

## SANDFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting held at Sandford Parish Hall, 8.00pm, on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2024.

At a meeting of the Council held this day those present were :-

Chair – Cllr R Ward

Parish Councillors - P Larcombe, J Crooke, D Crosby, D Hope, B Fyfe, and S Miles.

L Hooper, J Stephens (arrived during the meeting), and P Sandys (part meeting).

DCC Cllr M Squires (part meeting) MDDC Cllr M Jenkins

5 Members of the Public Parish Clerk Mr M Vallance

- 1) Chairs opening remarks – The Chair welcomed everyone to the Meeting and went on to thank individual Councillors for action they had taken on behalf of the Parish Council since the last Meeting :-

Cllr Fyfe – For putting together comments on the recent revised planning application (24/00012/MARM “Libbets Grange”) to remove the “thatched roofs” for submission to MDDC Planning. **See Appendix 1**

Cllr Crooke – For his efforts to unblock the drains in “Fanny’s Lane”.

- 2) Apologies – MDDC Cllr H Tuffin SPC Cllrs Snow and Stoyle.
- 3) Declarations of Interest - None
- 4) MINUTES of the Parish Council meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2024 – These had been circulated ahead of the Meeting and were duly confirmed, and Signed by the Chair as a true and correct record.  
Proposed Cllr Sandys, 2<sup>nd</sup> Cllr Crosby and carried.

- 5) Open Forum – MDDC Cllr M Jenkins brought to the Council’s attention the latest issue at “Weavers Way”. The builders had deposited their waste on top of the “Ha Ha”.  
The Clerk agreed to take a picture and send this to the MDDC Conservation Area Officer for thier attention.

**MV**

Cllr Jenkins also reported structural issues on the Bridge at the Millennium Green and agreed to take this up with Charlie Werner.

**MV**

- 6) Matters Arising

- a) Annual Parish Meeting - This was confirmed for 21<sup>st</sup> March 2024, 7.30pm, at the Parish Hall.  
Suggested topics to discuss included future Parish Council Projects.  
It was agreed that someone from Newton St Cyres Parish Council be invited to give an update on their Neighbourhood Plan.

A proposal was made to include a 15-minute spot for both of these topics.

Proposed Cllr Sandys, 2<sup>nd</sup> D Crosby, and carried.

A proposal was also made that, whilst Parish Council Accounts would be presented it was not felt necessary for other Parish Organisations to present theirs unless it was their wish.

The Clerk would contact Sandford Relief in Need, Sandford Parish Hall, and Sandford AFC to advise them.

Proposed Cllr Ward, 2<sup>nd</sup> Cllr Stephen, and carried.

**MV/RW**

- b) Project Proposal/Community Need Form – Following the previous meeting Councillors had taken the opportunity to study this document.

It was agreed to Adopt it for future use by the Parish Council.

However, whilst the form set out Guidelines “flexibility” would be necessary depending on the type of future project.

A suggestion was made that this document could be Posted on the SPC Website ?

**MV**

c) "Weavers Way" Footpath

A very useful footpath Meeting, had taken place with Richard Spurway and Tania Weeks (DCC PROW), Sheri Noad of Bellfield, DCC Cllr M Squires and SPC Cllrs M Snow and J Stephens and B Fyfe who was thanked for supplying notes of the Meeting :-

*Richard Spurway and Tania Weeks wanted to ensure that the Furlongs footpath, a Public Right of Way, would be correctly sited upon reinstatement. That access up through to the public open space in the north west corner of Weavers Way from the PROW be correctly recorded for posterity. This will also establish the access to the attenuation ponds and surrounding areas for South West Water, Weavers Way Management Committee and the Parish Council and the Sandford Millenium Green charity on behalf of the SPC. Mr Spurling and Ms Weeks will be writing to Bellfield to confirm their expectations and record the agreements regarding the formalisation of public right of way and access. This included leaving the 2m wide footpath in good order upon completion of the works.*

*Separately, we, SPC representatives, enquired as to the support there might be expected for the enhancement of the access from Snows and the change of the footpath to shared space with bicycles. The PROW DCC had no funding available and the maintenance budget was all accounted for. The processes for change were straight forward, the funding less so.*

It was agreed to note this meeting and it follow up regarding funding at the appropriate moment.

**7) Committee and Sub-committee feedback and Review of Committees**

a) Planning Committee – No Meeting

In future a suggestion was made that the Planning Committee could meet at 7.00pm ahead of the main Parish Council Meeting,

b) Finance Committee - Meeting set for 5<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

c) During the month Cllr Miles, and Stephens, had been making arrangements for the proposed re investment of capital at Lloyds Bank to attract a higher rate.

