

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF CORFE PARISH COUNCIL**  
**HELD AT CORFE VILLAGE HALL, TUESDAY 3rd March 2020.**

**PRESENT:** Cllr J. Harrison, Cllr C. Brown, Cllr D. Bradbeer, Cllr B. Lenthall, Cllr J. Jackson, Cllr J. Sanders.

Clerk: S. Millard-Jones.

County Cllr John Thorne, Cllr Sarah Wakefield and 7 members of the public were present.

Chairman Cllr J. Harrison opened the meeting at 6pm, welcoming all.

**3435: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

Cllr B. Hosie.

**3436: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

Cllr C. Brown: Village Hall Committee.

Cllr J. Harrison: Corfe, Pitminster and Trull Almshouse Charity.

**3437: MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 14th January 2020.**

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

**3438: MATTERS ARISING FROM THOSE MINUTES.**

Citizens Advice Bureau thanked Corfe Parish Council (CPC) for the donation.

The issue with the flooding at the racecourse has been resolved.

**3439: REPORTS OF COUNTY AND BOROUGH COUNCILLORS.**

Cllr J Thorne briefed CPC on the following;

- One Somerset – The debate has begun, and I have had a recent personal experience of the confusion caused by the current two-tier local government model, as I attended a parish council meeting and was savaged for not only the shocking waste of money in merging West Somerset and Taunton Deane councils but also for buying the Mecca Bingo Hall in Taunton! I pointed out these were district council issues and in both cases I was on the same page as the complainant. The county council's leader, Cllr David Fothergill, has now written to the Secretary of State to formally kick-start the unitary process by asking for consent to submit a business case, which would be done by July, ahead of the Parliamentary summer recess. Cllr Fothergill is also offering to come and speak to as many parish councils as would like him to do so. You just have to ask. He attended Wellington Town Council yesterday (Monday) and has been to many others in the past couple of weeks. There is a website available which has dedicated web pages giving much more detail on what is being suggested. You can find it here [www.onesomerset.gov.uk](http://www.onesomerset.gov.uk).

- Budget 1 – Full council approved a budget for 2020-21 which has no new cuts to frontline services, and nor will there be any for the next three years. There is a 1.99 per cent increase in council tax precept raising an extra £4.924 million to support spending on services, plus a further two per cent increase for the adult social care precept, giving an extra £4.949 million to

support the growth in demand for services. The Band D council tax charge will then be £1,289.20, representing an increase of 95p per week. We also received indicative budgets for 2021-22 and 2022-23, the first time we have been able to in effect budget for three years ahead, which is an indication of the increasingly strong financial position of the council.

- Budget 2 – There were several new initiatives announced as part of the budget, including £2 million being put into supporting new and enhanced bus services for rural areas. This is separate to the Government's £5 billion 'buses and bikes' fund which was announced recently. The Somerset £2 million over the next three years will see three new Slinky Buses and nine new peak time bus services across the county to improve local connections to help people get to work or further education. There will be a new round of Small Improvement Schemes this year. The window will open in the autumn and each councillor can again submit two schemes. Because of the timing, delivery of the schemes will fall into the next quadrennial, in other words after the next elections in 2021 and possibly under a unitary council if that goes ahead. We have committed £1.5 million this year to start rolling out 20 mph school traffic zones. Many schools already have advisory 20 mph zones outside their gates, so discussions will now be held with those which don't with the intention of including half of them this year and the remainder next year. Another initiative is to plant a tree for every baby born in Somerset next year. This is likely to be about 5,500, but we expect to actually plant many more than that, and also to provide the funds to make sure they become established over the next few years. Another initiative was a £6.3m investment in our social care providers to help them meet the increased national minimum wage for their staff, ensure high quality provision, and continue to be able to meet a wide range of different needs.

- Connecting Devon and Somerset - CDS has launched a fresh procurement to find new contractors to roll-out superfast broadband across the two counties. Working closely with Building Digital UK (BDUK) agency it follows confirmation of the Government's funding extension for the programme = helping to provide a £38 million public investment in the region's broadband. Well, that is the official line on it. My personal line is that it is 'Groundhog Day'. We've heard it all before, and I have not changed my opinion that that CDS is a calamity and should be replaced.

- Improving Lives grants –These grants will be repeated this coming year, so I will have another £2,000 available for our county division to help fund projects which reduce loneliness, bring people together, or help them live better lives independently at home. All three of my bids for the past year's fund were successful, and the nearest to Corfe was the CBO Community Bus in Churchinford, which has received £497 to help with recruitment of more voluntary drivers.

- Climate change 1 – Within the budget we agreed, county has allocated £1 million to share with parish and town councils across Somerset for local climate change initiatives. It is the largest fund of its kind by any local authority anywhere in the country. This is in addition to the climate change strategy being worked up in the item below. You should be receiving a letter shortly to give you more detail about the fund, but I understand it will be open to bids on a match funding basis. By working closely with you as parish councillors, who know your community best, we hope to be able to encourage individuals to change their own behaviours, which is what will make the biggest difference on climate change. Also, I can tell you that we are committed to making even larger sums of money available to this fund in future years. I will share more as

soon as I know it, but I anticipate you will hear directly from county before I learn anything further.

