

MINUTES OF THE 2019 AGM MEETING OF CORFE PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT CORFE VILLAGE HALL, TUESDAY 2nd July 2019.

Present: Cllr J Harrison, Cllr K Brown, Cllr C Brown, Cllr D Bradbeer, Cllr J Jackson. Cllr B Hosie, County Cllr. John Thorne.

Apologies: Cllr B Lenthall, Cllr J Sanders

No members of the public were present.

Chairman Cllr J Harrison opened the meeting at 7pm, welcoming all.

3394: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE. Councillor B. Lenthall, Councillor J. Sanders

3395: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST. Cllr Harrison: Almshouse Trust. Cllr C Brown: Village Hall Committee.

3396: MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 7th May 2019.

The minutes having been circulated and published, and were duly approved and then signed as an accurate record.

3397: MATTERS ARISING FROM THOSE MINUTES.

- A358 CONSULTATION: The pink route has now been announced as the preferred route. This will have less of an impact on our village if this remains the case.

- CLERK - The vacancy remains unfilled. Cllr C Brown is continuing to volunteer to take PC Minutes and arrange the agenda, with other duties being taken on by volunteer support. Cllr Harrison reported previously that SALC would contact every acting clerk to see if any could take on the extra duty as we cannot continue in this position indefinitely.

NOTICEBOARD - This will be placed back into its original position once Village Hall wall painting refurbishment has been completed weather permitting in July.

ACTION - Parish Council/Village Hall Committee to erect notice board when labour can be arranged.

3398: REPORTS OF COUNTY AND BOROUGH COUNCILLORS.

Cllr Thorne, SCC presented a detailed report on a number of issues:

- Finances – This month, the county's finances continue to improve and the latest news is that the underspend on last year's budget has now topped out at £5.9m. It is not actually something I am particularly pleased about, however, because I see that as money which could and should have been spent on supporting vital services last year which were being reduced because we thought at the time we were going to be badly overspent (possibly by £12.4m) and therefore short of money. However, it does mean this year's budget is less pressured and there is more money available than anticipated, which is good when we continue to operate in a climate of financial uncertainty, not knowing if we will be awarded various grants again which we have received in the past, and with demand continuing to rise for children's services and adult social care. To put it in context, while it is a lot of money, the £5.9m only represents 1.85% of the county's £317.8m total spending. That said, there are still challenges ahead and this year and next year will continue to be demanding for us.

- Prevention Fund - £1m is being put into a 'Prevention Fund' which will be used to pay for council and community projects which help to prevent or reduce issues, problems, and needs with the idea being that future demands on services can be eased and people's lives improved, in turn helping the council to be sustainable in the long term.

- Health & Wellbeing Fund – Each councillor is being given responsibility for a £2,000 health and wellbeing fund which will be taken from the above Prevention Fund. It is now called the 'Members Improving Lives Grant Scheme', and will be open for bids from September 1 to November 30. The basic idea is to help communities develop activities which encourage people to join together, such as projects to reduce loneliness and isolation, or encourage gardening or healthy eating, anything that helps improve emotional health and wellbeing. I am still awaiting more detail on how bids will be formatted. It may be a match-funding scheme, but as yet it has not been fully explained.

- A358 – I'm sure everybody will have heard about last week's announcement of a preferred route, which is essentially the pink route from the three on which Highways England consulted, with a few modifications. Personally, I think it is the best we could hope for as it certainly meets all the main demands which I was making, which was that there should not be a new M5 junction, it should connect to the motorway via J25, a proper by-pass should be provided for Henlade, a junction was needed to connect the A378, and it should stick as close as possible to the existing carriageway. There will be a statutory consultation later in the process of approving the route and the community forums will continue to operate. Work will start in the second Road Investment Strategy period of 2020-25. There is still quite a lot to be agreed in terms of the section of road between West Hatch and Ilminster for access via a new junction and closure of side roads.

- Broadband – My thoughts are quite well known on the (non) roll-out of phase two of the superfast broadband network for Somerset communities by Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) and its contractor Gigaclear. Gigaclear have failed to deliver and failed badly. CDS has now given Gigaclear to end of this month to produce plans which are acceptable to it and to the Government and has issued the dire warning "CDS will not shrink from taking further tough action if that is deemed necessary" which simply makes me laugh because they have not taken tough action yet so how can they talk about 'further' tough action. The phrase 'fighting their way out of a paper bag' comes to mind! At the same time CDS has admitted that it is opening up its Community Challenge Fund to more communities, which is where they help local communities to come up with their own broadband solution. Each solution is bespoke to the community where it is installed. This is an indicator of things to come I believe, where it will become every community for itself after (I forecast) the collapse of the CDS-Gigaclear initiative. They are also looking at the Government's Rural Gigabit Connectivity initiative, which is where the Government pays for a broadband 'hub' to be installed in remote areas on a public building such as a school and then commercial providers can build onto it and gradually expand provision.

