

MINUTES OF NORTON SUB HAMDON PARISH COUNCIL
VIRTUAL MONTHLY MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 14TH SEPTEMBER 2020
VIA ZOOM AT 7.30 P.M.

20/1555 PRESENT:

Mrs S. More (Chairman), Mr S. Maunder (Vice Chair), Mrs P. Biddle, Mr B. Matraves, Ms R.Cumberbatch, Mike Hewitson (District Councillor), Mrs L.Brooks (Clerk), 1 member of the public.

At the start of the virtual meeting the Parish Council Co-Opted Rachel Cumberbatch onto the Parish Council. Documents were signed and witnessed by all the Parish Councillors present.

Proposed: Cllr. More

Seconded: Cllr. Maunder

Agreed unanimously.

20/1556 APOLOGIES:

Mr R.Middleton (Personal commitments)

Mr J Cole (Home commitments)

Mark Keating (County Councillor) – Council redeployed commitments

20/1557 PUBLIC TIME

20/1557/a Public Time

Nothing to report

20/1557/b P.C.S.O. Report:

Nothing to report

20/1557/c District Councillor: District Councillor Mike Hewitson was present at the meeting. He updated the Parish Council on the following:

Future of Local Government in Somerset:

- The District Councils have put together a cross-party Business Case for submission to the Secretary of State, called THE STRONGER SOMERSET BUSINESS CASE
 - The ‘Stronger Somerset Business Case’ wants to scrap all Councils in Somerset and replace them with **two new Unitary Authorities**: one for West Somerset which will cover the existing Somerset West & Taunton and Sedgemoor areas, **and a new East Somerset Council which will cover the existing Mendip and SSDC areas.**
 - In addition, the Stronger Somerset Business Case will see the creation of a new Combined Authority and potentially an elected Mayor for the area.
 - This Business Case comes in response to a meeting with the Minister, Simon Clarke. Government are insisting that District Councils be scrapped and are keen on the creation of Combined Authorities and Mayoralities.
 - The proposed new Councils will reach the mandated 300k population by 2031, whereas the County proposed single Unitary would reach the mandated ceiling of 600k population in the same time frame.
- We believe that the Stronger Somerset Business Case is better for the people of Somerset because:
- The scale of the new Councils will mean that people are closer to their elected representatives, and to decision making. This will avoid the democratic deficit inherent in the County’s proposals (Stronger Somerset = 1 Cllr per 2,800 population versus 1 per 5,600 under County case).
 - A new Children’s Trust will be created on the recommendation of the Social Care Institute for Excellence to help give a fresh start to Children’s services which continues to be of concern to OFSTED and parents of SEND children.
 - ‘Savings’ are comparable to the County’s Business Case, but long term value is projected to be greater. £202m for Stronger Somerset vs £168m for County’s proposals.

More information can be found on the dedicated microsite <https://strongersomerset.co.uk>.

An update on Ham Hill:

SSDC has been successful in bidding for £98k of National Lottery Heritage Fund grants to support the development of a Phase 2 bid for £1.6m towards improvement to the Country Park & Historic Monument. Work will now begin on detailed plans for a new visitors centre and cafe, as well as environmental and heritage improvements.

The next phase of development work will last until February 2022 when the final decision on Phase 2 of the project. We hope that this will lead to significant economic investment, creating jobs and opportunities in our area.

20/1557/d County Councillor:

Nothing to report.

20/1557/e CLT Update:

Nothing to report

20/1557/g Hamdon Youth Group:

Nothing to report

20/1558 MINUTES:

The Minutes from the July meeting have been circulated. They were agreed and signed.

Proposed: Cllr. Maunder

Seconded: Cllr. Biddle

Agreed unanimously.

