

CHURCHSTANTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES/ACTION NOTES

Name of meeting:	Churchstanton Parish Council Meeting
Date meeting held:	Wednesday 10 th March, 2021
Meeting location:	Virtual Meeting via Zoom
Present:	Cllr. Ken Pearson, Cllr. Andrew Crabb, , Cllr. Ian Foxwell, Cllr. Helen Humble, Cllr. Dan Prettejohn
In attendance	County Councillor John Thorne, District Councillor Ross Henley, Joe Knowles
Chair	Cllr. Ian Firth
Clerk	Julie Wardle
Public Participation Time	No comments

Reports from County / District Councillors, Neighbourhood Watch & Police

County Councillor John Thorne provided a written report, a copy of which is available on the parish council website or by contacting the parish clerk.

District Councillor Ross Henley

County Council - Ross expressed his disapproval at the cancellation of the county council elections this year which in his view is anti-democratic. This will mean that the current county councillors will have a term of six years instead of four without an election.

Ross also voiced his concern at the county council plans to create a unitary council. In the current financial climate, post Covid and considering that SWT district council was only established in May 2019 Ross commented that in his view this was a 'gross waste of public money'.

SWT Budget – Unlike 94% of district and county councils who have made cuts this year, SWT haven't made any cuts at all. In addition, new enhancements / budgets have been created for the following:

Climate Change - £500,000

Tree planting - £100,000

Community Enhancement Fund - £100,000 (Fly tipping / play equipment etc.)

Business Grants – The latest Business Grant payments will be made this week.

Dog Waste – Ross had walked, socially distanced, around the area with a parishioner to discuss the ongoing issues with dog waste in the village.

Parish Councillor Identification Badges – Ross has now received photographs for all parish councillors and will arrange for identification badges to be made by SWT.

Fly Tipping – Ongoing issues with fly tipping. Together with Somerset Waste Partnership, cameras and signs are being put up across the Blackdown Hills.

Garden Waste – Collections had been missed and Ross was dealing with this following contact with several parishioners.

Hummingbird Residential Care Home – Ross had spoken to the Hummingbird who have requested that a 20mph zone be established outside the care home.

Fingerpost Sign, Fairfield Green – Councillor Crabb will fix this.

PCSO – The parish council had received a newsletter.

Neighbourhood Watch – The parish clerk receives regular reports from Avon & Somerset Police when incidents have been reported in the area. These are all now posted on the parish council facebook page and website.

1. To resolve to exclude members of the press or public

Cllr. Firth requested that a discussion takes place prior to item 8 without the presence of the press and public.

2. Apologies

Cllr. Raadiyah Rifath

3. Declaration of Interest

Councillor Crabb is a neighbour to Fairfield Stables – Item 8. Planning application.

NB: Those present at this meeting should be aware that their names will be listed in the notes of the meeting which may be released to members of the public on request.

