

Mrs. L.A. Ruff, Clerk of the Council, Street Parish Rooms, 6 Leigh Road, Street, Somerset BA16 0HA Tel. (01458) 440588

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11th June 2020

**PLEASE NOTE DATE AND TIME**

Dear Sir/Madam,

You are summoned to attend a meeting of the Street Parish Council which will

be held **virtually using Zoom** with remote attendance **on TUESDAY, 16TH JUNE 2020** for the purpose of transacting the business specified in the following agenda. Public Question Time will commence at approximately **6.55 p.m**. The Chair will allow each person who has registered with the Clerk to speak for up to 3 minutes on any subject/s and will firstly explain the procedures for the meeting. Persons speaking will have been informed that the meeting will be recorded. The Council meeting will commence at approximately **7 p.m**. or as soon as Public Question Time is closed by the Chair. Notes of Public Question Time on 19th May are attached **Page 4**. The meeting will be streamed live on YouTube on the Council’s YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCiwCtXUydITXA9OpDqQfvIA/videos>

In accordance with standing orders 7 c and d, a member with a disclosable pecuniary interest must leave the meeting and be placed in the waiting room during the relevant item of business, unless permitted to remain following the grant of a dispensation. Councillors

with an interest in relation to any item of business being transacted at a meeting under Appendix B (Other Interests) or where a matter relates to a financial interest of a friend, relative or close associate, may (i) make representations, (ii) answer questions and (iii) give evidence relating to the business being transacted but must thereafter leave the meeting and be placed in the waiting room, unless permitted to remain following the grant of a dispensation. At a convenient time the Chair will also give this opportunity to any members of the public who have registered to speak with the Clerk prior to the meeting.

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Yours faithfully,

L.A. Ruff

Clerk of the Council

**AGENDA**

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE - acceptance of any reasons offered.

2. MINUTES

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the extraordinary meeting of the Council held on 9th June 2020 (attached) **Pages 5 - 9**

3. MATTERS ARISING

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

To receive declarations of interest from Councillors on agenda items and to

receive written requests for dispensations for disclosable pecuniary interests

(if any). Clerk to grant any requests for dispensation as appropriate.

5. COMMUNITY POLICEMAN

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6. PLANNING COMMITTEE

To receive details of applications and recommendations made under the agreed emergency arrangements by email (attached) **Pages 10 - 11**

7. CHAIR’S REPORT

8. PARISH PATH LIAISON OFFICER – County Cllr. Leyshon to give a verbal

report on behalf of PPLO Jake Dalton.

9. PROJECTS WORKING GROUP

To receive notes of the meetings on 28th May (attached) and 12th June –

to follow. Specification and scoring criteria for up to 11 years play area in Merriman

Park to follow for approval. **Pages 12 - 18**

10. PILLARS BAR AND GRILL – CHANGE TO LICENCE (report attached) **Page 19**

11. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION IN SOMERSET(attached)**Pages 20-31**

12. REVIEW OF HOLDING ANNUAL MEETING OF COUNCIL AND MEETING DATES

(report attached) **Pages 32 – 33** – to review when to hold the annual Council meeting

when the Chair, Vice-Chair, committees etc. are re-elected to May 2021

13. PATH TO RECOVERY AND HIGH STREET CLOSURE (report attached) **Page 34**

14. DRAFT CYCLING AND WALKING MANIFESTO FOR SOMERSET (attached)

**Pages 35 - 38**

15. MENDIP YMCA (report attached) **Page 39**

16. STREET COMMUNITY SUPPORT GROUP – verbal update

16A. REVIEW OF ENERGY SUPPLIER/CONTRACT PARISH ROOMS AND CLOCK

(report attached) **Page 39A**

17. CHAIR UPDATES FROM OTHER COMMITTEES/WORKING GROUPS

18. CORRESPONDENCE/MINOR MATTERS (attached) **Page 40**

19. REPORT FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

AND COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

Questions to be noted for written replies and matters for consideration

referred to the appropriate working group. All reports received have been

emailed to members.

20. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT (schedule of payments attached for approval and

initialing by Chair to be arranged) and confidential detailed income and expenditure

by account report at 31st May 2020 including budget variance –

emailed to members only with bank reconciliations and earmarked reserves

schedule. **Pages 41 – 43 – to follow**

21. MATTERS FOR REPORT

Consideration of items not on agenda for information only

(a) Report from Clerk

(b) Matters raised by members - TO BE NOTIFIED TO THE CLERK IN

ADVANCE OF MEETING.

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22. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

In accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 as amended

by the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, the press and

public will probably be excluded from the meeting by resolution for the following items

as they involve confidential information on quotations received.

23. QUOTATIONS – MOVING WAR MEMORIAL (Confidential report from ACPO

attached for members only) **Page 44**

24. QUOTATIONS – BIKE RACKS AT GREENBANK POOL (Confidential report from ACPO attached for members only) **Page 45**

25. QUOTATION – REMOVALS - PARISH ROOMS (Confidential report

attached for members only) **Page 46**

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To: Chair and Members of Street Parish Council

**NOTE** Members are reminded that they **must update their register of interests** within 28 days of receiving any further gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £25 by completing the **Update Form** and returning it to the Monitoring Officer, Mendip District Council

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NOTES OF PUBLIC QUESTION TIME HELD BEFORE

COUNCIL MEETING ON 19TH MAY 2020

The Assistant Clerk read out a statement from C. Hughes regarding changes to bus routes. It was agreed to ask the Highways Group to look at this. It was noted that the transport assessment for the planning application for development off Somerton Road referred in detail to bus routes.

S. Todd, Development Officer for Greenbank Pool explained that the Committee considered when to re-open the facility on a weekly basis. Prior to the coronavirus emergency a large capital expenditure had been undertaken to fit a new boiler to heat the pool and the wet play area which was more efficient and environmentally friendly. New eco bins had been provided which split waste for recycling. The Pool could operate into 2021 even if it was not able to open in 2020 but would loose over £200,000. Councillor Leafe confirmed that the capital investment had been made before the crisis had been known about and asked the Council to look favourably on the grant application.

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STREET PARISH COUNCIL

Extraordinary meeting of the Council held virtually using Zoom with

remote attendance on 9th June, 2020 at 7.21 p.m. The Chair made a

statement on how the meeting would be conducted.

PRESENT: Councillor C.E. Axten (Vice-Chair of Council)

(In the Chair)

Councillors: P. Birch, R. Boyce, S. Carswell,

M. Daniells, J. Diment, D. Drew, D. Goater,

A. Leafe, L. Mogg, T.W.E. Napper, A. Prior and

L. Zaky

IN ATTENDANCE: L.A. Ruff - Parish Clerk

M. Sandiford – Assistant Clerk Projects Officer

J. Marshfield – Assistant Clerk

S. Coles – WYG Environment Planning

Transport Ltd.

County Councillor L. Leyshon

APOLOGIES: Councillors: D. Ellis – another engagement and

P. Goater and H. Shearer - on Mendip

Planning Board – reasons accepted

235. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 19th May, 2020 which had

been circulated were approved as a correct record and signed by the

Chair.

236. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

In accordance with the Code of Conduct Councillors Carswell and

Napper declared an other interest under Appendix B in any matters

relating to the District Council and stated that they would keep an open

mind when considering issues at either District or Parish level.

Councillor Napper declared an other interest under Appendix B in any

Matters relating to Somerset County Council and stated that he would

keep an open mind when considering issues at County or Parish level.

Councillor Leafe had taken advice from SALC and declared that he did

not need to declare an interest in the application as although he lived

close to the site he was not a neighbour of it.