- Climate change 2 – The climate change strategy consultation closed last week with the conclusion of the online survey (a link to which is here <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/Somerset-Climate-Change-Survey-2019>). I was aware shortly before it closed that more than 2,000 responses had so far been received. A Climate Emergency Business Summit was held toward the end of January with more than 100 businesses taking part. Consultation on a draft strategy and action plan is scheduled for later in March and April, with the final strategy document coming to full council in July. More info is available here [www.somerset.gov.uk/climateemergency](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/climateemergency).

- Brexit – The Brexit team was scaled down but not stood down ahead of the UK leaving the EU on 31<sup>st</sup> January. There will be an update on the issue later this month, but for the moment the Brexit team is working on three main areas as the focus has moved away from planning for a 'no deal' Brexit. They are Promoting and encouraging EU nationals to apply for Settled Status; Monitoring the local economy; Monitoring any social impact on the local community.

- Free Health Checks – I have mentioned these previously, and last year nearly 7,000 people received them. We are offering the service again this year, giving anyone over the age of 40 an opportunity to have a free check-up every five years, to help identify those at higher risk of certain health problems, such as heart disease, diabetes, kidney disease, or stroke. It takes just 30 minutes for a healthcare professional to assess blood pressure, cholesterol, BMI, and lifestyle. They can advise patients there and then on any small changes they can make which could have a huge impact on their future health. More info about health checks is here <https://somersethealthchecks.co.uk/about-nhs-health-checks>.

- Brain in Hand – Something I have only just become aware of, as it is about to go live this month. It involves the adoption of 'Brain in Hand' assistive technology. County has purchased 30 licenses at a cost of £52,000 to pilot among people with learning disability or mental health issues. The app will look to increase people's independence, reduce anxiety, increase confidence, remember events, and help them feel supported, reducing the need for paid-for support in the future. If successful, it could also be used with children's services. It is part of the council's transformation programme which I have previously spoken about, where we seek to use technology and artificial intelligence to deliver services more cost-effectively. A recent example being the avatar robots we are using in schools for children who are unable to attend their classroom learning for a long period. Somerset is the first county to take up this initiative and already it is proving extremely successful.

- Slim My Waste, Feed my Face - Is coming to you shortly, this month, I believe. It is a 'behavioural change campaign' to increase recycling of food waste, which is a significant proportion of total waste generated in Somerset amounting to 42,000 tonnes per annum. If all of this was recycled, it would save the county £950,000 a year, and the equivalent of 882 tonnes of carbon. Somerset already recycles a lot, but the average rubbish bin still contains 25 per cent food waste which should be going to the county's anaerobic digestion plant where it can be turned into electricity and compost. No amount is too small - recycling six tea bags produces enough electricity to boil a kettle for another cuppa! A £110,000 fund has been secured from the council's Prevention Fund with additional match funding to from Viridor to bring it up to

£173,000. It is expected to deliver a total of £213,000 of savings over four years and prevent 5,000 tonnes of food waste going to landfill. This is an additional campaign to the Recycle More initiative. You should start to see more about this in the media and on social media shortly.

- Chairman's Community Awards – 'Community heroes' nominations are currently sought for the annual county council community awards. Nominations can be made online here <https://bit.ly/37iINJK> by 5 pm, Tuesday, 12th May. Paper nomination forms can be requested by emailing [CDJames@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:CDJames@somerset.gov.uk) or calling 01823 356859. Successful nominees and their nominators will be contacted in the week beginning Monday, 25th May. The award ceremony will be held in Taunton Rugby Club at 6.30 pm on Thursday 9th July.

- Talking Cafes – Another one I have mentioned previously. They offer a brilliant service and our Adult Social Care people now have 17 Talking Cafes and a network of community agents and village agents who work closely with county's social work teams to ensure that people are able to find solutions that help them live as independently as possible in their own home and community. To date, 5,519 people have been supported through the Talking Cafes. The nearest Talking Cafes are in Chard Library every Monday (except Bank Holidays) from 2 pm to 4 pm, in Taunton at The Great Western Hotel on Mondays (except Bank Holidays) and Musgrove Park Hospital (near the M&S outlet) on Wednesdays, both from 10 am to 1 pm. If you do Facebook there is more info here [www.facebook.com/talkingcafesomerset](https://www.facebook.com/talkingcafesomerset).

Cllr S Wakefield briefed CPC on the following points;

- The budget has been agreed and there will be no cuts in 2020/21. Car parking charges will increase in order to encourage shoppers to use the park and ride. Looking to make the park and ride more available on weekends
- The bus station will be closing down and the space may become a car park.
- Hoping to start building on the Firepool development by the end of the year. There will be a hotel on the development. There are currently three interested parties.
- Looking to reduce the number of housing developments and to increase the number of council properties.

Cllr S Wakefield was asked to look into what could be done in Corfe to address the speeding through the village. Cllr S Wakefield didn't think that CPC could have a pedestrian crossing due to there being no street lighting.

