

**MINUTES OF THE CORFE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**  
**HELD AT CORFE VILLAGE HALL, TUESDAY 20<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2022.**

**Present:** Cllr J Harrison, Cllr B Lenthall, Cllr C Brown, Cllr D Bradbeer, Cllr J Jackson, Cllr G Alexander, SCC Cllr R Henley.

Four members of the public.

Chairman Cllr J Harrison opened the meeting at 6.30pm, welcoming all.

**96/09: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.** – Cllr G Alexander and SCC Cllr S Wakefield.

**97/09: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.** Cllr Harrison: Almshouse Trust. Cllr C Brown: Village Hall Committee.

**98/09: MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 19th JULY 2022** - Were discussed briefly. The Minutes have been circulated, published, and signed as accurate records.

**99/09: MATTERS ARISING FROM THOSE MINUTES** - Nothing was commented on.

**01/10: REPORTS OF COUNTY AND BOROUGH COUNCILLORS.**

Cllr R Henley of Somerset County Council and SWT highlighted several issues that appear in a written report (see Appendix below).

Cllr A Butler to look into the Coalition of Parish Council's questionnaire which needs to be submitted by mid-October November with any Parish Council ideas on the three proposals plus any of our own on this subject.

**02/10: Co-opting of Parish Councillors.** – Following reports that two of our current Parish Councillors have yet to be officially registered, following the local elections, it was agreed that we would co-opt them onto the Council. This was actioned so that correct process was followed. Cllr A Butler was co-opted. Cllr G Alexander was also co-opted in her absence. Cllr A Butler also agreed to seek the appropriate papers so that registering could be completed.

**03/10: REPORTS OF PORTFOLIO HOLDERS.**

**PLANNING: Cllr J Harrison** – Reported he had received no applications although it was noted that an application at Brookside had been posted and that the date for any objections had now passed. On viewing the application online, Councillors, however, agreed verbally that what was being proposed was OK and no objection from Councillors was appropriate. Nothing further to report.

**HIGHWAYS: Cllr B. Lenthall** – Reported stones that had fallen from a wall located to the North of the Duddlestone turning on the B3170 had been removed. Three cars sustained damage as a result and no repairs had yet been applied to the wall and that further problems could occur if this was not addressed. Cllr B Lenthall will make the landowner aware and request they take appropriate action as soon as possible.

A member of the public also referred to the bends that are narrow on the approaches to Taunton Racecourse highlighting that after having his own wing mirror destroyed while travelling through them that a serious accident is likely to happen, especially at night. On personal inspection of the area, he found many such wing mirrors parts were present. He asked if the cat's eyes on the bends were now encouraging drivers to negotiate the bends in a more central way.

Grit bins owned by the Parish have been damaged as previously reported. Highways have confirmed that they will not be replacing them and that the Parish Council would have to do this from their budget. The bins will cost c. £150 to replace. It was agreed this would be done to allow replenishment of grit.

**RIGHTS OF WAY: Cllr D. Bradbeer** - Had nothing further to report. A brief discussion took place on improvement measures that have been made in and around Hurley Farm. Concerns regarding Cattle grazing in fields near Heale was also touched upon with advice on dealing with them when walking dogs.

**WEBSITE: Cllr J Jackson** – The website remains well used. He had nothing further to report.

**VILLAGE HALL: Cllr. C. Brown** – Keith Gosling gave a brief update on Village Hall matters of interest.

Hand driers have been installed in the gents and disabled toilet which should help remove the need for paper towels.

New signage for Queen's Acre has now been erected by Cllr. John Harrison (Chair of Parish Council) and our thanks go to him for the work done.

Nigel Furniss is continuing to progress draft plans for a possible extension to the Village Hall. He distributed copies to those present and answered questions from the floor along with Keith Gosling. These will be shared with the Parish Council in due course once the complicated issue of required funding can be addressed before hopefully moving forward to obtaining planning permission. The Parish Council expressed their thanks to Keith and Nigel for what they had done so far with this proposal.

Village Hall meeting minutes are now available for public viewing on the Corfe Village Website: <https://www.corfevillagesomerset.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/VH-May-2022.pdf> They are also displayed on the Village Hall Notice Boards as and when they occur.

**GREEN PORTFOLIO** – Cllr. G Alexander was not present and no report was submitted. No further progress on obtaining an area for green horticulture has been made.

**ALMSHOUSE CHARITY SELICKS GREEN REPORT** – Cllr J Harrison – Nothing further to report since the last meeting.

**04/10: FINANCES** – Cllr J Harrison provided an update on finances. Our current cash position is a bank balance of £24,237.06. Monies currently being held within this total that are protected include: £3,327.00 reserved for the Corfe Gateway project and £1434.67 held on behalf of the suspended Corfe Lifts group. We therefore have a true Parish Council Balance of £19,475.39 as of 20/09/2022. Payments made since last meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2022 included: British Heart Foundation for £198.00, Parsons

Landscapers for £137.23, new swing straps of £160.15 (not yet cashed), and new Queen's Acre signs £76.80 (not yet cashed).

