Skies and fully supports the recommendations of the Ecology report regarding external lighting for the protection of bats.
- The Council also notes and supports objections from neighbouring properties which are at risk of being overlooked by this application.

Given the number of concerns, Councillors resolved to object to this application.

### 11b Mendip District Council Decisions

Councillors noted the following decisions:

2019/1549/FUL Agricultural Buildings, Top Road	Refused
2020/0364/OTA New Build, Top Road (outline)	Approved
2020/0757/HSE Apple Rock, loft conversion	Approved with conditions
2020/0876/HSE Oak View, Roughmoor Lane, resubmission erection of shed (unseen by PC)	Approved
2020/0967/OTA Tree Works, Bell Close	No objection
2020/0862/TCA Tree Works, The Old Vicarage	Refused/TPO applied

### 11c For general consideration/monitoring

Councillors discussed the following:

i) 2019/1549/FUL Agricultural Buildings, Top Road, any developments

No further developments at this point.

ii) 2019/2336/FUL Shamrock Stables, amended application and any developments

The Chair will liaise with various interested parties once the date for Planning Board consideration is announced.

iii) Land at Lynchcombe Lane, unauthorised occupancy and any developments

The Chair confirmed that site was not for sale and Cllr Reece added that it was no longer occupied.

iv) Shepherd's Barn, top of Lynchcombe Lane

An addition to the Agenda. In response to several queries raised by members of the community concerning the number of structures which have appeared at this site, the Council requested the Clerk to contact MDC Planning regarding the matter. Planning have forwarded the enquiry to Enforcement who are now investigating.

### 12a Payments to Note

The following payment from the coronavirus emergency fund was noted:

- Chris Harris, Zoom subscription (May and June) £28.72

The following payment was noted:

- Tickbox Marketing for Website Security Licence £108.00
- Donation of previous marquee hire fee to RGPF as requested by Mr & Mrs Love £50.00

### 12b Payments to Approve

The following payment was approved:

- Mark Smith, Website Services £249.00

**12c The following account balances at 27/07/20 were noted:**

- Treasurer's Account £871.76 (includes VAT refund of £217.48 paid 22/06/20)
- Business Bank Account £24,001.98

**12d Internal Audit 2019-20**

The finalised internal audit figures were presented by the Clerk, and were approved by the Council. The Chair thanked Mrs Alison Cole, acting as Internal Auditor, for her thorough and detailed efforts in the production of the finished data.

**12e Asset Register 2020**

The updated Asset Register 2020 was presented by the Clerk and approved by the Council.

**13. The state of parish roadways**

In the absence of Cllr Wyke, this Item will be put forward to the next meeting.

**14. Traffic and speeding through the village**

In the absence of a response from Cllr Pullin, this Item will be put forward to the next meeting.

**15. Update on Court Farm Footpath**

In the absence Cllr Timson, this Item will be put forward to the next meeting.

**16. Resignation of Cllr Bright and Councillor Co-Option**

As mentioned in Item 7 above, Cllr Isherwood would act as representative for the Village Hall going forward. It was agreed that Mr Bright continue to hold the keys for the containers; Cllr Timson will be delegated to act as a second in Mr Bright's absence.

The Clerk confirmed that one application had been received for Councillor Co-Option. The closing date is 21<sup>st</sup> August and the formal process will take place at the next meeting.

**17. Clerk Recruitment**

The Clerk confirmed that three applications had been received, but one had since withdrawn. Closing date is 14<sup>th</sup> August after which time the formal recruitment process will be put in place.

**18. Notices**

There were no notices raised.

**19. Items for Next Agenda**

**19a Duck Lane Wall.**

Another complaint about the dangerous state of this wall had been received by the Council, and Cllr Millbank had approached the resident adjacent to the wall - assumed to be the owner - for permission for removal by a group of community volunteers, in order to make the area safe for footpath users. This matter will be added to the next Agenda.

**19b Collapsed Culvert, The Square**

Formal investigations have taken place and urgent remedial works are planned. This matter will be added to the next Agenda.

**19c The Tree Group**

Members of the Tree Group requested the opportunity to feed back to the Council. This matter will be added to the next Agenda.

**20. Date and time of next meeting**

It was agreed that, with the impending recruitment of a new Clerk, the date of the next meeting be put forward to **Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2020 @ 7.30 p.m.** as a virtual meeting via online conferencing facilities.

Signed electronically:



Chair of the Parish Council

Date: