

**Chairman's Report for Norton St Philip Parish Council Meeting 10.6.26
Held at Farleigh-Hungerford School Room**

Permissive Pathway alongside the A366 at Farleigh-Hungerford

On 14 May CM emailed William & Marianne Cartwright-Hignett with an update on the site meeting held for the proposed permissive pathway inside the old wall bordering the A366 between the Castle and the mouth of Tellisford lane.

That meeting was held with the PRow officer Daniel Gordon, the architect employed by the current owners of the Hungerford Arms as well as Ian Hasel, George, Val and I .

George had subsequently obtained a quote from Jo Leber a stonemason in NSP who is willing to make an opening in the wall and install a timber kissing gate set in from the road.

Daniel Gordon has also confirmed his department have the timber and finger posts ready and available for collection which his department are happy to fund.

William Cartwright-Hignet replied to say he would appreciate walking the proposed route with the PC and dates were exchanged for this, however on 26 May he responded by adding that

"I think we were going to meet once it was clear that County Council Highways were happy with the idea of a new opening, and that there was no issue with Planning / Listed Buildings – did you manage to get a written view on that? I ask, because as landowner I would be on the hook in the first instance were there to be a planning concern raised. Once we know that there is a clear path ahead, then it makes sense to meet on site and agree the route, which can then be drawn up and documented, and the necessary applications put in I think."

Stephen Tompstone (Iford Estate Manager) also added his thoughts:

"I would say the stone wall is curtilage listed & as such a heritage asset - it's next to the Castle & even closer to the GII Listed ex pub building

My historic correspondence with the EH land agent for the Castle site (on wall repairs the Estate had undertaken on the car park side) acknowledged this, so certainly worth you getting Council/ EH confirmation first up on any works proposed.

Secondly I think in my experience a new opening in a stone wall onto an "A" road will require permission and via the usual safety sight lines test & design drawings reports for SCC Highways to approve etc.

SCC could be consulted by you/PC as you suggest with accurate drawings via a pre app maybe .. ??"

Although letters had previously been e-mailed from myself and Dawn Denton to Conservation/Planning back in March, they have yielded no response to date.

On 2 June Nikki accordingly sent further formal letters on behalf of the PC to Highways and to the Planning Department asking them to let the PC know if they wish to make any comments upon the proposed plan.

Nikki also contacted Daniel Gordon as he works at an adjacent desk to the current conservation officer. His response (received on 6 June) is that:

“I have asked conservation , planning, but also highway regarding the proposal. I have re-chased and they are pulling together a response, I don’t know when it will be.”

I am unsure at the time of writing whether any other response has been received from Highways or Planning in response to the PC email of 2.6.26?

Steps and Dog-bins around Fortesque Fields

On 27 April Lesley Baker who is the chair of the Fortesque Fields Manco emailed the PC to ask if we could fund the provision of two dog-waster bins and

“contribute to the maintenance and upkeep of the steps from Fortescue Street to The Mead as this is in constant use and is very difficult to manoeuvre for wheelchair users and pushchairs. Our suggestion would be to have a zig zag slope - then flat area with handrails alternating on the left and right across the pathway”.

Nikki sent a tactful response to this on 4 June Clarifying that

“the Parish Council understands the issues identified, (but) it has no statutory powers or obligations in relation to the maintenance of privately owned land and is therefore unable to assume responsibility for the provision and servicing of dog waste bins or to undertake maintenance and improvement works within the development.

That said, the Parish Council is keen to support residents where it can. Subject to the Council's grants policy and the availability of funds, the Council would be willing to consider an application for a grant towards the purchase of dog waste bins for the area. Any such proposal would, of course, require the permission of the landowner before bins could be installed on private land, and any application would need to be accompanied by suitable arrangements for the siting, ownership, maintenance and emptying of the bins.

In addition, if residents or the management company believe it would be helpful, the Parish Council would be happy to facilitate discussions with the landowner and other interested parties regarding the concerns raised and to explore whether mutually agreeable solutions can be identified.

She also added that in the light of the

“recent planning application (2025/1515). Should that application be successful, it is anticipated that these works may address some of the accessibility concerns raised. In light of this, the Council considers it sensible to revisit this matter once the outcome of the planning application is known and the implications for the footpath can be fully assessed.”

Lesley has acknowledged this and will revert on the grants issue after her next Manco meeting

SCRAPP (Somerset Communities Raging against Poor Planning)

On 9 6.26 an email was received from Emma Snead Treasurer of SCRAPP inviting the PC to vote on whether it wishes to join the SCRAPP group and providing bank details for the £150 annual subscription if so.

The PC needs to consider if it wishes to help directly fund SCRAPPs activities and support our local communities in Somerset in this way.

Personally, I think the contribution is probably worthwhile and modest. That said, the last meeting attended by CM, Ian Hasel and Barbie generated more heat than light. Overall, it is probable that NSPCC has more to give than to gain in terms of experience in dealing with planning issues.