

Priddy Parish Council

COUNCIL MINUTES

A Meeting of the Parish Council held on **Wednesday 6th January 2021**
at **7:30pm** by Zoom Virtual Platform

Present: Cllrs Lucy-Rose Andrews, Alan Butcher (Chair), Chris Dyke, Juanita Glass, Mark Leach, Rachel Thompson MBE

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

PPC21/001 **Apologies for absence:** Cllr Adams

PPC21/002 **Declarations of Interest:** Nil

PPC21/003 **Public Forum**

A member of the public said they were interested in the discussion of Dursdon Drove. Another member of the public said they were hoping for an update on matters relating to Dale Farm. The Chairman noted that Cllr Killen of Mendip District Council was not present and asked the Clerk, that if Cllr Killen did not join the meeting, to contact Cllr Killen for an update.

PPC21/004 **Council Reports**

a) **Somerset County Council**

There was no report from Cllr Pullin.

b) **Mendip District Council**

There was no report from Cllr Killen

PPC21/005 **Police Report**

It was noted that a stakeholder newsletter had been received. An email from the local PCSO reported a theft from a garage, with a request that residents ensured garages and outbuildings were kept locked, and 4 x 4 vehicles in Eastwater Lane and Dursdon Drove.

Cllr Leach noted that there had been a response to 4 x 4 vehicles but that this had been an hour later than the incident. He said the vehicles were audible across the Village. He wondered if the route through the Parish used by the vehicles could be provided to the Police. He felt the situation was getting more serious with ten to fifteen vehicles producing a nuisance.

Cllr Glass said that she had an incident number issued by the Police. She was concerned about the threat to livestock. She said that she had been subject to foul language as part of this anti-social behaviour.

The Chairman suggested that a call should be made to the non-emergency Police number (101) as soon as a problem with 4 x 4 vehicles started and that the number of calls would add weight to the requests to deal with the anti-social behaviour.

The route around the parish seemed to be Ubley Drove, Nordrach, (into Blackmoor Reserve) Townsend, Nine Barrows Lane, Easter Water Lane, Dursdon Drove and then out to Welch's Green bridleway.

PPC21/006 **Parish Paths Liaison Officer.**

There was no report from the Parish Paths Liaison Officer.

Cllr Thompson said that she was already the Access Lead with the AONB partnership and offered to co-ordinate a team of volunteers who would check on the condition of rights of way. The Clerk explained the role of a PPLO and that the role was to liaise between the parish and the county councils over the condition and accessibility of rights of way and works required to ensure they remained accessible.

Cllrs Leach, Andrews, Dyke and Glass volunteered to join the group co-ordinated by Cllr Thompson.

Cllr Glass asked that if stiles were to be renewed, that gates be used as an alternative, for the benefit of dog walkers and others.

PPC21/007 **Acceptance of the Minutes of previous meetings:**

The minutes of the meeting held on 2nd December and Extra-Ordinary meeting held on 15th December were agreed, nem con, as a true and correct record.

PPC20/008 **Planning**

a) **2020/2488/FUL** Erection of 3 stables, tack room and storage building Land At 352745 151675 Nine Barrows Lane Priddy Cheddar Somerset

It was felt that the application looked more like that for a residential than an equestrian

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building. Cllr Glass felt that the footing was larger than would be required for an equestrian building.

Cllr Leach agreed that the building appeared overly large and not justified by the land it was to serve. He was concerned about the size of vehicles using the access from Nine Barrows Lane. Cllr Leach was also concerned about drainage from the site. He was concerned that the land would move from agricultural land to a brownfield site with the proposed development.

Cllr Thompson was concerned about creeping development in Nine Barrows Lane, especially as Nine Barrows Lane had been identified by the Council as a possible Quiet Lane. She was concerned that as the land sloped, a lot of soil would need to be moved to create a level surface for the building. Cllr Thompson was also concerned about run off from the site as this would be into Priddy Pool. The paddock opposite was thought to be contaminated with lead and she was concerned that run off from the disturbed land might affect the bio-diversity of the pool. She felt that a moveable field shelter would be more appropriate and would not require footings or excavation of the ground.