Income received since the last meeting: SWT Council contribution of £805.

**05/10: CORRESPONDENCE** – Trees extending into cottages from church grounds requiring maintenance. Cllr Lenthall reported that he would be seeing to this. It has been reported that the field previously used for the Corfe Fete situated behind the church was being used for dog exercise with owners not clearing up any waste from their animals. Councillors agreed that this was not a Parish Council responsibility, but that of the landowner, and were also told that the entry gate had now been padlocked

**06/10: ANY OTHER BUSINESS** – It has been reported that the new owner of The White Hart Inn at Corfe is currently canvassing local businesses to help him decide how best to proceed with renovations and appeal to the local area with what he could eventually offer. It is his intention to come to Corfe in November and a meeting with the Parish Council and residents to help with this process has been suggested.

The village notice board has currently been removed to allow for new hinges to be inserted. Our thanks go to Cllr J Harrison and Tony Dewhirst for taking on this action following reports of notices being blown onto the highway.

**Following the death of Queen Elizabeth II, Corfe Parish Council wishes to extend its deepest sympathies to her family.**

**Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday 15th November 2022 at 6pm.  
Please note the return to an earlier start time.**

## Appendix – Report from Dawn Johnson Somerset County Council and SWT - September 2022

### Local Community Networks

A consultation regarding the development of the much-anticipated Local Community Networks (LCNs) is soon set to launch. Somerset Council will cover a very large geographical area and so needs local committees of the council where voices can be heard, partners brought together, and decisions taken with the benefit of local knowledge and experience.

Throughout the summer officers of County and District Councils have been working on options for the following aspects of LCNs:

**Function** – the roles and responsibilities of LCNs in the first and subsequent years of Somerset Council.

**Form** – options for the boundaries of the LCNs, using existing democratic boundaries and community infrastructure.

**Name** – does Local Community Network describe the form and function of the committees?

**Finance** – as inflation impacts on all council budgets, LCNs must be affordable in the first year

yet able to develop in future years as savings are realised from the move to one council.  
**Governance** – as Committees of Somerset Council, the LCNs will have a formal role and be supported by Democratic Services at the Council.

The consultation will be launched on 1<sup>st</sup> September and run to mid-October, and will seek the views of parish, town & city councils, partner organisations and individuals on the function, form and name for LCNs. A comprehensive communications strategy is currently being drawn up ready for the launch of the online consultation. The responses will form an important part of the recommendations for the Somerset County Council Executive and Full Council.

## Finance Update

Somerset County Council, like many councils, is experiencing significant financial challenges in the current year. Inflationary factors, as we are all experiencing in our home lives, affect a large Council on a large scale. Energy costs, travel costs, increases in construction materials have all added to our costs and in turn that has affected the pay award for this year. SCC is part of a national negotiation and the latest employers' offer, equivalent to 5.5% increase, has not been accepted.

Other factors are having an adverse effect on Adults and Children's services, with increases in external placements post-Covid and the same inflationary factors impacting on the companies and organisations that provide residential placements. They are also seeing greater challenges in providing the right level of staffing, with a very competitive labour market throughout the country.

The Council's Senior Leadership Team is already working on plans to reduce the projected overspend, and some areas of the Council are now projecting underspends.

Of course, this financial year's projections have an impact on the first-year budget of the new Somerset Council. Savings will be made when the five councils come together as one Unitary Council but those savings won't be in place on day one, so it is essential that different ways of working and other plans are put in place early in the autumn. The Executive will continue to receive monthly budget monitoring reports as well as the ongoing reporting on Local Government Reorganisation.

## Council Tax Support Scheme Consultation

A consultation on council tax support for the new unitary Somerset Council has launched. This is the first major consultation for the new Somerset Council and it proposes that the lowest income households across Somerset get 100% council tax relief.

Somerset's four district councils currently offer varying levels of council tax support. The proposed changes would harmonise support for working-age people on low incomes across the county and come into effect on 1 April 2023, with the creation of the new Council.

For more information: <https://somersetnewsroom.com/2022/07/25/consultation-on-council-tax-support-scheme-launched/>

## Help shape the future of council services in Somerset

People in Somerset are encouraged to join a new Customer Panel and help shape the future of council services.

From April 2023, the new unitary Somerset Council will deliver all council services to all communities – from waste collection and adult social care to housing, benefits and parks.

The Customer Panel is being established to ensure residents are at the heart of those services. No special skills are required, all you need is a willingness to take part in three research topics each year and provide honest and constructive feedback. Panel members will have the chance to take part in online surveys, one-to-one interviews, usability tests and discussion groups.

For more information: <https://playbook.somerset.gov.uk/our-customer-panel/>

## Somerset County Council backs new Cost-of-Living Crisis Appeal

Somerset County Council has welcomed the launch of Somerset Community Foundation's Somerset Cost-of-Living Crisis Appeal.

