

Haselbury Plucknett Monthly Parish Council Meeting
held at 7.00pm on Monday 12th July 2021 at the Bible Christian Centre in Haselbury Plucknett

Present - Cllrs, C Simmonds (Chairman), M Rendall, B Atherton, J Prunty, H Williams, J Farrant, D Whitmarsh, R Bourne and L Gibbons (Parish Clerk)

Members of the public present: Two

Open session: The amount of Dog Poo left around the village was raised again.

- 1. Apologies for absence:** Cllr M Bryant, D Cllr O Patrick and CCllr M Keating.
- 2. Record of business of last Month 14/06/2021:** Approved and will be signed as a true and proper record.
- 3. Matters Arising - None**
- 4. Declaration of Interest:** None
- 5. D Cllr O Patrick's Report:** As circulated

C Cllr M Keating's Report: As circulated. Questions were asked about the works at Swan Hill. Rather than the 19-day closure publicised, work took less than two days. It is unclear what work was actually done and how this work could have cost the many thousands of pounds that we were told it was costing. LG to ask MK for further information.

All help and information is now available in a single place on the SCC website <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/coronavirus/covid-19-latest-advice/>

6. Planning:

a) Planning Applications: 21/01148/HOU - 5 Petvins Court Claycastle – The Erection of a garden room and shed. The Parish Council has no objections to this application.

b) Planning Applications received after publication of agenda: None

c) Planning applications considered prior to this meeting: 21/01659/FUL. Land at Claycastle, Haselbury Plucknett. Erection of 3 houses. The following response was submitted -

Thank you for your e-mail message of 11th June 2021 with the link to the above Valid Planning Application in the Parrett Ward, and for giving the Parish Council the opportunity to comment on the proposals.

The Applicant, Mr Cox, and his Agent, Mr Vincent of Graham Vincent Architecture, kindly agreed to meet with members of the Parish Council on site on 23rd June to discuss the present plans and application. As a result of that meeting, we understand that the Agent will be amending and re-submitting certain elements of the proposals, and we will comment on these when they become available. However, in order to adhere to the 2nd July cut-off date for comments as noted in your original message, we would draw the following matters to your attention, and ask that you take them into consideration in your own appraisal work, and in any subsequent conversations that you may have with the Applicant or his Agent.

A particular concern of the Parish Council is that drawing 19-449-01 shows additional land, outlined in blue, in the same Ownership as the Application site, but not the subject of this present Application. We fear that if consent is granted on this occasion there will be a risk of further backland development that would ultimately link with properties in Castleton to the west of the Applicant's land and irrevocably alter the character of this area of the village.

In this respect, however, we would draw to your attention the fact that our own enquiries to HM Land Registry reveal that presently they hold no records in respect of the Property area outlined in red on the Application drawings, and that no registered estate, caution against first registration or application for first registration or application for a

caution against first registration is shown on the index map in relation to the Property. We would ask that this important detail of the present Ownership of the site is determined before the Application is allowed to progress.

The Design and Access Statement for the proposals contends that the *'development is arranged to reproduce a farm setting similar to several others along the road'*. There are no such similar configurations of buildings in Claycastle. The only possible contender for such a description is the Applicant's own dwelling, being a converted barn once within the curtilage of Claycastle Farmhouse, but the scale and form of this sensitively refurbished old building bears no relationship to the widely spaced estate style houses that are proposed here. The development would, instead, be an incongruous addition to the existing village, completely outside the established development area of both the Adopted SSDC 2006 and the 2006-2028 Local Plans and uncomfortably positioned at right angles to the otherwise linear development of the road.

The Design and Access Statement states that SSDC cannot demonstrate an adequate 5-year supply of land for housing and seeks to justify the NPPF assertion that *'policies limiting development'* are out of date. This is factually incorrect, and Information published by SSDC in November of 2020, [supported by a spreadsheet matrix of named sites and projects], confirms that the Council can now demonstrate a supply of land on *'specific deliverable sites'*, in excess of a six-year projection. The SSDC report further notes that the requirement for rural housing has already been accommodated.

Policy SS2 of the SSDC Local Plan cited by the Applicant's Agent stipulates the need for strict control of development in rural settlements, and specifically limits its scope to those proposals that: -

- Provide employment opportunities appropriate to the scale of the settlement; and/or
- Create or enhance community facilities and services to serve the settlement; and/or
- Meet identified housing need, particularly for affordable housing.

