

## Minutes of the Meeting Held at 7pm on Thursday January 4th 2024

*All meetings are held at 7.00pm in the Village Hall unless stated otherwise -  
Although under no obligation to, Dan Thomas, our NSC Ward Cllr, attends when possible*

*The meeting started at 7.10pm*

**Present:** Cllrs Lynda Redding (Chair), Victoria Butterfield, Mel Ellis, Clayton Penfold, Helen Riddell  
**In Attendance:** Don Hill (Clerk)  
**Public Attendance:** 5

### 001/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr J Corbett, Cllr P Penfold, Cllr D Thomas (NSC)

### 002/24 DECLARATIONS *(Dispensations apply to Cllrs re percept setting, and Village Hall matters)*

Cllr Redding in relation to Minute 005/24i d, whose family own the Cider House and adjacent listed building. Cllr Redding did not take any part in the discussion of the application.

### 003/24 PUBLIC SESSION

This related to planning application 23/P/2796/LDE at Minute 006/24i - see minute below.

### 004/24 LAST MEETING MINUTES + Matters Arising

December 7th 2023 minutes were agreed and signed.

### 005/24 PLANNING *Details at <https://planning.n-somerset.gov.uk/online-applications/>*

#### i. New:

- a) **23/P/2338/FUL** Mayfield Farm gateway on Maysgreen Lane, a twisting lane with large and fast moving traffic. As farm equipment will move in and out of the gateway it has to be set far enough back from the road, with suitable splays, to allow access and parking off road for gate opening and closing. There also needs to be a long enough line of sight for users of the road to take account of whatever activity they encounter around the gateway. There could be an issue of mud on the road during inclement weather. Would a 'Concealed Entrance' sign be in order? If account is taken of these concerns, then Members were happy for the application to proceed.
- b) **23/P/2796/LDE** Flavours *(for Information)*. As the existing and proposed plans for this application are the same, and as the property has been occupied by a number of people for some time, the meeting presumes that this is a retrospective application. It raises a number of concerns relating to what appears to be a house of multiple occupation - ie Class C4 rather than the applied for existing/proposed C3. The ground floor business is believed to be closed. The rooms on the first and second floors will presumably, therefore, not be for the benefit of staff associated with whatever business may reopen on the ground floor in future, but will operate as a commercially viable house of multiple occupation. The proposed C3 use, or the possible C4 HMO use raise - in no particular order - obviously related queries that need addressing:
  - There are no cooking facilities
  - There is no fire escape
  - There are no communal lounge facilities
  - There are no laundry facilities and no closely available laundromat

- Are the rooms to be let to 6 individuals, or rotated between a host of individuals at an hourly rate? In which case, what room servicing arrangements are there to satisfactorily support such an arrangement?
  - Has any thought been given to the strong community spirit along the quiet access lane that could be undermined by 'all the comings and goings' that the project has already been noted as attracting?
  - It has been reported that tyres left in the car park for a long time, have now been removed to the highway as fly-tipping.
  - Given environmental degradation of the property over time of this prominent landmark building, any new use granted should be conditioned by an appropriate external re-decoration and landscaping together with a responsible biodiversity contribution.
- c) **23/P/2782/AOC** Fulfilment of decision conditions on 23/P/1374/FUL(*for information*). This relates to the barn conversion opposite Heathgate Farm, off the A370. No concerns were raised.
- d) **23/P/2556/FUL** The Grange, Wick Lane. The Grange is a listed building. At its rear is The Cider House, a two story stone building that is not deemed to impinge on the integrity of its neighbour listed building. Full details of the application as discussed are on the NSC website indicated at the head of this Minute. The site is not overlooked and the owner also owns land over which the proposed new windows will face. After a detailed study of the application Members raised no objection to it.

**Clerk to inform NSC planning of the above deliberations.**

- v. **Decisions Due: 19/P/0815/FUL** Puxton Park car park. **22/P/3067/OUT** Haybow Village (Banwell PC). **23/P/0609/FUL** Puxton Park Operating Framework. **23/P/2676/CQA** Conversion of agricultural building to domestic accommodation off Puxton Lane.
- vi. **Approved: 23/P/1813/CQA:** Oakacre lay-by, conversion of barn to house.

