

As you are aware some of the issues that the Parish Council had hoped to complete have had to be put on hold due to the furloughing of staff across the country. Things appear to be gradually getting back to normal as staff are returning to regular work but, of course, there will be delays with staff catching up with the backlog of work.

I have been in contact with Falcon Housing about the planning application to renovate the children's play area and this will be on their list of things that need addressing as soon as they are fully staffed again. The National Trust stabilising the hedge bank near the Church is still on hold. The good news is that the Community Speed Watch program has been given the go-ahead to restart and the Village Hall will be opening shortly for some events with the usual restrictions in place. Our local re-cycling centre at Williton is now open but only for four days a week rather than the six days as previously. Bridgwater is fully open. They are asking people to be restrained in what they bring to the site and there is no hands on help available from staff. Details can be found on the websites.

The EDF application to remove the environmental safeguard of an Acoustic Fish Deterrent is currently being reviewed and the Wessex Area Environment Agency has asked for more information before it makes a decision later this year.

Somerset Climate Action Network has recommended that the five principal authorities in Somerset 'Remove barriers and lead joint funding bids to plan and develop effective cycling and walking infrastructure in all Somerset towns and key rural locations'. At the moment only a few small percentage of infrastructure spending goes on improving the accessibility for walking and cycling compared to vehicular priorities such as road building. Cycling in and around our area appears to be extremely dangerous due to the amount of heavy traffic on our roads.

Alfoxton House has been sold at last and the PC has had an email outlining the new owners plans for the future as a Buddhist Retreat. They will attend a Parish Council meeting later this year to present more details. We understand that all renovations will be undertaken on an 'ad hoc' basis by volunteers so any improvements are likely to take place over a very long time scale.

The planning appeal relating to the Strawberry Field site is under way and we are told it could be many weeks before a decision is made due to the complexity and number of documents relating to the application.

One of the thornier issues in hand is the proposed amalgamation of Somerset Councils into a single unitary council. The Parish Council has been asked to respond to some of the suggestions that have been put forward. This will be discussed as an agenda item today. The Chairman will be present for a virtual meeting about the proposals on Thursday 16th.

Emma Cavendish