

Pitcombe Parish Council

Minutes of a Pitcombe Parish Council Remote Meeting held on Tuesday 8th December 2020 via Zoom.

Present: Councillors Waller (Chair), R. Currie, C. Donald, L. Donahue, M. Fysh (from 19:34) and M. Groom (from 20:20)

Also present: District Councillor Robin Bastable and County Councillor Anna Groskop

Clerk: Zöe Godden

There were five members of the public present at the start of the meeting.

19:30 – The Chair allowed a public open session

A member of the public voiced their objections to planning application 20/02856/FUL, saying that they felt the site was not suitable for agricultural use and that the vehicular access onto the A359 would compromise road safety on an already complicated and busy junction, which served local attractions and where vehicles often exceeded the speed limit.

19:34 – Councillor Fysh joined the meeting.

The Chair invited the applicants of application 20/02856/FUL to speak but they did not wish to do so.

A member of the public voiced their objections to application 20/03450/AGN, saying that there had been previous applications for housing on the site and that the proposed barn would be visible for miles around due to its height and the height of the site itself. In addition, the member of the public said that, because the site was smaller than five hectares, the proposal should have been submitted as a full planning application (FUL) and not an agricultural notification (AGN), as specified in Agricultural Permitted Development Class A.

19:43 – The Chair brought the public open session to a close.

- 1. Apologies:** Apologies had been received from Councillor Groom, who would arrive later, and from PCSO Tim Russell. The Clerk reported that Councillor Wells had not attended a meeting for six months and had not submitted apologies, which meant that a vacancy would have to be declared.
- 2. Declarations of any Interest:** Councillor Fysh declared a personal interest in item 5 ii b) as he lived in a neighbouring property to the site of planning application 20/03450/AGN. Councillor Currie declared a personal interest in item 8 iv because he was the Chairman of the Village Hall Committee.
- 3. To approve the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 10th November 2020.**

RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed to approve the minutes as presented.

4. To receive reports from

- i County Councillor Anna Groskop** reported that the number of confirmed cases of CV-19 was increasing in Somerset and reminded Councillors of the CV-19 helpline number, 0300 790 6275, which could be used by anyone needing information or assistance in relation to CV-19. Councillor Groskop asked that this number was advertised locally. An additional £30 had been allocated for pupils receiving free school meals to provide food during school holidays. Somerset County Council had asked for next year's elections to be delayed because of the CV-19 situation and to give it an opportunity to consult residents on the One Somerset proposal. Finally, Councillor Groskop reported that Bruton Library was continuing

to be a success and that more volunteers were needed.

- ii **District Councillor Robin Bastable** gave an update on the availability of business support grants. Councillor Bastable also reported that South Somerset District Council had agreed to purchase Huish Park and lease it back to Yeovil Town Football Club to help with its current difficult financial position.
- iii **PCSO Tim Russell** had sent his apologies and submitted a report.

5. To review Planning Applications, Road Closures, Foot Path Diversions.

- i Outcomes of applications considered at previous meetings:
 - a) **20/02129/FUL** - The erection of an agricultural building for housing cattle at Land East Of Ridge Lane Hadspen Castle Cary Somerset. – **Granted with conditions**
 - b) **20/02130/FUL** - The erection of an agricultural building for housing cattle at Land East Of Ridge Lane Hadspen Castle Cary Somerset. – **Granted with conditions**

Noted.

- ii. To consider the following new planning applications:

a)	20/02856/FUL	Change of use of land to agricultural, formation of an agricultural access, stationing of a caravan to provide shelter and stationing of a shipping container (Part retrospective)	The Old Embankment Mill Lane Pitcombe Bruton Somerset
Councillors discussed the application and recent activity at the site. It was felt that the change of use of the land to agricultural was supported but Councillors were very concerned about the proposed vehicular access points because of the danger to road users on an already dangerous stretch of highway.			
RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed that the Parish Council has no objection to the change of use element of this application nor to the presence of the caravan or storage container, with the proviso that neither of these is allowed to be replaced with a caravan or container any larger than those currently on the site. However, the Parish Council strongly objects to the introduction of any vehicular access to the site due to the danger of vehicles accessing the A359 on an already dangerous stretch of road. The Parish Council also asks that SSDC takes account of the comments made by the SCC Highways officer.			
b)	20/03450/AGN	Notification of intent to erect a storage building for hay, straw, farm machinery and sheep farming related equipment	Land At Mill Lane Pitcombe Bruton Somerset
Councillors discussed at length their concerns that the proper process may not have been followed by SSDC in dealing with this application, including whether the site was large enough to be covered by Agricultural Permitted Development class A and whether neighbouring residents should have been informed of the application. It was noted that pigs had been sited on the land at a point closest to the nearest neighbouring property and that mud was regularly left on adjacent roads from agricultural vehicles using the site.			
20:20 – Councillor Groom joined the meeting.			
Councillors questioned the need for such a large building, which would be visible for miles around, and also felt that any building on the site should be located closer to the vehicular access to reduce the amount of mud left on adjacent roads.			
RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed that, as per the Agricultural Permitted Development class A, the site is smaller than 5 hectares, so the AGN notification is wrongly conceived. The Parish Council requests confirmation from SSDC that the notification is valid. In addition, the dimensions of the site in the different submitted documents differ and the Parish Council wishes to receive confirmation of the correct dimensions of the site. Should the notification be valid, the parish council feels that the barn should not be situated in the centre of the field and that the size is excessive and should be reduced considerably.			

