

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF CORFE PARISH COUNCIL  
HELD AT CORFE VILLAGE HALL, TUESDAY 20<sup>th</sup> JULY 2021.**

Present: Cllr J. Harrison, Cllr C. Brown, Cllr D. Bradbeer, Cllr J. Jackson, Cllr G. Alexander, Cllr A. Butler. TDBC D. Johnson and 6 members of the public were present.  
Chairman Cllr J. Harrison opened the meeting at 6pm, welcoming all.

**29/09: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

- Cllr B. Lenthall. County Cllr J. Thorne. TDBC Cllr S. Wakefield

**30/09: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

- Cllr J. Harrison: Corfe Pitminster & Trull Almshouse Charity. Cllr C. Brown: Village Hall Committee.

**31/09: MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 4th May 2021.**

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

**32/09: MATTERS ARISING FROM THOSE MINUTES.**

- Matters arising were addressed. The right of way issue relating to continued flooding to the footpath close to Barton Grange was still outstanding so it was agreed that the farmer would be approached to discuss proposed actions with local residents.

**33/09: REPORTS OF COUNTY AND BOROUGH COUNCILLORS.**

- Cllr J. Thorne, SCC. Although not present on the night, Cllr Thorne presented a detailed report for viewing (see Appendix 1 below).
- Cllr S. Wakefield, TDBC. Although not present on the night, Cllr D. Johnson stood in to highlight significant points to those present and answer any questions on the pre-prepared report that was presented (see Appendix 2 below).

**34/09: REPORTS OF PORTFOLIO HOLDERS.**

**• Planning:**

- Cllr J. Harrison reported that no objections had been received in relation to the Brook Cottages application and the Hayne House solar farm proposal, which he had personally visited to ensure that it would not impact on the natural beauty of the area.

**• Highways:**

- Cllr B. Lenthall.

Nothing to report and passed this on as a comment to the meeting in his absence.

**• Rights of Way:**

- Cllr D. Bradbeer.

Reported that pathways had been cleared in what was one of the busiest times of the year for foliage growth.

**• Website:**

- Cllr J. Jackson.

The Parish Council continues to provide up-to-date information of interest to parishioners, including COVID-19 advice, The Country Code, How to report Fly-tipping, Online Fraud Prevention, and updates from SW & Taunton and other local councils.

These updates are provided via the website, WhatsApp groups, the village notice board, and a periodic newsletter. If you would like to find out more about our communication please contact:

[corfeparishclerk@live.com](mailto:corfeparishclerk@live.com)

If you would like to receive the newsletter, please sign up at: <https://www.corfevillagesomerset.org.uk/join-the-mailing-list/>

Once you have signed up, the newsletter will come from [corfeparishclerk@live.com](mailto:corfeparishclerk@live.com), so make sure to check your junk box.

Following a review of our advertisers, we now have three individuals/companies who advertise on our website, generating £50 a year. If you would like to advertise, please contact: [corfeparishclerk@live.com](mailto:corfeparishclerk@live.com)

#### • **Village Hall:**

##### • Cllr C. Brown/Keith Gosling (Village Hall Treasurer)

Keith Gosling reported that the Village Hall Committee has been actively seeking some new blood to support the existing committee members. New volunteers are welcome to come with open minds to our six meetings a year, which are minuted but are casual and relaxed in fashion. We are seeking ideas that would basically appeal to villagers both socially and practically, so any volunteer should be prepared to organise such an event while being supported from within the committee to achieve the agreed goal.

The Purchase of a dishwasher and the electrical rewiring issue was mentioned and discussed as a separate agenda item (see below).

#### • **Green Portfolio:**

• Cllr. G Alexander: Discussed the topic of applying for a grant for a community charging point for electric vehicles. GA acknowledged this was likely to be the direction that car travel will be going, and we, as a council, of course support any move towards sustainability.

GA outlined the potential consequences of a community charging point: that it would suit visitors rather than residents because of how the duration of charging would work and would be added to maps; given the flow of traffic through the village, avoiding congestion in other places, there is a possibility that we would become a 'service station' for people driving to Devon/Cornwall; the potential for this technology to become obsolete; and the need for policing in terms of use and payment.

