

South Somerset District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **Area North Committee** held in the **Council Chamber, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil** on **Tuesday 22 November 2022**.

(3.00 pm - 4.16 pm)

Present:

Members: Councillor Adam Dance (Chairman)

Louise Clarke	Clare Paul
Mike Hewitson	Crispin Raikes
Tim Kerley	Mike Stanton
Tiffany Osborne	Gerard Tucker



Also present:

Malcom Cavill – via Zoom

Officers:

Adrian Moore	Locality Officer
Terena Isaacs	Locality Officer
Katy Menday	Leisure & Recreation Manager
Rachael Whaites	Countryside Manager
Colin Begeman	Principal Planner (Development Management)
Jill Byron	District Solicitor & Monitoring Officer
Kirsty Larkins	Director (Service Delivery)
Angela Cox	Specialist (Democratic Services)
Jo Boucher	Case Officer (Strategy & Support Services)
Becky Sanders	Case Officer (Strategy & Support Services)

NB: Where an executive or key decision is made, a reason will be noted immediately beneath the Committee's resolution.

14. Minutes (Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 22 June 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

15. Apologies for absence (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Neil Bloomfield and Dean Ruddle. Councillor Malcolm Cavill was present on-line via Zoom.

16. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

Councillor Crispin Raikes declared a personal interest for item 8 on the agenda – Grant for East Lambrook School Room - as a few years previously he had been a member of the Parochial Church Council.

Councillors Mike Stanton, Tim Kerley, Adam Dance and Crispin Raikes each declared a personal interest for item 14 – planning application 22/01298/FUL – as they are members of the National Trust.

17. Date of next meeting (Agenda Item 4)

Members noted the next meeting of Area North Committee was scheduled for Wednesday 14 December 2022 at 2.00pm.

18. Public question time (Agenda Item 5)

There were no questions from members of the public present at the meeting.

19. Chairman's announcements (Agenda Item 6)

The Chairman reminded everyone present that Councillors online via Zoom were not able to vote on any item on the agenda.

20. Reports from members (Agenda Item 7)

Councillor Crispin Raikes reminded members that he and Councillor Tim Kerley were no longer members of Huish Episcopi Leisure Centre Board. As the Centre was now run by a private provider they had been advised by the SSDC Legal Team to resign from the Board, which they had both now done.

Councillor Mike Hewitson noted that new play equipment had been installed at Norton Sub Hamdon play area and was being enjoyed, and thanked Area North Committee for supporting the project with a grant.

21. Community Grant - East Lambrook School Room Refurbishment (Executive Decision) (Agenda Item 8)

The Locality Officer introduced the report which asked members to consider the awarding of a grant towards refurbishment of the East Lambrook School Room. He noted all detail was included within the report and he was happy to take any questions.

The Chairman noted two representatives of the School Room Management Committee were present in the meeting if members had any questions. One representative updated members that fundraising continued and they had now secured a total of £7,545 towards the refurbishment.

Ward member, Councillor Mike Stanton expressed this full support for the project, He noted it was a lovely building but was in need of some refurbishment.

Following a brief discussion, in which other members indicated their support for the project, it was proposed to approve the grant as per the officer recommendation, and on being put to the vote was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED: That a grant of £11,638 be awarded to East Lambrook School Room Management Committee towards refurbishment of the School Room, the grant to be allocated from the Area North capital programme and subject to SSDC standard conditions for community grants (appendix A to the agenda report).

Reason: To consider a grant request for funding towards the East Lambrook School Room Refurbishment.

(Voting: Unanimous)

22. Community Grant - Ash Village Hall Car Park - All Ability Access Improvements (Executive Decision) (Agenda Item 9)

The Locality Officer introduced the report which asked members to consider the awarding of a grant towards all ability access improvements at Ash Village Hall Car Park. He noted all detail was included within the report and he was happy to take any questions.

One member queried the scoring for equalities and diversity under the Community Grants Assessment Score in the agenda report, as the officer assessment score was higher than the maximum score available. The Locality Officer explained that this had been an administrative error on his part.

Councillor Louise Clark commented that she fully supported the project and noted that wheelchair access at the location was difficult at the moment.

There being no further discussion, it was proposed to approve the grant as per the officer recommendation, and on being put to the vote was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED: That a grant of £3,750 be awarded to Ash Parish Council towards all ability access improvements to Ash Village Hall Car Park, the grant to be allocated from the Area North capital programme and subject to SSDC standard conditions for community grants (appendix A to the agenda report).

