

- 24/25 259 **PRESENT** - Cllrs Charlesworth (in the Chair), Heale, Gowing and Vine.
- 24/25 260 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** - accepted and approved from Cllr Welch.
- 24/25 261 **ALSO PRESENT** - 8 members of the public, Somerset Councillor Munt.
- 24/25 262 **IN ATTENDANCE** - The Clerk to the Council.
- 24/25 263 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** - Cllrs Charlesworth, Vine and Gowing all had an interest to declare in planning application 26/25/00002 and requested dispensations. The Clerk explained the process to the public and the necessary paperwork was completed.
- 24/25 264 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING** - confirmed and signed.
- 24/25 265 **UPDATES ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS AND NOT LISTED** - none.
- 24/25 266 **SOMERSET COUNCILLOR'S REPORT** - SCllr Munt said Somerset had now set a legal and balanced budget which would increase the council tax by 7.5% following permission being granted by the Secretary of State mainly because of the high care costs in Somerset.
- 24/25 267 **LOCAL COMMUNITY NETWORKS (LCNS) AND ENHANCED HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE (EHM)** - at the last highways meeting there had only been 7 council represented with no representatives from highways present. There is a possibility of communities sharing SIDs which could be borne in mind.
- 24/25 268 **BTMG (BRIAN TILBURY MEMORIAL GROUND ON THE NIDON)** - no update.
- 24/25 269 **HIGHWAYS & FLOODING**
- Speed Indicator Device (SID) - Cllr Charlesworth would make this a priority for this month.
 - Chandlers Lane/Holywell Road bend - nothing has been heard from Highways, Streetworks or BT.
 - Flooding - Cllr Charlesworth reported on some drains being mapped which had not shown before. The drainage board is only responsible for the water as far as the Nidon Bridge. The different jetting schedules cause some confusion especially when the jetting is missed.
 - Nidon Lane - Still nothing has happened.
 - Broadmead Lane - large stones in road - the Clerk had again contacted the landowner about these and about the hole in the roof of the Pillar Barn. He had replied that he would sort things out when the conditions were suitable.
 - Problems arising and any other highway matters - Potholes in Broadmead Lane - the Clerk is no longer able to identify and report them. Cllr Vine volunteered to undertake that. 30mph sign - the sign near Gardners Cottage on the West side of the village needs reinstating.
- 24/25 270 **PLANNING** -
- 26/25/00002 - Outline application Corner Close (incorrectly identified by Planning Authority as The White House) - 1 detached dwelling house - (The Clerk reminded the meeting that three named councillors had all received dispensation to take part in this agenda item.)

There was very considerable discussion about this with both the applicant and objectors given ample chance to speak. The main objections were based on the loss of some trees some years ago and the affect on the ecology if this development were to proceed. However the ash trees all suffered from ash dieback and the elm trees were dead and causing safety concerns.

The Chairman noted that the site is located within the defined settlement boundary for Edington where new housing is supported by Local Plan Policies S2 and T3a, the latter specifically dealing with Tear 3 settlements including Edington. Additionally the National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 173a requires great weight, not just a little weight, to be applied to the benefits of using suitable sites within the settlement boundary for new housing. Since Christmas 2024 new mandatory policies for local planning authorities to calculate the number of new houses in each area of the country have been brought in. For Somerset this has increased planned housing by an average of 40% compared to what was required to be planned for this time last year.

The site is also within walking distance of a primary school, doctors' surgery, shop, post office, bus routes and village hall and is not within any protected area such as Green Belt, National Landscape or Local Wildlife Site. The new policies mean every Somerset village will need to do its bit to allow new housing that is appropriate in terms of location and scale.

Every new house built within the settlement boundary on unprotected land will reduce the pressure on less suitable land outside the settlement boundary. To object to this development would be contrary to the Local Plan and based on opinion rather than our infrastructure and needs of the village. Bringing families in to keep our school open, support local businesses and fill local jobs is vital.

Regarding ecology it is understood that new legislation came into force on small sites from April 2024 meaning a biodiversity net gain metric has to be undertaken and the baseline biodiversity value of the site must be calculated as at January 2020. It is noted that Somerset Wildlife Trust has some concerns and that the Council's ecologist has yet to respond to the planning consultation.