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237. APPLICATION 2019/2946/OTS - OUTLINE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF

UP TO 280 DWELLINGS, VEHICULAR AND PEDESTRIAN

ACCESS, SUSTAINABLE URBAN DRAINAGE, OPEN SPACE,

LANDSCAPING AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE

ALL MATTERS EXCEPT ACCESS ARE RESERVED (AS REVISED

BY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON HIGHWAYS INCLUDING A

NEW RIGHT HAND TURN LANE, DRAINAGE AND ECOLOGY

RECEIVED 24TH APRIL) LAND AT 348795 135704 SOMERTON

ROAD, STREET FOR THE NINE SQUARE TRUST – OUTLINE –

SOME MATTERS RESERVED

Consideration was given to the application. The meeting was

adjourned from 8.49 p.m. to 8.55 p.m. to allow the public present to

speak. There was a long debate on various issues and the main points

made were as follows -

lack of consultation and answering questions from residents – S. Coles

felt there had been extensive consultation with 2 public events and the

opportunity to attend Parish Council meetings and to write to the

District Council for the meeting of the Planning Board. Residents could

not be forced to attend or complete forms. Many residents had been

spoken to at events including about the northern boundary and the

masterplan had been amended in response to comments. Councillor

Drew pointed out that the consultation on altering the Parish Rooms

was to meet certain criteria as consent for a loan was to be requested.

She also reminded members that in the consultation on the

Neighbourhood Plan residents had requested affordable housing. The

Chair stated that a protocol for holding remote meetings had been

agreed when legislation for this was introduced due to the coronavirus

situation. All councils needed to continue to deal with matters as they

arose.

lack of information on a development which would have a big impact on

Street including on education and highways issues – County Councillor

Leyshon reported that County Highways had no objections to the

amended proposals and that funding required for school places would

be secured by agreement for the Local Education Authority to provide.

S. Coles confirmed that all surveys for the transport assessment had

been carried out prior to the pandemic.

the transport assessment referred to a minimum of 280 houses – S.

Coles reported that in the Local Plan a minimum of 280 homes would

be allocated for the site but the Trust was not seeking to build more

concern that affordable housing would not be pepperpotted around the

site but would be in clusters of 10 to 15 and a north south divide would

be created – S. Coles explained that for registered providers 10 to 15

houses were ideal but they could deal with lower groups and that such

housing would be pepperpotted throughout the site

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a query was raised as to whether a developer had taken an option

agreement for the land – S. Coles reported that there was considerable

interest but that this would not be considered during the outline process

The Chair reminded members of the charity work which the Trust did

for Street. She felt that other developers would build many more

houses and be less sympathetic. S. Coles stated that the Trust would

seek to impose control on the development by requiring it’s approval

at various stages

concern about the flood risk – S. Coles reported that there had been no

objection to the proposals from the Drainage Authority and no housing

would be built within the flood plain. Requirements would result in a

betterment of the rate of run off which would be less than with a green

field site.

more houses were needed particularly affordable ones to enable young

families to stay in the area. The various professional reports had been

assessed by experts working with the Local Planning Authority. The

Trust had made an effort to build a community with lower density

housing and by listening to the residents and Parish Council – S. Coles

reported that 84 affordable units at 30% would be secured through a

Section 106 agreement as part of a consent. There would be a

cascade with focus on need in Street first. The type of properties

would by determined by the District Council and the need assessment.

concern about the ecological impact and how features through the site

will be maintained – S. Coles explained that usually a management

company would take this on but this would be considered at the

detailed design stage and could be discussed eg. the Parish Council

could manage the site

a query was raised as to what action the Parish Council had taken and

the Chair stated that she had been checking questions as they arose at

all meetings. There had been lots of technical questions and the

experts had checked details and no objections had been made

including in regard of the transport assessment

a query was raised regarding the conditions proposed by Highways

relating to the transport assessment – S. Coles reported that all were

achievable and would most likely be attached to a consent. Traffic

regulation orders were decided upon by Highways and were subject

to public consultation.

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a query was raised as to whether the architects had ever considered

providing denser housing along the main road – S. Coles explained

that the background work on the masterplan was in the design and

access statement. There were constraints on the site with the

adjoining conservation area and listed building. The land rose further

south and lower density housing was there as this was more

prominent. A good urban design would place as many houses as

possible close to the settlement to give the shortest distance to walk or

cycle to schools, centre of Street etc. Residents on the north boundary

would experience change but the minimum buffer distances had been

exceeded. There would also be a lot of landscaping there to create a

dark corridor for bat migration. There would be a small, traffic calmed

service road.

concerns about blocking off Burleigh Lane and increased use of Keens

Elm Lane – around half of the public present were in support of a

Traffic Regulation Order for Keens Elm Lane to increase safety or

enable traffic to flow better. The design would be determined by

Highways and both County Councillor would need to support this.

County Councillor Leyshon would support this but County Councillor

Napper did not think this would add anything – it was agreed to

consider this again at a Parish Council meeting.

At the end of the meeting the Chair thanked S. Coles for answering the

questions posed.

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Leafe and seconded

by Councillor Zaky -

RESOLVED

that Mendip District Council as the Local Planning Authority be

informed that the Parish Council wished to object to the application for

the following reasons -

A. the masterplan – the proposed housing development situated to

the north of the site by reason of density, size, siting and design would

represent an unneighbourly form of development, detrimental to the

amenities of the occupiers of adjoining residential property, particularly

by reason of the overbearing effect. It does not respect local context

and street pattern or, in particular the scale and proportions of

surrounding buildings and would be out of the character of the area

and not in keeping

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B. although a flood risk assessment and drainage strategy was

undertaken the developers still choose to build high density housing in

flood zone 3 – the highest level of flood risk. The national planning

policy framework requires councils to avoid flood risk areas wherever

possible. Where building in these areas is being considered, councils

must ensure that suitable alternative sites at lower flood risk are not

available, which we know there are.

In accordance with standing order 3 m the Chair requested that the

way in which members voted be recorded in the minutes. The voting

was as follows -

Members Who Voted For Motion Members Who Voted Against

Councillor Birch Councillor Axten

Councillor Boyce Councillor Carswell

Councillor Daniells Councillor Drew

Councillor Diment Councillor D. Goater

Councillor Leafe

Councillor Mogg

Councillor Napper

Councillor Prior

Councillor Zaky

The motion was passed by 9 votes to 4 votes.

The meeting ended at 9.06 p.m.

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AGENDA ITEM NO: 6

Dear All,

Please see the following planning applications received by Street Parish Council during the Covid-19 lockdown. Please submit any comments to the me by 12 noon Thursday 14th May 2020.

Kind Regards

Jenny Marshfield

Assistant Clerk Street Parish Council

**2020/0796/ADV** Retrospective application for the erection of 1no internally illuminated

sign on glazing, aluminium fascia panel with acrylic lettering and existing illuminated roundel to be re skinned at Unit A Clarks Village China and Glass Pavillion Farm Road Street for Mr Athos Loizou – C Rogers – Reply 12.5.20

\***2020/0834/****FUL** Dismantled original memorial and reconstruct in new location with

later additions of concrete insert, raised concrete curb and metal railings will be demolished and replaced with a simple stone border at War Memorial Merriman Road Street for Mr M Sandiford – C Rogers – Reply 20.5.20 – *This is SPC’s application to move the War Memorial in Merriman Park. I would advise you to leave the decision to planning officer at MDC.*

**\*2020/0835/LBC** Dismantled original memorial and reconstruct in new location with

later additions of concrete insert, raised concrete curb and metal railings will be demolished and replaced with a simple stone border at War Memorial Merriman Road Street for Mr M Sandiford – C Rogers – Reply 20.5.20 – *This is SPC’s application to move the War Memorial in Merriman Park. I would advise you to leave the decision to planning officer at MDC.*

**\* 2020/0826/FUL** Replace existing cycle racks with 10 new stainless-steel tubular

Racks at Greenbank Swimming Pool Wilfrid Road Street for Mr Mark Sandiford – C Rogers – Reply 21.5.20 – *This application has been submitted by SPC, I would advise you to leave the decision to the planning officer at MDC*

**2020/0882/HSE** Proposed Garage and Workshop / Storage at 60 West End Street for Mr Chris Jones – C Pearce – Reply 27.5.20

**APPROVALS AND REFUSALS**

2020/0347/ADV Erection of opaque signage at 50 High Street Street – APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS – SPC – NO COMMENTS MADE.

