

BICKNOLLER ANNUAL PARISH CONFERENCE – WEDNESDAY 28 APRIL 2021

The Annual Parish Conference was held remotely (ZOOM) at 7.00 pm on the above date.

PRESENT: Councillor C Warren (Chairman)
14 Parishioners

The meeting was chaired by Councillor C Warren.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** were received from Maggie Pumphrey and Clive Raisey.
2. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 22 MAY 2019:** The minutes were approved and would be signed by the Chairman when conditions allowed.

3. **PRESENTATION BY VERITY JONES, VOLUNTEER CO-ORDINATOR, QUANTOCK & BLACKDOWN HILLS AONBs**

Verity introduced herself and gave a volunteering update. It has been a disruptive year due to COVID but she has been working throughout. Volunteer Rangers began working again from the end of March and were out on patrol over the Easter weekend and ensuring visitors enjoyed the hills responsibly. From May it was hoped to bring back groups of volunteers and engagement groups. She was working on the many volunteer enquiries she had received and would be in touch with those as soon as possible, and it was hoped to start working in the office in Nether Stowey in the not too distant future. Her work involved working out all the hours volunteers do and providing evidence to DEFRA, which helps with funding. Last year there were 2,200 volunteers, which was only down on the previous year by 400.

4. **PRESENTATION BY COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS:**

Somerset County Council Report:

Somerset County Councillor Mrs Lawrence thanked the Parish Council for inviting her and reported as follows –

“For many of us the past year has been one we will not forget and a real challenge in many ways. Some of us have lost friends or family to the Covid 19 outbreak, and I send my condolences to those who have lost loved ones. I also want to thank those volunteers and Parish Councillors who have visited and supported vulnerable villagers, making sure that those living alone have the help and provisions that they need, plus a friendly smile. Work at County Hall has changed dramatically, all of us working from home on Zoom or Team meetings. At first, I did not think it possible that so much could be achieved by working in this way, but we have all learned a lot about the Internet and Connectivity Working. I am pleased that a lot of Highway work has been done in our area and a lot more will follow 2021/22. The village is looking clean and tidy, and I thank all those who have contributed their time and effort in picking up litter, clearing gullies and keeping the roads free of obstacles. With our Covid 19 numbers dropping and most of us having had our first or second vaccinations, we are now able to move around a little more, but please continue to wear your mask when appropriate and meet out of doors or in your garden. We still need to remember: FACE - HANDS – SPACE and ventilation. The Covid helpline is still open Telephone Number 0300 790 6275 and to date 13,600 calls have been received. Vaccination Bookings are continuing to come in and 50,000 people have had at least the first injection and many are now having their second

vaccination. A further 7,783 follow up Welfare calls have been made to support and comfort the most vulnerable people. The work continues in Contact Tracing and establishing the Local Lateral Flow testing sites and the roll out of Home Lateral Flow testing kits. Spark Somerset has now trained over 100 Covid Champions across Somerset to support local communities".

District Council report: District Councillor Trollope-Bellew gave an update on the Somerset Waste Partnership and recycling. He advised that Recycle More is coming in and will come to Bicknoller in February or March 2022. Black bin waste will be every 3 weeks. Recyclables will be every week. It is hoped it will save 2 million pounds per year when it is rolled out. In the AONB controlled burning could not be done. Part of the AONB has now also got the Quantock Landscape Partnership scheme financed by 2 million pounds from the National Heritage fund. One of their projects is to move the car park at Crowcombe Park Gate, although there has been a delay as the car park planning permission applied for was not for a big enough area. Another part of the scheme is an archaeological dig in Bicknoller which will be looking to understand how Bicknoller developed as a village. This will be held on 16th and 17th October 2021.

District Councillor Rigby reported that the Somerset Waste Partnership is trialling electric refuse collection vehicles. He gave an update on the current position relating to the Local Plan. Somerset West & Taunton (SWT) Council has been working with Somerset County Council on works to the seawall at Blue Anchor and the sea defence in Watchet. SWT are also rolling out electric charging points in many of their Council car parks.

5. REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PARISH COUNCIL:

Councillor Warren introduced himself and thanked all Parish Councillors and parishioners for their dutiful work over the last 12 months which had been a difficult time. He thanked and commended those who had volunteered to help others in the parish due to COVID. Face-to-face meetings have not been possible and the Parish Council have continued to do business via ZOOM. Two Parish Councillors have been exceptional with the amount of work they have put in: Julian Anderson (roads, drainage, hedges) and Stuart Dowding (planning applications and the Volunteer Group).

At this point, he asked Parish Councillors Anderson & Dowding to give a short report on their work on their respective areas of responsibility.

Stuart Dowding – there was approximately 20 people on the Volunteer Group. Works had been curtailed due to COVID but work had been undertaken on bus shelters, and the clearance of streams at Woolston. Planning: Most applications caused no problem. The Parish Council had objected to an application in Trendle Lane, which had been granted on appeal. The Parish Council would be raising concerns over the handling of this application with the Planning Inspector.

Councillor Anderson: advised he was relatively pleased with the SCC Phase 1 work in Chilcombe Lane. He had spoken to several Highways personnel and they had assured him the next phase would be done but money would be sought sometime in September 2021 for works in 2022/23. There is a stream bubbling up every so often in Chilcombe Lane, which had been mentioned to SCC. Church Lane: water bubbling up from under the tarmac. He was trying to reduce the speed limit on the A358 which goes through the village. Road surveys which had been undertaken

showed there were approximately 5,000 vehicles (in March) going through every day. Average speeds: Williton-Taunton 52mph; Taunton-Williton 48mph.

6. FINANCIAL REPORT (CLERK TO THE COUNCIL)

The Clerk presented the end of year accounts for 2020-2021. The closing balance at 31.3.21 was £11,189. She advised the accounts were currently with the Internal Auditor for audit.

7. PRESENTATIONS BY REPRESENTATIVES OF LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

Representatives of local organisations gave a summary of the current activities of their organisations. These included: Church & PCC (Carolyne Stock); Flower Show Committee (report read out by Parish Clerk) and Bicknoller Social Club (report read out by Parish Clerk).

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Ian Liddell-Grainger raised concerns of parishioners in Church Lane over the use of a field behind their properties regarding animal health and husbandry. He asked the Parish Council to consider sending a letter to the owner of the field.

The meeting closed at 8.05 pm.

Signed: Date:
Chairman