We note that Stoke St Gregory have fitted two charging points at their Village Hall and GA is happy to discuss with them although, on balance, the view presented was that community charging points is not the way forward.

GA offered two potential alternatives for the medium/long term: (1) a car share which could be electric which would be located within the village and so for residents; (2) those with electric charging points (currently only two known of in the village, although there may be more) to sign up to the app CoCharge, which would allow charging points to be shared using an Airbnb model.

GA therefore presented the view that we should not, at this time, make any application for funding for a community charging point. It was also acknowledged that this fund was vastly oversubscribed and only parish councils who had put a lot of work into their applications would achieve any possibility of approval. However, with the shift to electric cars likely to accelerate over the next decade, we expect the discussion of the issue more generally will be ongoing in future meetings.

The feeling from the floor was that we should make sure that Somerset County Council are aware that we want to be part of this change when it comes and want to be included.

### **35/09: Corfe Village Hall Commercial Dishwasher Installation/Electrical Rewiring Issue.**

• Cllr. C. Brown/Keith Gosling (Village Hall Treasurer) reported that several hall users had made a request for a commercial dishwasher to be installed in the Village Hall.

Investigations had been made into the best options. A company with a proven track record, who has already contented local customers, has been chosen and a model proposed. The cost of such a device was discussed allowing those present to hear the pros and the cons for the expenditure that was expected. It was pointed out that a previous fund raising effort had already provided some funds towards the cost which were still held by the Village Hall Committee. The committee is proposing to pay two thirds of the cost of the appliance and it was hoped the Parish Council could provide the other third. A vote was then taken and in favour to purchase a dishwasher. The dishwasher will, however, require rewiring to be compliant with health and safety regulations so separate quotes will be obtained for this purpose, as well as the cost of some rewiring that the hall will now require due to its age. These will be presented for approval to the Parish Council in due course.

### **36/09: Corfe Speed Indication Device (SID) Update.**

• Cllr. C. Brown reported on the progress that was being made in providing Corfe with a SID (Speed Indication Device) to assist in reducing the traffic speeding problem through the village. At present, we are still awaiting Highways works to begin to install posts to house the SID device. Cllr C. Brown and Cllr. J. Harrison, who have been working hard to identify what they feel would be the most cost effective and reliable device they could find on the market, presented to those present a purchase proposal drawn up by Cllr C. Brown for Councillor's approval. A discussion then took place as to what the proven effects in speed reduction would be by having a SID from this particular company and it was agreed and voted on that a purchase could now be placed so long as the company in question could provide us with some statistical proof of speed reduction effectiveness from its product. Cllr C. Brown agreed to provide Cllr A. Alexander with this information once he had approached the company in due course.

It should be pointed out that we have just been informed by Avon and Somerset Police that we have been successful in obtaining a Police Road Safety Grant of £5000 towards the purchase/installation/training of the SID and we would like to express our gratitude to the Trustees involved for making this generous donation.

### **37/09: Somerset Bus Partnership/Bus Service for Corfe.**

Councillor Jackson reported on Bus Services.

There are plans to improve the current service in Somerset with the help of central government funds.

We have been asked as a Parish Council to respond to a bus service survey. Further details are on the village website – <https://www.corfevillagesomerset.org.uk/bus-service-review/> – and will appear in the next edition of Community Matters.

Bus Back Better is a national programme to boost the number of people travelling by bus. The plan is to rejuvenate the local bus market and make the service better in all regards.

The programme fits in with the government's climate emergency, leveling-up, and rural connectivity agendas.

Central government is offering £3bn across England (outside London) to help counties reintroduce bus services. They are looking for ambitious, but realistic, ideas and plans.

What it means for those Somerset parishes who have long complained that their local bus service is unfit for purpose, is that at last there is an opportunity to get a change for the better. For villages that don't currently have a service, there may be a chance to get one.

As you know Corfe has not had a bus service for many years despite holding a unique geographical position at the gateway of the Blackdown Hills and its neighbouring attractions. This is an ideal opportunity for us to push for a service of at least a couple of buses a day. This is more environmentally friendly for many residents than the countless car journeys that now appear to be norm.

