Holford Parish Council January 2024

Chairman’s report

There have been a series of meetings in the last two months of 2023 which have been attended by representatives from Holford Parish Council. We are not the smallest of the Parish Councils attending and we have made noticeable contributions.

The most important ones have been the Hinkley Point C Transport Forum where it was announced that there are currently 10,000 people employed on site and it may rise to 12,000 although there will be redundancies as sections are completed. As far as the bus accident at Cannington last winter there was found to be no fault by either driver and the road had been gritted. To reduce road traffic through Bridgwater barges are now being used to transport heavy items to Combwich wharf from Bridgend.

The process of trying to remove the requirement for a fish deterrent from Hinkley C will be the subject of an enquiry in the Spring. A programme of mitigation is being planned.

An LCN meeting for all 16 neighbouring parishes in the Dowsborough LCN did agree on some action points to be pursued before the next meeting but Somerset Council’s financial emergency overshadowed the meeting. Cllr Bill Revans, Leader of Somerset Council, gave a full explanation of the position at the Somerset Association of Local Councils (SALC) which was held in Somerton in December.

On a very practical level I have been in communication with a number of Somerset Council Officers and as a result we have had three visits by highways and many of the gullies, not all, and grits (cut outs on the verge for drainage) have been cleared and cleaned. Many of the gullies had disappeared under vegetation or were blocked. However, providing highways with a map of their locations helped the process. We are proposing to include additional work on our Parish maintenance contract to try to keep them working and to minimise standing water on the A39 in the village. A new contractor, Kier Transportation, will take over Somerset highways maintenance from 1st April 2024.

This year highways work associated with new housing developments on the A39 at Wembdon may cause delays as there will be a 20mph speed limit in place for some time

Residents can play an important part in this by notifying Somerset Council of any highways issue from potholes to overgrown trees. <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/report-a-problem-on-the-road/>

We now await details of the services provided by Somerset Council that may be withdrawn or reduced but it is likely we will have to increase our precept to ensure we can provide such services.