

# Priddy Parish Council

## COUNCIL MINUTES

A Meeting of the Parish Council held on **Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> August 2020**  
at **7:30pm** by Zoom Virtual Platform

**Present:** Cllrs Alan Adams, Alan Butcher (Chair), Chris Dyke, Juanita Glass, Mark Leach, Rachel Thompson MBE

**In attendance:** William Newton Newey, Parish Clerk, ten members of the public

PPC20/80 **Apologies for absence:** Cllr Andrews

PPC20/81 **Declarations of Interest:** Nil

PPC20/82 **Public Forum**

One member of the public referred to the comments about car parking that had been sent to the previous meeting. Other members of the public said that they did not want to say anything.

PPC20/83 **Council Reports:**

a) **Somerset County Council.**

There was no report from Cllr Pullin.

b) **Mendip District Council.**

There was no report from Cllr Killen.

PPC20/84 **Police Report.**

There was no report from the Police.

PPC20/85 **Parish Paths Liaison Officer.**

No report had been received despite a request from the Clerk.

Cllr Thompson confirmed that the Westbury Combe Bridle Way issue was being dealt with by Somerset County Council.

PPC20/86 **Acceptance of the Minutes of previous meetings:**

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020 were agreed as a true and correct record. It was confirmed that the Chairman would sign the minutes when available.

PPC20/87 **Planning**

a) **2020/0917/FUL** Erection of a permanent agricultural workers dwelling on land adjacent to the dairy unit and farm buildings at Vale Hollow Farm. Vale Hollow Farm West Harptree Road Priddy Cheddar BS40 6EN

**It was resolved to support the application**

b) **2020/1386/FUL** Erection of an above ground slurry store. Harptree Hill Farm Nordrach Lane Priddy Cheddar BS40 6EL

Councillors accepted the necessity of slurry stores but were concerned about the visual impact of such stores.

**It was resolved to leave the decision to the Planning Team of Mendip District Council.**

The Clerk was asked to include a response in the Council's reply requesting that suitable screening be a requirement for all such stores.

**Planning Cases Decided**

The following decisions were noted

c) **2020/1177/TPO** G1 - Ash Trees and - Horse Chestnut - Remediation works to TPO Group M1024. New House Priddy Green Priddy Cheddar BA5 3BB  
Approved with conditions

d) **2020/0951/FUL** Application to demolish barns B and C and extend barn A. - Higher Eastwater Farm East Water Lane Priddy Wells BA5 3AX Approved with Conditions

e) **2020/1117/HSE** Erection of a Single Storey Side Extension. Perro House Ubley Drove Charterhouse Cheddar BS40 7XN Approved with conditions

f) **2020/0966/VRC** Application to vary conditions 2 (Occupation) and 1 (Approved

## Priddy Parish Council

Plans) on planning approval 2014/0829/FUL Ubley Hill Farm House Ubley Drove Charterhouse Cheddar BS40 7XN Approved with conditions

PPC20/88

### Clerk's Report

- a) **Response to feedback request on Somerset Local Government Re-organisation (PPC20/76a)**

The Clerk confirmed that the response agreed at the previous meeting had been submitted on behalf of the Council.

- b) **Request to include additional area in strimming of the Village Green (PPC20/76c)**

The Clerk confirmed that the request had been made of the contractor and the area would be included from the next strimming session.

- b) **Asset Register: The Parish Online to update Asset Register**

The Clerk stated that the use of Parish Online was still developing but encouraged Councillors to use the access they had been given to explore the functionality of the service. The Clerk felt that Parish Online was a valuable tool.

All

PPC20/89

### Parish Council Matters

- a) **Annual Governance and Accounts Return (AGAR): to receive Internal Audit Report for 2019/20**

The report of the Internal Auditor, which contained no adverse comments, was noted.

- b) **Annual Governance and Accounts Return (AGAR): to approve signing of Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2019/20**

This had been completed with affirmative answers to all the sections.

**It was resolved that Section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accounts Return should be signed.**

- c) **Appointment of an Internal Auditor: to discuss arrangements for the appointment of an Internal Auditor**

The clerk informed the meeting that the Internal Auditor had indicated that she did not want to continue in her role in the 2020/2021 financial year. The role of Internal Auditor was to advise the Council on system and process, and adherence to Financial Regulations during the course of the financial year.