Cllr Dyke also felt a field shelter was a more suitable provision.

The Chairman queried change of use from agricultural to equestrian use but it was stated that this would be granted automatically if permission for the stable were granted. He too noted that the pool was a nationally significant habitat for newts.

At a vote, it was resolved unanimously not to support the application.

The Clerk was asked to note the following in the response to Mendip District Council: that the proposed building was too big, that there was a risk of contamination from the groundworks, the runoff from the site would enter Priddy Pool and Swildon's Hole, there was no provision for foul water or drainage, no provision for a dung heap, that a temporary field shelter would be more appropriate and the concern over creeping development.

Planning Cases Decided

The following decisions were noted

- b) **2020/0947/FUL** Conversion of redundant stone barn to residential unit. Land At 352325 156141 Nordrach Lane Priddy Cheddar Somerset – **Withdrawn**
- c) **2020/0948/FUL** Conversion of barn to residential dwelling house. The Hay Barn Home Farm Nordrach Lane Priddy Cheddar – **Withdrawn**
- d) **2020/1162/FUL** Erection of an agricultural building Land At 352732 150252 Pelting Drove Priddy Cheddar Somerset – **Refused**
- e) **M1380** Tree Preservation Order - Priddy No.13 (2020) Land at Laurel Farm, Pelting Grove, Priddy, BA5 3BA - On 31st December 2020 the [Mendip District] Council decided to **confirm the order**.

PPC21/009 Clerk's Report

a) **Census 2021**

The information circulated by the Clerk, including an information booklet for parish councillors, was noted. Cllr Glass offered to put a poster in the Church porch.

JG

b) **Bus Shelter – Parish Council Noticeboard**

The Clerk reported that the noticeboard on the side of the Bus Shelter had been damaged when the door had been forced open. He had found a business card, belonging to a firm of carriers, pinned to the noticeboard. The Clerk also said that the noticeboard was far from satisfactory, being sheets of ply into which it was hard to secure push pins. Given that the board had never been the correct size and presented problems with positing minutes and other notices, it was agreed that the Clerk should obtain costs for a replacement noticeboard to be affixed to the side of the Bus shelter.

WNN

PPC21/010 Parish Council Matters

a) **Traffic Calming Advisory Group**

In the absence of Cllr Adams, Cllr Leach reported that the group had met and undertaken a review of the main road through the Village. The results of this site visit would be subject to further consideration by the group post lock down.

Cllr Leach confirmed that the traffic calming posters had been re-erected and that none had been lost.

b) **Deer Leap Car Park**

Cllr Leach reported that Mr Jim Hardcastle of the AONB had been liaising with the

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farmer who had access through the car park. There were attempts to narrow the entrance but this needed to remain usable by a tractor and trailer. There might be other measures to restrict opening and the AONB had committed to providing extra resources when needed.

c) **Appointment of an Internal Auditor**

The Clerk told the meeting that Mr Les Caple had agreed to become the Council's Internal Auditor. Mr Caple had experience of acting as an Internal Auditor for other parish councils and was a retired bank manager.

It was resolved that Mr Caple be appointed as Internal Auditor

d) **Mendip Farmers Hunt Boxing Day Meet**

The Chairman reported that the Boxing Day meet had not happened due to inclement weather. There had, however, been a large number of vehicles on the Green. The Chairman had spoken to the Police Officers who attended (in three police vehicles). He said that his photograph had been taken by hunt saboteurs and posted on Facebook with the caption 'Priddy Scum'. He was concerned that there might have been conflict if the Hunt had ridden across the Green as had been planned for the Boxing Day meet.

e) **Dursdon Drove**

Cllr Leach felt that the Council should be clear as to whether it wanted to take action on the subject of Dursdon Drove and its classification as a BOAT (By-way Open to All Traffic). He accepted that altering the classification might take time but he felt it would be a good legacy for the current councillors if the Drove were made safe for walkers, horse riders and those enjoying it for quiet recreation. This was a lane in the AONB and it was right to seek to protect, flora, fauna and dark skies.

Cllr Glass felt that it would be appropriate for the Council to take action on an emergency basis to protect the community from issues on the Drove.

