

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF CORFE PARISH COUNCIL
HELD AT CORFE VILLAGE HALL, TUESDAY 8th SEPTEMBER 2020.

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

In attendance: Mrs S. Millard-Jones, County Cllr John Thorne and 8 members of the public.

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

01/09: Re-appointment of the Clerk.

All councillors were in agreement regarding the re-appointment.

02/09: Apologies for Absence.

None.

03/09: Declarations of Interest.

Cllr C. Brown: Village Hall Committee.

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

04/09: Minutes of Meeting held 3rd March 2020.

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

05/09: Matters arising from those Minutes.

None

06/09: Appointment of a new Councillor.

No interest.

07/09: Reports of County and Borough Councillors.

Cllr J Thorne briefed CPC on the following;

- • **One Somerset** – The district councils in Somerset have now published their business case for alternative unitary proposals for two councils which they have termed Stronger Somerset. Unfortunately, you will now see the debate become more ‘political’ as the argument splits along party divides, something which I have always avoided bringing into my reports to you. I will continue to look at the issue from the perspective of what I believe is best for the communities I represent and not what my party might want, and to tell it to you as it is, without political ‘spin’. You can continue to give feedback into the issue using the online survey available on the bespoke One Somerset website www.onesomerset.org.uk and the Stronger Somerset site set up by the districts here www.strongersomerset.co.uk both of which have much more information available, and for One Somerset also with the paper copy in the most recent edition of the Your Somerset newspaper. I won’t comment on the negativity, misinformation, and lack of evidence-led statements in the Stronger Somerset business case because I’m sure that would just be interpreted as playing politics, and because I have not yet fully read through it myself. County

council committees continue to be held virtually using Microsoft Teams and anybody who wants to speak at one should register by calling 07790577336 or 07811 313837 or 07790 577232, or by emailing democraticservices@somerset.gov.uk. Details of upcoming meetings are available here <https://bit.ly/2YiKBRb>.

- **0300 790 6275** – This is still the number we recommend anybody to call, the Somerset Coronavirus Support Helpline, if they are in need of Coronavirus-related support from county or SWT councils. It has received nearly 8,000 calls so far and calls are coming at a regular rate throughout the week. It is staffed jointly by the four district councils and county council seven days a week 8 am to 6 pm. There is a focus now on channelling businesses and individuals to the helpline who find themselves in a redundancy position following the end of the furlough scheme and need financial, employment, mental, or upskilling support. The service does not provide medical advice and people should continue using the 111 NHS online service - and only ring 111 if you cannot get help online. Each district council's usual helpline number is also still available.

- **Dedicated coronavirus web page** – You can still find all coronavirus information and help from the county council in one place here <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/coronavirus/covid-19-latest-advice>. It is regularly refreshed throughout the day. You can sign up for automated updates.

- **Gateway Park & Ride** – Work is due to start any time now on security measures at the Gateway P&R site to prevent future incursions by travellers. I saw the plans about a year ago but funding was not available at that time. However, £49,000 which was going to be spent at the Silk Mills P&R has now been switched to Henlade instead and this will cover the project. It involves sinking large boulders into the ground, installing bollards, and putting in a height restrictor. Also, this month, EDF is due to start using the Gateway site for park and ride buses for their Hinkley Point C workforce.

- **Community Climate Fund** – It's official, the fund will now be launched in October as I originally pressed for. Your clerk will have received an email about it by now, or if not, she will very shortly. Grants of £5,000 to £75,000 are available for innovative parish-specific projects to reduce carbon emissions or help make Somerset resilient to the effects of climate change. Grants can be spent on both capital and revenue costs. You will have six weeks from 1st October to midnight on 12th November to submit bids. A second bid window will open on 1st December and also run for six weeks to midnight on 12th January. Multiple bids can be made during the application windows up to the maximum of £75k. They do not require match funding as I was previously told, but other funding can be added toward your project(s). Joint applications can be made by parish councils but only one can lead on the project and receive the grant money. Successful bids will be notified by 15th January and 11th March for the two windows. I have not yet looked at the application form (a sample of which is online), but one parish chairman tells me already that it has more questions than a National Lottery fund application! Loads more info is available here www.somerset.gov.uk/climate-emergency.

- **Mindline 01823 276 892** – This charity helpline is still operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week to provide a listening ear should you feel you want to talk to someone. They have had over 6,000 calls at the last count. County is still trying to attract more funding to help them develop the service further.

- **Small Business Grant Fund** – This has now closed to new applications. Latest stats show 11,034 grants have now been awarded, with circa 85 per cent of eligible claims processed and nearly 87 per cent of total funding now distributed, ie £132.52 million paid out. All outstanding claims for this original scheme had to be processed by the end of last week before funds are returned to Government.