The Chairman said that he had a contact who had carried out audits in the past and it was agreed that the Clerk would approach the person to see if they would be willing to become the Council's Internal Auditor.

**It was resolved that the Clerk should write a letter of thanks to Mrs Lloyd and arrange a gratuity for Mrs Lloyd (a £40 voucher for a meal at the Queen Victoria Inn).**

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- d) **Local Government Re-organisation**

The Chairman commented on the fact that a large business case document in support of a unitary authority for Somerset had been received from Somerset County Council. There had also been a letter from the district councils rebutting the need for a unitary authority. The Chairman noted that the business case proposed local community networks including unitary authority councillors, parish councillors with services provided by the County Council being devolved to parish council. Parishes would have responsibility for items such as verges and pot hole repairs but the document made no reference to funding these items.

Cllr Adams had attended a Zoom meeting about the proposed unitary authority at which he said the leader of Somerset County Council appeared to present the unitary authority as a "done deal". The presentation had suggested that there was an urgency about progressing the creation of a unitary authority to secure government funding, especially as other areas were also proposing the creation of unitary authorities. Cllr Adams did not feel that there had been any recognition of the fact that there was discord between the county council and the district councils. When the question was asked about the agreement of cost saving figures by the district councils, the reply was received that the county

## Priddy Parish Council

council were not interested in figures produced by other bodies as their figures had been checked and audited. It was stated that the decision not to create a unitary authority twelve years previously had cost £220m.

In response to the question as to why the move to a unitary authority had to happen during the time of pandemic, the reply was received that while Somerset finances were good, there was pressure from central government to make the change. The process could be more costly if Somerset was to be progressed after other areas had started the process.

Cllr Thompson reminded the meeting that an option which had been suggested was that Mendip would join the Bath and North East Somerset unitary authority rather than a new Somerset Unitary Authority. This, she felt, might have advantages from Mendip in terms of proximity and prosperity. The Chairman noted that the Bath and North East Somerset unitary authority had reported a problem with its finances due to the loss of revenue from visitors during lockdown.

Cllr Glass noted that Somerset County Council had been amongst the most supportive and proactive councils in terms of support for Social Care in the region.

The Chairman said that the Council needed to ensure that Priddy and its community was not disadvantaged by any decision. He remained concerned that devolved responsibilities for verges, pot holes and other matters without devolved funding would create an increase in the precept; a form of local taxation.

Cllr Adams queried the treatment of the parish under existing arrangements, citing the Mendip District Council Multi-User Paths plans which did not include Priddy. Cllr Thompson said that she felt that the plan to create routes for use by commuters was more likely to result in more recreational use than commuter use. She was concerned that the creation of new minor highways would increase the amount of tarmac laid across the area and that it would be better to address issues with single track unclassified county roads. She also noted that there appeared to be no involvement from the Highways Authority, Somerset County Council.

**It was agreed that the subject of Mendip [Multi-User] Paths should appear on the agenda for the next Council meeting.**

### e) Car Parking

Cllr Leach said that he had known Priddy for some eighteen years and had lived in the Village for three years. There had always been peaks in the numbers of visitors and parked cars but this seemed to have increased. He believed this was likely to be the case for a number of years following the Covid-1 pandemic. The Village Green needed to remain an open and uncluttered space, with no benches or other furniture. Cllr Leach wondered if discreet signage might be used to encourage people to use the gravelled area and the area in front of New House rather than parking on the centre of the Green. He also wondered if directions could be given to the top green as an alternative location.

Cllr Glass cited the example of a village in Sussex which had invested in land to provide a car park but, despite the use of double yellow lines on roads, the car park remained empty with cars parked closer to village amenities.

Cllr Adams felt that there would never be enough enforcement to make any parking scheme a success. The car parking impacted on local residents but had no impact on through traffic which he believed would mean the Police would take no action. He too favoured discreet signage.