**006/24**

**FINANCE**

- i. **2023-24 Accounts:** Accounts to date were reviewed and noted.
- ii. **Payments Authorised:** Vision ICT Ltd for Website annual fee £182.86. **Clerk to pay.**
- iii. **2024-25 Budget:** The draft budget was reviewed head by head and approved (**see Appendix 1 to these Minutes**). **Clerk to submit precept request to NSC.**

**007/24**

**PARISH MATTERS**

- i. **Triangles at Puxton Village and Wick Lane:** Painting the tarmac surrounding the Puxton triangle stonework should have been done. NSC are chasing this. Cllr Riddell noted that the triangle needs smartening up again after the recent bad weather, which she undertook to do.
- ii. **A370. Signage and Speed Issues:**
- a) Police DCB (data collection box) erection awaited via our local police contacts. An approach to the PCC re this and motor cycle speed checks outside St Annes School referred back to the DCB deployment and the need for an analysis of its subsequent results before any further action by the police could be considered.
  - b) If the DCB supports use of a mobile Speed Indicator Device (SID) we would want to purchase a SWARCO SID. For the purposes of seeking grants, a **full quotation will be circulated to Members by the Clerk.** (NSC regulations re SIDS formed part of the meeting papers for discussion (**See Appendix 2 to these Minutes**)).
  - c) We will learn of possible Bristol Airport grants towards a SID purchase in early 2024.
  - d) An approach to The Priory Learning Trust (TPLT), of which St Annes School is a part, were not able to propose a route to funding via them.

- v. **Publicity Flyers:** Various flyers can be distributed to households over the coming months as and when they are available:
- (a) **New Year Party:** This did not go ahead.
  - (b) **Fly-tipping:** Leaflet ready for printing and circulation.
  - (c) **Village Agent:** A Hewish & Puxton flyer should be available in early 2024.
  - (d) **Wind Turbines:** **Clerk looking at NSC material to see if a flyer can be prepared.**

#### 008/24 PROJECTS AWAITING FURTHER ACTION FROM NSC

- i. **Footpaths:** 4 items:
- Path 399628 - New kissing gate overgrown, making access to field impossible
  - Path 398631 - obstruction to access from the road on the corner
  - The roadside path at Puxton Court Farm: fence removal. Re-fit of exposed wires on pole.
  - Path at Wick Lane M5 bridge: Blocked - volunteers to clear (and make-safe trees?).
- ii. **Wick Lane Rail Bridge:** More regular weeding and overgrowth clearance, and clear, well maintained pedestrian markings, and 'Beware, Pedestrians' notices at either end needed.
- iii. **Potholes:** 2 on the A370 side of the Railway Bridge reported to NSC via the Area Officer (whose sharp eye has probably already been alerted to them). One pothole has been filled.

#### 09/24 COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

##### Cllr Ellis

**Littleton Steel:** There have been complaints of noise and light pollution, exacerbated by the doors being left open during their extensive operating hours. **Post the meeting Cllr Redding undertook to contact the owner to mediate a way forward.**

##### Cllr Butterfield

**Dolmoor Lane Fly-tipping:** This is a long and vexing problem for all using the Lane. Some years ago the Clerk was taken, by police and NSC officers, down the lane to experience the problem. This lane is not an adopted part of the highway, so NSC do not have an obligation to keep it clear of the intensive tipping that takes place. **Clerk will share this worry with the responsible NSC officer and see if there is a positive way forward.**

**Broadband:** There are still areas of the Parish that are fraught with problems re their broadband reception. Being so close to large and well served communities, areas of Puxton are justifiably frustrated by their niche and unacceptable situation. Local businesses have afforded specific solutions, but for those who work from home or simply enjoy the benefits of broadband access, there continues to be no way forward after withdrawal of Gigaclear and Truespeed from the truly rural remit that introduced them to our area. We seem to be left to the seemingly indolent rural service expansion of BT/Open Reach.

##### Cllr Redding

**Vexatious Behaviour:** The default 6 monthly issue of our only Vexatious Behaviour order was recently effected by our Chair. Only when the constant harassment by the subject ceases will the default renewal become a matter of formal review.

**Subject Access Request:** The subject of our only Vexatious Behaviour Order has applied, via a form from the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), for access to all information the Council holds about him. This application has been refused, based on official GDPR documentation held as part of this Council's Governance File and supported by ICO referencing on the issue.

**Village Hall Vandalism:** This continues within a predictable pattern. The latest ploy has been to spread glass over areas of the car park, having careful regard to the Hall's CCTV. Current vandalism repair has cost the Hall several thousand pounds.

010/24 **NEXT MEETING** - Thursday February 1st 2024 in the Village Hall at 7pm.

**The meeting closed at 9.10 pm**

## APPENDIX 1

### PUXTON PARISH COUNCIL'S BUDGET FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2024-2025

EXPENSES HEAD	24-25 BUDGET	23-24 BUDGET	% DIFFERENCE
<b>Clerk's Pay</b>	<b>£4584.00</b>	£4284.00	<b>7.0</b>
<b>Clerk's Expenses</b>	<b>£412.00</b>	£412.00	0.0
<b>Hall Hire Fee</b>	<b>£300.00</b>	£276.00	8.7
<b>Parish Maintenance</b>	<b>£2600.00</b>	£2600.00	0.0
<b>Insurance, Subscriptions, Audit, Legal</b>	<b>£650.00</b>	£550.00	18.2
<b>Publicity</b>	<b>£200.00</b>	£200.00	0.0
<b>Other Costs</b>	<b>£300.00</b>	£150.00	100.0
<b>Website</b>	<b>£250.00</b>	£250.00	0.0
<b>Bank Charges</b>	<b>£75.00</b>	£60.00	25.0
<b>Election Provision</b>	<b>£500.00</b>	£300.00	66.7
<b>Capital Provision</b>	<b>£1000.00</b>	£1000.00	0.0
<b>PRECEPT</b>	<b>£10871.00</b>	<b>£10082.00</b>	<b>7.8</b>

#### NOTES

**Clerk's Pay** increase is +7%. This is the NALC agreed increase due to be paid retrospectively from April 2023, but Puxton Clerk never take it until the following April - 2024.