Approval/amendment of minutes of previous meeting –

4. Approval and sign off draft minutes of previous meeting

Minutes of CPC Meeting held on 10th February, 2021 - **Approved**

Agenda Item	DISCUSSION AND NEW ACTIONS	Action by Whom	Action Date												
5. Covid-19 - Update	<p>No further update from The Blackdown Practice.</p> <p>Current legislation allowing virtual meetings expires on 7th May and therefore unless further emergency legislation is put in place the parish council will have to make plans to return to the village hall for their May meeting. (Agenda item – April meeting)</p>														
6. Action Review Summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The Quarry – Report from Joe Knowles (OSMG) - One quote for the access / car park to the quarry has been received with another due. A third quote is proving to be challenging. We are awaiting confirmation from Somerset Highways to confirm that the existing entrance can be reopened. A check will need to be completed to establish if any cables are in the road around the entrance area. It is hoped that work can start after Easter. A public meeting will be held at the quarry in the Spring, when the weather allows, in order to involve the community in the development of this community facility with the possibility of a parish litter pick to take place at the same time. – Defibrillator – No further update – Neighbourhood Plan – One member of the parish had approached Cllr. Firth regarding the Neighbourhood Plan and has been asked to contact Cllr. Pearson to discuss this. – Dog Fouling – The parish council website now has a link to ‘Fix My Street’. FixMyStreet is a great tool for reporting and monitoring issues that need to be repaired by the council - for instance, <u>dog-mess</u>, potholes, fly tipping and more... – Climate Emergency Community Fund – Awaiting news regarding the recent application for funding for the Otterhead Hydro-electric Turbine Project. Cllr. Humble and Cllr. Pearson had held a zoom meeting with a small number of parishioners to discuss other small climate projects in the parish. – ID Badges for Councillors – Photographs have now been provided to Cllr.Henley who will arrange for SWT to provide identification badges for all councillors. 														
7. Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balance of Accounts as at 28th February, 2021 <table border="1" data-bbox="579 1287 1468 1526"> <tbody> <tr> <td>Current Account</td> <td>1146.37</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Deposit Account</td> <td>18838.53</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>19984.90</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Restricted Funds</td> <td>9257.08</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Unrestricted Funds</td> <td>10727.82</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>19984.90</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Current Account	1146.37	Deposit Account	18838.53	Total	19984.90	Restricted Funds	9257.08	Unrestricted Funds	10727.82	Total	19984.90		
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<u>Income (included in figures above)</u>	
<u>Payments for approval (not included in figures above)</u>	
Parish Clerk Fees – February 2021	235.02
ICO – Data Protection Registration Fee	40.00
<u>BALANCE Remaining</u>	<u>19709.88</u>

- All payments listed above were approved for payment.
- Following research and demonstrations of two purpose-built finance packages for parish councils, Cllr.Firth proposed that the parish council purchase the Scribe software package at a cost of £228 per annum. This was seconded by Cllr. Foxwell and unanimously approved.
- A refund of £122 from The Mapping Company has been confirmed and will be showing in the bank account shortly.
- Churchstanton Community Fund - The Spring window for applications to the CCF will be 1st - 30th April, 2021 with a vote to decide which applications are successful to take place at the Annual Parish Meeting in May. This will be advertised in the CBO News and on noticeboards.

8. Planning Applications

- **10/21/0005 Change of use of land to a mixed use (equine and dog exercise area) at Fairfield Stables, Moor Lane, Churchinford**

The parish council strongly object to the extensification of the stud business at Fairfield stables. The joint use of land for exercising dogs and grazing horses is incompatible and the location of the land, together with its excessive scale and lack of control over animals – if allowed to run freely over the land – is likely to give rise to substantial increase in uncontrollable noise (barking) emanating from the property. As the applicant's agent should be aware, there is no change of use required to graze horses in any case...

It is the parish councils view that if approved, the identified land will in fact be used in its entirety for uncontrolled free-range release of dogs and will have a corresponding detrimental effect on the tranquillity of the AONB - and particularly nearby residential amenity.

The applicants' agent has made assertions about noise impacts of the existing stud business that are demonstrably untrue - and the extant development already has significant harmful effects on neighbouring amenity and the area – to the effect of resulting in a statutory nuisance.

The ability to allow 'free run' (exercise) over the whole land area will certainly reintroduce dogs into areas adjacent to the public domain (highway to the south) – a busy / popular walking route – and as such the applicants' dogs are likely to come into near direct contact with passing people / dogs / traffic etc. This, and likely associated territorial barking, would arise in close proximity to the nearest residential properties and seems to be poorly considered...

The agents statement cites Para 83 of the NPPF concerning 'sustainable' development. The proposed activity may well benefit the applicants' aspirations – however sustainability concerns all people and the environment as a whole. Noting the uncontrolled harm that is likely to arise from the proposal – this cannot be considered sustainable development.