The timetable is very tight. By October 2021, Somerset County Council (SCC) will write a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) which will assess the current state of the network and set out a plan to create a future network. By March 2022, the detailed mechanics of the new bus services have to be established and bids for support have to be submitted by SCC.

The Somerset Bus Partnership is a newly-constituted group set up to influence the 'Somerset Bus Improvement Plan' that's currently being prepared to ensure it includes proposals that will mean a better bus services. They are looking to produce a detailed document.

SCC is also being advised by consultants WSP who are also seeking feedback ahead of their report.

We have been asked to contribute our thoughts and ideas of what we would like to see in the plan. We should highlight our views on the whole bus infrastructure, rather than just the service itself.

If you have any thoughts on the subject of a bus service, please tell us at: [corfeparishclerk@live.com](mailto:corfeparishclerk@live.com)

You can view the Principles document here:

<https://www.corfevillagesomerset.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Bus-Service-Principles.pdf>

### **38/09: FINANCES.**

- Cllr. J. Harrison reported that our current cash position was still healthy, with a bank balance of £19202.45

However, it should be noted that £2,500 of this balance is from a Community Chest Grant that can only be used for purchasing a SID device and £3,327 is from previous resident donations and fund raising activities related to speed reduction through the village that were then earmarked at a previous meeting for a Corfe Gateway project.

The balance for Parish Council expenditure is therefore £13375.45

A spreadsheet was supplied to councillors showing the finances for 2020/21 and current expenditure.

### **39/09: CORRESPONDENCE**

- No Correspondence has been received for comment.

### **40/09: ANY OTHER BUSINESS.**

- A thank you to Grace Alexander and Andrew Butler for stepping forward as Parish Councillors was made by the Chairman.

The tarmac footpath that exists between the church and the main road opposite the church is in need of repair and questions from the floor were raised as to who was responsible for repairing it. The consensus was that it was the church who owned it and that it was their responsibility to carry out repairs.

Pavements. These still remain neglected compared to the roads, with little or minimal maintenance over the years being applied. Could they be properly re-tarmacked in due course was the feeling of the meeting.

The large trees in the centre of Corfe close to the main road were now becoming overgrown in places. A request for some trimming especially at pedestrian height level was raised and it was hoped that this could be done by nearby residents.

Rubbish bins are being overfilled in the village on occasions, especially at Queens Acre. Consideration as to what is being placed into them like food items was commented on. Please be considerate when using the bin for food waste as it often attracts pests as a consequence.

Dog Poo Bin. Corfe now has its first official dog poo bin. It is situated at the Village Hall Car Park and will be emptied on a weekly basis in the first instance depending on usage during the year. Other bins may well be purchased in due course depending on the success of this bin. **A big thank you to Tony Dewhirst for volunteering to install the bin.**

**Hopefully this will help reduce the level of dog mess around the village.**

A request from the floor to add a new memory to the History Tree in Queens Acre was made to commemorate the death of HRH Prince Phillip the Duke of Edinburgh. Those present agreed that this was a good proposition and so it was approved on the night.

**Date of Next meeting: Tuesday 21st September 2021 at 6pm – details to be confirmed.**

### **Appendix 1 – Cllr John Thorne**

- **Covid stats** – The latest figures show infection rates in Somerset have, predictably, started to rise again from a low of 4.1/100k and in the past six weeks the figure has rocketed to 159.4/100k, although it is still below the 277.2/100k for the South West and the 345.1/100k for England, both of which have also risen significantly. The latest R number range for the South West by the weekend was 1.2-1.5. The surge is happening mostly in people aged under 30 years and much of it is believed to be because of contacts during the recent European football tournament. However, it is worth noting that we have not had any Covid deaths in Somerset for several weeks, nor any Covid patients in our acute hospitals. The hospitals, do, however, remain very busy with other patients. Somerset continues to have one of the lowest infection rates in the country, coupled with one of the highest vaccination rates in the country. Nearly 85 per cent of the eligible population have now had at least one vaccination and nearly 100 per cent of the over 55s have also had their second jab and in excess of 90% of the 50-54 age range. A number of walk-in vaccination centres have been organised, including at Taunton Racecourse for first and second doses of both the AstraZeneca and Pfizer vaccines, and at Boots Pharmacy and Taunton Tourist Information Centre for first and second Pfizer doses. In case you know of anybody in any of the priority groups who for whatever reason has not had

their job, then please let them know that it is not too late and they still can book a jab. I understand that booster jabs will start to be offered from September.

