

PRIDDY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council held at the Village Hall at 7:30pm on Wednesday 5th June, 2019

Present: Cllrs Alan Butcher (Chairman), Alan Adams, Lucy-Rose Andrews, Chris Dyke, Juanita Glass, Mark Leach (Vice Chairman) and Rachel Thompson

In attendance: William Newton Newey (Clerk)
Thirteen members of the public
Cllr Tom Killen (from PPC19/092 deferred [part])
Cllr Mike Pullin (from PPC19/097 [part])

PPC19/090 **Apologies for absence**
None

PPC19/091 **Declarations of Interest**
Members are required to act in accordance with the Priddy Parish Council Code of Conduct adopted 6th July, 2016 (clauses 10 – 14) where a matter arises at the meeting in which he/she has a disclosable pecuniary interest or other interest as detailed in the Code. Unless a dispensation has been granted the member shall not participate in the discussion or vote on the matter or shall withdraw from the meeting as required by the Code.
Cllr Glass declared an interest in respect of PPC19/097a

PPC19/092 **Public Forum**
Members of the public only wished to speak on the New Inn and so this item was deferred until before item PPC19/097.

PPC19/093 **Police Matters**
There was no report.

PPC19/095 **Parish Paths Liaison Officer**
There was no report. The Clerk was asked to request a report from the PPLO for the next Council meeting.

PPC19/096 **Acceptance of the Minutes of Previous Meetings**
The minutes of the annual meeting of the Council held on 15th May were signed as a true and correct record of proceedings.

PPC19/092 **Public Forum**
The Chairman adjourned the meeting to allow member so the public to speak on Mowing the Village Greens and the New Inn Planning Appeal.

PPC19/097 **Planning**

Cllr Glass left the meeting

- a) **Appeal in respect of refusal of application 2018/2050/FUL** Change of use land from residential curtilage to formation of guest car park and erection of outbuilding for purposes ancillary to the New Inn. The New Inn Priddy Green Priddy Wells Somerset
The Chairman began by rehearsing the history of the application, appeal and submission made by the Council in respect of the Appeal. The Council had voted not to support the original application at its meeting in September 2018 on matters of material concern and not viability. The Council was keen to resolve issues, as had been identified when it gave it support to the original application for the refurbishment of the New Inn in 2016. From the 1950's the Parish Council had taken a pragmatic approach to parking on the gravelled area of Village Green in front of the New Inn. A significant factor in the Council's decision not to support the application was that it covered not only parking but a new ancillary building. It had not proved possible to have a meeting with the owner before the appeal had been lodged. The Council had confirmed that a submission be made to the Inspectorate at its meeting on 15th May.

In preparing the submission, the Chairman and Vice Chairman had noticed a reference to 14 parking spaces in front of the New Inn. These were the spaces on the gravelled area of the Village Green, and as such, were not and could not be dedicated to the use of the New Inn.

As the decision not to support the application was more than six months old, no special resolution was required for Council to reconsider the matter.

Cllr Thompson read an argument for supporting the application which she had prepared. In this she pointed out that the Parish Council had been instrumental in saving the New Inn as a Community Asset. She realised that the Council was not the decision maker in the planning process but disagreed with the decision not to support the application and the submission which had been made to the Planning Inspectorate. Cllr Thompson then

stated 1) the view of the wider community was that the New Inn should re-open with the hope that it would be a thriving business, 2) that the economic impact and amenity value of a re-opened New Inn with bed and breakfast beds should be considered, 3) that further parking was needed and the parking in front of the New Inn was not dependable and overnight parking by guests would infringe Village Green Byelaws, 4) that the owner of the New Inn had proposed measures to mitigate any impact there would be to neighbours from the increased parking, 5) that the proposed ancillary building was to be a low level, green oak building which would not be visible from the Village Green and would replace two other structures (one of which had already been removed), one of which was partially visible from the Green. Cllr Thompson also rejected the Chairman's view that economic viability was not a material consideration in respect of planning.

It was noted that there was a gap between two of the planned parking areas and it was stated that this was to minimise the effect on the neighbouring property.