Cllr Thompson agreed that it was important to keep the centre of the Village Green clear of parked vehicles. She thought a change in signage might be of help but that the situation needed to be monitored to see if this would be the case. Cllr Thompson also thought it would be good to explore the possibility of a

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## Priddy Parish Council

parking area on the edge of the Village but noted that no land had been offered. Cllr Adams repeated the view that if it was not considered convenient the drivers of vehicles would not use a car park. Cllr Dyke echoed this opinion by saying unless it was very close to amenities, it would not be used.

The Chairman said that much hard work had been done to try and manage parking around the Village Green. There had been pressure in the past when the New Inn had been open in the past. The Chairman reflected that the Parish Council had proposed a car park using a field next to the Village Hall. This proposal had not received support from Mendip District Council.

Cllr Glass reflected that there was an attraction of drawing a car over to the edge of a picturesque village green, putting out the picnic blanket, turning on the car radio and enjoying a picnic.

**It was agreed that the topic should appear on the agenda of the next Parish Council meeting.**

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f) **Trading on the Village Green**

It was noted that the Village Green Byelaw 10 related to Trading on the Village Green and stated 'No person shall in the ground, without consent of the Council, sell or offer or expose for sale, or let to hire, or offer or expose for letting to hire, any commodity or article, or provide or offer to provide any service for which a charge is made.'

g) **Trading on the Village Green: an application to trade**

An Ice Cream van had been parked on the Green at weekends and bank holidays. This appeared to have no adverse effect and the operator of the van, having been informed on the need for permission was seeking permission. Signage in respect of social distancing and additional waste bins would be supplied by the operator.

Asked if the Council were able to grant permission, the Clerk opined that the Council was able to grant such permission and to make its decision on a case by case basis.

Cllr Glass noted that the operator of the van was a local business whose normal activities had been curtailed by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Cllr Dyke felt that the granting of permission would be good for the local community and supportive of a local business.

**It was resolved to grant permission for Ollys Lollys to park their ice cream van on the Village Green at weekends and bank holidays until 31<sup>st</sup> October 2020.**

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h) **Bus Shelter: roof repair**

The Chairman noted the opinion of the original contractor that the whole roof needed to be replaced with the Unduline roofing material being placed on a new substructure. The Chairman did not believe this to be necessary though some repair work would need to be done to the rear of the roof. He called for volunteers to help fix the Unduline roofing panels to the bus shelter before the autumn school term began. Several offers from councillors and member of the public were received.

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i) **Reeves Paddock**

It was noted that one of the properties in Reeves Paddock had become vacant. Cllr Leach had wondered if the Parish Council was aware and if they had any right to comment on prospective letting arrangements. It had been discovered that the housing association, Hastoe, had contacted the Parish Council and that lettings were made through the Home Finder Somerset service. The property had been let to a couple who worked in Priddy. This accorded with the Section 106 agreement completed at the time the properties were built. It was noted, however, that if no local applicants were registered with the Home Finder Somerset service, a tenancy could be offered countywide.

Cllr Thompson said that it would be helpful to have sight of the Section 106



## Priddy Parish Council

agreement and the Chairman agreed to search the Parish Council's filing cabinet in the Village Hall.

### j) **Traffic Speed on Lower Green**

Cllr Leach said that he and others were concerned at the speed of traffic at on the Lower Green, especially at Pincross. The Chairman felt that the situation was not helped by the fact that the road markings were so worn. Cllr Adams was of the opinion that the wear on the road markings had been exacerbated by inappropriate use of the highway related to the camber of the road and right-hand bend.

Cllr Glass wondered if it might be time to re-examine a speed limit for the Village. One positive effect of the Covid-19 pandemic had been the increase of pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders but she feared for them having to share or cross a road with speeding vehicles. Cllr Thompson said that she had been amongst those opposed to the speed limit the last time it had been considered but was of the opinion that it should be reconsidered now that roads had been quieter in the lock down period.

Cllr Thompson reported that a 20mph roundel had appeared on the road at Rodney Stoke on the A371. Cllr Adams noted that there was no corresponding end signage and that a number of signs, which did not appear to have been erected by the highways authority, had appeared in villages on the A371.