The proposals set out here would not fulfil any of these requirements, and furthermore, proposals to be considered under SS2 are required to be consistent with relevant community led plans, and should generally have the support of the local community following robust engagement and consultation. While the Parish Council acknowledge the recent site conversations with the Agent, we feel that earlier engagement, and reference to our own 2014 Village Plan would have been more helpful.

The current guidance notes to Developers from SSDC is, *'that full weight can again be attributed to policy SS2'*, and on this basis we believe that there is no justification to permit the development of the site.

The Design and Access Statement notes that the proposed access to the site will be from Claycastle, and drawing 19-449-28 contends that adequate vision splays can be achieved from the intended egress position onto the road. However, the drawing appears to show the vision splays to have been taken from the carriageway edge rather than from a point 2.4m back from the tangent point as specified in the *'Manual For Streets'*. When correctly measured, and plotted on the topographical survey of Claycastle belonging to the Parish Council, it is clear that the 2.4m x 43m vision splays cannot be achieved. To the west, the vision is restricted at a distance of 32m by the blind bend in front of the next property, *'Brooklyn'*, and to the east, vision is almost completely obscured at this time of year by the growth of vegetation along the bank of the Small Brook.

In this regard we are concerned to note that the Document posted on the Planning Portal from Mr Garland, the Principal Planning Liaison Officer for the Traffic & Transport Development Group of Somerset County Council, proposes the Condition that *'There shall be no obstruction to visibility greater than 600 millimetres above adjoining road level in advance of lines drawn 2.4 metres back from the carriageway edge on the centre line of the access and extending to points on the nearside carriageway edge 43 metres either side of the access.'* This is simply not attainable, since the land affected is not in the Applicant's ownership, neither would it be legal since the vegetation at the side of the Small Brook is the habitat of the Water Vole, a protected species.

The Agent's drawing of the site access indicates that the bellmouth to the entrance will extend for a length of approximately 14 to 15 metres along the edge of the highway to Claycastle. There is no doubt that such a length will

be needed in order to accommodate the swept path of large vehicles entering and leaving the site, and this, in turn, will dictate the need for a substantial bridge or culvert structure over/in the Small Brook.

Construction traffic itself, and then routine traffic of removal lorries, fuel oil delivery vehicles, refuse collection vehicles and fire engine tender access will impose high vertical loads at the crossing point and the vertical surcharge will also create corresponding lateral forces at the approaches that will further damage the already weakened conditions of the verges adjacent to the Small Brook.

In Section 11 of the Planning Application form the Applicant's Agent has stated that the site is not in an area at risk of flooding. This is a seriously misleading statement as the entire length of Claycastle from the proposed entrance to the subject site to the entrance of Bay Tree Farm, some 120m to the east is known to flood regularly, [most recently on 17th May this year]. The information is clearly shown as a high risk area on the Environment Agency surface water flood risk mapping.

The bend in the road at the proposed site entrance is a low point, coinciding with where the course and flow direction of the Small Brook changes from East-West to due North, and where upstream flow restrictions in the watercourse cause it to back up, often submerging the entire width of the road to a depth of more than 300mm. Under these conditions the course of the Small Brook becomes indistinguishable, creating a hazard for motorists as they negotiate the bends on this section of the road.

Without very significant remodelling of the vertical alignment of the carriageway, it is not possible to see how the bridge access to the site could be maintained above the known flood levels, or alternatively, if present road levels are maintained, how the crossing structure itself can be prevented from becoming a further hydraulic impediment to the flow of water.

The present submission takes no account of these important factors, and while it might reasonably be assumed that land on the Applicant's side of the Small Brook falls under his riparian ownership, there do not appear to be any details of the land ownership on the side of the highway to ascertain if the Owner of that land will consent to such significant civil engineering works being undertaken.

We are of the opinion that this calls into question the viability of forming an access to the site at this location, and until full hydraulic and civil engineering proposals are put forward and approved by the Highway Authority, the Application should not be permitted. It would be misleading to allow the development site to come to market without this significant constraint being fully resolved.

