Chairman’s report November 2023

We have some good news as far as Parish Councillors as we now have 2 places filled by Stephen Campbell and Reuben Morris.  They are very welcome as there is quite a bit going on. However, sadly, Stuart Moffatt has had to resign as, due to working away and family commitments, he is unable to spend as much time as he would like. I would like to extend my thanks to Stuart, he has been a very valuable member of the Council. This means that we still need two more volunteers!

We held an extraordinary meeting in September to enable us to hear your views on the new planning application for a further 100 caravans at a site adjoining the current Moorhouse Farm site.  24 people (including Parish councillors) attended that meeting and many expressed their opinions. A list of questions had been posed to the applicant before the meeting, and the responses to these were read out.

After listening to everybody and reading the information available, the Parish Council determined that we were not in favour of the current application for a number of reasons including that there was no evidence to support the view that it adds value to the local economy and concerns over the increased traffic that would be created together with the ecological issues. The application will now be decided by the Somerset West Planning Committee West on 21st November.

Roadside poles for Speed Indicator Devices have been ordered from Somerset Council and we hope these will be installed speedily.

Holford councillors have attended and contributed to meetings of the Hinkley Point Community Forum, the Quantock Hills Advisory Committee. and with the Clerk, the newly formed Local Community Network, Dowsborough, of which Holford is a member together with 15 other local parishes. The Chairman attended a meeting held by the Police and Crime Commissioner. Substantial progress has been made by the police on tackling anti-social behaviour and knife crime with the newly branded Violence Reduction Partnership, but traffic and local policing remains a concern to many of the attendees. Specific traffic issues have been followed up with the PCC as we endeavour to improve the quality of life on our village roads.

The volume of reports that we receive on a monthly basis from such bodies, as well as from Somerset Council is formidable and we need to work out a way of providing relevant information to parishioners.

The management of a Parish Council is becoming more complicated as the way we operate is quite strictly controlled. Our clerk has completed her Introduction to Local Council Administration qualification, and also completed ‘budget for council clerks’ and GDPR training. She will shortly start an essential Financial Introduction to Local Council Administration course. This will help councillors work within the legal framework.

Mike Copleston November 2023.