

**Meeting of the Pilton Parish Council**  
**in Pilton Village Hall on**  
**Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2022 at 7.30pm**

**Present:** Councillors Robert Kearle (Chairman)  
David Drew  
Colin Elkin  
Stephen Kearle  
Joe King  
Roger Noble

9 Members of the public attended the meeting plus 2 via Zoom.

1 **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

i Mobile phones should be switched to silent.

2 **APOLOGIES:** Audrey Brown, Lynda Roberts, Andrew Shaw

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS:** Councillor R Kearle stated Festival (Dispensation approved) and has no interest in any planning application at present but may do so in the future. Councillor Drew stated a Festival ticket and that he has no interest currently in any planning application but may do so in the future. Councillor S Kearle stated Festival. Councillors Elkin, Noble and King, stated Festival ticket. All Councillors declared an interest in planning application 2202/0107/TCA as it relates to a fellow Councillor.

4. **MINUTES:** of the 5<sup>th</sup> January 2022 were approved.

5. **MATTERS ARISING:**

i Traffic Matters:

- **New Defects:** There are approximately 12 potholes down Winters Hill. The badgers have moved back under the bridge near Walters Cottage, due to this the road is undulating, it was suggested that work takes place now before the bridge is damaged. The potholes near the bridge on the Ridge Road has burst the tyre of a villager. From the old bridge at West Shepton, as you go around the bend there are large potholes. Bourne Farm onto East Town lane the road is giving way and there is sharp edges. The cover in the road in Mount Pleasant has sunk into the road. A resident thanked the Parish for their hard work and to Robert for his work on the crossroads.
- **Lamberts Hill:** Residents are disappointed with the work so far. The Clerk will chase for an update.

ii SIS Proposal TI004358 for the A361:

A Task Order has now been issued to the contractors to undertake the construction works for the Small Improvement Scheme in Pilton. The completed scheme design can be seen at [www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-and-](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-and-)

[transport/small-improvement-schemes-directory](#) (look for ‘TI004358 – A361 Pilton (pedestrian crossing improvements)’ in Mendip district). There is not yet a programmed start date for the construction works.

In the meantime, there will be an advanced vegetation cut prior to the main scheme works, so that this can be completed before the spring nesting season to minimize any impact on wildlife.

- iii Community Speedwatch: Speeding has reduced recently, hopefully making the roads a little bit safer.
- iv Local Council Alliance: There was no update from Councillor Shaw this month.
- v Dog Poo Bins: The Clerk has chased Mendip District Council for an update regarding the 3 proposed sites for the poo bins.
- vi Queen's Platinum Jubilee Celebrations: The plan is to plant 70 trees. Currently looking for an alternative site and need to approach landowners. The intention is to plant the trees in October. The Alan Powell Trust has given £1000. A further grant will be applied for from the Parish Council in due course.
- vii Parking at the Drew’s opposite the Chapel on Top Street: This has improved slightly but registration numbers are still being recorded.
- viii Pollution: The Clerk has chased and is awaiting a response.
- ix Letter to Trustees of the Village Hall: A response has been received from the Trustees of the Village Hall. The Clerk was asked to thank the Trustees for the letter. There is the opportunity to change the Parish Council meetings to a Tuesday evening when the Boxing Club does not take place. This will be added to the agenda for discussion at the March Parish Council meeting.
- x Shooting Ground: The new senior officer, Andy Langston at Mendip District Council, has recently asked for the case to be reopened. He is working alongside Richard Keith-Hill and re-investigating and in fact were due to visit the shooting ground. The Parish Council will be notified of on the progress made.
- xi Update from Nigel Hewitt-Cooper: See Appendix A

6. **PLANNING:**

Application Number	Proposal	Applicant & Location
2022/0022/FUL	Erection of 1no. dwelling house and creation of access	Mr Stephen Evans Barn Owls, East Town Lane, Pilton
Pilton Parish Council Recommends: APPROVAL The applicant spoke regarding the proposal. Councillor Drew proposed approval, Councillor King seconded, the vote was 4 in favour 1 abstention.		
2022/0017/TCA	Pollard 4 x willow trees, sown hazel reduction to ground level.	Richard Drabble Monks Mill, Shop Lane, Pilton
Pilton Parish Council Recommends: APPROVAL Councillor Drew proposed approval, Councillor S Kearle seconded, the vote was unanimously in favour of approval.		
2022/0106/TCA	T1 – Tree of Heaven – Fell. T2 – Yew – Crown raise southern side x 2.5m. T3 – Sycamore – Fell. T4 – Willow – Fell.	Brigid McConville Laurel Cottage Shop Lane Pilton
Pilton Parish Council Recommends: APPROVAL Councillor Noble proposed approval, Councillor Drew seconded, the vote was unanimously in favour of approval.		