Drainage proposals for the site itself are not sufficiently developed. Drawing 19-449-04 shows a connection being made for the foul water discharges from the site *'to existing mains drainage system'*. However, no such piped foul water drainage system exists in this part of Claycastle, and the Wessex Water Asset Data plan for the area notes that the nearest available gravity connection would be close to Tarqua House, approximately 130m to the west of the site. Consequently, the development will require individual 'Klargester' type installations for each dwelling or a private pumping station with a wet-well holding tank and a pumped rising main taken up the road to the gravity connection. The use of individual installations will require further investigation into the viability of soakaway infiltration drainage, [as also noted for the surface water run-off]. Claycastle is named as such with good reason and the near surface deposits of Fullers Earth clay are notoriously impermeable.

We believe that the Applicant's Agent should undertake a more comprehensive appraisal of the Flood Risks to the site, which should include identifying a safe 'dry-route' for residents to leave their dwellings in the case that the main access to the site is flooded. At present, the Application document notes, at section 8, that no new public rights of way or footpaths are to be provided within the site, although this statement is at variance with that given in paragraph 5 of the Design and Access Statement. However, it should be borne in mind that existing footpaths are frequently muddy, they require traversing stiles and they cross uneven ground through fields that are occupied by agricultural stock. They are not always usable by the elderly, the infirm or parents carrying young children and as such would not be a suitable route to be used in an emergency.

The Agent's drawings presently contain no details of the topography of the site, but, standing at the proposed entrance location, the existing ground rises gently to the north and to the east, [thus draining towards the course of the Small Brook on the western boundary of the lower part of the site and then to the southern and western boundaries of the Applicant's other land as edged in blue on the location plan].

Although the proposed access road on the site is unlikely to be suitable to be offered for adoption, the increased impermeable area will exacerbate surface water runoff towards the south. No details have been given as to how these flows will be intercepted and prevented from adding to the known flood risk on the highway at the proposed entrance to the site.

The Application makes no reference to the control, attenuation or off-setting of phosphates into the water courses around the site. While the drawings presently indicate the proposed use of soakaway drainage, the significant increase in the impermeable area will inevitably lead to increased flows into the Small Brook so the 'Phosphate Calculator' on the SSDC web-site should be consulted to assess the required attenuation or off-setting measures that are required.

The Location plan, 19-449-01, and Existing Site Plan, 19-449-02, both show the subject site as a single area, outlined in red. The Proposed Site Plan, 19-449-03, however, indicates a sub-division of the site into four smaller areas, three containing the individual plots of the proposed dwellings and a fourth area containing the access road and the proposed Ecology Plan area as shown on drawing 19-449-29. It is unlikely that the geometry of the access road will be suitable for adoption by the Local Highway Authority so we believe that there needs to be some clarification of the future ownership, and liability for maintenance of the access road and the ecology area.

The Proposed Ecology Plan, drawing 19-449-29, also indicates a 3m wide Exclusion Zone running parallel with the eastern boundary of the site, to '*allow for animal passage*'. The Architectural drawing does not make clear how such an exclusion will be implemented, nor how it can be enforced in the longer term. In the case of the central plot shown on the layouts, a 3m zone is effectively half of the rear garden of the proposed dwelling and it is difficult to believe that an Owner would be prepared to accept such a constraint if it effectively precludes activities such as erecting a garden shed or greenhouse.

The eastern boundary of the site is densely vegetated at present with a mix of large deciduous trees, and mature hedging, nearly all of which is planted on the application site side of the boundary. Members of the Parish Council visited the site in the morning close to the longest day of the year, but the area of the land near to the boundary was deeply shaded and we are concerned that the Developer of the site and future residents will seek to remove the trees to enhance the light levels and distant views at the rear of the new dwellings.

There is presently some localised die-back on a few of the Ash Trees, [*Fraxinus excelsior*], along the eastern boundary, and we are concerned that inappropriate pre-emptive felling and removal of trees might be carried out in order to improve the levels of natural light to the proposed dwellings. Forest Research and Defra both presently advise against a general presumption of felling infected trees unless there are over-riding considerations to protect the safety of the public. In section 10 of the Planning Application, the Agent has confirmed the presence and importance of the trees on the site and we believe that the Application should not be allowed to proceed until a full survey in accordance with BS5837: Trees in relation to Design, Demolition and Construction, has been undertaken.