With regard to phosphates and the requirement for applications to be nutrient neutral it is noted that sustainable drainage and permeable surfaces are planned. This is again a matter for the Council's ecologist.

It is noted that there are inaccuracies in the application regarding the nature of the land and name of the site.

There are also inaccuracies in documents uploaded by members of the public including some pertaining to the Parish Council itself.

Taking everything into consideration it was agreed that, for the good of the parish, the Parish Council supports the application subject to meeting the Council ecologist's requirements.

b. Any other planning matters - none.

24/25 271 **FOOTPATHS** - The Footpath Liaison Officer reported that there are two finger posts in need of reinstating. He and another member of the public would do this.

24/25 272 **POLDEN ENVIRONMENTAL NETWORK (PEN)** - a representative stated that funds from the Somerset Rivers Authority had enabled grants for tree planting for schools and other groups. Next meeting on 23rd September in Woolavington Village Hall.

24/25 273 **DEFIBRILLATOR/CRITICAL BLEED KIT** - Cllr Charlesworth reported that both the defibrillator and the bleed kit are now available for use although there is still no working key for the defibrillator and she will continue to work on getting that sorted out. Juvenile defibrillator pads are also available at a cost of approximately £90. It was agreed that these should also be purchased, hopefully with a contribution from Catcott Parish Council.

24/25 274 **HOLY WELL AND COMMEMORATIVE SEAT** - The Clerk had purchased the required documents from the Land Registry but they didn't really help establish who is responsible for the trees on the border with the field. Cllrs Charlesworth and Welch had met with an informed resident who would arrange for three builders to meet on site in order to arrange tenders. The bench has arrived and is being stored under cover at Jigsaw. A plaque will still be needed and Cllr Heale would bring some suggested wording to the next meeting.

24/25 275 **GARDEN COMPETITIONS** - Leaflets had been distributed and prizes for both adults and children have been purchased. Some people have already registered to take part.

24/25 276 **VILLAGE CLEANUP** - The Chairman thanked everybody who took part in the biggest cleanup we've had so far. 31 adults and 3 children took part and covered an extended area. Over 30 bags of rubbish were collected but it was sad to find that only two days later rubbish had appeared in Holywell Road South. It was agreed it might be beneficial to install a litter bin in the layby up there. It was also agreed that it would be a good idea to have a similar event in September concentrating on collecting litter, clearing ditches and drain covers.

24/25 277 **VE 80TH ANNIVERSARY** - this is being celebrated on 9th May. The Village Hall is otherwise free on that day so a bring and share event has been proposed. There are no details at present.

24/25 278 **FINANCE**

a. Accounts check - The clerk had not had time to produce accounts this month.

b. Cheques for signature - were approved as follows:- Chq.1061 Land Registry (Holy Well documents) £47.90; Chq.1062 Information Commissioner (Data Protections) £52.00; Chq.1063 Robson Electrics (moving defibrillator box) £254.21; Chq.1064 Heartsafe (new defib pads and labels) £243.90; Chq.1065 S Charlesworth (cleanup refreshments) £61.60; Chq.1066 Clerk (pay and expenses) £441.65.

c. Bank mandate - Cllr Charlesworth had yet to complete her responses. She would do so as soon as possible.

d. Any other finance matters - Appointment of internal auditor - it was agreed to re-appoint Richard Young. Defibrillator expenses - the clerk had received a cheque from Catcott Parish Council for half the costs incurred in getting the defibrillator going again plus the £0.03 sum outstanding from a bank error.

24/25 279 **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION, CIRCULATION, DISTRIBUTION** - C&CD; Community Payback Scheme details would be passed to the Village Hall.

24/25 280 **URGENT CORRESPONDENCE** - none.

24/25 281 **ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING(S)** - parish council computer; internal and external audits; ring fenced funds; village newsletter.

24/25 282 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING** - Thursday 10th April 2025 at 7.30pm in the Committee Room at the Village Hall

The meeting closed at 8.45pm