Cllr Leach said that while he had not lived in the Village for long, he had been dealing with planning applications for 30 years. Planning applications needed to be viewed as a whole. Just because a building could not be seen was not a justification for it being built. He questioned the claim as to viability which had led to the increase in lettable rooms in the main building which in turn required the transfer of functions to an ancillary building. He too wished the New Inn to re-open and reflected that the original vision had included a bakery and a micro-brewery. He was concerned that there was a constantly changing picture when it came to the refurbishment of the New Inn and the development of the site; was it in danger of becoming too large a business.

Cllr Adams was concerned that the building which was prominent on the edge of the Green would remain unused and decaying. As a community asset he believed its use could not be changed.

Cllr Andrews said that she had seen the building decline from the 1990s to its current state. It had proved a struggle to keep the New Inn viable and perhaps this was for a lack of innovation and opportunity. She felt that a sustainable future of the New Inn should be embraced and that car parking was essential for a viable business. She felt that the proposed mitigation, in terms of natural screening and other measures, were an attempt to make the necessary car parking arrangements acceptable to neighbours.

Cllr Dyke said that she wished to see the New Inn re-opened. She accepted that there was a need for additional car parking.

Cllr Thompson proposed that the Council having reviewed its original decision in the light of the statements submitted by the appellant to the Planning Inspectorate withdraw its objection to the Planning Application.

It was resolved at a vote (four votes in favour and two against) to reverse the decision not to support the application taken in September 2018 and withdraw the submission made to the Planning Inspectorate.

Cllr Thompson further proposed that the application be supported and the Planning Inspectorate be informed

It was resolved (nem con) that the application be supported by the Council and that this be communicated to the Planning Inspector.

The Clerk was asked to prepare a statement to the Inspector of the change of position on the application, for circulation to Councillors, before submission by 12th June.

Cllr Glass re-joined the meeting

PPC19/093

Council Reports

a) **Somerset County Council**

Cllr Pullin noted that the County Council had experienced some difficult financial times and made reference to the Panorama programme on Social Care. He was glad to be able to report that the Council's finances were back in the black and that money had been transferred to reserves.

An extra £1.3m had become available for highways' small improvement scheme (SIS) and the intention was to clear a backlog of 90 of these schemes over two years. This would include works at the Miners' Arms cross roads where vegetation again needed cutting back. There was no SIS for the cross roads at the Hunters Inn but Cllr Pullin felt something could be done about lines and signs. He thought that Priddy Road might be top dressed in the near future and that road markings would then be renewed. The Chairman noted that there had also been problems with the complex junction at the Castle of Comfort, where the road markings had been almost entirely worn away. Cllr Pullin noted that in the previous year 23% of the road deaths in Somerset had occurred in the

Mendip area. County Council Safety Officers were to consult with the Police and there would be some speed safety work undertaken. A member of the public wanted to know what the results from the speed camera at the Miners Arms. Cllr Pullin said that the monitoring at the Miners Arms had not been a speed camera but another form of monitoring and information.

The Travellers at Deer Leap had left the car park and Cllr Pullin believed there had been contact by the County Council about the illegal use of the car park. He also noted that the Clerk had contacted him about a memorial bench in the picnic area at Deer Leap.

b) **Mendip District Council**

In his recent visits in the his Ward, Cllr Killen noted that Highways and Roads were the most common concern and he continued to work with Cllr Pullin to seek improvements such as at the Miners Arms. He would also be working to try and ensure that Gritting in the Mendips continued after the review by the County Council in the summer.

Fly-tipping had been another concern of his constituents and he praised the work of Enforcement Officers at Mendip District Council and the contractors retained by the Council; fly-tipping was normally cleared very quickly. New regulations meant that liability for fly-tipping could be passed back to the person employing the person who had fly-tipped.

A new recycling contract would come into effect in early 2020 with a company called Suez. This would see a greater of range of materials recycled from kerb-side collections. A new recycling plant had been built at Avonmouth and Mendip District Council had helped finance the fleet of lorries to serve this facility.