Further, Para 84 as cited states "...In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings..." The expansion / change of use of land allowing dogs to run freely and in an uncontrollable manner will not - in any sense - be sensitive or appropriate to its surroundings. Indeed, it would appear that no positive consideration of neighbouring property has been entertained.

The proposed change of use identified is excessive and – if to be supported at all - a significantly reduced, sensitively designed and sited exercise area (with appropriate levels of enforceable control and clear separation from the public domain) should be sought. For the avoidance of doubt, in the opinion of the parish council, this should be located solely to the north of the kennels only and adjacent to the sewage works.

- **10/20/0002 Appeal - Variation of Condition No. 05 of application 10/16/0028 to vary the wording to include 15 breeding bitches, 3 stud dogs and puppies**

We, Churchstanton Parish Council, whole heartedly support the LPA's refusal of application 10/20/0002

Fairfield Stables 'Stud' has a detrimental effect upon the community at large and expansion of the business should be forcefully resisted. We have no doubt that the proposed increase in numbers of animals proposed to be housed at the site will have yet further harmful effect on the area – over and above the nuisance that already arises from the site.

We object strongly to ANY further intensification of the 'stud' activities and have the opinion that the extant activities continued there are wholly inappropriate in this otherwise tranquil AONB setting.

	<p><i>The appellant has demonstrated a continued disregard for the amenity and quiet enjoyment of the area – particularly neighbouring properties and generally to the community.</i></p> <p><i>Despite attempts to encourage the appellant to take proactive steps to improve the site and amenity of the area the daily loud barking and associated noise issues are wholly unsustainable in every sense of the word.</i></p> <p><i>If taken at face value - the proposed varied condition would result in the appellant SIGNIFICANTLY worsening the extant problems and would, if abused, allow many many more than 15 Bitches 3 stud dogs to be housed; Assuming that puppies (by common definition) are juvenile dogs up to 2 years of age and likewise assuming that an average 'active' breeding-bitch is capable of producing an average of 8 puppies per litter (perhaps 2x per year) – the realistic number of animals that could be housed (following the varied condition proposed) may be able to exceed 123 animals.</i></p> <p><i>Furthermore, if the proposed varied condition were abused, the proposal would not limit the appellant from housing dogs under 2 years of age irrespective if bred on site or from elsewhere... If this were the case the number of animals on site could rise yet further.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 10/21/0007/LEW Application for a Certificate of Lawful Development for the existing use of the building as a permanent residential dwelling with associated land at Border Lodge, Churchinford <p><i>The parish council cannot confirm or deny the unlawful occupation for a period of four years or more and therefore cannot make any further comment.</i></p>	
9. Local Plan Review 2040 - Response to Consultation	Ongoing - no action required at present	
10. Highways / PPLO / Outdoor Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Footpath Signage – Absent and missing signs have been reported to SCC Rights of Way Team by Sarah Henderson, PPLO. • The Hummingbird Residential Care Home have requested a 20mph sign outside the home and have requested the support of the parish council to facilitate this. Cllr. Firth proposed that the parish council endeavour to change the current 30mph with a 20mph speed limit throughout Churchinford. This was seconded by Cllr.Humble and approved unanimously. Cllr. Henley and the parish clerk will make enquiries in order to progress this. 	
11. Correspondence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine, Draft Revised Neighbourhood Plan - Nine-week Consultation Period, 22 February to 30 April 2021 • IBM Briefing – Local Government in Somerset Consultation & Postponement of May's County Council Elections - 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication from Stronger Somerset regarding Unitary proposal • Somerset Day 2021 – Fly the Flag for Somerset • SW&T Governance – Council Publish Phosphates Calculator 		
12. Items of Future Business for the next Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointment of Internal Auditor • Annual Parish Meeting • Future Meetings (virtual or face to face) – post 7th May • Report from Greening Committee • Village Party • Somerset Unitarisation - Consultation 		
Date of Next Meeting	Wednesday 14th April, 2021		