20/1559 MATTERS ARISING

1. Co-Option of Rachel Cumberbatch to the Parish Council – This took place at the start of the meeting – see above
2. One Somerset – any updates from District and County Councillor. – See above under District Council report.
3. Gigaclear for Norton – Every household have now received a letter from Gigaclear, outlining their plan. They have informed residents that Norton is eligible for the RGC programme (Rural Gigabit Connectivity Programme), and asking for Norton residents to email them if they would be interested in having a service from them once the network is built.
4. Consultation for Planning for the Future: The Clerk reported that all paperwork has been forwarded to the Parish Councillors regarding the proposal to make vast changes to the planning system, by streamlining the planning process with a system that will replace the entire plan making law in England to achieve this.
5. The Chairman requested that we ask Charles Campbell to attend the October Zoom meeting to express out thanks to him for all his hard work, as we are still unable to have face to face parish council meetings
Action: Clerk

ITEMS TO BE DISCUSSED AT THE NEXT PUBLIC MEETING TO BE HELD IN THE HALL:

1. Boules Court

20/1560 PLANNING:

20/1560/a Matters for report:

Nothing to report

20/1560/b Decisions Notified:

20/01646/LBC Rose Cottage Higher Street Norton Sub Hamdon Stoke Sub Hamdon TA14 6SN
Rose Cottage Higher Street Norton Sub Hamdon Stoke Sub Hamdon TA14 6SN - The erection of a single storey rear extension garden room to dwelling to replace existing lean to extension

20/1560/c Applications for consideration.

20/01971/HOU 1, Barn Orchard, New Road. Conversion of Integral garage into home office.

The Parish Council had no Objection to this application.

20/01915/FUL - Erection of two dwellings/houses. Land To The West Of Barn Orchard New Road Norton Sub Hamdon

5 out of 6 Parish Councillors objected to this application.

Therefore MAJORITY OBJECTION BY THE PARISH COUNCIL – for the following reasons:

1. How can further development be allowed when we have already been informed that we have exceeded the number of new houses recommended in the local plan?
2. Two more houses would take the number to twenty seven from the original twenty and there are huge concerns that to allow further development would set a precedent allowing the remaining fields to be developed.
3. Historic Village – Norton sub Hamdon is a village steeped in history. Sitting just below Ham Hill - a geological site of Special Scientific Interest, Scheduled Ancient Monument, Iron Age Hill Fort, Roman

site, Local Nature Reserve and Country Park. This planning application (along with Bramley Fields) is viewed from the top of Ham Hill, and is also visible from many other vantage points on this Iron Age Fort. This historic village should be protected from further development as it is part of England's heritage.

4. Highway Safety – The entrance to this site is on New Road. The entrance sits opposite a primary school. Norton sub Hamdon already is at full capacity with regards to traffic with a road structure that leaves this area very vulnerable to a fatal accident happening. The road cannot cope with the capacity of traffic it already has. At school drop off/collection times this danger is accentuated to hazardous levels. Bramley Fields has already added to this problem with added vehicles vacating the entrance, as well as more parking on New Road. **THIS IS A VERY TREACHEROUS AREA ALREADY AND FURTHER TRAFFIC ENTERING THIS AREA WILL ONLY ADD TO THE SAFETY HERE.**
5. Flooding – We have a history of flooding in this village. This past winter 2019/20 we have had many problems with flooding on both Great Street and New road, much of which in areas where we have not had flooding before. This has been exasperated by the loss of trees that have been removed to accommodate Bramley Fields already. The fact that another 5 houses were then 'added' to the Bramley Fields development which meant an attenuation pond that was originally requested from planners was suddenly given a 'U'turn and no longer required?! The majority of this flooding over the past winter has been caused from water runoff from The Old Fruit Farm Site, which is now being pushed towards the Turnpike entrance off the A356, due to having nowhere to run. The more you allow this area to be concreted over will just cause more flooding misery for local residents. It will have a huge impact on the value of their properties as well as insurance costs.
THERE IS NO FLOODING REPORT ON SSDC WEBSITE FOR THIS PLANNING PROPOSAL - WITH NORTON'S HISTORY OF FLOODING, WHY HASN'T THIS BEEN REQUESTED?
6. Bramley Fields still has numerous houses for sale. In total we currently have 7 large executive/luxury/prestigious properties for sale in Norton sub Hamdon (Rightmove 18.08.20), plus smaller properties. This is before the 5 extra houses are even built on the Bramley Fields site that were approved in 2018. Norton sub Hamdon does not need anymore new houses.
7. **No to a spur road** – Why is there a turning area?? There is no need for this with ample turning space already. **The Parish Council will never support a spur road here.** This has purely been added to allow for access for further development in the future which is not required. Houses need to be positioned differently to block off the possibility of further development, or trees with TPO's need to be planted.
8. Wildlife/Nature conservation. Norton sub Hamdon have already lost much wildlife from the development of Bramley Fields. This remaining area needs protecting from species that may well be rare or extinct.
9. Noise and Disturbance – The development of Bramley Fields has already created much noise and disturbance to local residents. Police presence has been witnessed on many occasions in what has always previously been a quiet and beautiful environment to live in. There is also much noise pollution already from Barn Orchard which affects residents who live in close proximity. There is no consideration for privacy of neighbours.
10. Why haven't local residents been informed about this development? A number of houses that back onto this proposal have not even been notified.

