

BICKNOLLER PARISH COUNCIL – 25 SEPTEMBER 2019

A meeting of the Council was held in the Village Hall at 6.30 pm.

PRESENT: Councillors C Warren, J Anderson, A Harrison, K Ogilvie-White, M Rawle and Mrs C Skinner.

IN ATTENDANCE: District Councillors M Rigby and A H Trollope-Bellew, County Councillor Mrs C Lawrence, Mrs C Richards (Clerk), 3 members of the public

PARISH FORUM: None.

REPORTS FROM COUNTY & DISTRICT COUNCILLORS: District Councillors M Rigby and A H Trollope-Bellew and County Councillor Mrs C Lawrence reported on current matters of interest.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

An apology for absence was received from Councillor S Dowding.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION

2.1. All Councillors present signed a Dispensation Form in respect of items relating to the Bicknoller Village Hall to cover the period 15 May 2019 to 31 May 2023.

The Clerk would ask Councillor S Dowding to sign at a later date.

Councillor K Ogilvie-White declared a personal interest in Item 12 as Chairman and Founder of 'Frack Free Somerset' and 'Frack Free EQ' (Exmoor, Quantocks and Sedgemoor).

3. MINUTES OF MEETINGS HELD ON 10 JULY 2019 & EXTRAORDINARY MEETING HELD ON 6 AUGUST 2019 & MATTERS ARISING

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 10 July 2019 and the Extraordinary Meeting held on 6 August 2019 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Nothing to report.

5. REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS

5.1. Environment – Councillor Mrs Skinner – a fridge and a large black sack that had been dumped at the top of Halsway Hill had been removed. No reports of any flytipping. District Councillor Trollope Bellew advised that flytipping in West Somerset is very low and across Somerset as a whole the number of cases was decreasing.

Trees on Woolston Moor – Councillor Anderson advised that following an event held by Quantock Eco, a suggestion had been made that Quantock villages might join together to plant their own woods. He suggested that a possible location for a little Woolston wood would be on the small area of Woolston Moor. It was resolved (1) to agree this in principle and resolved (2) that Councillors Anderson and Mrs Skinner meet to discuss further and report back to a future meeting.

5.2. Police Liaison & Neighbourhood Watch – Councillor Harrison – report circulated prior to meeting and attached as Appendix A to these Minutes. Neighbourhood Watch Signs – he had now taken delivery of 8 new street signs and has full permission to put up the two new ones proposed for Quantockside and Halsway. The remaining signs will be used to replace faded ones around the parish and potentially for additional new signs to be

sited on private property where no permission is required apart from that of the landowner. The cost of the signs was £50, which Councillor Harrison had paid, and it was resolved to reimburse him and Cheque No. 206 was raised for this amount.

- 5.3. Rights of Way – Kevin Ogilvie-White – footpaths up behind Short & Long Coombe had been cut back by Quantock Hills AONB staff. Councillor Skinner drew attention to some footpaths that required attention up on the Quantocks and it was agreed she would discuss these further with Councillor Ogilvie-White.
- 5.4. Roads – Councillor Anderson – there is an overhanging hedgerow by the footpath which runs from the end of Church Lane along the A358 up to Chilcombe Lane. The person who had been asked to cut this on behalf of the owner of the hedgerow has been too busy to do this. It was resolved that the Clerk would report this to SCC Highways. The lane name signpost on the left-hand corner of the entrance to Chilcombe Lane off the A358 which had collapsed has now been replaced with a black and white sign and he commended Neil Corfield from SCC Highways for his quick response to the original email and for dealing with this. Speeding through Bicknoller, at the last Dunster Area Panel PCSO Jamie Munroe said he was keen to establish community speed watch schemes within the area and invited us to become involved. Subsequently, the Speed Enforcement Unit put a speed indicator unit at the top of Halsway Hill for 10 days, the results of which would be reported to PCSO Sue Thompson who will then send them on to Councillor Anderson. Finally, there is a pothole forming in Church Lane and it was resolved that the Clerk would report this to SCC Highways.
- 5.5. Community Resilience & Bicknoller Volunteer Group – Councillor Ogilvie-White – noting to report regarding Community Resilience. With regard to the Bicknoller Volunteer Group the Clerk reported grass continues to be cut along the A358. An email has gone out to volunteers for them to look at the drains throughout the Parish, extra work that has been carried out this year is the cutting of the patch of grass outside the Old School House alongside the stream, Dashwoods Lane. Looking forward to next year, they will only be cutting eight strips of grass from the road edge at Woolston Moor.
- 5.6. Quantock Hills & Farming– Councillor Rawle – was still getting complaints from the Commoners about sheep getting stuck in the quarry up Hill Lane. The previous West Somerset Council had put some fencing around the quarry but it needs re-fencing all the way around. Councillor Rawle & District Councillor Trollope-Bellew to visit the area to see what work was required.