2020/0426/HSE Erection of a ground floor side and rear extension and 1no. additional parking space to front at 7 Keens Close Street – APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS – SPC -NO COMMENTS MADE.

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2020/0509/PAH Erection of a single storey rear extension, which would extend beyond the rear wall of the original house by 7 metres, with a maximum height of 3.9 metres and an eaves height of 2.4 metres at 23 Smithfield Road Street - PRIOR APPROVAL IS NOT REQUIRED

2020/0401/OTS Outline Planning Permission for the Erection of 2no dwellinghouses with details of access and layout at Land At 348449 136143 Leigh Road Street – REFUSAL – SPC – NO COMMENTS MADE

2020/0406/OTS Application for Outline Planning Permission with some matters reserved for installation of shipping container to provide new cafe with details of appearance, layout and scale (re-submission of 2019/2293/OTS) AT Millfield School Butleigh Road Street - APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS – SPC – APPROVAL

Mendip District Council Tree Preservation Order - Street No. 29 (2019) Garden of 22

Wraxhill Road, Street and adj. Public open space. (M1371) - Please note that the above Tree Preservation Order was confirmed on 4th May 2020.

2020/0377/ADV Heavy duty vinyl with metal ring banners to be displayed from lampposts at

6 Leigh Road Street- APPROVAL – SPC – DECISION TO BE LEFT TO PLANNING OFFICER AT MDC

2019/3039/FUL Erection of day house at Millfield School Butleigh Road (Access Off Somerton Road) Street – APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS – SPC – APPROVAL

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AGENDA ITEM NO: 9

NOTES OF THE PROJECT WORKING GROUP MEETING

HELD REMOTELY ON 28TH MAY 2020

PRESENT: Councillors Axten, Carswell, Ellis, D and P Goater, Prior, Shearer

Jenny Marshfield – Assistant Clerk.

1. **MERRIMAN PARK PLAY AREA PROJECT.**

CA is putting together the specification for the refurbishment of the play area for children aged up to 11 years. This will also include extra fencing across the park. The specification will be placed on the Contract Finders website where contractors will be able to submit tenders for the works.

CA suggested that due to the current situation, emailed tenders should also be accepted rather than postal tenders as postal tenders would need to be collected from the Parish Rooms, scanned, and emailed to Councillors.

HS asked for hard copies along with electronic copies of tenders to be supplied also.

CA informed the group that Stephen Wood from Kompan suggested that the site be open to contractors to visit once they have gained permission from the Clerk. This would avoid staff or Councillors potentially having to meet contractors on site. However, HS suggested that if social distancing was in place, this would minimise contact for staff or Councillors.

AP enquired if the old play equipment be usable elsewhere. CA explained that the equipment is very old and is unlikely that Mendip District Council would use it. PG informed the group that Mendip District Council owned all the other play areas in Street.

PG suggested that CA meet with the Merriman Park Fund Raising Committee so they can be part of the final design decision and that CA along with one other Councillor from the PWG and two representatives from MPFRC decide on the final tender.

JM to arrange a remote Zoom meeting for Friday 5th June at 11am for CA, SC and the Merriman Park Fund Raising Committee to discuss the final design and tender process.

JM informed the group that Mark Sandiford has contacted Kelly Pritchard at MDC to enquire if a Pre-Planning Application would be needed for the refurbishment, however this may not be required as the Parish Council own Merriman Park.

CA asked JM to place the specification documents on Contract Finders Website next week.

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1. **REPOSITIONING THE WAR MEMORIAL – MERRIMAN PARK.**

Planning application has been submitted and awaiting approval. Some quotations from contractors have been received.

1. **BIKE SHELTERS**.

Planning applications has been submitted and awaiting approval. PG informed the group that 106 Travel enhancement money is being used for this project

1. **PARISH ROOMS/LIBRARY REFURBISHMENT.**

PG reported that we now have a start date for the works to proceed – 29th June 2020 and the works should be completed within 16 weeks.

LIFT UPGRADE

As staff have been able to work remotely at home during the lockdown situation, the Parish Council office will not need to be relocated to Room 20 in the Community Centre. Also, the temporary library that was due to relocate to Unit 92 in Clarks Village will not be needed either. The savings the Council will make will enable a more substantial lift to be installed.

A meeting with Jack Stafford - Community Library Manager and Emma Mercer – Library Development is being held on Monday 1st June to discuss the library staff and the reopening of the library.

The Clerk and Assistant Clerk will meet with Daryl Thyer – Melhusih and Saunders Ltd on Tuesday 2nd June to discuss the electricity supply needed for the server and the Clerks computer during the refurbishment. The server enables the staff to continue working from home and the Clerks computer always needs to be on to access the accounts programme.

A further meeting to discuss the library final design with James Ellis – Orme Architects and Emma Mercer – Library Development has been arranged for Thursday 4th June at 9:30am

It was agreed for the Clerk to organise the removal company – All items from the Parish Rooms will need to be placed in storage.

CA informed the group that the colour scheme for the library area had been agreed previously and that a neutral colour would be used throughout.

1. **High Street – Enabling Social Distancing.**

PG informed the group that as non-vital shops will be opening within the High Street, there is potential for long queues on the pavement outside shops and could hinder social distancing. It is suggested that the High Street, from Vestry Road to Farm Road be closed during the daytime (10am – 4pm) with a one-way walking system in place with strategically placed signage.

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As yet, there is no guidance from central government, however PG is talking with MDC to get in place before shops begin to open.

PG to work with MS to go through the High Street plan and decide what signs need to be purchased. These signs could also be used for future events.

CA suggested using some of the vulnerable people money to pay for the signage as our community need to be protected.

AP asked if the weekly market will be starting soon?

HS commented that having the market again would encourage people out of their houses.

PG is talking with MDC and Grahame, the Market Manager, to see when and where the market can take place. The market position may need to change if the daily High Street closure goes ahead.

Meeting closed at 12:30pm

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Friday 12th June at 1pm**

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AGENDA ITEM NO: 10

To: Council

From: Clerk

Subject: Pillars Bar and Grill – Licence Application

An application to vary the premises licence for Pillars Bar and Grill, 15 Leigh Road, Street has been received and representations on this must be submitted to Mendip District Council by 23rd June. The application relates to a proposed variation to the licence to extend trading hours by 2 hours every Friday and Saturday night until 2 a.m. and closing up to be extended from 1 a.m. to 2.30 a.m. on those 2 days. The applicant has written to neighbouring properties to explain the proposals and has stated that there will be self-imposed conditions including no use of the terrace areas after 11.30 p.m., no re-entry or any entry after 11.30 p.m. and a strict dispersal policy.

An objection to the proposed variation has been received from S. Packer of 57 High Street who lives very close to the premises and feels that the increase in hours may result in noise which would have a big impact on residents in the early morning.