After many phone calls, and visits to Lloyds Bank, this had finally been achieved and the following transfer of capital had taken place :-

24<sup>th</sup> January 2024 (Maturity 17<sup>th</sup> July 2024) - £20K at 3.5% 175 days term

31<sup>st</sup> January 2024 - £10K at 2.6% 32-day notice

Thanks were expressed to Cllrs Miles, and Cllr Stephens, for the time taken to make these arrangements.

d) Communications Committee – Cllrs Crosby and Sandys would travel to Dorchester, to attend a Parish Website Training (£150) to be run for them both by the SPC Website providers Vision ICT.

A suggestion had also been received from the Editor of the Crossing for a photo and a few words about each Parish Councillor for inclusion. This was agreed.

e) Play Area Committee – No Meeting

f) Projects Committee - Meeting provisionally set for 21<sup>st</sup> February 2024.

g) Staffing matters Committee - (Meeting set for 19<sup>th</sup> February 2024)

**8) Planning**

24/00012/MARM Removal of Condition 3 and Variation of Condition 1 of planning permission

22/00063/MARM - Reserved matters. to allow removal of the thatched roofs and substitute plans "Creedy Bridge" Crediton

24/00036/FULL "Roxgates" New Buildings- Erection of an agricultural livestock building

24/00071/HOUSE "Roxgates" New Buildings Erection of side garage and annexe

23/01944/FULL “Frostlands Farm” Sandford Conversion of and extension to a building to create a dwelling  
23/01612/FULL “Hollycroft Cottage” The Square Sandford Retention of DSLAM cabinet for electronic communication

**The Planning Committee would meet to discuss the current applications, and arrange Site Meetings where necessary, the Clerk would contact MDDC Planning to request a 7-day extension for the submission of comments.**

**MV**

#### **9) Items for Discussion / Proposals:**

- a) Proposal for Cllrs D Crosby and P Sandys to join the Finance Committee  
Further discussion took place on the number of Councillors needed to serve on SPC Committees, and in particular the Finance Committee.  
DALC had responded to a request for advice on this matter :-  
*There is no particular limit on the number of councillors that may sit on the committee. Committees are generally limited by the council itself and members are appointed at a set time; it may sometimes be the case that councillors who wish to sit on a committee are not appointed and are unable to do so. I'd suggest that the full council may want to review the terms of reference for the committee and fix a maximum number. When considering how large you want the committee to be, it may be worth thinking about the purpose of the committee.*  
As Numbers were not stated in the Terms of Reference it was decided to discuss this matter in May 2024. Also, to annually (in May) discuss the makeup of Committees and whether any changes or additions were needed. **MV**  
A Proposal was made to add two Signatories (Messrs M Ward and M Vallance) to the Parish Council Lloyds Bank Accounts. **MV**  
By adding the Parish Clerk this would make it easier for him, as SPC Responsible Finance Officer, to discuss Parish Council Banking matters with Lloyds Bank.  
Proposed Cllr Stephens, 2<sup>nd</sup> Cllr Crosby, and carried. **MV**
- b) Weeding 2024 – The Chair agreed to arrange a joint meeting with Steve McCulloch and Di Martin to discuss this matter. Cllr Hooper asked to be included. **RW**
- c) Grass Cutting 2024 – The Clerk would write as in previous years to obtain the necessary three quotes. In addition, it was agreed to advertise this on the Parish Facebook page “Sandford Scene”. **MV**
- d) “Weavers Way” – As reported the “ha-ha” had been covered over with earth and builders’ rubble. The Clerk was asked to report this to the MDDC Conservation Officer. **MV**  
It was pointed out that this piece of Land would form part of that coming under the responsibility of the “Weavers Way” Management Committee”

#### **10) Council Feedback**

- a. Mid Devon District Council – The “Crofts” Parking Review was underway and once drawings were available MDDC would arrange a “Drop In” event for Parishioners to attend.
- b. Devon County Council - DCC were currently dealing with issues over the Budget for Social Care, and also “School Transport”. There were currently vacancies for “Foster Parents”.
- c. Crediton Cluster Meeting – The Chair had attended this meeting and found it a useful opportunity to discuss common issues with representatives of Neighbouring Parishes. One common theme was the creation of Footpaths with a central cluster point in the Crediton area.

#### **11) Correspondence**

- a) “Kerswell Cottage” Planning” application to make an opening on the Sandford to Crediton Road – G Stephens had written to say that despite a positive response from the Clerk on his planning application the Parish Council had advised MDDC that it objected to this proposal.  
The Chair had written apologising for this response pointing out that the matter needed to be discussed and agreed by the full Parish Council.  
It was noted that details of the DCC Highways meeting to discuss this application were still not on the MDDC Planning Website.
- b) L Lever – An email had been received to say that SACA already dealt with some of the topics in the “Sandford Parish Organisations Hub” proposed by the Chair. He had replied explaining what was being proposed and advising that this would not detract from SACA pursuits.