6. PLANNING

- 6.1. Applications:
 - 3/01/19/008: Manor Farm Barn, Woolston Lane, TA4 4LN: retention of works already complete to the dutch barn, concrete courtyard, areas of hardstanding, track, siting of 1 No. static caravan for the duration of the works and erection of store. (No objections in principle).
 - 3/01/19/009: Winsome Cottage, Trendle Lane, Bicknoller, TA4 4EG: Erection of workshop extension to rear of existing car port. (No objections).
- 6.2. Decisions:
 - 3/01/19/003: Melbreak, 44 Church Lane, Bicknoller, TA4 4EL: Erection of single storey extension to the east elevation (Granted).
 - 3/01/19/004: Culverhayes Farm, Culverhayes Lane, Bicknoller, TA4 4EX: Demolition of timber store building and erection of an annexe to be used as ancillary accommodation (Refused).
 - 3/01/19/005: Paradise Farm, Paradise Lane, Bicknoller, TA4 4BE: Construction of manège and re-siting of field shelter (Granted).

3/01/19/006: Steep Hill, Taunton Road, Bicknoller, Taunton, TA4 4EH: Demolition of attached garage, porch and first floor bay window, erection of a 1.5 storey rear extension and a new verandah and front porch including all ancillary works (Granted).

3/01/19/007: Woolston Dairy, Woolston, TA4 4LN: Application for prior notification for the erection of an agricultural building for the storage of fodder and fertiliser (Granted).

6.3. Appeals:

3/01/18/007: Combe Hayes, Taunton Road, Bicknoller, TA4 4EH: Outline application with all matters reserved, except for means of access, for the erection of 2 No. dwellings (Appeal Dismissed).

3/01/18/009: Chilcombe House, 30 Trendle Lane, Bicknoller, TA4 4EG: Outline application for the erection of one detached dwelling and double garage with all matters reserved except for access (Appeal Dismissed).

3/01/19/001: Land off Combe Close, Bicknoller: Outline planning application with all matters reserved except for access for the erection of 4 No. detached dwellings. It was resolved that the Parish Council would re-submit their previous objections to this application to the Planning Inspectorate.

7. FINANCE

7.1. Budget & Actual; Cashflow 2019-2020 was noted.

7.2. It was resolved to note the issuing of the following Cheque & Direct Debits:

Chq. No. 203, Hire of Village Hall (Invoice No. 618)	£38.00
Direct Debit payment to Open Spaces Society on 4 July 2019	£45.00

7.3. Authorisation of expenditure –

It was resolved to issue the following cheques:

Chq. No. 204 – Clerk's Salary (July-September 2019)	£483.21
Chq. No. 205 – Clerk's Expenses (June-September 2019)	£33.01

8. CRS BUILDING SUPPLIES:

It was resolved (1) to appoint Councillors Ogilvie-White and Warren to order/ purchase materials on behalf of the Parish Council and resolved (2) to include this resolution in paragraph 9.4 of Financial Regulations.

9. HEDGE CUTTING:

Councillors Anderson & Dowding had obtained two quotations of £30 per hour for hedge cutting within the Parish. After further discussion, it was resolved to place this item on the next agenda in the hope that a meeting could be held between Councillor Anderson and Kevin Bridgwater from SCC Highways before then which would provide more information.

10. DOG LITTER BIN

It was resolved not to proceed with the purchase of a dog litter bin.

11. DEFIBRILLATOR SUPPORT PACKAGE

It was resolved to defer this item until the next meeting.

12. FRACK FREE ZONE

It was resolved to defer this item until the next meeting.

13. SOMERSET WEST AND TAUNTON STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT CONSULTATION

District Councillor Rigby reported that it was hoped to have a new Local Plan in place within two and a half years which would provide a sound planning basis to determine planning applications.