Cllr Thompson believed that an attempt to alter the classification would not be successful given that new evidence would need to be produced to overturn the two previous public enquiries. These enquiries had confirmed the BOAT classification and established the Drove was an old road like Pelting Drove. Cllr Thompson counselled that similar actions had ended in failure, including a High Court Case, and that it could be seen as matter of protecting rights. She suggested that attention be paid to ensuring that the other bridleways, restricted by-ways (Welch's Green [bridleway], Ubley Drove and East Water Lane [restricted by-ways] and reserve areas were inaccessible to 4 x 4 vehicles. This would break the circuit used by 4 x 4 vehicles.

Cllr Glass contrasted the rights of 4 x 4 vehicle users with the rights of residents to quiet enjoyment of their homes and land and again repeated the request for urgent action.

The Chairman said that the Council needed to ensure that it acted in a legal way and suggested engaging a legal specialist to advise on actions which could be taken. It was suggested that a letter could be written to the County Solicitor, with a copy to the Divisional County Councillor, giving evidence. If no action from the County Council were forthcoming, the Council would then explore what actions it could take.

It was suggested that a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) could be requested to stop the use of Dursdon Drove by 4 x 4 vehicles. It was noted a TRO had legal weight and use by 4 x 4 vehicle in contravention of the TRO would be a criminal offence.

It was resolved to request a TRO in respect of Dursdon Drove.

The Clerk was asked to seek advice as to the process of applying for TRO.

Other matters such as narrowing entrances and temporary barriers or gates were discussed but there were concerns about legal issues and environmental impact.

f) **Bridleways and Restricted Bridleways**

The Chairman reminded councillors that the Council must ensure that whatever it did was legally correct.

Cllr Thompson noted that Eastwater Lane was a restricted bridleway and so its use by 4 x 4 vehicles was illegal. She said that Somerset County Council as the highways authority would erect motor vehicles prohibited signs. Cllr Thompson counselled that there were issues with the erection of barriers or gates. The bridleway had to be accessible to carriage drivers and so gates could not be locked. Any gate, or bollards would need the agreement of all landowners adjoining the bridleway.

Cllr Leach said that there had been many phone calls about the misuse of Eastwater

WNN

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Lane and he believed that two of the four landowners were agreeable to gates being erected. This would be preferable to the destruction of the surface of the bridleway.

It was resolved to request the Highways Authority to erect Motor Vehicles Prohibited signs at Eastwater Lane.

WNN

Cllr Leach said that a parishioner had offered the planting of trees at Townsend where 4 x 4 vehicles were also causing damage to a verge.

h) **Somerset Association of Local Councils Annual General Meeting**

In the absence of Cllr Adams, the Clerk reported that the AGM had been a straightforward and uncontentious business meeting. It was held on Zoom and unlike previous meetings had been purely business with no speakers or presentations.

PPC21/011 **Financial**

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

The accounts and bank reconciliation were noted.

To authorise the following payments

b) Clerk's Expenses [WD Newton Newey] (£139.46)

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

PPC21/012 **Matters of Report**

a) **Training**

The Clerk asked councillors to note the details of training courses he had circulated.

b) **Nordrach (Blackmoor Reserve, Ubley Drove), Raines Batch**

Cllr Thompson told the meeting that Mr Jim Hardcastle of the Mendip Hills AONB had also reported issues with motor vehicles at Nordrach, including Blackmoor Reserve and Ubley Drove. There were also issues with the Raines Batch Bridleway and, in respect of the latter, Cllr Glass raised the issue of drainage.

The Chairman suggested organizing a Zoom with the AONB and other interested parties.

c) **Food for Distribution**

Cllr Dyke said that she had links with a charitable organization which had food for distribution. She invited those who wanted more information to contact her.

d) **Dale Farm**

As Cllr Killen had not been at the meeting, the Chairman asked the Clerk to contact Cllr Killen for an update.

PPC20/013 **Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 3rd February 2021**

This meeting would also be held virtually on the Zoom platform

The meeting closed at 8:56pm.

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(Chairman)

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(Date)

William Newton Newey, Parish Clerk
17th January 2021