An objection should only be made for valid reasons taking into account the licensing objectives such as prevention of harm and crime and disorder. If mediation is not successful there will be a Hearing and an objection would carry more weight if an officer or councillor attended in person.

L.A. Ruff, Clerk

16.06.20

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AGENDA ITEM NO: 11

To: Council

From: Clerk

Subject: Local Government Reorganisation in Somerset

On 5th March I attended a workshop on the above subject in Frome with a number of other local councils and notes of this are attached. The problems to be faced both now and in the future including adult social care with a rapidly ageing population and lack of funding, seemed quite daunting. However I was blissfully unaware that in less than 2 weeks I would be working at home due to the pandemic and all that this would involve. The leaders of the County and District Councils had been invited to attend a meeting of the Council to speak on the matter but this was cancelled in view of the coronavirus emergency. Now that things have settled down a bit this subject is being discussed again. You will have received an email from Cognisant Research working for Somerset County Council to support the public engagement for the One Somerset proposal.

I have also attached a report commissioned by SALC, SLCC and Glastonbury and Frome Town Councils from Mel Usher on recommendations for the role of parish councils in the reorganisation process. The report does not favour any particular local government structure but shows how parishes could contribute. Finding Local Solutions 8.4.2 of the report describes the kind of initiatives already being carried out by the Street Community Support Group and planned for delivery from the newly refurbished Library and Parish Council office. A business case or proposal to deliver LGR in Somerset to the government must be made in the next 2 months. The Council is asked to consider if it is in support of the 7 recommendations by mid July and if so to explain why and to then notify the leaders of the County and District Councils, SALC and SLCC.

L.A. Ruff, Clerk

16.06.20

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**UNITARY WORKSHOP IN FROME ON 5TH MARCH 2020**

270 local councils in Somerset and a population of 500,000 which is size now required for a unitary authority.

**OVERVIEW**

There will be a lot of changes over the next 15 years from 2020 to 2035 with an ageing population, troubled families, environmental issues, 25% of children in poverty and a need to provide better paid jobs and more opportunities for the young. The current system will not be financially sustainable and there will be insufficient funds for adult social care and children’s services. There will be less funding and resources and so it is felt that local councils need to try to meet the present and future needs of their communities by providing free meals, volunteer driving schemes, gardening services, handyman with low charges etc. It was felt that whatever kind of new unitary authority was formed little notice would be taken of representations from local councils and that they would be best continuing to carry out services needed by the community themselves and raising the precept to meet the cost. Often a relatively small amount of funding could be given to another organisation to deliver community schemes such as the breakfast club at the Crispin Hall. It was felt that local councils should remain neutral to proposals from the County and District Councils as they would need to work with which ever new authority was finally established.

In Dorset there were 3 district councils and mostly political alignment on forming 2 unitary authorities. Bournemouth and Poole had gone ahead with forming Dorset Unitary Council and the rest of Dorset decided to become Dorset Rural Unitary Council. Each unitary has a population of around 500,000. The structural change order was made in February 2017 but not approved until May 2018 leaving only 1 year to April 2019 before the new unitary was formed with elections in May 2019. There was a transition and implementation team. Council tax harmonisation needed to be achieved.

**WHAT WE WANT AND NEED FROM LOCAL GOVT RE-ORGANISATION**

Joint report on possibilities, ideas, kind of demands might make on a new unitary authority, Parish Charter (not legally binding) on how all local councils want to be dealt with – how will consult, communicate and support eg. re asset or service transfer. Good examples such as transferring assets free of charge and if local councils develop any in the future they should not have to pay any return to the County or District Council.

Get the MPs making the decision to recognise some of our ideas.

Talk about the community rather than just services.

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Final draft 5 June 2020 Recommendations on the Role of Parish Councils in the event of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Somerset.

Commissioned by the Somerset Association of Local Councils and the Somerset Branch of the Society of Local Council Clerks. With assistance from Glastonbury Town and Frome Town Councils.

Author: Mel Usher.

Executive Summary

With sufficient goodwill and innovation, and in partnership with parishes, it is possible to create, through the LGR disruption, improved community engagement, creative partnerships and highly tailored local services that will go some way to addressing current and future problems and community needs in Somerset. Any real gains from LGR will not come from boundary changes but rethinking how multiple community issues are addressed in the future. If at the end of the reorganisation the same services and functions end up being managed in the same way with the same outcomes, then a real opportunity will have been missed. Often the views of parishes are missing from LGR debates. The purpose of this paper is to ensure that all parishes in Somerset are aware of what is being proposed in relation to LGR, to make a strong case for parishes to be included as partners in preparing for LGR and to identify possible ways of improving the outcome. The commissioners do not pretend that this report contains all of the answers, nor will everyone agree with its contents, it is however an entry to the debate. This report does not advocate reorganisation nor does it have a preferred solution. It provides for the possibility of self-reflection on the role of local government and the needs of the communities of Somerset. Seven recommendations are made (note where unitary is referred to this could mean more than one council).

Recommendation 1. A Charter for Somerset SALC and SLCC with the help of a cross section of parishes to work in partnership with the proposed unitary to develop a unique Charter for Somerset. One that builds upon the lessons drawn from neighbouring LGR decisions, includes rights and responsibilities, mutual expectations and identifies new possibilities, procedures and ways of working. The Charter should be a living document, reviewed bi-annually and be binding.

Recommendation 2. Local Ownership and devolution Parishes to be involved in determining the methodology behind the devolution of assets, how services and functions are to be transferred, the resources dedicated to ensuring a smooth transition, how decisions can be transparent and a draft timetable. The overriding philosophy on devolution should be “by request”, recognising the diversity of capability and motivation within parishes/communities and the ability of the unitary to handle multiple contacts and aspirations.

Recommendation 3. Localism and Solutions Localism is a way of tackling issues through which parishes and a unitary council can encourage and recognise the significance of local solutions, local innovations and local community groups in tackling isolation, vulnerability, environmental concerns and the local economy. It can be a way of giving voice, choice and control to communities and it is hard to underestimate the importance of sense of place, recognising a common story and fostering pride. The unitary and parishes to commission a “Somerset Guide to Localism” including good examples, outcomes and meaningful partnerships.

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Recommendation 4. Local Governance There are 278 parishes in Somerset and a new unitary will have to communicate with all of them. A common method seen elsewhere is to cluster parishes in Community Networks. How such a Network is established is a crucial decision around engagement, it could potentially be the difference between success and failure. Parishes to be involved in establishing the boundaries, brief, representation and procedures of these Networks from day one.

Recommendation 5. Local Presence It's pivotal for a new unitary to have a dedicated and supported senior staff presence based locally in each Community Network to assist in ensuring proper coordination, engagement and communication within the network and to feedback to/sort out with the unitary on cross cutting issues, blockages and decision making. Representatives of parishes to be involved in the appointment of the staff.

Recommendation 6. Trust and Partnership To build trust, a 5 year joint cultural and development programme for staff and members be established. A team drawn from local government, partners and a suitable University be created to think beyond the immediate concerns of LGR to create a unique road map showing genuine possibilities for greater engagement, localism, resilience and innovative solutions.

Recommendation 7. Parishes Working Together Parishes need to recognise that LGR is the biggest change to local government in Somerset for decades. The impact on local councils will be profound and should not be underestimated. Through SALC and SLCC parishes need to run a concerted campaign, establish a dedicated steering group of representative councils and find sufficient resources to ensure that their voices are heard loud and clear in the run up to, implementation and subsequent working of the new unitary.