- **Covid transport** – The free bus service from Taunton town centre to the vaccination centre at Taunton Racecourse has been withdrawn because there were too few people using it. The service was being used by an average of fewer than two passengers per day. The county council will continue to offer free transport for concessionary pass holders to all vaccination centres on community transport and Slinky services. For people who do not have a concessionary pass, as long as they do not have access to their own car, they can use Slinky services or community transport by registering directly with Somerset Accessible Transport (the in-house fleet operation) and book a journey by telephoning 01823 331266. The maximum fare they would pay on Slinky is £5.00. Community transport is a bit more expensive, but the Slinky fare compares favourably with those on current bus services.

- **Local 0 (zero)** – This a new local scheme to help reach individuals who have tested positive quicker. Information is still registered nationally, but the contact tracing is now all carried out locally. It is intended to trace people quicker to let them know they need to isolate, and so break the chain of transmission. Using local call centre staff with local accents and local knowledge is shown to encourage people to engage more, and we can build into the service the add-ons such as food and prescription deliveries. Somerset has been part of this as a pilot project for some time, but from last month we are now doing it on our own.

- **Somerset Coronavirus helpline** – The Coronavirus support helpline number 0300 790 6275 continues to operate seven days a week from 8 am to 6 pm offering a range of support from help accessing food or medicines, to emotional and financial support, and employment, housing, and business advice. It is still just as busy as it has been throughout the pandemic and has received more than 14,000 calls, made nearly 134,000 calls, and booked more than 32,000 appointments.

- **Local Government Reorganisation 1** – There was possibility we could have heard before the end of June which form of unitary council is going to take over, as late June/early July was the timeframe I was recently given for the Secretary of State's decision. However, it has not yet been announced and we still await the decision which will now come by Thursday (22<sup>nd</sup>) at the latest. In the meantime, the county council is setting up consultative groups which will help to shape the way a unitary council will work should the One Somerset model be adopted. County wants to work in partnership with key stakeholders over the next 18 months in shaping the future of local public services in our county. Anybody interested in becoming involved in one of the consultative groups should email [onesomerset@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:onesomerset@somerset.gov.uk).

- **Local Government Reorganisation 2** – More detail is emerging about local community networks (LCNs) proposed under the One Somerset unitary model. They will comprise clusters of parish councils, each of whom will have one representative on the LCN. They will be formed around parish council boundaries and current county council division boundaries and all unitary councillors within the area will be members. Each LCN will have a revenue and capital budget and will be serviced by dedicated unitary council officers. They will also include representatives from

health, education, police, fire, and the voluntary and community sector. Everything except planning and licensing can be on their agenda. They will meet between six and eight times per year. Decisions will require the support of a majority of the unitary councillors that sit on them. A detailed Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) will be commissioned for each LCN to identify the community profile and social, economic, and health challenges the communities face. The JSNA will be the evidence base for decisions to be taken. There will be around 15 to 20 LCNs across the county. A board is currently being established by the county council to oversee the formation of the LCNs and they will be expected to have up to four LCNs established and running on a pilot basis from the autumn. If you are thinking to yourselves that the LCNs sound rather like mini-district councils, then I would agree with you.

- **Democracy** – The next meeting of the full county council takes place tomorrow (Wednesday) and will be held in the MacMillan Theatre, in Bridgwater at 10 am. It has been moved from the Shire Hall in Taunton because the courts are running flat out at the moment, and we cannot use County Hall because there is not enough room. There will be no public attendance as far as I am aware because the theatre does not have the facility for people to take part remotely. So, I will be interested to learn how the council gets around legislation which requires all meetings to be open to the public.

- **Gateway Park and Ride 1** – You may be aware of concerns expressed about a car meet which was held at the site one Sunday evening recently, complete with PA system, burger van, and ice cream van. The police were called and moved the attendees of within the hour. However, it seems that this sort of activity cannot be prevented because EDF are now using the site 24/7 so it is not locked, and the height restrictors are intended to deny access to traveller vans but won't stop cars entering. I have a little knowledge of car meets because I accidentally attended one a few years ago on the Hankridge retail park. However, my battered old Ford Mondeo Ghia did not attract much interest from the others attending it! While they are not especially a problem in themselves, except under current Covid restrictions, they do cause congestion on the roads and can block access for ordinary members of the public.