- iii. Temporary Road Closures: Wyke Lane for approximately 40 metres on 9th and 10th December between 22:00 and 06:00.

Noted.

- iv. Highways: To note that the bridge across the river Pit is in need of repair and to agree any action to be taken.

Councillor Currie reported that the poor condition of the bridge had been highlighted to him by a resident some time ago. Councillor Currie had reported the problem to County Highways, who sent an officer to carry out an inspection. The officer agreed that the bridge was in need of maintenance but that there were other bridges in greater need, so it had not been possible to give a date for any work to take place. Councillor Currie went on to say that the bridge dated back to 1742 and that it formed part of a long-standing toll road that had been the main route to Castle Cary. Prior to this, it had been a Roman road. Councillor Currie expressed concern that, should the bridge collapse, it would be replaced with a modern design and the historically interesting design would be lost. Councillors **agreed** that further action was needed to ensure the bridge was repaired. The Clerk was instructed to contact a Councillor from Castle Cary Town Council who might be able to suggest a suitable bridge expert who could offer advice, and to liaise with Councillor Currie.

Action Parish Clerk

6. Reports from Portfolio holders not covered elsewhere on the agenda – There were no additional reports.

7. Finance.

- i. To consider a grant application from Pitcombe Parochial Church Council for the sum of £1000 towards burial ground maintenance for 2021-22.

RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed to approve the grant application as presented.

Action Parish Clerk

- ii. To consider a grant application from Pitcombe News for the sum of £250 towards printing costs for 2021-22.

RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed to approve the grant application as presented.

Action Parish Clerk

- iii. To consider a draft budget for 2021-22 and agree any changes required.

RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed to approve the budget and precept request as presented.

- iv. To consider applying for a grant from Somerset Prepared to cover the cost of two flood warning signs for the Parish.

20:59 – District Councillor Robin Bastable left the meeting.

Councillors discussed the issue. Councillor Donahue asked who would look after the signs and put them out when needed. The Chair said that several residents had shown an interest in helping with this. Councillor Donald said that four signs were needed for different locations in the Parish.

RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed that the Clerk should apply for the grant to cover the cost of purchasing four flood warning signs.

Action Parish Clerk

- v. To review the Budget vs Spend sheet.

Noted.

vi. To approve the cash book and bank reconciliation for October and November 2020. Councillor Currie had checked the bank reconciliation before the meeting and found it to be accurate.

RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed to approve the cashbook and bank reconciliation as presented. The reconciliation would be signed by the Chair at a later date.

vii. To approve payments the following payments and agree two Councillors to sign cheques:

Staff	Salary November 2020	£200.02
HMRC	Income tax November 2020	£49.80
SALC	GDPR training (Clerk)	£25.00

RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed to approve the payments as presented. Cheques would be signed at a later date by Councillors Groom and Waller.

Action Cllrs Groom and Waller

8. Council Matters:

i To consider meeting dates for 2021.

RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed to approve the meeting dates as presented.

ii To consider supporting the SAVE Climate Initiative by joining in with the group application to Somerset County Council's Climate Emergency Community Fund.

The Chair summarised the initiative.

RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed to support the SAVE Climate Initiative.

Action Parish Clerk

iii To note receipt of information from the Flood Watch Group and agree any action to be taken. The Chair reported that the floodwatch group continued to operate and expected to carry out clearance work to the river when the water had receded. Councillor Groom noted that the floodwatch group held useful information on flood events in the Parish and the Chair said he would ask the group if the Clerk could hold any useful information for future reference.

Action Chair

iv To hear an update on the provision of Wi-Fi for the Village Hall and agree any action to be taken. (RC)

Councillor Currie reported that he had been researching options for the provision of Wi-Fi for the Village Hall and had concluded that a conventional fibre-based system would work well and would cost approximately £30 per month with a cost of around £50 for installation. Councillor Groom said that the Village Hall was covered by the Connecting Devon and Somerset scheme and suggested that this would provide the most up-to-date product.

RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed that the Parish Council supported the installation of a Wi-Fi service at the Village Hall in principle but did not wish to have any ownership of the scheme. It was further agreed that, should the Village Hall require financial assistance, the Parish Council would consider a grant application in the usual way.

9. Items for report and for the next agenda

Please note this item can only be used for statements of information and requests for items to be included on the agenda at the next meeting.

The Clerk was instructed to send future agendas as email attachments rather than sending a link to the agenda on the Parish Council's website.

10. Date of the next Parish Council meeting: 12th January 2021 at 7.30pm

The meeting ended at 21:25.

Zöe Godden

Zöe Godden
Parish Clerk

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