**Clerk's Expenses** have not increased since January 2016.

**Hall Fee** has not increased since at least late 2015.

**Parish Maintenance** remains the same as for 2022-23. It is the contractor cost, which has not gone up since he started, plus a small contingency for unforeseen costs.

**Insurance, Subscriptions Audit and Legal** has gone from £550 to £650. The ALCA sub is dependant on parish population and is due to go up by some 7%. Our internal auditor officially retired last year; if he is replaced I suspect his modest fee will at least double to £100. With insurance premiums rising, there is a margin built in from the estimated 2023-24 insurance cost, which we do not receive until February 2024, plus, prudently, a further increase provided for in February 2025.

**Publicity** There has been none during 2023-24 (the Annual Parish Meeting Agenda is within the Clerk's monthly expenses). If we are to circulate flyers we will need the £200 budget, which remains unchanged from the 2023-24. The budget of £200 for publicity will allow a for one double sided leaflet per month. A new Clerk will expect all this work to be farmed out, which will increase this cost.

**Other Costs** is a catch all for unforeseen expenses like the coronation mugs, which cost just under £200, or replacement of the finger post finial, which cost some £350 - rather more than the spare funds in the Parish Maintenance budget.

**Website** budget remains the same - the annual charge from Mar 24 - Feb 25 was authorised at this meeting. There is a cushion for additional charges, such as for acknowledging the deaths of Queen Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh.

**Bank Charges** were suddenly imposed, un-budgeted. The budget allows for any small monthly increase, plus the 40p per cheque or any other incidental charge that may arise.

**Election Provision** had reduced from £500 to £300 because the fund was enough to cover the cost of an election or a parish referendum. The cost of the election in May is the reason for the annual budget reverting to £500.

**Capital Provision** has stood budgeted at £1000 since its introduction. As we can see, it takes years to build the fund, but just one highway project to decimate it.

**The Precept Increase:** With Principal Authorities - NSC in our case - funnelling costs down to town and parish councils due to the squeezing of their own funding from Central Government and the annual government-imposed caps on their own precept increases, parishes like ours, that have no income generating assets, have to be realistic about how much they need to operate with from year to year.

## NSC Speed Indicator Signs (SIDS) Policy

1. These are signs which display the approaching vehicles speed, they are not authorised traffic signs, so their use is limited to information only.
2. This limits their use to non-permanent signage (so must be mobile) and to limited time periods in varied locations, and they do not, by themselves inform motorists if they are complying with the law or relate to a specific hazard.
3. It should be noted that this type of sign is not always effective in reducing vehicle speeds and in some locations, it can have the opposite effect of causing some vehicles to speed up (e.g. drivers who want to see how high the number will go). The Department for Transport recommend the use of standard Vehicle Activated Signs.
4. If communities want to use this type of sign North Somerset will approve their use under the following circumstances.
5. An application will need to come from the relevant Parish / Town Council
6. **The sign will only be in one location for a maximum of 2 weeks and will not return to that same location for 3 months.**
7. **The PC will identify locations for North Somerset to approve using existing street furniture, if existing furniture is not available, then the installation of additional posts will be added to the Highways works programme for the PC to fund.**
8. **The PC will be responsible for appointing someone accredited to work on the Highway if the signs are to be erected on the Highway**, a list of approved contractors can be found at the following link: [Accredited contractors | North Somerset Council \(n-somerset.gov.uk\)](#)
9. Alternatively, the SIDS could be erected on its own free standing equipment, if free standing equipment is being use the PC take full responsibility for the equipment and any incidents which may occur, it is advisable that the PC take out public liability insurance to guard against any claims.
10. If the PC want to use street lights to erect the signs on they will need to contact [streetlighting@n-somerset.gov.uk](mailto:streetlighting@n-somerset.gov.uk) for approval.
11. When erecting on street furniture it should be erected at a minimum of 1.5 metres above a verge, 2.1 metres above a footway and 2.3 metres above a cycleway, no part of the sign will be closer than 450mm from the edge of the carriageway.
12. **The sign will be clearly seen from 60 metres away.**
13. **The sign face and operation of the sign will be approved by North Somerset before it is purchased.**