

# NORTON ST PHILIP PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held on  
**Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> August 2024 at 7.00 pm** in the Palaiet Hall, Norton St Philip.

**Present:** Cllr Hasell (Chairman), Cllr Fox, Cllr Lund and Cllr Hitchins.

**In attendance:** Nicola Duke (Parish Clerk), Somerset Councillor A Boyden (from 8.11 pm) and 20 members of the public.

## Public Participation

Members of the public were invited to make representations to the Council on any matters relating to the work of the Council or to raise any issues of concern. A number of local residents addressed the Council in respect of the planning applications relating to Mount Pleasant Farm and the following points and comments were noted:

- The PC had been copied in on a number of written submissions objecting to the application and the Chairman confirmed he had received a number of calls on the matter. The PC confirmed these comments would be taken into account during its deliberations.
- Residents expressed the following concerns in respect of the applications:
  - Lack of information as to the level of potential increase in traffic using the access from Ringwell Lane, which was narrow and unsuitable for large vehicles.
  - The impact of large agricultural vehicles using the narrow access as well as the potential for damage to historic property to occur.
  - The impact of such traffic generation issues on the amenity of local residents.
  - The impact of the proposed development on access and safety for the many walkers and riders using the track, as well as the potential impact on safety for the young children who access the school and pre-school via Ringwell Lane.
  - Lack of information as to how the final works would be presented and the impact on the local amenity and visual landscape.
  - Concern at the potential for the track to be tarmacked, which would be out of keeping with the local landscape.
  - The potential impact of the works on an area already subject to flooding issues.
  - The potential increase in commercial operations at the farm should the proposed works be approved.
  - That there were no measures being proposed to mitigate the impact on the local landscape and amenity.
- The agent for the application addressed the Council making the following comments and answering a number of questions from members:
  - He had noted the comments made and would relay these back to the applicant.

- Confirmed that the track was an existing access point and the works were planned in order to allow all weather access to the sheep farming operation.
- The works were planned for operational efficiency and to provide a functional access, which would separate the sheep farming operation from the other commercial operations and the domestic house.
- The applicant was in discussion with Somerset Council regarding the materials to be used, and had confirmed it was not the intention to tarmac the track.

	<b>AGENDA ITEM</b>
8975	<b>Apologies for Absence</b> Cllr Murfitt due to a prior commitment, accepted.
8976	<b>Declarations of Interest and Dispensations to Participate</b> None.
8977	<b>Minutes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The minutes of a meeting of a meeting of the Council held on <b>24<sup>th</sup> July 2024</b> were approved for accuracy and adopted (proposed Cllr Hitchins, seconded Cllr Lund).</li> <li>b) To consider any matters arising from the above meetings (if any): None.</li> </ul>
8978	<b>Parish Council Vacancies</b> Members considered commencing the process to co-opt parish councillors for current PC vacancies (Co-option Procedure previously circulated). The Clerk reported that Somerset Council had now been able to confirm that no election had been called in respect of the two casual vacancies. Following debate, it was resolved to proceed with co-option, advertise the process in the Parish News and to add this as an agenda item for the September PC meeting. (proposed Cllr Hasell, seconded Cllr Fox). Interested parties were invited to contact either the Chairman or the Parish Clerk.
8979	<b>Planning Applications, Appeals and Consultations</b>  <b>2024/1154/AGR</b> - Mount Pleasant Farm Wells Road Norton St Philip Somerset - Application for prior notification of an agricultural development: proposed farm track – Notification only.  <b>2024/1256/FUL</b> - Land At Mount Pleasant Farm Norton St Phillip Bath Somerset - Installation of 50m of access track crossing an existing Class 4 Right of Way.  <b>2024/1255/FUL</b> - Land At 377084 155964 Ringwell Lane Norton St Philip Frome - Surfacing of existing Ringwell Lane access with associated works.

On the advice of the Case Officer the Council considered the above three applications together and following debate, it was resolved to Object to the applications on the below grounds (proposed Cllr Hasell, seconded Cllr Lund):

During the public participation session the PC had heard from several parish residents of their concerns about the above applications. The applicant's agent also attended and answered questions from parish councillors and residents. As all three applications seek to achieve a single purpose- the construction of an agricultural track between Mount Pleasant Farm and Ringwell Lane- the PC requests that the LPA treat its comment as common to these three applications.