- **Gateway Park and Ride 2** – A new contract for P&R services has been let to Buses of Somerset after a procurement exercise because the existing contract expired early last month. It has been awarded on a 'cost basis' rather than a subsidised one, which seems to mean that the county council will be able to have a say on fare structures, which I hope will either lead to cheaper tickets or at least prevent increases in prices. I am still awaiting clarification on that point. There was talk of including electric vehicles and other green initiatives but in the end they proved too expensive so were omitted but the option is available to introduce them later if they become more cost efficient. There are no changes to the timetable.

- **Bus services** – The county council is preparing a bus service improvement plan (BSIP) as part of the Government's national bus strategy 'Bus Back Better' announced in March, which made £100k available to us. The BSIP has to be published by 31<sup>st</sup> October and to inform the plan the county is holding a series of engagement events with stakeholders during the summer. It has not been clarified if



this includes parish councils, but I am pressing to ensure it does, as I know so many of you share my desire to see more buses more often serving our rural communities. Somerset has the fourth lowest bus usage of any county in England. Additionally, a public consultation is about to be launched for people to have their say, whether or not they currently use buses. The county's communications team will be putting out info about this any day now. The final version of the BSIP is due to be considered by the council's cabinet on Wednesday, 20<sup>th</sup> October, should anybody wish to go along. The BSIP will set out the county's ambitions for public transport and Government will look at it and make decisions on how much funding we need (that is the theory, anyway!) to bring it about.

- **Rural broadband** – I have genuinely been shocked to uncover a previously hidden fact about Connecting Devon and Somerset's roll out of a gigabit capable fibre broadband network for our rural areas. While in theory it can be claimed to be true, in practice it turns out to be far from the actual truth. This is because CDS is using Airband UK to deliver the network in this area and Airband is only offering two packages, 100 MBs and 250 MBs, which means users cannot achieve gigabit speeds, only a maximum of 25% of the potential. I was previously informed by CDS that the network was 'open access', i.e., users did not have to take a service with Airband (nor previously with Gigaclear) but could sign up with any broadband provider they chose. The discovery arises from a recent online argument I had with an Airband representative. I am now informed that any commercial provider which wants to use the network has to apply for consent from Airband to do so. To date, no such applications have been made. This means that the only broadband provider using the network will be Airband, so homes and businesses which want to connect will have to sign up with Airband, and their minimum term contract is 18 months. After this time, they will again be free to go with any other commercial provider which may have started to use the network. Apparently, this has always been the case but has never been explained to me, nor, I believe, to other councillors.

- **Climate change community fund** – You may know that I have been pressing for another £1 million to be found to meet some of the unsuccessful bids to this fund and after being told they would be trying to help some of these, I now understand that £350,000 will be available, although I don't have any detail on this yet.

- **Rowbarton traffic lights scheme** - The scheme to install state of the art traffic lights at this complex road junction near Taunton Railway Station which began in March is being extended because of complications such as the discovery of thick concrete layers and the fact that gas mains and electricity cables are not buried as deep as was thought. So, instead of being completed this month, the work will now continue until the autumn. It will now also include full road surfacing across all affected roads. There will be temporary traffic lights, lane closures, and whole road closures during this time. The work is being carried out by Alun Griffiths, the same contractors who have delivered the J25 and Nexus 25 link road scheme. The average life of traffic lights is 15 years, and the Rowbarton lights are now 40 years old. The work is designed to improve traffic flow and make it safer for pedestrians and cyclists. The project is the first of a major £9 million programme to overhaul of traffic signal systems across Somerset over the next three years.



- **Toneway Creech Castle** – The improvement works which were postponed last spring due to the pandemic will now start on 9<sup>th</sup> August and will take approximately a year to be completed. There will clearly be major disruption for traffic. The decision was taken because there was a risk of £6.7 million funding being lost, which represents the majority of the £8.3 million cost. Improved facilities for cyclists and pedestrians will be a significant element of the scheme. More info is going to be available here <https://www.travelsomerset.co.uk/tonewaycc/> although when I checked the site last night it had not yet been updated!