Section 1. Introduction

1.1 It appears that the possibility of Local Government Re-Organisation (LGR)or at least a reshuffle is likely for Somerset in the not too distant future. In most other areas this has led to disagreements between Districts and the County, sometimes with several structural options being proposed. In rural areas the outcome has often been the emergence of a new unitary authority based on the former County boundaries. This is the model followed regionally by Wiltshire, Dorset (where 2 super unitaries were created) and Cornwall. In Somerset the debate seems to be centring around one unitary or “deeper collaboration” between existing authorities, although more recently a new preference has emerged for two unitaries using an east west split with a combined authority to deal with strategic concerns.

1.2 In all LGR cases savings are forecast and services are claimed to be more efficient and capable of being better understood by local communities. With one or two admiral exceptions the role of parish councils has been a secondary consideration at best. However, parishes and towns have often been expected by the new unitary to inherit many local environmental services; allotments, parks and recreation, grass cutting and so on. There are examples of more adventurous transfers of power and greater influence but they are few and far between.

1.3 There is a feeling in some counties that parishes have been used as pawns in the LGR merry go round. Yes, consulted, but not seen as serious players with much to contribute. Other commentators have questioned the whole raison d'etre of LGR pointing out that the emphasis on structural change and supposed efficiencies might be misplaced. Surely they say the question should be “what is best for the communities of Somerset and what is the most effective way to tackle the “wicked issues” faced now and in the future rather than just identifying the most efficient way of running current services?”

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1.4 This report does not enter the structural debate. That work is left to others. However important points are made about services and functions that could be devolved, how new democratic arrangements could be forged and how issues around resilience should be tackled.

Section 2. What happens next on LGR?

2.1 A standard format has developed leading to a decision on LGR and it goes something like this. One or more Councils triggers a starting gun by writing to the Secretary of State (now done by the County Council). He/she can decline but usually gives a green light. Once that is received business cases are commissioned by the Councils involved which evaluate potential savings and improvements and the advantages and disadvantages of different configurations of Unitary government.

2.2 The individual council or groups of councils set out to consult the public and parishes. A programme of residents' surveys, roadshows and meetings is organised and a web-based site is developed explaining the options in detail.

2.3 Once the business cases are submitted and assessed the Secretary of State finally signals that he/she is “minded to approve” the proposal or not. This can be a long process and questions are often asked about how robust are the savings, do the staff know what's happening, are the public and parishes truly engaged and how can promises be fulfilled once the dust has settled.

Section 3. Summary of District and County Arguments

3.1 Somerset has a three-tier system - Somerset County Council looks after highways, social care, some education and social services among other things. Alongside it, four district councils provide services such as planning, housing and recreation. Closest to the ground are 278 parish councils which vary from one meeting a year to sizeable town councils with meaty budgets and programmes.

3.2 In 2019 the 4 Districts and the County commissioned the Future of Local Government in Somerset Report (FOLGIS) and the various councils set out their stalls identifying their preferred future options.

3.3 The leaders of the five authorities as sponsors of the FOLGIS report appear to agree on one thing – that things can't remain the same. They also believe that any changes have to be driven by the ability to deliver services in a better way and that the objective of reorganisation is not all about saving money.

3.4 In recognition of the need to change, the report notes that service needs across Somerset are evolving, demand is increasing, and a new collaborative delivery strategy is needed. The issues to be tackled include:

 Disadvantaged children: Somerset has low social mobility and high numbers of “troubled families”, with both poverty and deprivation being on the rise;

 Young people: there are issues with children not being able to access higher education, as well as high levels of self-harm and little genuinely affordable housing in the county;

 The economy: Somerset’s economy is generally low-wage and low-skill, with productivity also being a problem. The county has poor digital connectivity (e.g. broadband) and there are big problems with public and private transport;

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 The environment: Somerset’s councils are working to become carbon neutral, but more work is needed to tackle emissions and reduce the risk of flooding across the county; and

 Older people: Somerset’s elderly population is rising as its working population declines – in the next 15 years, the number of people aged 85 and over could rise by 88 per cent. With that comes issues about the provision and quality of health and social care, as well as tackling social isolation and loneliness.

3.5 The report identified seven structural options, although how they are connected to the issues to be resolved is at this time hard to fathom. Most options have now fallen away leaving two front runners.

Section 4. What has emerged?

4.1 The four districts favour closer collaboration and integration without abolishing the two-tier system. This includes integrated leadership teams, shared internal support and a single common strategy. The County Council would prefer one unitary with all of the above advantages but based on the county boundaries. This option is seen by its proponents as the easiest model to understand and the one that could produce the most savings at least cost. More recently the four districts have favoured two unitaries based on an east/west split with South Somerset and Mendip in the east and Sedgemoor and Somerset West and Taunton in the west. At the time of writing there are no other obvious contenders although some councillors are promoting a merger for part of Mendip with BANES.

Section 5. Where does that leave Parishes in Somerset?

5.1 All of the options will impact on parishes in Somerset. In the run up to determining the preferred solution there will be much debate and even angst amongst aficionados. Semi-arbitrary boundary lines, the identification of the savings that will reputedly accrue and the survival of cherished organisations will prove far more attractive for comment and analysis than trying to find new ways of stemming the burgeoning demand on services and resolving local community issues arising from life altering environmental, social and economic conditions. That growing demand, particularly children's and adult social services, will in any case soon dwarf any proposed savings.

5.2 Any real gains from LGR will come from rethinking how multiple community issues are addressed in the future. If the same services and functions end up being managed in the same way with the same outcomes, then a real opportunity will be missed. And that's where Parishes can help.

5.3 Parish Councils in Somerset are a mixed bag. Some are very small with tiny budgets and precepts, some spend millions and have wide ranging functions. It all depends upon the nature and size of the parish and their ambition. No size fits all and that parish diversity is a strength but also, of course, a weakness.

5.4 On the whole the smaller parishes deal with allotments, bus stops, toilets and minor environmental concerns. A big change occurred through the Localism Act in 2011 when parishes were granted the General Power of Competence. In simple terms it gave parishes the power to do anything an individual can do provided it is not prohibited by other legislation. This opened the door to almost limitless possibilities and led to some parishes introducing significant innovations with greater confidence in fields such as housing, wellbeing, economic development, trading, community development and neighbourhood planning.

5.5 It is fair to say that some parishes have a limited view of their role and are happy with their current plans. Some focus on process and procedures and are less than willing to raise the local precept. Others are keen to make a difference and have adapted readily to new innovations and ways of working.

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Section 6. Looking ahead

6.1 Let's assume that two proposals involving unitary authorities are advanced as technical and structural panaceas for Somerset. Let's also assume that the “red lines” debate has dominated discussion but finally town and parish councils are asked what their preferences might be. Should they plump for the one that appears to save most money or maybe the one that majors on geographical proximity or perhaps none at all? If LGR is to proceed the objective parishes might want to adopt is “is it possible to use LGR to create within Somerset a new type of community engagement and partnership whilst encouraging tailored services that will best serve future community needs?”

6.2 The remainder of the report explores the role of parishes (and communities themselves) in achieving that objective. It draws conclusions, makes suggestions, proposals and even demands for a new unitary to take into considerations when preparing their business case. In effect by being clear about its wishes the parish sector can influence the outcome of LGR and contribute to producing a more viable outcome.

Section 7. Communities and the Future

7.1 Although this report majors on the future role of parishes in Somerset there are wider community considerations and trends that will influence the way parishes and a unitary will operate over the next 15 to 20 years. In the recommendations we recommend that these future considerations be part of a radical Somerset study that identifies how events might unfold and how communities might deal with the outcomes. There are six headings:

7.1.2 Localism There is growing political consensus nationally on the need to decentralise power and influence. Locally it is clear that the scale and complexity of Somerset's challenges are so great they are unlikely to be effectively addressed from a unitary council which is too distant from recognising and responding to local concerns.