The PC has concerns over the following:

**1) Landscape impact.**

The site is highly visible in views from the village as can be seen in the photographs included below (*photographs not included here in minutes, available on request*) which show, for indicative purposes only, the route of the proposed track as seen from two points in the village. The potentially harmful visual impact on the landscape was raised with the applicant at the site visit. Mitigation by means of tree and hedge planting was referenced by the applicant but this is not included in the application.

**2) Impact on biodiversity of the proposals.**

The proposed track is approx. 900m long and along its length is composed of two 1m wide stone tracks; a total area of approx. 1800sq meters. No mitigation is proposed for the loss of this grassland.

**3) Composition of proposed track.**

The sectional plans submitted show the proposed track being raised above the existing ground level by up to approx. 300mm and laid on an unidentified base. The PC assumes that this base is hardcore. The central section is a maximum 100mm deep "grass strip" laid on top of the hardcore base.

**4) Disruption to public access on PROW FR 11/26 & FR 11/37**

The proposed track crosses both of these PROWs. Drawing 020-039 refers to an existing track to the south of the byway. The PC suggests that any tracks are as a result of vehicle movements and that no track presently exists in either of the fields bordering the byway. The PC notes that the Council's Rights of Way Officer has been consulted on 2024/1255 and 1256 but not 2024/1154 and requests that the Officer is also consulted on this application.

**5) Materials proposed for the surfacing of the existing Ringwell Lane access**

Following concerns raised by the PC and neighbours, the applicant amended the proposed surface from concrete blocks to stone/gravel. The PC has seen the Highways subsequent

comment dated 6th August requesting *“The first 12 metres of the access will need to be a tarmac surface layer..... An amended drawing to show this is required.”* The PC would oppose any such proposal as being inappropriate and out of keeping with the rural nature of the access. At the PC meeting the applicant’s agent confirmed that they would not support tarmac.

#### **6) Potential impact on Ringwell Lane**

This is a very peaceful rural single track lane within the Conservation Area. It is unsuitable for large vehicles and is not serviced by the standard refuse/recycling vehicles. Any large vehicle using the access may result in damage to both the ancient drystone walls and verge/vegetation along the lane.

The access onto Ringwell Lane is on a 90 degree bend where visibility is restricted. The lane is much used by walkers, riders and cyclists. Increased traffic, particularly by large vehicles, would inhibit these activities. Furthermore there is no footway on that narrow section of the lane with little or no space for people to move out of the way of vehicles.

#### **Summary**

The Agricultural Justification Statement submitted with the application describes the farming operation and purpose of the proposed track as to *“effectively create an agricultural ‘spine road’ across the length of the farm and will greatly reduce vehicle movements”*. It also notes that *“As it stands, the farm relies entirely on a single point of access to the public highway through the main gate at the southernmost point”*. The penultimate paragraph of the statement refers to *“Creating the road and enlarging the second access will also allow separation of farm vehicles away from non-farm vehicles using the main gate...”*. The PC understands that the agricultural access already exists;

indeed it was used as such for many years by the previous owner. The application does not propose enlarging this access. This, together with the constraints of the narrow lane limits its suitability to small vehicles. Yet the intended use is for farm vehicles. The PC supported previous applications by the same applicant for diversification of the farm including both the creation of workspaces and holiday lets (2020/2516 and 2021/2629). These had potential benefits for the local economy; however the PC understands that to date the work spaces have not been completed or let. At the time of those applications, Highways raised no objection to the increased use of the access to Mount Pleasant Farm from the A366. This had previously been significantly altered to provide safer access and better visibility splays (2014/2619). The separation of farm vehicles from non-farm vehicles was not raised at the time of those applications.

For the reasons given above, the PC **objects** to these applications.

**2024/1140/FUL** - Land At Brownshutters Farm Farleigh Road Norton St Philip Bath - Creation of 5.no fishing lakes, nature conservation & wildlife areas, the construction of an acoustic bund and a new access track with associated parking. Members noted that the PC had been

granted an extension for the submission of its comments on this application and this would therefore be deferred to the September meeting for decision. It was confirmed that a site meeting with the applicant had been set for 20<sup>th</sup> August 2024.