- **Armed Forces Week** – To mark the recent celebration of our Armed Forces, the county has launched a ‘Veterans Guaranteed Interview Scheme’. It means any veteran who has left the Armed Forces in the past five years will be guaranteed an interview with the authority if they apply and meet the essential criteria for a job. The guarantee also applies to the veterans’ partners. (Separately, county are also doing this for any young person leaving care, guaranteeing an interview as part of an initiative to help looked after children move on and make a life for themselves).

- **Libraries 1** – Volunteers are being sought to help support this year’s Wild World Heroes Summer Reading Challenge which will be a celebration of nature, reading, and more. The challenge, which runs across all public libraries, aims to encourage children to read six books during the summer holidays while also engaging in a host of fun events and activities online or at their local library. More than 7,100 children took part in 2019. Volunteers need to be aged 14 and can help to register children for the challenge, design activities and events, create displays, promote the challenge on social media, or run outdoor storytelling events with Somerset Libraries’ staff. More info here <https://volunteering.somerset.gov.uk>.

- **Libraries 2** – An audio explainer has been developed which allows visually impaired people to hear about the inclusive services that are available to them. It was launched as part of the recent Hi Vis fortnight which was an awareness campaign seeking to highlight the world of accessible reading. This year’s theme is diversity of reading. More info here <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/libraries-leisure-and-communities/libraries/libraries-services/books-on-prescription>.

- **Libraries 3** – Covid restrictions are being lifted in public libraries from Saturday (24<sup>th</sup>) so there will be no need for library users to socially distance or wear masks from that date. However, people are being asked to be considerate of others and continue to be cautious. Activities which are held indoors will continue for the time being to be for limited numbers and managed in a Covid-safe way.

- **Somerset Fund** - Another round of bidding for support from the Somerset Fund has opened, with grants available up to £2,500 for core costs for smaller charities, community groups, sports clubs and social enterprises based in Somerset (those which are run on less than £100k a year). The fund was created by the county council in 2018 and is managed for us by the Somerset Community Foundation (SCF). Grants can be used to pay for ongoing running costs, known as core costs, as well as capital costs. The deadline for the current application round is 5 pm on Friday, 13<sup>th</sup> August. Applications can be made via SCF’s website [www.somersetcf.org.uk/apply](http://www.somersetcf.org.uk/apply) and more info is available by emailing [info@somersetcf.org.uk](mailto:info@somersetcf.org.uk) or calling 01749 344949. To date, 96 good causes have been supported across Somerset, with more than £170,000 given in grants.

- **Rights of Way** – During the coronavirus pandemic there has been a big rise in the number of people using the county’s 9,000 public rights of way across a network which totals 3,843 miles (6,186 km). This has meant a huge upsurge in the number of reports being received, at times double that from previous years. Through the Rights of Way team and nearly 400 volunteers, the ‘easy to use’ grading of the network has risen to 85.7 per cent, the highest since records began in 2003, when it was just 39.2 per cent. Anyone interested in helping the team can find out more here [www.volunteering.somerset.gov.uk](http://www.volunteering.somerset.gov.uk).

- **Electric vehicle charging strategy** – County has adopted an electric vehicle charging strategy which has been prepared together with the four district councils. It is intended as a high-level direction of travel (no pun intended) document and does not commit to the spending of any money. It is part of the commitment to make Somerset carbon neutral by 2030 and comes after stats showed traffic was responsible for 46 per cent of CO2 emissions in Somerset. It predicts most EVCPs will be provided on private land such as supermarkets and other destination sites and workplaces rather than being provided by the public sector. Separate work is being commissioned on options and technical solutions for on-street EV charging.

- **SEN School** - The £23 million county council-funded state-of-the-art Polden Bower School, in Bridgwater, has been completed. It will cater for 160 pupils with complex needs and is part of a wider council programme to boost provision for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) in the county. The purpose-built school will cater for students aged four to 16 years with the most complex needs, including those with significant mobility difficulties. A further 40 places for young people aged 16-19 years will be provided at the existing Penrose School site. Primary aged children started on site in June, with older children following this month, so they can become accustomed to their new environment before the start of the new school year in September.