- c) Karen Limon/Mervyn Leach – Both of these Parish Parishioners had written complaining over the dangerous icy road at the entrance to Linhay Park.  
The problem was due to water on the road 24/7 heading down the hill from “Bawdenhayes” and had been reported on numerous occasions in the past.  
The current and ongoing issue had been reported on the DCC Highways Website, the Clerk had sent some recent pictures, and DCC Cllr M Squires was now pursuing these matters. **MS**
- d) ROSPA – 2024 Safety Review – It was agreed to take up the offer for Play Area Safety Inspections for both the KG Field and “Creedy View”.  
Proposed Cllr Fyfe, 2<sup>nd</sup> Cllr Hope, and carried. **MV**
- e) John Neave – An email had been receiving to say that MDDC Officers had been spotted on site as part of the “Crofts Parking Review”. **MV**
- f) MDDC – “State of the District Debate” 30<sup>th</sup> March 2024 Tiverton – The Chair hoped to attend this event. **MV**
- g) DALC – 2024 Royal Garden Party Nomination  
It was agreed to Nominate Cllr B Fyfe.

**12) Replies – None.**

- 13) Matters reported to the Clerk – “Furlongs Footpath”** As part of the reinstatement of the footpath following the development at “Weavers Way” the condition of the footpath had been improved with less muddy areas.  
Parishioners were now asking whether chippings could be put down to cover the remaining muddy part just below the development (after passing through the gateway below “Park House”).  
Parishioners should be able to walk the Footpath 365 days of the year rather than just on the “non muddy” days.  
The Clerk had passed this suggestion on to FP Warden Steve Mc Culloch as a possible project to be included when submitting the Sandford FP for 2024/2025 budget.

- 14) Police Matters –** It was reported that there had been an attempted “break in” at the affordable homes at “Weavers Way”.

**15) Receipts & Payments**

**Receipts:**

Lloyds Bank interest (January 2024)	£52.77
Mr R Ward (Christmas tree/lights funding) plus 2 x £10 anonymous donations)	£93.60
Mr R Ward (Christmas tree/lights funding)	£41.67
Tozer’s Solicitors (Donation to Play Area)	£12,500
Crossing Donation (D Day ~Beacon Lighting)	£400.00
HMRC (Vat refund)	£197.50

**Payments:**

Mr M Vallance (Salary) £604.33, Ink cartridges £86.48	£690.81
Sandford Parish Hall (Donation toward Defibrillator)	£150.00
Mr R Ward (Refund)	£93.60
Roger Lee (Christmas tree)	£50.00
Sandford Parish Hall (Donation towards Defibrillator)	£150.00
Ministry of Play (Payment on account for Ball Park)	£16712.22

Cheques Signed by Cllr Miles and Stephens

**16) Councillors Forum**

Next Meeting 7<sup>th</sup> March 2024, 8.00pm, at Sandford Parish Hall

There being no other business the Chairman closed the Meeting at 9.50pm.

**Appendix 1**

Chairman Upton Hellions Parish Meeting  
Councillor Sandford Parish Council

Mr Adrian Devereau  
Planning Services Development Management  
Phoenix House  
Tiverton  
EX16 6PP  
Ref: 24/00012/MARM

22<sup>nd</sup> January 2024

Dear Mr Devereaux

**RE: Proposal: Removal of Condition 3 and Variation of Condition 1 of planning permission**

**22/00063/MARM - Reserved matter for the erection of 257 dwellings and up to 5 Gypsy and Traveller pitches; associated works in connection with 8.6ha of land to facilitate future Crediton Rugby Club and up to 1.1ha of land for future primary school; details of landscaping, public open space and other associated infrastructure and engineering operations and access and highway work following outline approval 17/00348/MOUT - to allow removal of the thatched roofs and substitute plans**

**Location: Land at NGR 284185 101165 (Creedy Bridge) Crediton Devon**

**Site Vicinity Grid Ref: 284007 / 100951 Parish: Sandford 43**

I am a Councillor of Sandford Parish Council (SPC) which has delegated authority to me to act on its behalf and Chairman of the Upton Hellions Parish Council (UHPM). I have consulted widely in the two Parishes and elsewhere. The following comments represent the predominant views of the parishioners in the two Parishes and more widely. I am aware that individuals have commented. Their observations are most welcome, I am sure.

This large development on the A3072 is a singular gateway site to CREDITON, SANDFORD and the large rural district beyond. The impact on Upton Hellions is significant. Upton Hellions is an isolated 'dark sky' environment adjacent to this housing estate which is to be built on a facing slope and alluvial plain at the head of the Creedy Vale. The design of development is also detrimental to Creedy Park particularly at its East Lodge.

SPC and UHPM would comment as follows in opposition to the proposal to remove Condition 3 and variation of Condition 1 of planning permission.