**2024/1295/VRC** - Valley View Bath Road Norton St Philip Frome Somerset - Variation of condition 2 (Plans List) on consent 2022/0843/HSE (Construction of ground floor and lower ground floor rear extension, new car port and replacement side extension) – Support on the grounds listed below (proposed Cllr Fox, seconded Cllr Hitchins):

This application is to vary the conditions of two previously approved applications to enable changes to be made to the design: a reduction in overall rear extent; removal of an external staircase; replacement of a glass balustrade with timber clad fencing and minor alterations to fenestration. The application is to reduce the extent of the projection to the rear and to improve the design of the two original approved applications. The Parish Council **supports** the application.

**2024/1342/TCA** – Church Farm House, Church Street Norton St Philip - Works/Felling Trees in a CA – Notification only; noted.

**2024/1369/TCA** - The Old Coach House Bath Road Norton St Philip Frome - Works/Felling Trees in a CA – Notification only; noted.

**Premises Licence application - MotoX Vets Event September 2024**

*At this point Standing Orders were suspended in order to enable a resident of Farleigh Hungerford to address the Council (proposed Cllr Hasell, seconded Cllr Lund).*

Mr Rex Eastment updated members on the current status of the application, reporting that he had been informed that Iford Estate’s Manager would be meeting with the event organisers to discuss the detail of the application. This being the case, Somerset Council was due to be approached by the applicant to ask for determination of the application to be delayed to allow for any revisions to be submitted post the meeting with Iford Estate. Members noted this new information and received background and clarification from Mr Eastment as to the expansions for the event contained in the new application, detail of historic events and the concerns of local residents regarding the new proposed arrangements.

Members discussed the information and the application, noting the strict criteria for raising any objections to the application given that the licensing regime was a generally permissive one. Following debate, it was agreed that the Council did not have the final information required in order to reach a decision however, members agreed to contact the Case Officer to state this, request updates on the progress of the application and confirm that the Council would liaise with residents to monitor the impact of the 2024 event. Mr Eastment reported that he and another resident had been invited to attend the meeting with Iford Estate and the event organiser and the Chairman offered to attend if this would be useful.

*At this point Standing Orders were reinstated.*

	<p>To receive and consider planning applications received after the issue of the agenda (<i>where the response time fell outside of the meeting schedule and an extension could not be obtained</i>) – None.</p>																		
8980	<p><b>Financials</b> Council payments due as listed were approved (proposed Cllr Fox, seconded Cllr Hitchins):</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="435 566 1485 1066"> <tr> <td data-bbox="435 566 852 647">N Duke</td> <td data-bbox="852 566 1329 647">Expenses August 2024 LGA 1972 s 112</td> <td data-bbox="1329 566 1485 647">£72.38</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="435 647 852 728">Somerset Council Pension Fund</td> <td data-bbox="852 647 1329 728">Pension contributions July LGA 1972 s 112</td> <td data-bbox="1329 647 1485 728">£367.18</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="435 728 852 808">HMRC</td> <td data-bbox="852 728 1329 808">PAYE/NI July LGA 1972 s 112</td> <td data-bbox="1329 728 1485 808">£139.08</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="435 808 852 889">J L Bryant</td> <td data-bbox="852 808 1329 889">CMC bin emptying April – June Litter Act 1983 ss 5,6</td> <td data-bbox="1329 808 1485 889">£625.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="435 889 852 969">Cllr Hitchins</td> <td data-bbox="852 889 1329 969">Reimburse Survey Monkey NP LGA 1972 s 111</td> <td data-bbox="1329 889 1485 969">£75.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="435 969 852 1066">Gooding Accounts</td> <td data-bbox="852 969 1329 1066">Payroll fee July 2024 LGA 1972 s 112</td> <td data-bbox="1329 969 1485 1066">£20.00</td> </tr> </table>	N Duke	Expenses August 2024 LGA 1972 s 112	£72.38	Somerset Council Pension Fund	Pension contributions July LGA 1972 s 112	£367.18	HMRC	PAYE/NI July LGA 1972 s 112	£139.08	J L Bryant	CMC bin emptying April – June Litter Act 1983 ss 5,6	£625.00	Cllr Hitchins	Reimburse Survey Monkey NP LGA 1972 s 111	£75.00	Gooding Accounts	Payroll fee July 2024 LGA 1972 s 112	£20.00
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8981	<p><b>Neighbourhood Plan for Norton St Philip</b> Members received a report from Cllr Hitchins and considered the schedule of amendments to the Neighbourhood Plan, the HRA and SEA reports and discussed the dates for the Regulation 14 consultation. Cllr Hitchins reported the following:</p> <p><i>At the February meeting the PC resolved to make amendments to the draft Plan as a result of representations made by residents and landowners during the 2023 Regulation 14 consultation. Those amendments included the deletion of the proposed policy designating Local Green Spaces in the village and its replacement with a policy identifying important green spaces.</i></p> <p><i>It also referenced the need for amendments as a result of the requirement for both a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Shadow Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).</i></p> <p><i>Both these reports have now been received and agreed with Somerset Council.</i></p> <p><i>With the addition of a reference to the Bats Special Areas of Conservation in the Bell Hill Garage development policy the HRA concluded that the Neighbourhood Plan would not result in a Likely Significant Effect on any Habitat site, either alone or ‘in-combination’ with other projects or plans.</i></p>																		