## Appendix 2 – Sarah Wakefield

1. Council meetings are now being held in person and can be viewed by webcast. We have now had 3 planning committee meetings, one Audit and Governance, Executive and Community Scrutiny meetings in the last month. As I am now a member of the planning committee I cannot comment publicly on planning matters which might come before the committee although I can still receive emails and lobbying of course.
2. The next Full Council meeting has been re-scheduled to 27 July following the delay in further relaxation of Covid restrictions. It will be a challenge to get all 59 Cllrs and officers in the chamber for that meeting. I am proposing to bring a motion to that meeting to oppose the planning changes currently outlined by the government in its White Paper. These major changes would, if implemented, severely limit the power of local communities to challenge and oppose just such applications as the one we dealt with recently being part of the Comeytrove Garden Community (as we must now call it) and the ones your PC comments on and in future the attempt to get permission to develop Orchard Portman Farm. (which Cllrs will know is now owned

and land banked by Taylor Wimpey). There is also a change to the use classes happening on 1<sup>st</sup> August by the creation of Use Class G (which basically allows property in town centres to be changed from commercial to residential use without planning permission). There is another change to the way affordable housing is provided and sold by developers requiring it to be offered for sale for six months to first time buyers.

3. Speeding Traffic/Traffic calming: Dawn Johnson has held a meeting with SCC about the options for measures which could be introduced to control speed and discourage speeding in our ward mostly in relation to Trull. The information she gleaned will be useful but basically any traffic calming measures wanted by PCs have to be paid for locally and not by SCC. However, with regard to spoil lorries or other large vehicles using the Honiton Road or the Corfe Road I am advised that registration numbers, times and contractor company details need to be collected before we can expect to get any help with controlling this.
4. Household waste and recycling collections: Cllrs may be aware that Somerset Waste Partnership has experienced difficulties recently and that there have been quite a lot of missed collections including of garden waste. SWP have apologised and indicated that a shortage of trained drivers and of locum drivers has contributed. Their website should help with updates but if you do not get satisfaction from SWP please report any continuing problems to Dawn or myself.
5. Boundary Changes and by elections: The proposed constituency changes for Westminster have been published recently. Cllrs will no doubt be pleased that Trull Pitminster and Corfe are set to remain in the Taunton Constituency but may be surprised to hear that areas like Norton Fitzwarren, Cotford St Luke, Staplegrove and Bishops Lydeard are all proposed to become part of a new Tiverton and Minehead Constituency. We have long known that Taunton Deane constituency is already far too populous and would have to be slimmed down but the break up is far more severe than anticipated. There is time for people to comment online until 2 August. I am pleased to report that a by-election for SWT was held on 24 June in North Curry and Ruishton (which includes Stoke St Mary). It was won by Barrie Hall – a Liberal Democrat who teaches at Richard Huish and lives in Helland just outside North Curry.
6. Unitary decision: We have been told to expect a decision before the summer parliamentary recess towards the end of this month but it could come at any time. The result of the poll held by the district councils without the co-operation of Somerset County Council was a 2/3 : 1/3 vote in favour of the Stronger Somerset 2 council model on a 25% turnout of voters. You can read that whichever way you like.
7. Our Liberal Democrat team organised a public meeting on 18 June in Stoke St Mary for people concerned about the sale of the Orchard Portman Estate by the Crown to Taylor Wimpey for a fraction of its value as development land. We will be working with concerned local residents to challenge both the sale of the land (without any uplift provisions) and to seek to protect it from development as far as possible. We have organised a petition against development on this land, which has already attracted over 400 signatures. If people would like to sign it, details can be found at [tdld.co.uk/orchard\\_portman](http://tdld.co.uk/orchard_portman)
8. I am continuing to attend the A358 duelling forums to keep abreast of plans to bring that matter forward (being run by Highways England with its chosen partner Taylor Woodrow/Arup). Could these 2 matters (A358 and Orchard Portman) be related I

wonder? Details of junctions and their layout are being designed now and affected parish councils are putting forward their ideas and objections.