**Please would MDDC confirm:**

- How MDDC has assessed/is assessing the validity of Bellway's procurement process and the statements made by it in the submission?
- What MDDC will take into account in terms of assessing Bellway's statement that there needs to be consistency in decision making? The implication of the statement is that the decision is in fact incorrect.
- In the absence of detailed programme and financial modelling - which has not but should have been provided by Bellway - how will MDDC assess the programming and cost claims made by Bellway? If cost/Bellway's return on investment is deemed by MDDC to be a relevant factor, then what threshold is applied?

### Objections:

We object to the submission to remove the thatch condition on the basis that:

- There is no evidence of a comprehensive procurement process: Bellway has provided no supporting documentary evidence as to the scope and format of the procurement exercise that it has carried out. There is merely a statement that 9 thatched roof specialists have been 'contacted' – nothing to suggest that a thorough procurement process has been conducted or indeed to substantiate Bellway's claims as to lead times or cost;
- Cost should not be a consideration: The thatch Condition was, presumably, included in the reserved matters/planning consent on the basis that it was considered by MDDC Planning to be of material importance to the overall look and feel of the development and in-keeping with the identity and character of the immediate vicinity of the Creedy Valley. Cost therefore should not be a consideration/factor in removing the condition; the introduction of the vernacular elements of the design and street scene were included by the developer to address wider dissatisfaction with the Outline planning permission.
- The site is unique: Whilst Bellway comments in its submission that there is a 'small smattering' of thatched properties in the vicinity, that statement ignores the fact that the positioning of this development is very different to that of Tarka View. **Whether a 'small smattering' or not those unfamiliar with the area should note that on the approach to Creedy Bridge on the A3072 from both Tiverton and Shobrooke there are two thatched houses directly opposite each other and each a few feet of the edge of the road.** Both properties are well known landmarks and regularly used as reference when giving directions to travellers within Devon and further afield.

The proposed development is within a few hundred yards and a few seconds driving of these significant dwellings.

Further, when attending the organised tour of the site with the archaeologist pointing out important evidence of Romano – British dwellings, it was drawn to the group's attention that a view of Lower Creedy, a Grade II listed thatched farmhouse was in clear sightline of the proposed development. Retaining the existing permission to include the thatched dwellings would, therefore, be entirely consistent with their immediate surrounding environment.

A primary consideration of this development has always been its unique countryside location and the fact that it is of historical significance. It is also close to a conservation area.

Whilst Bellway's submission talks of there being a need for consistency, it is entirely correct that each site is considered based on its own characteristics and, given the location of the site, MDDC's decision to require thatch is justified. Differing conditions between sites is not a reason to remove the condition;

- There is no evidence of an attempt to re-programme the development: The submission does not contain any detailed justification that the delivery programme cannot be adjusted to facilitate the stated lead times of the thatch. There is no evidence in the submission that the developer has been proactive in its procurement of this important attractive feature of the agreed permission. Plenty of time has passed since the agreed Condition for Bellway to have procured the reed and a selected thatcher for the important feature of the development.

Bellway is an established and sophisticated developer, supported by professional advisers, and more than capable of providing a fully modelled explanation as to the practical and economic effect of the Condition. The details of the negotiation which resulted in the agreed application including the thatched roofs in the prominent visible aspect should be released. The Condition should not be removed until it is properly established that the development becomes uneconomical, not just expensive, as a result of the Condition being retained; and

□ Mortgages and insurances are available: The mortgage and insurance markets do have available products for thatched properties. The fact that there are fewer products in the market is not a reason to remove the condition.

The points made by Bellway simply run to inconvenience and return on investment – a desire to value engineer the development solution. What seems to have been ignored in the submission is the inherent importance of ensuring that the development is a suitable fit with its unique surroundings mindful too of the climate and environmental crisis.

We take this opportunity to express disappointment that further consideration has not been given to display the developer's ecological, energy efficiency and sustainability credentials as the District Council strives to meet its pressing Zero Carbon Energy Policies before a sod is turned. A re-evaluation of the orientation of the houses better to harness the solar energy via installed or retro fitted Photo Voltaic (PV) cells would be most welcome. The reconsideration of the intention to incorporate gas fired combi boilers into the dwellings and instead install air or ground source heat pumps in order to reduce environmental pollution and energy costs. The inclusion of Mechanical Ventilation and Heat Recovery {MVHR} units into each property in line with the government's Building Regulations Part F as an energy and carbon emission saving viable ventilation system.

This should also be a moment to reflect on the routing of the thoroughfare through the estate to exit further down Long Barn Lane to anticipate the regular HGV and van haulage, supply and delivery traffic and seasonal agricultural heavy traffic to and from the rural district. Thus, creating less disturbance, air pollution and nuisance to some of the homeowners.

Yours sincerely.

Brian Fyfe