- **J25** - Overnight closures of Toneway and Junction 25 gyratory will be in place from yesterday (Monday) for approximately three weeks to undertake resurfacing works. Diversion routes will follow those used in connection with the works previously undertaken on Toneway.
- **Libraries** – All public libraries have now reopened. Apart from Taunton, they still do not allow browsing of books on shelves. Other libraries are offering the new order-and-collect service which gives access to library books while staying safely socially distanced. Customers can choose a selection of up to 10 books, DVDs, or Talking Books which staff pick out for them, based on the types of authors or genres that are of interest to them. The order-and collect request form is available online here www.somersetlibraries.co.uk or by emailing librariesmail@somerset.gov.uk or calling. 0300 123 2224. One-hour computer sessions for internet access are available but must be pre-booked.
- **Brexit** – Remember this? One of my favourite topics! I thought it worthwhile reminding people about settled status applications for EU nationals. Although the deadline has been set as 30th June 2021, that is only if the UK makes the final break from the EU with an agreement in place. If there is no agreement when the transition period ends, then applications have to be in by December 2020. It is free at the moment to apply and people are encouraged to do so as early as possible. It is something for employers in particular to take note of if they want staff to legally remain and work here. Support is and advice is available from the county's Brexit Transition Team by emailing BrexitTeam@somerset.gov.uk and the application form can be found here <https://www.gov.uk/eusetledstatus>. Don't forget this also applies to those from Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland.
- **School transport** – County is laying on an extra 20 buses at peak times for college transport. Parents and students are being advised to walk, cycle, or be driven to school or college where possible. For those who use school transport, students are advised to sit with their year group and are strongly advised to wear face coverings on the bus. More info is here www.somerset.gov.uk/schooltransport.
- **Active Travel** – People are still being encouraged to use the Commonplace website to put forward ideas for changes to make it easier for walking and cycling. Their website is here <https://somersetcovidactivetravel.commonplace.is>.
- **Somerset Coronavirus Appeal** – Grants from £250 up to £10,000 are still available and to apply groups need to complete a short application form available at www.somersetcf.org.uk/coronavirus. Information on how to donate to the appeal is available here <https://www.somersetcf.org.uk/appeal>
- **Traffic lights/Pedestrian Crossings** – County is about to enter into a framework agreement for the refurbishment of traffic signal assets, which include things like Toucan and Pelican crossings, across Somerset. There are 287 traffic signal sites in use in Somerset at present plus 10 more becoming operational by the end of the year, and 112, or about 30 per cent, have exceeded their 15-year design life and are at significant risk of failure if they are not refurbished within the next few years. Any failure would require an upgrade to the installation which could take six to 12 months, during which time temporary traffic lights would have to be used. The Rowbarton lights in Taunton are being used as an example, where these are now about 40 years old. We now have money for capital funding to start refurbishing our traffic lights and the programme will involve updating the technology to increase junction capacities and making them more energy efficient
- **Covid-19 parish forum** - SPARK is hosting a forum with SALC on the 15th September aimed at parish and town councils. It will be an opportunity to showcase some of the councils in Somerset who really engaged in the Covid-19 response in their communities, co-ordinating local efforts

and experimenting with new ways of working. SPARK and SALC are hoping that this will initiate a conversation about how parishes can work better with the communities they serve and on the volunteering legacy from Covid-19. To register go to https://us02web.zoom.us/join/join?pwd=Zm9udG9z4tEtdXYBab_pbWDMGESkyf5Y7I

08/09: Reports of Portfolio Holders.

- **Planning:**

Cllr J. Sanders

- 12/20/0005**

Conversion of outbuilding to home office, gym area and shower room/toilet at Barton Grange, Barton Lodge, Queens Acre Lane, Corfe

This application is being re-submitted due to the building being used for business purposes.

- 12/20/0008**

Replacement of dwelling at Hurley Farm, Adcombe Lane, Corfe

RESOLVED: To support

- **Highways:**

Cllr B. Lenthall.

Issues with the pavement outside Brook Cottage. Highways have been made aware.

- **Rights of Way:**

Cllr D. Bradbeer.

No report.

- **Website:**

Cllr J. Jackson

Looking into getting the website ready in order to meet the Accessibility Regulations that come into place 23rd September. There is a government template that can be used. Awaiting on some guidance from the Trull Clerk and their website host.

- **Village Hall:**

Cllr C. Brown

The village hall is now open. A risk assessment has been completed, adhering to Covid government guidelines. If anyone has any concerns, can they contact Keith Gosling. The hall is now being cleaned twice weekly.

The Queens Acre plaque is in place and thanks were given to the Parish Council and Cllr J Harrison for their donations.

There have been problems with excess rubbish in the park over the summer, next year a bigger bin may be considered.

A member of the public suggested that a fence would be beneficial at the end of the field between the play equipment and the road.

09/09: Consultation on the Removal of the Public Telephone Box in Corfe.

We are still awaiting a decision from BT and the Secretary of State. 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.

It was highlighted that it appears as though BT have not inspected their phone box or maintained it in anyway and have allowed it to remain in disrepair prior to this consultation beginning. Therefore, to say that it had not been used is in fact only correct statistically because it could not be used because of this! A resident did point out that an emergency had occurred one night and that a member of the public had asked if they could use his phone because the telephone box was out of order. It is felt by many that the defibrillator and a phone box close by for emergencies should go hand in hand.

10/09: Green portfolio.

Cllr J Jackson will send an email out to all about the Climate Change Fund for ideas and will look to make an application for Corfe Parish Council.

11/09: S106 Remaining Funds - Recreational Facilities.

Further to communication from Rebecca Staddon CPC are aware that there is £2654 in the S106 funds that will be lost if not spent by April 2021. The PC are struggling to find an acceptable way to spend the funds.

12/09: Correspondence.

It was noted that the Annual Governance and the Accounting Statements Statement were in order and were approved for the Chair to sign.

13/09:

Cllr J. Harrison reported:

Bank Balance = £18,209.92

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

14/09: Items for the next meeting/agenda.

Speeding through the village.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 3rd November at 6pm.

Chairman Cllr J. Harrison closed the meeting at 6.55pm