- Broadband vouchers – CDS is now offering vouchers through the national BDUK Better Broadband Scheme. All homes and businesses in the county with broadband speeds of less than two megabits per second (2Mbps) and without a published delivery date for superfast broadband within the next 12 months are now eligible to apply for an interim solution under the voucher scheme. Vouchers worth up to £350 would contribute towards the cost of equipment and installation of a 4G, Fixed Wireless, or Satellite solution. Applications need to be made through registered suppliers on the approved supplier list at: <https://basicbroadbandchecker.culture.gov.uk/>

- Park and Ride – Another incursion by travellers has recently taken place at the Gateway P&R site in Henlade and specialist bailiffs with police support were needed to remove them. An injunction was obtained giving them a deadline to leave and although some started to leave shortly afterwards, the remainder did not. The P&R was, however, able to operate almost as normal, but the Cricket World Cup organisers could not afford to take any chances and so they organised two alternative services, a P&R from Taunton Racecourse and a park and walk from Somerset College just in case. A clean-up operation was ready to start as soon as the travellers were gone. I met subsequently with the council leader Cllr Fothergill to (again) raise my concerns that these incursions keep happening and I firmly believe we have reached the point where we have to invest in physical/permanent measures to prevent or severely restrict any repeat

occurrences and I will be pressing for more to now be done. This particular instance was more challenging to resolve than others for reasons I cannot put in writing, but hopefully it is now behind us.

- Resurfacing programme – This year's road resurfacing programme started last week and there will be 68 schemes over two months, 17 on principal roads and 51 on non-principal roads, totalling 22 miles, plus two flood related re-surfacing schemes. In addition, there will be surface dressing at 152 separate locations totalling 148 miles of roads. The total budget for this work is £14.5m. As always, live info can be found on this website www.travelsomerset.co.uk. The rural grass verge cutting programme for A and B roads has been completed and C and D roads will be completed by July 26.

- SCC website – County has revamped its website in the first of a series of improvements to the council's online offer with a focus on enabling people to find the services they want quickly and easily. Next up is to look at content within the site, and work with services and users to review and improve it. They will also refine and add new areas where customers can carry out transactions, and will reduce the number of websites the council has, concentrating its online presence into one place. The website link is here if anybody wants to have a look <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/>

- Heat Health Watch – We are now in the annual Heat Health Watch period which runs nationally until September 15. Its purpose is to reduce the number of summer deaths and illness by raising public awareness. It also triggers actions in the NHS, public health, social care, and other community and voluntary organisations to support people who have health, housing, or economic circumstances that increase their vulnerability to heat. You can find information about the risks, plus guidance here: <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/getting-ready-for-summer/>

- Adults with Learning Difficulties – A monthly peer support group has been started in Taunton Library. It is being run by People First Dorset who successfully runs similar sessions in Yeovil. The group offers an opportunity to make new friends, access support and information, gain new skills and confidence, and practice independent living skills. More info is available from People First Dorset by emailing office@peoplefirstdorset.org.uk

- Stay Strong Stay Steady – County has been working with Age UK Somerset to support important research on how to provide services to reduce risk of falls and to run Stay Strong Stay Steady classes which provide an opportunity to meet others while building and maintaining strength, balance, and confidence in movement which are invaluable in helping people live independently as they age. More information is at: <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/somerset/our-services/ageing-well-exercise-sessions/stay-strong-stay-steady/>

3399: REPORTS OF PORTFOLIO HOLDERS.

- Planning: Cllr J Harrison. No planning applications made.

A358 - Pink route has now been declared as the preferred route. No new motorway junction close to Corfe being proposed.

- Highways: Cllr J Harrison on behalf of Cllr B Lenthall had nothing to report.

Hedge trimming will take place in Adcombe Lane.

The Spin bus has been parking up near to the church and on occasions the village hall. Organisers to be approached to discuss noise and obstruction issues.

Road resurfacing lasting 18 days in the lane adjacent to the Golf club will be occurring shortly.

- Rights of Way: Cllr Bradbeer had nothing to report.

- Web site: Cllr Jackson reported Website Advertising – All advertising payments are up to date. The adverts now appear on the front page on the website, as well as on the advertising tab.

The monthly newsletter was sent out in May and June to the distribution list of 95 people. This provides a commentary on what has been going on in the village and compliments the bi-monthly Community Matters magazine.

The Parish Council email account is being constantly monitored.

The next Corfe Farmers Market is taking place on Thursday 11th July (6pm-8pm)

- Village Hall: Cllr C Brown reported that a Village Hall meeting had taken place on 19th June. Full details of this are available on the website and will be displayed on the village notice boards.

3400: S106 Remaining Funds - Recreational Facilities.

A discussion took place on what could be considered for spending with the remaining S106 funds. It was agreed to make this an agenda item for all future PC meetings to help promote village ideas on what this could be spent on. The remaining funds will no longer be available to us to spend post July 2021.

3401: FINANCES.

Cllr Harrison reported:

Cheques paid since the last meeting were: Parsons Landscapes (£123.22); Zurich Insurance (£768.93); and Somerset Local Councils (£84.69).

Invoices to be paid: goal post erection (£180) and AstroTurf (Parsons £702). Both items to be reimbursed from s106.

S106 funds still available to spend: £3,332 (by July 2021).

Bank Balance £14,532.12 (Gateway of £3,327 is included within this total)

3402: CORRESPONDENCE

- Nothing to report.

3403: ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

- The Fete organisers and volunteers were praised for their efforts in putting on a fantastic event which raised considerable funds in support of the village.
- The First Corfe Farmers Market was well supported. A bi-monthly trial will continue with the next one due on Thursday 11th July (6.00pm - 8.00pm) on the Queens Acre and in the Village Hall.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 2nd September 2019 at the earlier time of 6pm.