2022/0107/TCA	T1 Black Locust – Reduce x2 lateral branches, approximately 2m. T2 Liquidamber – Reduce x3 . lateral branches, approximately 1m	Mr M Shaw Meadow View Barn Whitstone Hill Pilton
Pilton Parish Council Recommends: APPROVAL Councillor Noble proposed approval, Councillor King seconded, the vote was unanimously in favour of approval.		
2022/0144/HDG	As part of a safety scheme at the above location (B3136/junction Ridge Lane) we propose to remove and replant a hedge at the location shown of 140 meters (Hedge is in north west field). We are on the clock with this scheme as four very serious accidents have occurred recently and the Police are chasing to get visibility improved. Two phases have been completed with kerbing being upgraded around the junction and road resurfacing in all directions in Lamberts Hill B3136 and both Ridge Lanes with anti-skid also laid on both approaches. Signs and road markings have also been upgraded. We have negotiated land take from two landowners at the junction of Lamberts Hill and Ridge Lane and the legal process is moving forward <b>We are trying to get these later stages completed and some tree removal done on the opposite side of Lamberts Hill before bird nesting season starts, so any help from yourselves would be appreciated.</b>	Mr Martyn Evans Land At Lamberts Hill Pilton
Pilton Parish Council Recommends: APPROVAL Councillor Drew proposed approval, Councillor King seconded, the vote was unanimously in favour of approval.		

i Update: There was no update this month.

7. **FINANCE:**

i Financial Statement:



of the damage and did not visit the burial ground herself. Discussion took place regarding the alleged dangerous state of the grave however the grave was dug the day prior to the funeral and was left in a safe condition but when the grave digger returned the next day the site was not in the same condition. He has since felt caught in a trap and that there has been a vendetta against him for years from Councillor Noble and that his vehicle had been seen at the burial ground at dusk and he had a witness to Councillor Noble at the grave.

Councillor S Kearle apologised to the family and stated he was honestly unaware who the grave digger was and did not know that he had dug the grave.

Letter of apology will be sent to the family, the grave digger and the Funeral Directors. Assurance was given that the grave digger can prepare the final resting place in peace and Councillor Noble gave his word. The Parish Council confirmed that they are happy for grave digger to continue as the parish grave digger.

The complaint will be reported to the Monitoring Officer at Mendip District Council by the Clerk, who will include all correspondence.

The Clerk was asked to investigate whether there are any standards for grave digging.

The family asked that standards and expectations of the burial ground be reviewed and be put up in a prominent place.

## 9. FOOTPATHS

- i Weir Lane Footpath: The Clerk has applied for a grant via Mendip District Council to pay for the metal handrail along the Weir Lane Footpath. Parish Councillors were requested the documentation to see if anything else needs to be added.

The blocked bridleway has now been cleared.

## 10. ITEMS FOR COUNCIL'S INFORMATION:

- i Roundabout report:

Puffin Crossing Update - A Task Order has now been issued to the contractors to undertake the construction works for the Small Improvement Scheme in Pilton. The completed scheme design can be seen at [www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/small-improvement-schemes-directory](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/small-improvement-schemes-directory) (look for 'TI004358 – A361 Pilton (pedestrian crossing improvements)' in Mendip district). There is not yet a programmed start date for the construction works.

In the meantime, there will be an advanced vegetation cut prior to the main scheme works, so that this can be completed before the spring nesting season to minimize any impact on wildlife.

The next PPC/GFEL meeting is taking place on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2022 at 6.30.

A member of the public thanked the Parish Council for monitoring the speed in East Town Lane.

A concern was raised by a member of the public that with the influx of traffic in Neat Lane and Copse Hill the infrastructure of the roads does not support the change. There have been numerous accidents and it is getting worse and

worse. There are more children living in the village no pavements, more traffic. Is there anything that can be done?  
The Clerk will write to Highways raising the concerns and asking what can be done.

11. **GFEL**

i. Dates of Festival Meetings & public involvement:

Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2022 at 6.30pm

Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2022 at 6.30pm

It was stated that Melvin Ben is the Head of Operations, Councillors were asked to consider whether he should be invited to attend Parish Council meetings. This will be discussed at the March Parish Council meeting.

12. **COMPLAINT**

This was discussed in a closed meeting and the complaint was unanimously rejected by Councillors.