Cllr Killen reported that Mendip District Council was now very different with conservative members having fallen from 32 to 10, Liberal Democrats and Green Party having risen from 9 to 22 and 1 to 10 members respectively. There were also 5 independent members. The Liberal Democrats had entered into a collation to gain control of the Council. Cllr Killen felt that it was important that party politics should not dominate and that he would continue to represent his rural ward and its interests. He was keen that rural areas were not overlooked in favour of the market town in the District.

PPC19/098

Clerk's Report and Continuing Business from Previous Meetings:

a) **Village Green Bye Laws**

Councillors were asked to send comments to the Clerk on the draft byelaws based on the new model byelaws issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government. Further discussion was deferred to the July meeting of the Council.

b) **Heavy Goods Vehicle Signage: Wells Way / Wallace Lane junctions with Western Lane**

The Chairman said that he had yet to speak to the Chairman of West Harptree Parish Council as there had been a change in Chairman after the recent elections. The Clerk reported that there had been no reply from Bath and North East Somerset Council Highways Department.

The Clerk also reported that nothing further had been heard from Somerset Highways about the pictographic signs in Nine Barrows Lane.

c) **Welcome Pack**

It was agreed that Cllr Andrews would approach local organisations for information to be included in the Parish Welcome Pack.

PPC19/099

Parish Council Matters

a) **Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2018 / 2019 – Exemption Certificate**

The Council could claim exemption from the Limited Assurance Review by the external auditors due to income and expenditure being below the £25,000 threshold.

It was resolved to claim the exemption and the certificate was signed.

b) **Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2018 / 2019 – Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement**

The Statement of the Internal Auditor had been received and there were no issues identified in respect of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return. An Internal Audit letter would follow later.

It was resolved that section 1 of the return should be signed.

c) **Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2018 / 2019 – Section 2 – Accounting Statements**

The accounting statement had been completed as per the accounts presented at the May meeting, which included the information in the format required by the return.

It was resolved that section 2 be signed.

d) **Car Parking in front of the New Inn**

The Chairman reminded the meeting that it had been noted that the submissions to the Planning Inspectorate by the owner of the New Inn included the statement that there were already 24 parking spaces to the side and in front of the New Inn. Of these, 14 were on the gravelled area in front of the New Inn which was Village Green under the control of the Parish Council. This had been noted in the submission to the Planning Inspectorate which was now to be withdrawn. The Chairman felt that this matter needed to be addressed with the Owner of the New Inn.

Cllr Thompson said that the Queen Victoria Inn had 30 parking spaces and it was not uncommon for there to be an overflow on to roads when an event took place at the Queen Victoria Inn. She felt the situation was similar with the New Inn. The Chairman felt that it was important that it was made clear that this part of the Green was not designated to the use of the New Inn.

Cllr Leach was concerned that use or activities such as cutting grass on the Green might establish ownership of part of the Green by others than the Parish Council. This was thought unlikely given the fact that the ownership of the Green was registered. Disclaimer signage was suggested as a way of confirming the ownership of the Village Green by the Parish Council. The map for the new noticeboard to be erected by New House also gave details about parking and the Village Green

A meeting with the owner of the New Inn and others to discuss the management of car parking was raised and the Chairman confirmed that the Parish Council was trying to keep channels of communication open. Cllr Thompson felt that the pragmatic approach that had been adopted in the past should be continued; this was not only an issue on the Lower Green by the New Inn but also on the Upper Green by the Church, School and Hall.

It was felt important that there was clarity about the space in front of the New Inn.

It was agreed that the Clerk would draft a letter to the owner of the New Inn confirming the Parish Council's ownership of the land in front of the New Inn as part of the Village Green and how it could be used. This letter to be circulated to Councillors before being sent.

e) **Community Led Housing**

The Chairman reminded the meeting that the Council had undertaken a Housing Needs Assessment which had identified the need for smaller, more affordable housing for younger and older people. There was Government money available for community led social housing schemes. Previously only a local authority housing waiting list type scheme had been used or considered and the Chairman was keen to explore the community led route.

It was agreed that Cllrs Thompson, Andrews and Leach should form a working group with other members of the community to explore the matter.