For the reasons outlined above, Haselbury Plucknett Parish Council OBJECT to the current proposals, although as noted above we will be pleased to consider amendments if these are submitted to the District Council by the Applicant's Agent.

d) Decisions received: None

7. Finance:

a) Invoices for payment: All payments were approved:

SSDC	Ranger May	£372.96
Phil Lilley	Website Renewal fee	£35.00

K M Dike	Grass, May & June	£288.00
Jim Farrant	Climbing Frame repair	£219.94
L Gibbons	Clerk salary/expenses	£265.05
B Atherton	Paint for park re-painting	£168.88

b) Bank reconciliation: Was agreed.

8. **The Park: Safety checks:** BA has circulated the safety checklist. The paint needed for the re-painting of park equipment has now arrived. BA brought a list of the individual pieces of equipment that require painting. Councillors agree that the best approach was to work on one piece of equipment at a time. He asked for volunteers to help him undertake the work. The Ranger will also carry out some of the work. LG advised that a risk assessment should be completed prior to the work commencing in order to comply with our public liability insurance. JF has completed the repair and replacement work for the top panel of the climbing wall where it had de-laminated. Photos have been circulated. This looks fantastic.
There is a tree in the park that is badly affected by Ash die back. CS/HW/JF will remove the tree on Monday 19th July.
9. **Road and Footpaths:**
 - a) **A30 Tunnel:** HW is working with OP to set up a working party to help collate evidence to make the case for action. OP has published an article in various village magazines across South Somerset, which has started to gather momentum. To date, 12 people have written in support (including the Footpath Secretary from South Somerset Ramblers, as well as the Chair of the Monarch's Way Association). 327 people have signed the Change.org petition (link below), and there is plenty of supporting evidence being submitted in the petition's comments section. OP has also been pursuing this topic further with officers at SSDC, making sure it is on their agenda, he also met with the Portfolio Holder for Finance & Legal (Cllr Peter Seib) to explore how we can achieve the aim of reopening this tunnel. He is supportive but sounded a note of caution regarding the amount of public money that this might cost.
 - b) **Roads and Highways Working Group:** A further bollard has been removed from the refuge area opposite the school. LG to chase up G Warren and MK for an update on timescales for this work as it is now beyond the Q2 2021 timescale that we were advised.
 - c) **Virtual Pavement:** C Cllr M Keating asked us at our June meeting to confirm what the PC wish to happen regarding the virtual pavement when the road is eventually resurfaced. LG referred to the e-mail from G Warren (SCC) following the meeting held with CS, PR and JF in January 2020. This stated that we wished for the virtual pavement to be re-painted. We were advised that if a colour other than buff was required, that the PC would be required to meet the cost. It was also agreed at that meeting that additional pedestrian symbols would be added. Councillors agreed that this was still what they wished to happen. LG to advise MK of this information.
 - d) **Footpath Working Group Feedback:** HW will do some cutting back of hedges on overgrown gateways. He has asked for extra signage to show the direction of footpaths where the existing signage is missing or unclear.
10. **Village Maintenance:**
 - a) **Village Ranger:** He has made a good job of tidying up Frog Lane and has strimmed along Puddletown. There are plenty of small jobs outstanding for him to carry out.
 - b) **SID:** This was still only working intermittently. JF has cleaned up the battery connections and is looking into a better battery charger. It is now working better. CS/JF are monitoring the situation.
 - c) **Tree planting in Claycastle Lane:** AS reported that plan for trees along Claycastle Lane had been given the go ahead by all parties and that the only problem might be in accessing trees and suitable equipment for this winter.
 - d) **Puddletown pavement and vegetation:** The Ranger has carried out work to tidy this area up. It now looks much better.
11. **100 Club 2021:** Tickets are selling well. The first draw will take place in September. If anyone wishes to buy one that hasn't already done so, they will need to be quick!

- 12. Haselbury in Bloom:** Judging took place on the 1st July. Initial feedback was that huge progress had been made. Adjudication is on the 7th October. The doorstep challenge will take place on 13th July.
- 13. Queen's Jubilee Celebration:** CS asked if anyone had any ideas regarding a celebration. Councillors will consider this and come back with ideas.
- 14. Correspondence:** None
- 15. Matters to report:** None
- 16. Notices Parish News:** H Sturage has asked if the PC would like to include a round-up of PC business in the parish news. BA has agreed to precis the minutes and pass them on to her.
- 17. Items for next meeting:** Social media protocol.
- 18. Next Meeting Date:** 13/09/2021 at the Bible Christian Centre at 7:00pm.