**NEXT MEETING:** Parish Council Meeting will take place on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2022 at 7.30pm

## **Appendix A – Report from Nigel Hewitt-Cooper**

Coronavirus infection rates: As of 28th January the number of confirmed Covid cases in Somerset was 106,569 (27% up from 83,300 on 30th December) and the number of Covid-attributed deaths 977. The rate per 100,000 stands at 964.2 (766.6) for Somerset with Mendip at 766.5 (892.0), Sedgemoor at 1143.1 (756.6), South Somerset 921.3 (684.3) and SW&T at 1016.0 (770.4). The number of total deaths across the County is currently below the 5-year average and the latest R-value for Somerset is between 0.8 and 1.1

Infection rates in Somerset continue to be extremely high. With the new Omicron variant it is still advisable, even for those who have had both jabs and the relaxation in Government guidelines to continue to observe Social Distancing and to always ventilate indoor areas.

Somerset Coronavirus Support Helpline: A single phone number continues to be available for anyone in Somerset who needs Coronavirus-related support. 0300 790 6275, is open seven days a week from 8am to 6pm.

Vaccination programmes roll-out: Somerset continues to have one of the highest vaccination rates in the country with the latest figures showing over 96.2% of the 18+ population having had one dose of vaccine and 93.8% having had both doses. In total 63.7% of the adult population have also received their booster.

Local Government Reorganisation: Following the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) decision to support the move to a single Unitary Council across Somerset the Structural Changes Order was laid before Parliament on 24th January. The agreed vesting date remains 1st April 2023. The first elections to the new authority together with Somerset Town and Parish elections will be held on 5th May 2022.

County Council Revenue Budget: Somerset County Council has published its last draft proposed budget ahead of the creation of a new unitary Somerset Council in April 2023. The council is proposing major increases in investment in care services, with an increase for Adult Social Care of £18m (13%), and over £12m (also 13%) for Children's Services. The increase in funding for Adult Social Care in part reflects the council's recent decision to support an increase in carers pay and to provide a retention bonus for care staff in Somerset. This is intended to support the recruitment and retention of staff in a challenging job market for care services.

County Council Capital Budget: SCC is proposing to allocate £48 million for capital spending in the coming year. This includes substantial investment in measures to tackle climate change, building on the council's successful Climate Emergency Community Fund. The council has allocated £1 million in new match funding to support the "decarbonisation" of schools – on top of the existing £7.8 million investment in decarbonising the council's buildings, including libraries. A further £1 million has been allocated for electric fleet vehicles and charging infrastructure. A new investment of £1 million has been allocated to local transport schemes.

Proposed Council Tax: Council Tax for SCC is proposed to rise by two per cent with a further one per cent rise for the social care precept. This compares to UK inflation in December running at over four percent and will mean that Somerset County Council continues to set one of the lowest County Tax rates in the UK.

Somerset libraries: Since libraries reopened their doors last April, Somerset Libraries have had over half a million visits and have welcomed over 16,000 new members. To encourage even more people to reconnect with library services and support communities as they start to recover from the impact of the pandemic Somerset Libraries is running two initiatives from 21st January until the 31st March. Children and young people aged 17 and under will not be charged for using any library services. This

includes requesting books from other libraries, borrowing DVDs and no charges for the late return of items! The service will also be happy to clear outstanding charges, for all customers, incurred before 21st January 2022, no questions asked. To take advantage of this 'welcome back' offer, visit your local library before the 31st March and speak to a member of staff.

Climate change action 1: Somerset County Council has been ranked as the top county council in the UK when it comes to taking a lead on climate change. Climate Emergency UK has ranked all 409 local authorities, scoring them against nine categories, including how well councils' plans would mitigate the impact of climate change locally, whether the climate and ecological emergency was integrated into existing policies, community engagement, climate education, scale of emissions targets, and commitments to tackle the ecological emergency. Somerset County Council was named as the top county council, meanwhile Somerset West & Taunton Council was ranked as the top district council.

Climate change action 2: A grant available to help Somerset people benefit from energy efficient installations worth up to £10,000 has been extended until June 2022. The Green Homes Grant Scheme allows eligible homeowners to apply for vouchers to install climate-friendly energy saving measures such as insulation, air source heat pumps, or double glazing. The work can be worth up to £10,000, with nothing for homeowners to pay towards the cost of the works. To be eligible for the grants, the residents of the property must have a low income and the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) for the property must be rated D, E, F or G. visit [www.heatsomerset.co.uk](http://www.heatsomerset.co.uk) for more information.