Strengthening localism, in whatever forms, offers the potential to tackle disadvantage, rebalance the local economy, and revitalise democracy. In public service design and delivery, it can also ensure that services are equipped to address local needs, harness local assets and improve local employment and investment.

Localism is also about giving voice, choice and control to communities who have in the past been mere recipients. It enables innovative local solutions to emerge through partnership and collaboration centred around place, whether villages or towns. It also provides the platform for social action to thrive whether through the work of voluntary or community organisations.

It is hard to underestimate the importance of sense of place, recognising a common story and fostering pride. Localism is about the connections and feelings of belonging that unite people within their communities. It is about how people perceive their own power and ability to make change in their local area alongside their neighbours. And people do care, if approached in the right way and with the correct mind-set, most people appreciate engagement, they care about their neighbour, their street, their friends and relatives. Taking part in local action can strengthen feelings of community cohesion, generate a greater sense of pride and purpose, and improve wellbeing.

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7.1.3 Connections

The nature and quality of relationships in communities is the foundation stone of their success. It is the most effective way to bring people together given the massive price of loneliness and perceived isolation. Research suggests that particularly important are “weak ties”, saying hello to people, recognising a friendly face and attending the same local events are especially important in creating

Final draft 5 June 2020 embeddedness. Weak ties have suffered badly in recent decades amid the loss of meeting places, greater use of the car and increasing busyness. We should take pride and celebrate the place we share together...it's story, its beauty, its quirks, its diversity and its resilience in the face of challenges.

7.1.4 Resilience

The decade ahead is likely to be characterized by shock, stresses and turbulence. There will be an intensifying impact of climate change and global heating. Parishes need to create the capacity for greater resilience. Of course, no community can be self-sufficient but it can benefit from being selfreliant. Can for example communities create skills and knowledge to support local enterprise and economies? Can initiatives as varying as community energy sources and credit unions lead to greater self-reliance? There are already examples in Somerset of communities and parishes investing in their own skills and enterprises.

7.1.5 Collaboration.

Exploring not just what works but why, learning rapidly from other communities and parishes, investing time and resources into greater collaboration will be essential. Different kinds of organisations will have to come together; parishes, grassroots community groups, businesses, charities, social enterprises, individuals, the NHS and more. There will be tensions for example between ultralocal but innovative parishes and powerful but potentially bureaucratic unitaries. The new opportunities and threats this will create will mean having to make it up as we go along. Creativity and risk taking and the ability to learn quickly from experiments will be essential.

7.1.6 Inclusive Politics.

Participative and representative democracy can mesh together and deal with competing priorities at a local level. New political dynamics are likely to emerge as climate change shifts policy around power generation, transport and the built environment. So we need to build trust in the democratic process. There will be a premium on local forms of politics...fair, locally understandable, transparent, flexible, accountable and open to everyone.

7.1.7 Advocacy.

Successful places and local councils will recognise the power of advocacy and campaigning. They will organise, mobilise and communicate in pursuit of the support they need. Sometimes that may be for more money but also influence, deliberation, engagement and decision making.

7.1.8 These six factors amount to an immense challenge. The current system will no longer be able to cope, parishes as part of any LGR change need to rethink their role or be in danger of disappearing into the archives of history.

Section 8. Involving Parishes and Communities

8.1 The FOLGIS report spelled out the issues facing Somerset now and in the future. They were centred around disadvantaged children, young people, the economy, older people and the environment including climate change. They will be the same problems faced by a new unitary authority(ies) and be just as unaffordable as they are now. Parishes could help enormously in addressing some of these issues; in many cases whilst the responsibility may lie at a strategic level the solution can often be found locally, sometimes even at street level.

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8.2 There are six interdependent areas in which any change could occur:

 local governance encouraging and finding new routes for local communities and parishes to be more involved in local decision making and having greater influence and control;

 locally led innovations, using new and existing mechanisms to give parishes and communities the tools they need to deliver local social, environmental and economic improvements;

 finding local solutions by making sure all players in an area work closely together to make best use of all resources;

 local ownership through the devolution of assets and services to community groups and parishes;

 local partnerships based on building trusting and respectful relationships on the ground to build local capacity; and

 local spending priorities aimed at saving money and producing better results.

8.3 Local Governance and decision making

8.3.1 One of the current problems with local democracy is the lack of delegation. Too many decisions are made remotely; physically, intellectually and emotionally. If one or two unitaries are created in Somerset the gulf between them and local councils and communities will be greater than ever. New ways will have to be found to shift power and decision making down without re- creating a new bureaucratic tier. This is a two-way process, the unitary needs to “think parishes” but equally parish councillors need to grow in confidence and optimism if they are to play an expanded role.

8.3.2 An important element found elsewhere where unitaries have been created are the variously named Area Boards, Neighbourhood Networks, Community Connections and so on. This report will refer to them Community Networks (CNs). CNs involving clusters of parishes (and other partners) have been established as devolution vehicles to partially bridge the gap left by the districts. Often but not exclusively they have been centred around market towns and their surrounding parishes although sometimes they follow other boundaries such as Clinical Care Commissioning Groups. Whatever the raison d'etre behind their boundaries they have broadly similar roles:

 delegated decision making;

 monitoring the quality of services locally;

 engaging with local people on issues of concern and shaping the local political agenda;

 influencing the unitary council and other strategic partners like the police and the NHS and the voluntary and business sectors;

 supporting and developing local partnerships;

 helping to develop local projects and funding bids to respond to community needs; and/or  offering an opportunity to manage and allocate devolved budgets.

8.3.3 Discussions where CN's have been established suggest that if these new networks are not to become merely talking shops the best of them appoint, in each area, a dedicated senior community development officer with sufficient staff and resource support. These locally based officers provide the essential link between the strategic priorities of the unitary and action at a local level. They should be connected into strategic level decision making through a corporate director on the Management Team of the unitary. Sometimes local action plans based on the strategic needs of the unitary, and community are jointly developed providing a mandate through which the CN can influence service providers as well as developing local projects and innovative schemes.

8.3.4 The networks usually involve regular meetings with agendas, reports, minutes and in some cases manage a significant local budget stretching from community grants to small highways schemes. They enable two-way communications and new innovations to be shared across the board.

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8.3.5 Voting on most networks appears to be rare, the majority decisions are made by consensus. However, where votes are taken the options run from the restrictive, where only unitary members can vote, to equal votes for every invited organisation.

8.3.6 In Somerset, if the area presence is to be tangible and meaningful there needs to be a way of engaging parishes in the formation, establishment and transparency of the CN's. Open to the public they should be a crucial and central part of the new council's governance procedures. How they are established, their remit, their staffing levels and resource allocation will all be crucial to their success.

8.4 Finding Local Solutions

8.4.1 Sometimes only truly local solutions present themselves. In Frome for example Active and In Touch aimed at vulnerable or lonely older people and Edventure at younger participants looking to develop new skills are both locality specific but capable of being replicated. There are many examples across the country of parishes combating isolation, running sports centres, engaging local communities by innovative means, starting dementia friendly towns, supporting wellbeing schemes, running community transport, establishing community fridges, taking over libraries and running youth services.

8.4.2 Even the smallest village could adopt its own local solutions. Think of an imaginary person, let's call her Alice. She is 85, lives on her own since her husband died, she lives in her own house but can't afford to maintain it and the garden is badly overgrown. The shop in the village has recently closed, the surgery is 10 miles away and the bus service is twice a day. Alice now knows few people in the village as new younger couples have moved in with children. Surely the parish council should be less concerned about grass verges and should start thinking more about Alice. Why not a volunteer car club to take her to the surgery, persuading the local pub to put on subsidised hot meals for Alice and others to have a proper meal twice a week at quiet times. Perhaps establish a contract with a local handyman with fixed hourly rates as Alice can't even change a lightbulb, a garden tidy up and maybe even a local teenager to teach Alice how to use a tablet to do her shopping on line and skype her daughter in Australia?

