**Holford Parish Council Planning Policy 2023-2024**

# **Background**

Parish councils are only statutory consultees for planning applications and as such, this means that: They only have the right to be informed of planning applications within the parish. They cannot approve or reject planning applications. They also only have as much importance/say as a local resident.

Their comments, together with comments from local residents, on these applications may potentially trigger a referral to Planning Committee:

* Full planning permission.
* Outline planning permission.
* Reserved Matters.
* Change of use.
* Listed Building/Conservation Area consent.
* Retrospective Applications.
* Certificate of Lawfulness.

As statutory consultees, rather than a decision makers. The Parish Council can:

* Take no action if the proposal’s overall effect would be neutral or of little relevance.
* Support or Object; and provide material planning reasons; or
* Confirm comments only but this would not trigger the referral process.

Where the Parish Council is going to respond to the application, they need to respond by the target date set out in consultation letter – usually 21 days, 14 days for revised plans.

When an application is referred to Committee: Divisional Members, **Parish**/Town/City Councils, Contributors (objectors/supporters) and the Agent/Applicant will receive a notification email confirming:

* The application details.
* The date, time and location of the meeting.
* Instructions on how you can register to speak or to attend.
* To register to speak they will need to notify Democratic Services by 12 noon the working day before the Committee.
* Agenda will be published at least 5 working days before Committee.
* People can attend and/or speak on an application in person or virtually.
* Parish councils have the opportunity for a representative to speak for 3 minutes at the planning committee if they wish to do so.

For further information please refer to the NALC advice document.

<https://www.nalc.gov.uk/library/publications/1632-how-to-respond-to-planning-applications/file>

## **HPC PROCESS FOLLOWING RECEIPT OF APPLICATION**

It should be noted that as a small parish we get very few planning applications compared to some parishes and town councils, however a previous Parish Council decision was made to not formally respond to planning application consultations due to the lack of resources to do so, and a need to prioritise other issues.

Following changes in the Parish Council we now have the opportunity to consider taking a more proactive approach.

The following proposed approach seeks to provide a mechanism for the parish council to get a better understanding of the impact of planning applications in our parish and better represent the views of the local population in a considered response to the planning consultation process.

Holford Parish Council has **agreed to give delegated authority** to selected parish councillors to consider and decide whether the application is likely to need further consideration and therefore to refer it to a full parish council meeting, and or whether the application is neutral and does not require to be referred. **The selected parish councillors will be agreed at the Annual Parish Council meeting in May and if necessary, varied at a further full Parish Council Meeting**.

## **Process Summary**

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| 1 | On receipt of planning application, Parish Clerk to forward to HPC planning lead with clear note of deadline for responses. |
| 2 | HPC planning lead to liaise with other members of the planning sub-group to review online applications, including responses already submitted by other consultees. |
| 3 | Where there are no obvious concerns and no concerns registered by members of the parish, the sub-group will instruct the Clerk to return a ‘neutral’ response to the consultation within required timescale. |
| 4 | Where it is agreed that the proposed development may significantly impact on the local environment and or local population, the planning members will arrange a site visit to gain further information and an understanding of any issues. |
| 5 | The planning application will be tabled as an agenda item on the next Parish Council Meeting. This will enable a public consultation and enable residents express their views. Where necessary, an extra ordinary meeting will be scheduled. In addition, the parish clerk can request an extension to the advertised deadline. Please note Somerset Planning Authority are not required to agree to the extended deadline.  |
| 6 | Following the meeting, the Parish Clerk will respond to the consultation within the required timescale with outcome of the discussions at the Parish Council Meeting i.e. SUPPORT, OBJECT or NEUTURAL together with material planning reasons for decision if applicable. |
| 7 | Where a planning application decision goes to the Council Planning Committee and we are notified of the opportunity to attend and speak, or attend virtually. The Parish Council may nominate an attendee. |

Ann Anderson

Parish Councillor

29 August 2023