

Chairman's report – November 16th 2020

Once more back in lockdown, hopefully only until Dec 2nd but we will have to wait and see. The Plough is once again closed and we understand that the new hosts will not now be in place before January 2021.

Planning

Alfoxton House has put in a number of planning applications. Parish Councils have been advised not to attend site meetings during lockdown which makes it difficult for us to comment on the application. The Planning Department of SWT has a comprehensive list of remedial work that must be carried out in order to comply with listed building regulations so practically the Planning Department is better placed to make the decision as they are monitoring the situation.

Transport : Enquiries have been made to the Highways Management Traffic Engineer regarding a speed reduction to 20mph in the village and she will be contacting the Chairman shortly to discuss any local issues. Councillor Mo Young has set up a rota of volunteers to join the local Speedwatch Team and has agreed to take up the baton of the Quiet Lanes project. We understand that two other local Parish Councils have shown an interest in the scheme.

There is no Community Bus Service at present.

Climate Change Emergency The possibility of applying for a Government grant to install an electric charging point in the village has been investigated by the Chairman. The main issues are that the PC must demonstrate the NEED for one and it must be sited on a public road. There are obvious problems with meeting both these conditions. The Parish Council could fund the project on alternative sites but a fast charging machine could be expensive as the charger also needs ground works and access to a power supply. Perhaps it is something we can keep in mind for the future.

Local Government Reorganisation plans are ongoing. The Secretary of State invited Somerset County Council to submit their justification for change to one single, unitary authority by November 9th. We are waiting for confirmation of the details of the application which is not yet on the Somerset County Council website. As reported previously there is disagreement amongst the five councils, some of whom prefer the two authority option. Currently the five councils are proposing five new authorities – full details are on the website One Somerset.

Planning :

- The planning application to extend the use of land at Moorhouse Farm to house EDF workers was refused so these workers will be moved to new EDF facilities and the issue of the bus pick up there has been removed.
- The Silk Mills appeal has yet to be decided.
- The Strawberry Field planning application appeal has been rejected by the Secretary of State and enforcement action for the removal of the building

is expected. The Planning Authority will put in place enforcement in due course.

- Falcon Housing have confirmed their intention to put in a planning application to change the consent for the playground at Portway so that it can be made accessible to families again Falcon have confirmed that they are in the process of drafting the application but due to the new lockdown they are struggling with staffing issues. This should be completed shortly.

This has been an unusual year to say the least and one of the casualties of the lockdown has been the observance of Armistice Day. I feel it's important to show our support for the British Legion and its amazing work. I would like to propose that for next year the Parish Council purchases a commemorative silhouette of a soldier. Both Williton and Nether Stowey have these and they are very moving. This will be discussed at the meeting under 'any other business' going forward.

We are pleased to announce that we have had a volunteer to be a co-opted councillor however due to the resignation of another councillor there is still one vacancy on Holford Parish Council. Details on how to apply can be found on the 'Notices' section of the Parish Council website.