8.5 Local Ownership of assets.

8.5.1 This is the area that attracts most interest in LGR debates. It is often couched in terms of “what can we legitimately shift to someone else” from the unitary and “what do we want to have” from the parish (if anything). Negotiations are frequently long drawn out, centred around towns and usually involve physical assets. It's vital however that the process recognises that every community is different, that negotiations have to be specific and that a Swiss cheese effect of dotted service provision will result for the unitary, which in the end will have to be rationalised. The most common approach to devolution has been to invite community groups, local councils and others to approach the unitary with requests to transfer, it could be individual building or a wholesale transfer involving all assets or services in a town or large village.

8.5.2 Under this approach requests are measured on a matrix against shared aims such as increasing satisfaction, providing greater local influence, generating greater community pride and engagement and enhancing the role of local councils. Criteria are then applied assessing social value, capital receipts and revenue effects as well as capacity, capability and local ambition.

8.5.3 There are at least 5 outcomes that could arise from the matrix:

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 Outcome 1. Influencing and Monitoring

 Outcome 2. Joint /enhanced delivery

 Outcome 3. Agency Agreements

 Outcome 4. Delegated Authority

 Outcome 5. Full transfer of services or assets

Resources are likely to be concentrated on projects that offer the greatest level of impact and are most likely to be deliverable.

8.5.4 Functions and assets that might be considered for transfer include:

 Control of markets;

 Maintenance of highway verges, open spaces, footways and footpaths;

 Parks, recreation area, allotments and unused land;

 Community, office and redundant buildings;

 Sports and arts centres;

 Tree preservation orders;

 Maintenance of closed churchyards;

 Street cleansing (such as litter picking, sweeping and graffiti removal);

 Public conveniences;

 Noise and nuisance abatement;

 Recycling provision;

 Street naming;

 Street lighting (except on principal roads);

 Parking restrictions;

 Off and on street car-parking, highway potholes;

 Road safety and restriction measures’;

 Issue of bus and rail passes or other transport voucher schemes;

 Licences for taxis, street trading or public entertainment;

 Some aspects of planning development control;

 Library and museum management or ownership; and

 Leisure and tourism provision.

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8.6 Locally led socially minded Innovations

8.6.1 Socially minded businesses in the UK are growing rapidly and no less so in Somerset: a full third of small and medium sized enterprises have social aims at their heart, many of them firmly anchored in local communities, with the sector worth three times more to the UK than agriculture and employing as many people as the creative industry.

8.6.2 Local government, including parishes, is increasingly willing to work with these organisations as delivery partners as evidenced by the County's micro business programme for adult social care. One scenario for the next decade could see existing partnerships between these kinds of organisation evolve into something much more complex and sophisticated: a web of local social and economic systems that seamlessly blend local government’s capacity to set frameworks and incentives with the capacity of both business and non-profits to innovate and deliver.

8.7 Local spending

8.7.1 Saving money will be foremost on the mind of any new unitary. Over the last decade local government has lost £15bn of its core funding, that is 60p in every £1 and the funding gap is predicted to be £8bn by 2025 whilst demand, especially from an older population, continues to rise. As a result, even the most optimistic of savings forecast arising from LGR will continue to be dwarfed by overall financial shortages. Meanwhile recent developments have seen the rise of the “super parish” with precepts of well over a million. In 19/20 forty-five parishes doubled their precept and across the country parish precepts amount to £554m.

8.7.2 Locally, ten years after reorganisation Chippenham Town Council bit the bullet and finally took on the remaining Wiltshire unitary services including green spaces, play areas, street cleansing, markets, sports and arts centres and allotments. Their precept is now £2.9m.

8.7.3 Savings will be important to central government when making any final decision on LGR in Somerset but parishes need to be aware that if they are to maximise the benefits for their local community some hard decisions lie ahead on possible tax rises and rethinking their role.

8.8 Building Trust and Partnership.

Much of what has been written about here depends upon changes in mind-set and cultures which are as profound as they are essential. And it's two ways. Any unitary needs to put localism at the heart of its thinking and ensure that implementation and ongoing relationships are well resourced and not merely after thoughts or platitudes. Local councils equally need to fulfil their promises, be outward looking, be ambitious and professional. This suggests the need for, firstly, a compact that both sides can refer to and use as a template and, secondly, a highly symbolic joint organisational development programme to assist parishes and the County Association to step up to the mark.

Conclusion

As the LGR process unfolds more issues will emerge and there will be a need for further reports and monitoring. The easiest option by some way for parishes would be to ignore what is happening and let the outcomes just occur. However, if maximum benefits are to accrue to the communities of Somerset from LGR it is essential that parishes work in concert with one another and in partnership with any proposed unitary to achieve lasting and workable conclusions.

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**Mrs. L.A. Ruff, Clerk of the Council, Street Parish Rooms, 6 Leigh Road, Street, Somerset BA16 0HA Tel. 07539 414205 or 07927 556387**

**Email street.parish@street-pc.gov.uk Website www.street-pc.gov.uk**

DATES OF COUNCIL MEETINGS JULY 2020 TO MAY 2021

Public Question Time begins at 6.55 p.m.

Council Meeting begins at 7 p.m. approx. (depending on length of Public Question Time)

Meetings are held virtually using Zoom and live streamed on YouTube – details on website and agendas

TUESDAY, 21ST JULY, 2020

TUESDAY, 18TH AUGUST, 2020

TUESDAY, 15TH SEPTEMBER, 2020

TUESDAY, 20TH OCTOBER, 2020

TUESDAY, 17TH NOVEMBER, 2020

TUESDAY, 8TH DECEMBER, 2020

TUESDAY, 19TH JANUARY, 2021

TUESDAY, 16TH FEBRUARY, 2021

TUESDAY, 16TH MARCH, 2021 – ANNUAL PARISH MEETING AT 6.30 PM IF HELD (CANNOT BE HELD REMOTELY) FOLLOWED BY COUNCIL MEETING AT ABOUT 7.30 PM GOOD FRIDAY ON 2ND APRIL

TUESDAY, 13TH APRIL, 2021

TUESDAY, 18TH MAY, 2021 - ANNUAL COUNCIL ?

INVESTITURE OF NEW COUNCIL CHAIRMAN TO BE AGREED

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MEETINGS OF THE POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE JULY 2020 TO MAY 2021 Meeting begins at 6 p.m.

(Note - Arrangements may be altered by Council as necessary)

TUESDAY, 7TH JULY, 2020 - Interest Rates for Investments

TUESDAY, 8TH SEPTEMBER, 2020 - Grant Applications

TUESDAY, 3RD NOVEMBER, 2020 - Estimated Expenditure and Precept for 2021/22

TUESDAY, 2ND FEBRUARY, 2021 - Risk Assessment, Annual Investment Strategy

TUESDAY, 11TH MAY, 2021 - Income and Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet and Annual Return

MEETINGS OF PLANNING COMMITTEE JULY 2020 TO MAY 2021

Meetings held on 3rd Tuesday of month -

Public Question Time begins at 5.55 p.m.

Planning Meeting begins at around 6 p.m. depending on Question Time

21ST JULY, 2020

18TH AUGUST, 2020

15TH SEPTEMBER, 2020

20TH OCTOBER, 2020

17TH NOVEMBER, 2020

8TH DECEMBER, 2020

19TH JANUARY, 2021

16TH FEBRUARY, 2021

16TH MARCH, 2021 (GOOD FRIDAY 2ND APRIL)

13TH APRIL, 2021

18TH MAY, 2021

Other meetings of the Council and its Committees are held as necessary and full details of all meetings are displayed in the Public Library, at Street Parish Rooms and on the Community Noticeboard in front of the Crispin Hall, High Street, Street.