20/1561 FINANCE:

20/1561/a Matters for report:

Nothing to report

20/1561/b Matters for resolution

Price increase from Down2Earth SW Ltd for grounds maintenance. The Clerk reported that Down2Earth SW Ltd had put a 3% increase in for maintenance to the play area and other recreation ground areas.

The Parish Council made a resolution to accept this.

Proposed: Cllr. Biddle Seconded: Cllr. Matraves Agreed unanimously

National Pay increase for Clerks: The Clerk reported that there was a National pay increase for Clerks

The Parish Council made a resolution to accept this.

Proposed: Cllr. More Seconded: Cllr. Matraves Agreed unanimously

20/1561/c Cheques Payable

PKF-Littlejohn	Audit for 2019-20	£	240.00 chq no 1472
Louise Brooks	Salary – July 2020	£	422.00 chq no 1473
Louise Brooks	Expenses & home office Allowance – July	£	70.00 chq no 1474
Louise Brooks	Annual renewal Anti-virus for Parish Council Laptop	£	89.99 chq no 1475
Louise Brooks	Salary – August 2020	£	422.00 chq no 1476
Louise Brooks	Expenses & home office Allowance – August	£	70.00 chq no 1477
The Cumbria Clock Co	Norton church clock annual service	£	222.00 chq no 1478
The Play Inspection Co.	Annual playground inspection	£	102.00 chq no 1479
Proposed: Cllr. More Seconded: Cllr. Maunder		Agreed unanimously.	

20/1562 VILLAGE HALL:

The Chair reported in Councillor Cole's absence that the hall was likely to have to close again due to the recent changes to Covid-19 restrictions.

20/1563 RECREATION GROUND:

Play Area and MUGA Annual Report: The Clerk reported that The Annual report for the play area and MUGA had now been carried out and no further repairs were required.

20/1564 CORRESPONDENCE:

Allotments: The Clerk had emailed a letter from Mrs Maunder regarding the requirement for a rent increase for the allotments for 2021, due to a rise in maintenance and water charges plus the expense of a new gate post. Mrs Maunder informed the Parish Council that there would be no available funds leftover to give to the poor widows of Norton and asked whether a change in the Trust Agreement could be applied for in order to honour the Trust in a different way. The Parish Council completely agreed with the rent increase and felt that if the rent increase needed to be more than was being suggested, then they would have no problems with it. They felt it was still very cheap. Councillor Matraves, who is also a Trustee of the allotments came up with a suggestion that any profits go to a local food bank. The Parish Council and Mrs Maunder thought this was a good idea and are looking into it with the Charities Commission. This will be put on the Agenda for October.

20/1565 FOOTPATHS:

The Clerk reported that the two new bridges on the footpath to Chiselborough were currently being installed.

20/1566 MEMBERS' REPORTS:

The Clerk was asked to include a piece about parking at junctions in the newsletter again, as the situation had got dangerous at both Higher Street to Great Street and New Road to Great Street.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.30pm

The next VIRTUAL meeting will be held on Monday 12th October 2020 at 7.30pm