Cllr Leach queried if the Village School would have a 20mph limit at the top of Greenhill. Cllr Adams said that he did not believe this would be the case as the School was not on the road but at the end of Church Path across the Village Green. He noted that 20mph limits were supposed to have been put in place with a range of other traffic calming measures, such as chicanes, but that these had not been implemented. Cllr Adams queried who would pay of the implementation of a speed limit. The Highways Authority was unlikely to do so unless it could be demonstrated that it would prevent serious or fatal road accidents. There had been no serious or fatal accidents in the Village for a number of years. Cllr Adams queried the perception of speed and noted the request, which had not been successful, to get the highways authority to paint white lines in Pelting Drove as a traffic slowing measure.

Cllr Leach wondered if locally produced signs might be of help and wondered if the School might be approached to see if the students could produce some artwork. He said that the Traffic Police had offered to talk to the Parish Council. The Chairman spoke of the attempt to introduce a 30mph speed limit in the Village 10 years ago. Much effort had been expended in the proposal and involvement of parishioners. A parish poll had rejected the proposal and there had also been a query from the Police about enforcement of the speed limit. The Chairman repeated that there had been no serious or fatal accidents in the Village for a number of years and the last fatality had been on the Wells Road at the Hunter's Inn Crossing.

Cllr Thompson was concerned about fast moving traffic at Townsend and that the road was used by users of the Cheddar Heights caravan and campsite making their way into the Village Centre.

Cllr Dyke returned to the subject of signage being produced by children at the Village School and opined that this might have an effect as something different to normal signage. Cllr Adams said that he had noticed different types of signage in different villages locally. In addition to signs by children, he had also seen blue and white information signs informing road users that they were entering a residential area and asking them to drive carefully. He noted that Priddy only had the Gateway stones, no other signage, and that of these only those in Pelting Drove had a wall which made them look like a gateway into the Village. Cllr Dyke said that walls were supposed to have been built to the other stones but that this had not happened. Cllr Dyke was of the opinion that

## Priddy Parish Council

speeding was less of a problem outside her home in Pelting Drove, perhaps because of the stones and walls.

When invited, members of the public expressed concern about the speed of vehicles. It was queried if repeater posts for a 30mph speed limit were still required, this having been the major reason that the speed limit had been rejected in the past.

The chairman noted that it was not possible to hold a Village Meeting under the current regulations but asked that any views on speeding and a speed limit be passed to Councillors of the Parish Clerk.

### **Annual Governance and Accounts Return (AGAR): to approve signing of Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2019/20**

These had been circulated to Councillors and accorded with the published accounts.

**It was resolved that Section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accounts Return should be signed.**

### **Annual Governance and Accounts Return (AGAR): to approve signing of Exemption Certificate**

The exemption form review by the External Auditor had been completed as income and expenditure in 2019/20 were below the threshold of £25,000

**It was resolved that the Exemption Certificate should be signed.**

### **Somerset Rivers Authority**

The Chairman and Cllr Leach both referred to the beneficial effects of dredging watercourses on the level. The Chairman also referred to the attempts to prevent run off from high level area, though he noted that most surface water in Priddy disappeared underground

**The Annual Report of the Somerset Rivers Authority was noted.**

PPC20/90

#### **Financial:**

a) **To receive a bank reconciliation.**

The bank reconciliation, which had been included with the accounts and accounting records circulated to Councillors, was noted.

#### **To authorise the following payments**

b) Major Maintenance for Strimming of the Village Green and other Areas £230.00

The payments having been approved, the Clerk would send the cheques and paperwork to the Chairman and Vice Chairman for signature.

PPC20/91

#### **Matters of Report**

a) **Theft from Pincross**

Cllr Leach drew the meeting's attention to the theft of bicycles to the value of £35,000 from a property at Pincross on 3<sup>rd</sup> August and advised vigilance.

b) **Ebborways Campsite**

Cllr Glass said that she had been asked to raise the subject of the number of people using Ebborways Campsite. Cllr Dyke replied that, in common with most campsites, bookings had increased due to people not be able to take foreign holidays. Steps had been taken to comply with social distancing requirements and equipment had been upgraded.

**As this had been raised as a matter of report, it was agreed that it would appear on the agenda of the next Parish Council meeting.**

PPC20/92

#### **Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2020**

This meeting would also be held virtually on the Zoom platform

The meeting closed at 8:58pm.

William Newton Newey, Parish Clerk  
8<sup>th</sup> August 2020

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