#### **3440: REPORTS OF PORTFOLIO HOLDERS.**

- **Planning:**

Cllr J. Sanders

**12/20/0002NMA**

Non-material amendment to application 12/19/0004 for changes to walls at Chapel Cottage, Honiton Road, Corfe.

This was approved.

- **Highways:**

Cllr B. Lenthall

There has been some tree and hedge cutting which has improved visibility near the Holme and Clavel.

- **Rights of Way:**

Cllr D. Bradbeer.

Nothing to report.

- **Website:**

Cllr J. Jackson

Nothing to report.

- **Village Hall:**

Cllr C. Brown

The noticeboard got damaged, but has now been repaired. The village hall minutes are now on the website. The farmers market will start in April and will take place on a monthly basis. Last Friday a general knowledge quiz took place which raised £350.

Next meeting will be 11th March.

The Thai Curry night 'fundraiser' has sold out.

### **Corfe Village: Green Initiative**

Grace Alexander introduced herself and indicated that she spoke as the representative for a group of Corfe residents, Corfe Village : Green Initiative (CVGI). She indicated that the aim of the group was to work together to respond to the climate emergency in a way that strengthened resilience as a village but also cohesion as a community. She referred to previous discussions about the racecourse road flooding, and commented on the power of one individual's actions on the landscape and us as a whole, and indicated that the converse is also true; that us acting as a group could also have a very powerful impact on our environment. She stated that this is an issue that affects us all, especially those with children and grandchildren, that our responsibility is to act in a way that is sustainable and mindful when using resources. This is particularly relevant as we are local to Taunton, but need cars to get there and so our lives are often set up to be resource intensive. She indicated that the focus of the group had been on identifying practical, simple steps that individuals could do within the village with the support of the group and each other, such as food bulk buys, growing own food, skills sharing. This has the additional benefit of closing economic loops locally, and supporting the financial health of the village. She acknowledged that there were pockets of people taking action but the role of CVGI would be to work alongside the PC and their members to make these decisions/sustainable choices joined up, easier, more accessible, and more obvious for our community as a whole. She suggested that working together with the PC could mean that there was more impact and effect on the village and that success and longevity of the initiative would only come if there was a high level of engagement from a breadth of people in the village. She reiterated that the CVGI was intended to be collaborative and widely inclusive, and recognised the other individuals and projects which are already focused on promoting sustainable and ethical practices. She asked for the support of the PC in developing this as an initiative within the community; this might be support in terms of helping spread the word and joining in, but that also that they may seek to work together to apply for grants and funding for specific projects, such as promoting active

recreation through community horticulture via a polytunnel. She also requested that the Parish Council create a new portfolio with the holder responsible for these issues.

CPC agreed to support the CVGI as and when required. It was suggested that this may be an opportunity for a new councillor to maintain this portfolio. In the meantime Cllr J Jackson agreed to be the portfolio holder.

#### **3441: Consultation on the Removal of the Public Telephone Box in Corfe.**

We are still awaiting a decision from BT and the Secretary of State. As a reminder, BT is looking to remove phone boxes that are used infrequently. In response, we sent the following form of words to the council regarding our phone box.

*Corfe Parish Council object on the grounds of mobile reception being patchy in Corfe. Also the telephone box is next to the village hall and a defibrillator and access to the telephone is needed to access the equipment if no mobile signal is available*

However, given there were no calls from our phone box in the last 12 months, we don't expect BT will allow us to continue with the service. A further update will be provided in due course.

#### **3442: S106 Remaining Funds - Recreational Facilities.**

Further to communication from Rebecca Staddon CPC are aware that there are £2654 in the S106 funds that will be lost if not spent by April 2021. Grace Alexander suggested that this could be used for the community polytunnel. It was agreed that this may need some further thought in terms of where it could go.

Some councillors are not keen to spend the money as it will increase the maintenance costs for CPC.

#### **3443: FINANCES.**

Cllr J. Harrison reported:

Bank Balance = £16,119.94

This is made up of: GATEWAY (£3,327.00); CORFE FETE FUNDS (£9,502.00); and PARISH COUNCIL - PRECEPT/GRANT (£2,674.53).

In addition, there is the S106 FUND = £2,567.00

#### **3444: CORRESPONDENCE**

Nothing to report

#### **3434: ANY OTHER BUSINESS.**

- Dog Mess. We have been asked by a number of parishioners to highlight the issue of dog mess given the sharp increase at the entrance to all paths and also along the grass verges on the approach to Barton Grange.

It is great to see so many new dogs around the village, but would owners please pick up their mess from places where people walk.

Thank you for your consideration.

- Cllr J. Harrison informed CPC that he was looking to stand down as Chair following his 7 years of service on the council.
- Sylvia's tree to go onto the agenda for the next meeting.
- CPC approved to share the cost with Trull Parish Council for the clerk to attend the following courses;
  - Preparation for internal audit £35.00
  - Understanding internal audit £35.00
  - Essential Clerk - Powers & Duties £30.00
  - Essential Clerk - Meetings, Agendas & Minutes £30.00

**The next meeting (AGM) will be held on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> May at 6pm.**

Chairman Cllr J. Harrison closed the meeting at 7.30pm