	<p><i>The SEA concluded that neutral or positive effects were likely over the SEA topics, with the exception of the ‘Landscape’ objective where uncertain minor negative effects were possible as a result of Policy 5 (Exception Sites). It considered however that existing local and national planning policy should safeguard against unsustainable development in the open countryside.</i></p> <p><i>The previously agreed and additional amendments are on the hard copies available at the meeting and on the NP website. The proposed amendments reflect not only these reports but also a restructuring of the NP. This splits the original policy 1 into 2, the new policy 1 relating to development within the settlement boundary, the new policy 2 to development outside of the boundary (including the green belt). A new policy 3 introduces the Housing policies, clarifying that housing development proposals will only be supported where they comply with all other relevant policies in both the neighbourhood and Local Plans. Policies 4 to 8 are the housing development policies.</i></p> <p><i>Policy 7 replaces LGS designations with the identification of 16 sites as “Important Greenspaces”. These include all 6 designated OALSs and the further sites identified in MDC’s Greenspace SPD. The proposed policy is that these sites all “make an important contribution to the Green Infrastructure and to the character of the historic village of Norton St. Philip and will be safeguarded and protected through this Plan.</i></p> <p><i>Proposals for new development should have regard to and, where possible, seek to enhance the identified Important Green Spaces in the village, and take account of the relevant policies in this Plan and the adopted Mendip Local Plan, the guidance in Supplementary Planning Documents and Natural England’s guidance on “Principles of Green Infrastructure”.</i></p> <p><i>A new policy 9 commits the PC to monitor and review the plan as required.</i></p> <p><i>Subject to the PC’s approval this evening, the amended NP, SEA, HRA and addendum to the Consultation Report will be available on the NP website by the end of the week. These will be published for Consultation purposes and a 6 week consultation period will be required for residents and other interested parties to make representations.</i></p> <p>Following debate, the Council resolved the following (proposed Cllr Hasell, seconded Cllr Lund):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To approve the Neighbourhood Plan in its new 99 page format</li> <li>2. To agree the schedule of amendments</li> <li>3. To approve the HRA, SEA and Character Assessment</li> <li>4. To approve the addendum to the Consultation Statement</li> <li>5. To proceed to Regulation 14 consultation; to run from 30<sup>th</sup> August 2024 to 18.00 on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2024</li> </ol>
8982	<p><b>Parish News</b></p> <p>The below items were agreed for inclusion in the next edition of Parish News:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-option procedure for new parish councillors</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress on the Neighbourhood Plan and survey flyers</li> <li>• Information on the September Hearings for planning appeals relating to proposed development at Fortescue Fields</li> <li>• Update on planning applications</li> </ul>
8983	<p><b>Meeting schedule</b> Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> September 2024 – Palairet Hall.</p>

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 8.28 pm.