The Council has contributed an initial £50,000 donation to support the launch of the appeal. The Cost-of-Living Crisis Appeal is an urgent call for donations which will be used to help fund local charities supporting local people living in poverty through the cost-of-living crisis.

Donations will fund crucial local work such as debt advice organisations, food banks, mental health support, help for people with disabilities or older people, and homelessness organisations.

To donate to the Somerset Cost-of-Living Crisis Appeal today visit: [www.somersetcf.org.uk/costofliving](http://www.somersetcf.org.uk/costofliving) or call 01749 344949.

When the fund is open, any community group or charitable organisation wishing to apply for a grant should visit the SCF website where they can find guidance on how to make an application: [www.somersetcf.org.uk/apply](http://www.somersetcf.org.uk/apply).

For more details about the fund, visit: <https://www.somersetcf.org.uk/somerset-cost-of-living-crisis-appeal-launched>.

## Bus it – you know it makes sense

As fuel prices spiral during the ongoing cost-of-living crisis Somerset County Council and Somerset Bus Partnership are joining forces to encourage people to 'BUS IT'.

The campaign aims to highlight that with households under financial pressure buses have never been more relevant, offering a cheaper travel alternative and the chance to save on fuel and

vehicle maintenance costs, while at the same time protecting the environment by helping to cut congestion and reducing your carbon footprint.

Following the withdrawal of the government's Bus Recovery Grant, bus operators are currently weighing up the viability of routes in Somerset, and one of the key factors operators will use in assessing viability is the number of passengers on each route.

Bus use in Somerset is slowly climbing again, but is currently at about 70 per cent of levels compared to pre-Covid.

For more information: [Bus it – You know it makes sense – Travel Somerset](#)

### **Climate Summit to help Somerset businesses increase sustainability**

Somerset businesses are being urged to play their part in combating the climate emergency – with a conference offering insight into practical steps they can take to become more sustainable.

The Somerset Business Climate Summit 2022 will take place at Queens College in Taunton on Wednesday 21st September between 10am and 1pm.

The Summit will highlight best practice and raise awareness of the opportunities and challenges for businesses as we shift toward a low carbon economy.

Guest speakers from businesses of different sizes and industries, including My Carbon Coach, The Field Works, and recently certified B Corp New Leaf Design will discuss topics including the easiest ways for businesses to cut carbon, what Net Zero means, the journey to B Corp, and sustainable agriculture and manufacturing. Businesses will be encouraged examine their current business models and make pledges to reduce their carbon footprints.

For more information: <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/climate-emergency/climate-emergency-businesses/climate-summit/>

### **Successful joint funding bid to tackle violence against women and girls**

Somerset County Council and North Somerset Council have jointly secured an additional £317,694 from the Home Office Safer Streets Fund to continue to make public spaces and streets safer for women and girls.

This follows the success of the neighbouring councils' 2021 campaign 'It can stop if we change together'. This raised awareness, tackled sexual harassment and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) to make public places and streets safer.

For more information: <https://somersetnewsroom.com/2022/07/25/successful-joint-funding-bid-to-tackle-violence-against-women-and-girls/>

### **Specialists appointed to take Somerset arts and culture strategy forward**

Specialist partners have been appointed to help develop a five-year cultural strategy for the new Somerset Council that comes into being in April 2023.

Arts Council England, in partnership with Somerset's five councils – Mendip, Sedgemoor, Somerset West and Taunton, and South Somerset district councils, plus Somerset County Council – have committed to invest in developing the strategy and have procured the services of cultural consultants, The Fifth Sector.

Key aims and objectives of the strategy include:

- To raise awareness and promote the role that culture and creativity can play in enriching communities and improving the quality of life, health, wellbeing and the local economy for Somerset residents, local businesses and visitors.
- To make sure that a cultural identity for arts and culture in Somerset is at the heart of the new authority's strategic plans.
- To identify new job opportunities in culture and the creative industries and raise the profile of the county's vibrant creative sector.

### **New electric minibuses hit the roads in Somerset**

Somerset County Council now has two fully electric, specially adapted wheelchair accessible minibuses available for use.

These vehicles are Maxus EV80 minibuses and are the first of their kind in the county. They have a capacity of ten passengers, and the seats within can be adapted so that three wheelchairs can be safely included.

On one charge, the buses can travel approximately 114 miles currently. They are currently being used in the Bridgwater area, but their use may well be expanded across the county in the future.

### **£1,500 of vouchers awarded to creative writing winners and Somerset Schools**

Three winners of the Fostering In Somerset Creative Writing Competition each scooped £250 in vouchers, as well as £250 in vouchers for their chosen school.

Somerset residents of all ages were encouraged to write a short story of up to 1,000 words for Foster Care Fortnight in May for the chance to win a share of £1,500 of vouchers.

Somerset County Council's fostering and library services received over 100 entries and judges whittled these down to three winners.

All three winning stories can be read at

<https://www.fosteringinsomerset.org.uk/resources/storycomp.htm>