



Correspondence address: c/o Andrew Bramston, Chair
Orr Farm, Chantry BA11 3LJ

**Minutes of Whatley Parish Council
Held on Wednesday 10th January 2024 at 7:00pm
at Holy Trinity Church, Chantry**

15 January 2024

Member Present:

Councillor Andrew Bramston (Chair)
Councillor Richard Evans
Councillor Will Palmer

Councillor Colin Boorer
Councillor Jon Scott

Officers Present: None

Somerset County Officers present: Cllr Barry Clarke

Chantry residents were also in attendance along with Mr Mark Reynolds from Context Planning Ltd representing the developer responsible for the planning application at Orcadia Farm.

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- 012024.1 Current Chairs Welcome**
The meeting was reconvened to Holy Trinity Church Chantry, due to building works at St Georges, Whatley.
- 012024.2 Apologies for absence:**
Apologies received from Rachel Nash, Clerk & Cllr Philip Ham
- 012024.3 Declaration of Councillors' interests and requests for dispensation:**
To declare any interests relating to the business of the meeting and receive any dispensation requests from the Clerk (Localism Act 2011 s29-34)
None received
- 012024.4 Approval of Minutes of the previous meeting held on 8th November 2023.**
Signed and dated by the Chair as a correct representation of the meeting.
- 012024.5 Somerset County Councillors' report**
Cllr Clarke gave a verbal update to the Council including update on Somerset Council. The issue of the budget deficit remain the key problem and actions proposed are to reduce services, sell assets, and increase rates. Somerset Council are interested in Town and Parish Councils to take on more local services, but there is no indication that funds would be available to facilitate this.

Somerset Council are making changes to Waste collection and recycling. It is possible the dates for collections will change later in the year. Also, residents will be able to dispose of household DIY / hardcore waste free of charge. Details are available on the council website.

012024.6 Public Participation relating to meeting agenda items
See under Planning

012024.7 Presentation from external organisations:
See under Planning

012024.8 Clerks Report
The Clerk provided a report that was duly noted:

012024.9 Finance: (Responsible Finance Officer)
It was resolved that the Council approved

- Payment of the invoices
- Reimbursement of Cllr Bramston expenses, which have been passed to the clerk
- To raise the precept in line with other local councils by 5.65%

012024.10 Roles & Responsibilities

It was resolved that the Council agreed to the following:

The following roles and responsibilities be allocated to the councillors

Cllr Boorer – Local Farmers liaison
Cllr Scott – Roads and Highways liaison
Cllr Evans – Chantry Village liaison
Cllr Palmer – Whatley Village liaison
Cllr Bramston – Quarry liaison

Ellie Swinhoe has volunteered to be the Communication liaison person, and take responsibility for the website and social media. She is invited to Join the council, being co-opted if she is willing to assume this. This will be formalised at the next meeting.

Councillors Evans and Palmer will respectively take on the roles of Local Business liaison for Chantry and Whatley.

In the future meetings each councillor will report to the council on each of these areas and they will be included on the agenda.

012024.11 Planning Applications

Planning application 2023 /2237/ PAA

A planning application was lodged with Somerset Council effectively amending the previous approval for a barn conversion to 2 dwellings at Orcadia Farm to be amended to now be 5 dwellings.

The building and surrounding land has been sold to a developer, Alan Jones, and consequently the change to the original planning application.

Whatley Parish council was not informed of the proposal, although several residents contacted the council concerned about it, having received a letter from Somerset Planning requiring comments before 26th December.

The Parish Council contacted Somerset Planning and obtained an extension to the deadline until after the next parish council meeting where the application would be discussed (10 Jan 24)

Mr Reynolds, from Context Planning Ltd representing the developer responsible for the planning application at Orcadia Farm, explained the Class Q legal planning process that allows the conversion of agricultural buildings to dwelling-houses. The size of the barn would permit 5 dwelling houses to be constructed within the existing steel frame. Each 4 bedroomed single story dwelling being approx. 93 sq meters.

Residents' concerns can be summarised as follows –

Access – via Mells Lane, the lane is quiet, and narrow and used by walkers and horse riders and occasional agricultural vehicles. 5 dwellings would add considerably more traffic to this lane. The lane is not practical to be used by construction traffic . The lane is a link from the village to the Bridleway and East Mendip way.

Drainage / Sewage – The nature of the land – shallow layer of topsoil and clay over limestone bedrock makes drainage complex. There is no mains sewer present in the village.

Proximity to Whatley Quarry the proposed development site is within 400 meters of a large working quarry. The impact of vibrations from blasting should be considered as to whether adapting an agricultural building for residential purposes is appropriate.

The design and appearance of the proposed conversion is not in keeping with the rural character of Chantry.

Overall, the view of residents, and the Parish Council is that the proposal based on the class Q adaptation of a single barn in its current form is not acceptable.

Moreover, we are concerned the proposal is incomplete given the context of the total land and buildings existing on the site. Whatley Parish Council have requested that the developer outline a strategic plan for the whole site that can enhance the small village of Chantry. The issues of Access via Mells lane / traffic and the Drainage / sewage can be better addressed in a holistic manner and the Parish council would be supportive and available to assist with such an approach.

012024.12 Council Emails

Resolved that the Clerk progress with the proposal to have separate email addresses for the councillors.

012024.12 WCGT Update

No update received

012024.14 Update on Quarry Liaison Meeting

Quarry liaison – There will be a liaison meeting with Hanson next week. Cllrs Bramston and Evans on behalf of the Council. Cllr Bramston to contact Halecombe Quarry to represent Whatley Parish on their liaison committee.

Hanson have distributed a letter to residents informing them of the decision to put on hold the plan to use Asham Void as part of the Westdown application. Residents are invited to a drop in meeting next week.

012024.15 Update regarding Village Planning

Cllr Evans is contacting the owners of the waste land opposite Bird Shadows, to establish if they would agree for the land to be restored as a parish garden. It was formerly used as a vegetable garden for Chantry. The land was sold off some years ago and has is now overgrown.

012024.16 Items for next Agenda / Items to Report

Nothing specific was added

012024.27 Date and venue of Next Meeting

Wednesday 13th March at 7:00pm in Holy Trinity Church, Chantry.

012024.18 Exclusion of press and public

None required