

Report to Corfe PC January 2022

I understand from the Clerk that you are not meeting this month but I would like to bring to your attention the following matters on behalf of District Cllr Dawn Johnson and myself:

1. At Full Council on 7 December SWT Council, after consultation, we adopted two important new design guides. These are the SWT Districtwide Design Guide and the Public Realm Design Guide for Taunton Garden Town. These design guides are important additional tools for planning officers and residents in seeking to require higher and better standards of design particularly in large developments such as Orchard Grove (Comeytrowe Urban Extension). As I may have mentioned previously because the planning system has been loosened over recent years it is important for Councils to bolster the strength of their local plans and requirements particularly in order to force developers to upgrade and update their layouts and building design. It is to be hoped that these new powers will produce a better standard of design moving forwards. The Council has also agreed to continue the existing council tax support programme with no changes. This is an income-related local discount scheme that helps people on low incomes to pay their council tax.
2. Cllrs may be aware that work has started on the design of the institutions of the new unitary authority – to be known as Somerset Council. It has been announced that elections for the new authority will take place in May 2022 and it is likely, though not yet certain, that elections for parish and town councils may now also take place at the same time but if not they will be now in May 2023. The new Somerset Council will take over from 1 April 2023 and will sit until 31 March 2027. The Local Government Re-organisation (LGR) Joint Committee – made up of the 4 district Leaders and the Leader of SCC and 4 other members of the SCC cabinet has started meeting with a second meeting due to take place in February (as a planned December meeting was postponed due to Covid). SWT Council has now agreed to the setting up of an LGR Scrutiny Committee with 2 members from each district and 8 from SCC chosen on the basis of the political balance of each council. SWT will have one Lib Dem and one Independent Group member and meetings are likely to start early this year.
3. Trull Parish, local to Pitminster and Corfe, will need to decide what, if any, changes it would like to be made to its boundaries in connection with the setting up of the new Taunton Town Council. The first consultation on the area to be included within the new Town Council closes on 12 January 2022 after which the SWT council working group will review the input and make recommendations about the new Town Council boundaries. Account will be taken of the views of PCs, who are representatives of their communities, as well as individual representations. A proposal will then be made and a further consultation with parishes affected will take place before the Council makes a final decision. Much of the Orchard Grove development is in fact immediately adjacent to the Comeytrowe Parish area rather than to Trull itself. Whatever decision is made regarding its final shape and extent Trull PC together with Pitminster PC and Corfe PC will all become part of one of the new Local Community Networks (tasked with providing some additional local services over a wider area through links with adjoining parishes). There is to be a conference about LCN's early this year to which all PC's should receive invites.
4. By way of information only as it is not in Corfe, a small 6m part of the stone wall along Trull Road near Gatchell Oaks will be removed by the developer between now and next summer in order to implement the permission to demolish much of the wall in connection with the construction of the new roundabout at the Trull end of the spine road. There will be a short term (a week we think) restriction of the road to one lane with lights) and the land behind the wall will be scraped back and some trees and vegetation removed. A post and rail fence will be erected. Whilst this is regrettable at least the work on the roundabout and other demolition and removal of

- trees, after representations made by us as ward councillors, will not take place until the development moves much closer to Trull itself (some years away).
5. The A358 consultation has now ended and we understand that work will not progress on the final drawings for junctions and construction of the carriageways. Sarah made a strong submission to the effect that although the junctions at the Ilminster and Taunton ends of that road urgently need improvements and Henlade desperately needs a bypass the rest of the road does not need to be made a dual carriageway throughout its entire length. This is because the effect of this will be to cut off many roads between parishes and settlements, the A358 does not become congested now except at each end and traffic will not be attracted to use the new road when the M5 is usually at a standstill at weekends in the summer in any event.
 6. Orchard Portman land sale. We are still running a petition about this which can be accessed at www.tdld.co.uk/orchard_portman We are also still exploring every option to have the sale re-examined and to ensure that the land concerned is not allocated for development in any updated or new local plan for Taunton and its surrounds.
 7. Although PC meetings are not happening at present please remember that PC members or residents are welcome to contact either of us at any time if you have an issue with which we may be able to help. Sarah's details are as follows: Sarah – tel 421461 Cllr.S.Wakefield@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

Cllr Sarah Wakefield