Cllr Thompson noted that a problem in the past had been the identification of exception site and the amount that could be paid for land. Cllr Killen said that he would be very willing to act as an intermediary with Mendip District Council.

It was hoped that the community led approach would produce a better result for the Parish.

d) **Purchase of Large Scale Ordnance Survey of Priddy Parish**

Cllr Thompson thought it would be helpful to have a large scale Ordnance Survey map of the Parish. This would show not only Priddy Village but settlements and areas of a very large parish.

The Clerk undertook to investigate obtaining a map under the PSMA (Public Sector Mapping Agreement)

PPC19/100

Financial

a) **Bank Reconciliation**

The reconciliation had been tabled.

The bank reconciliation was noted and signed by Cllr Andrews.

b) **To agree changes to signatories on Bank Mandate**

No changes were to be made to the mandate except signatories.

It was resolved to remove Barry Wilkinson and Kate Greet as signatories on the mandate as they were no longer councillors. It was further resolved to add Cllrs Alan Adams and Mark Leach as signatories.

Matters of Reporta) **Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting**

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting were noted.

b) **Somerton Classic Motor Cycle Club event on 8-9th June, 2019**

The event was noted

c) **TTRO - Circuit of the Mendips National Series Cycle Race**

The event was noted. It was also noted that the Upper Green had been used as a feeding station for a cycle race and that no permission had been obtained. It was discovered that the Village Hall had been booked but, given that the weather was fine, the organisers had used the Green instead. It was further noted that the cyclists had impeded access to the Church for a wedding.

d) **Mendip District Council Local Plan Part II**

It was noted that the Parish Council had made no submission as there was nothing relevant to Priddy

e) **Local Council help to Village Hall (NALC LTN21)**

The note from the National Association of Local Councils was noted.

f) **Somerset & VE Day 75 – 8th May, 2020**

The suggestion of national celebrations was noted. The meeting was informed that Priddy Friendly Society was considering moving club day to 8th May which was also to be Somerset Day in 2020.

g) **Bus Shelter**

The Chairman reminded the meeting that works were needed in respect of the bus shelter roof as well as the issue of noticeboards which had been raised at the Annual Parish Meeting. The Clerk was asked to include the Bus Shelter on the agenda of the next meeting.

h) **Priddy Pool**

Cllr Thompson enquired as to whether Priddy Pool had always dried out in the summer. It was the general opinion that the Pool had always dried up in the summer and that it was not as a result of it having been dug out in recent years or leaking from the dam. Reference was also made to the issue of 4x4 vehicles driving through the pond. There was also a brief discussion of Townsend Pool and the Clerk was asked to include Parish Pools on the next agenda.

i) **Parish Flagpole**

Cllr Leach enquired if the flag would be flown to commemorate D-Day. The Chairman confirmed that it would and said that it would be good to have a Flag Master for the Parish, who could ensure flags were flown appropriately.

k) **Priddy Village Green Policy**

It was agreed that the Clerk would circulate the policy to councillors and include the topic on the agenda for the next meeting.

l) **Training**

The Chairman encouraged councillors to take advantage of the training offered by the Somerset Association of Local Councils.

m) **World War Commemorative Trees**

The Chairman noted that the Annual Parish meeting had requested that the Council investigate planting trees locally rather than contributing to the Somerset Wood near Taunton. It was confirmed that there had been three deaths in World War I and one in World War II. It was suggested that the planting of the trees could be timed to coincide with the VE celebrations in 2020. Cllr Leach suggested the Glebe land behind the church as a possible locational and Cllr Thompson suggested Townsend Pool. This led to a wider consideration of tree planting at Townsend Pool to replace lost trees.

n) **Nordrach Noticeboard**

The Clerk reported that he had been unable to post contact details for the Council on the noticeboard because the vegetation was so high. Indeed only half the noticeboard could be seen and it was obvious that nobody had approached it for many weeks. The Clerk was asked to include the topic on the agenda of the next meeting.

PPC19/102 **Date of Next Meeting:** Wednesday 3rd July, 2019

The meeting closed at 21:33

Signed(Chairman)

3rd July, 2019

Minutes of a meeting of **Priddy Parish Council** held on 5th June, 2019

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