Details of meetings, agendas and minutes can be accessed via the website www.street-pc.gov.uk or by contacting the Parish Clerk.

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AGENDA ITEM NO: 13

To: Council From: Clerk Subject: Path To Recovery and High Street Closure

The Chair and I have been attending remote meetings with officers of Mendip District Council and the other town clerks to discuss ways of supporting local businesses to continue or restart now that the lockdown is being relaxed. The Projects Working Group has been looking at closing the main section of the High Street to assist with social distancing when the shops reopen.

Consideration has been given to ways of maintaining the current shop local trend into recovery and beyond. We received a presentation on ShopAppy which is an app successfully used in many districts to support local high streets. It provides a single point of selection and payment for goods from local shops that are signed up to the scheme. It can be adapted for other uses such as event organisation and tourism-related activities and may be able to support a Mendip Experience box containing local produce. It is currently available free to support local businesses during the pandemic. ShopAppy.com is launching in over 130 towns. Services, trades and other businesses can also be helped. The site can do browsing, bookings and buying with click and collect and home delivery. It can host virtual events to support local artists and producers to secure wider engagement and benefit. Example sites are - shopappy.com/banbury, shopappy.com/Kendal, shopappy.com/Todmorden and shopappy.com/saltaire. Businesses would need to maintain 10 or more live products available for purchase and some may not have the time, energy or skills for this. Another point made was that perhaps ShopAppy’s platform should act more like a ‘white label’ product that can slot into local council/tourism digital offerings with content and ‘skin’ to match local branding.

HIGH STREET CLOSURE Clarks Village, shops in High Street etc. will reopen from Monday 15th June. The Chair and I met with officers of the County and District Council on 11th June and agreed on behalf of the Council that the main part of the High Street from the junctions with Farm Road and Vestry Road would be closed at all times except for deliveries. The County Council will arrange for the Carnival Clubs to provide and erect barriers and signs and to maintain these. There will be space for vehicles to drive around them to make deliveries which will not be time limited initially to support retail. We would like volunteers to act as marshalls when possible to provide a presence, talk to people and explain why the road has been closed. This will be particularly important in the first few weeks. We are arranging to put up social distancing and keep left signs on the lamp posts along the High Street from the junctions with Cranhill Road to Wilfrid Road and along Farm Road from Southleaze Orchard to High Street. The arrangements will be reviewed with the County and District Councils and changes can be made as necessary.

L.A. Ruff, Clerk

16.06.20

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AGENDA ITEM NO: 14

To: Council

From: Clerk

Subject: Draft Cycling and Walking Manifesto for Somerset

A £2 billion travel scheme was recently announced to put cycling and walking at the heart of our transport policy. More locally Somerset Climate Action Network in their April 2020 document Towards a Carbon Neutral Somerset – Recommendations, recommended that principal councils remove barriers and lead joint funding bids to plan and develop effective cycling and walking infrastructure.

Prior to these developments Cllr. Hood of Bruton Town Council had been working with Taunton and Bridgwater Area Cycling Campaigns to consider how best to influence County Highways’ policy and practice. The idea was formed to have a manifesto – a simple set of requests for change which it was hoped local councils across the County could sign to indicate their support.

Comments are invited on the draft manifesto (attached) and that the Council agrees to support the final document based on comments received. This is required by the end of June and delegation could be given to the Clerk in consultation with the Highways Working Group to agree the final manifesto.

The Highways Group will meet to consider the use of £50,000 Section 106 funding for cycle/walk routes from Street Business Park which the Government would match fund.

L.A. Ruff, Clerk

16.06.20

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AGENDA ITEM NO: 15

To: Council

From: Clerk

Subject: Mendip YMCA

Councillor Drew will update the Council at the meeting on the most recent YMCA meeting and members should contact her if they would like notes from meetings prior to the Council meeting. She has also asked that the links below be given which highlight the importance of youth work at the present time as this may be of interest to members.

[https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/apr/29/youth-worker-coronavirus-youth-services-young-people-pandemic](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.theguardian.com%2Fsociety%2F2020%2Fapr%2F29%2Fyouth-worker-coronavirus-youth-services-young-people-pandemic&data=02%7C01%7Ccllr.drew%40street-pc.gov.uk%7C8b48ebf16757438053fb08d7ec58ea45%7C1b2a435d8c0c4c29a248215370c6a4ab%7C0%7C1%7C637237738943458983&sdata=NBgGCSZVvEUGKZy04Bib9VpCf39tTY7KNFgy%2BUgYw2M%3D&reserved=0)

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-52948236/coronavirus-life-as-a-young-carer-under-lockdown>

L.A. Ruff, Clerk

16.06.20

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AGENDA ITEM NO: 16 A

**To:** Council

**From:**  Assistant Clerk & Projects Officer

**Subject:** Review of energy supplier/contract for Parish Rooms and High Street Clock

Gas and electricity for the Parish Rooms and the clock in the High Street is currently

provided by Eon.  Details of the current usage and costs (Gas is estimated) is shown

in the table below.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | EON | | | | |
| **Description** | **Energy** | **Standing Charge (pence per day)** | **Unit Rate (pence per Unit)** | **Annual Energy Bill (Net)** | **Annual Energy Bill (Gross)** | **Current Contract End Date** |
| High Street Clock | Electric | 27 | 22.2 | 180.07 | 189.07 | 30/06/2020 |
| Ground Floor PR | Electric | 27 | 22.2 | 1449.1 | 1521.56 | 29/11/2020 |
| 1st Floor PR | Electric | 27 | 22.2 | 549.35 | 576.83 | 29/11/2020 |
| Parish Room | Gas | 27 | 3.93 | 1728.41 | 1943.85 | 29/11/2020 |

A recent review of alternative suppliers highlighted that savings of up to 17% were achievable. However, commercial energy prices are reviewed weekly, and unfortunately prices have increased over recent weeks.

It is therefore proposed that the market is again reviewed and Council delegate authority to the Clerk in consultation with the Chair to authorise a switch to a new supplier if the following conditions are met:

* The overall annual cost is at least 10% less than we current pay, and
* an energy supplier that endeavour to secure as much energy as possible from renewable sources will be chosen if costs are not more than 10% of that from the alternative supplier

The contract for the electric supply to the clock is due to end on 30th June, whereas the other electric and gas contracts are not due for renewal until 29 November. If it is decided to switch, the energy supplies will change on the renewal date, but prices will be locked now.  The new contracts are likely to run for a period of 3 years.

**Mark Sandiford**

**ACPO**

**16.06.2020 - 39 A -**

AGENDA ITEM NO: 18

To: Council

From: Clerk

Subject: Correspondence/Minor Issues

1. Election Matter

There may be a matter to be reported at the meeting subject to prior confirmation.

L.A. Ruff

Parish Clerk

16.06.20

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AGENDA ITEM NO: 20

To: Council

From: Clerk

Subject: Accounts for Payment

The latest bank reconciliations for all accounts at 31st May 2020 have been prepared successfully and sent to all members with the monthly income and expenditure by account report and earmarked reserves. Each reconciliation and original bank statement will be signed by Councillors Carswell and Prior as part of the monthly check of accounts when guidance allows and the Chair is doing an online check.

Receipts and payments are detailed on the attached pages and a final report for June will be sent to members in early July.

Approved by Council on 16th June 2020 and initialled by Chairman:

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