Councillor Harrison's report for Police Liaison and Neighbourhood Watch – 24th September 2019**Actionfraud**

In August, The Times newspaper printed an exposé of serious shortcomings of Actionfraud the privately run agency through which all fraud has to be reported. Fraud represents over 1/3 of all crime in England and Wales yet as few as one in 50 cases results in the suspect being caught.

Call handlers, some of whom are teenagers, and some of whom also have criminal histories, are trained to mislead victims into thinking their cases will be investigated when the vast majority are not. Decisions are made by low pay workers or computer algorithms. Handlers also accused of mocking victims and calling them "morons".

Police Scotland have already terminated their contract with Actionfraud and the English police are reviewing their position.

This situation makes it all the more important that the public do all they can to avoid becoming victims in the first place. I have informed NW members of this situation and again circulated information on how to stay safe.

Public Forum in Minehead

I attended a PCC and Police public forum in Minehead last night. PCC Sue Mountstevens explained the constabulary's main priorities under the austerity inflicted on them over the last few years. Loss of 700 officers and £80M reduction in budget. Their priorities are:

1. Protection of most vulnerable, especially the exploitation of children. A short dramatised documentary was shown of a 15 year old girl groomed on line, with her parents unaware of what was happening, and within 15 days she has been raped and murdered. Families need to be extra alert to what their children are up to on the internet. Information is being spread at schools to warn children not to trust strangers they meet on line...

2. To strengthen and improve police teams including the ring fencing of neighbourhood policing. PCSO's and special constables are key members of these teams. Retaining the trust and confidence of the public is paramount.

Use of body cams, laptops and phones with WiFi connectivity in the field allow maximum time for officers out of the office, now around 65%. Body cam footage can now be used to interview suspects for taking statements and as evidence of assault on police.

Taunton police now in the council building helping closer working with them and fire and social services.

New resources have been promised (20,000 new officers nationwide) but yet to see what they actually get. Meanwhile extra £2/month on Council tax is being spent carefully to help bridge the gap.

Main priorities in preventing and solving crime types are: Residential burglary, Drugs, especially county lines, and knife crime.

Chief Constable Andy Marsh then spoke about some of the challenges facing the Avon and Somerset force. E.g. finding missing persons (on average 28/day), 6-8 who are trying to kill themselves, and half of those are children.

Domestic abuse: 40,000 cases per year. Most homicides are domestic abuse.

County lines drug gangs, youths being recruited trafficked from cities to rural communities.

700 beat managers and PCSOs across the region. The Force is working with University of West England on speeding up training of expected new recruits but still likely to be no more than 100 extra for £2M population, so still very thin on the ground. So they have to make a visible difference to be seen to be having an effect. Targeting the priorities will do this. Next year expect a definite improvement in these areas.

Lisa Simpson head of the local police force then spoke. We live in the safest part of the UK despite having only 100 beat managers to cover 660 square miles and 150 parish councils. Also the highest percentage of pensioners in UK. Also a very wide gap between richest and poorest in the community. The pilot scheme of putting PCSO's on bikes has been a success so far with improved engagement with the public. Working closely also with independent advisory groups, speed wardens, Neighbourhood Watch, Drivers and Street pastors. As the police are stretched so thinly, impossible to engage on a parish-by parish basis so the 4

panel meetings held each year for public to engage with the police are the best place to do this. Unfortunately, these are usually poorly attended.

There then followed a Q&A session which covered a wide range of topics including CCTV in Minehead and Watchet, rural crime including poaching, the use of automatic numberplate recognition cameras to track and catch offenders and the need for police support for local community help groups. I asked for the panel's comments on the Actionfraud situation and was told that, yes, they are looking into it and the public should learn themselves how not to become a victim. I have asked for details of a liaison group that may offer some useful advice. Meanwhile I will continue to consult and disseminate some of the information that is already out there on the web. The document I circulated to our members the other day is from Age UK and is particularly easy to follow and comprehensive.

Neighbourhood Watch signs

I have now taken delivery of 8 new street signs and have full permissions to put up the 2 new ones proposed for Quantockside and Halsway. It has taken well over a year to get to this position, partly due to the convoluted process I had to follow and also to a lack of reply to letters and forms sent to BT and to Bristol police. The remaining signs will be used to replace faded ones around the parish and potentially for additional new signs to be sited on private property where no permission is required apart from that of the landowner.