Reason: To consider a request for grant funding towards all ability access improvements at Ash Village Hall Car Park.

(Voting: Unanimous)

23. Area North Committee Forward Plan (Agenda Item 10)

The Chairman updated members that there were no further grants applications to be considered and therefore the item would be deleted from the Forward Plan.

A member commented that he had hoped, at an Area level, there might at some point have been a presentation on Section 106 payments and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) payments, and queried if anything was planned. In response, the Director (Service Delivery) noted as many of the Areas had requested a report on Section 106 payments that a report was going to be presented at Full Council in December which would cover the whole district. She would check regarding CIL as it was not something that fell under her service area. The member requested that CIL payments were also looked at as it was another important area for members to have an oversight of together with Section 106s.

Members were content to note the Forward Plan.

24. Planning Appeals (Agenda Item 11)

There was no discussion, and members were content to note the report that detailed the planning appeals which had been lodged, dismissed or allowed.

25. Schedule of Planning Applications to be Determined By Committee (Agenda Item 12)

Members noted the Schedule of Planning Applications to be determined at the meeting.

26. Planning Application 22/02539/FUL - Land at Ham Hill, South of Lime Kiln Car Park, Ham Hill, Stoke Sub Hamdon TA14 6RW (Agenda Item 13)

Proposal: Construction of Visitor Centre and associated bin store, with provision of services and drainage works, and associated car park and highway improvements.

The Principal Planner (Development Management) introduced the application and provided members with several updates to the report since the agenda had been published, including:

- Stoke Sub Hamdon Parish Council had provided a further response via their Chairman, and a summary of the statement was read to members. The points included:
 - Initially the Parish Council felt they had not been consulted on the proposal which had led to their objections, however, they acknowledged now that this had not been the case.
 - Some members of the Parish Council had since met with officers responsible for the management of Ham Hill Country Park to discuss differences and how to move forward in a positive way.
 - In principle, the Parish Council no longer had an objection to the Visitor Centre itself, but they did have concerns about traffic and the condition of the road leading to Ham Hill. They would be happy to work with Highways.

the Duchy and project managers to look at the situation in the village regarding traffic, transport and parking issues, in order that the community would not suffer from increased problems.

- No further responses had been received from Norton Sub Hamdon or Montacute parish councils.
- South West Heritage Trust had provided an update to its suggested condition at condition 13 in the report, and now wished to change it to a compliance condition.
- Historic England had now issued Scheduled Monument Consent for the proposed Visitor Centre and were content with the proposals.

The officer then presented the application in more detail, including improvements proposed to the car parks. He clarified that the proposal did not trigger the requirement for phosphates mitigation, and also explained the key considerations.

A member acknowledged that several members had recently attended a site visit for the application, where several technical questions raised by members had been answered by officers on site.

Three members of the public addressed members in support of the application. Some of their comments included:

- There were many activities and enjoyment of the countryside at Ham Hill, and much of the site could be enjoyed by all.
- The proposed visitor centre would provide disabled facilities and a Changing Place, and would provide a hub, guidance for users, and a friendly welcome for orientation across the country park.
- Always surprised such a historical gem as Ham Hill is so low key when it is such an asset.
- Share concerns of local residents regarding traffic, pleased to hear the Parish Council have acknowledged they will work with Highways and others regarding some of the concerns.
- Would be good to have a centre that enhances the history and how things have worked at the hill.
- The importance of volunteering at Ham Hill could not be over emphasised, and more space for volunteers would be asset.

The Leisure and Recreation Manager then addressed members as the applicant. She explained some of the issues at Ham Hill, and provided a brief overview of the wider project at the site which was the subject of a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant application. She referred to the positive support from local residents and visitors, but also accepted the local concerns about traffic, and pledged to continue working with the village to align the project with the needs of residents. The Visitor Centre project was not setting out to increase visitor numbers, and the objective was to secure the future of the site and protect the archaeology.

Ward member, Councillor Mike Hewitson, commented he had been involved with the proposals for this project at Ham Hill since about 2019, and there had been extensive opportunities for the local community to be involved in the planning of the project prior to the planning application stage being considered. He fully supported the application and acknowledged the opportunities for conservation, heritage and interpretation of the site were huge. He referred to engagement with the local parish councils and he welcomed the inclusion of electric vehicle charging points as part of the proposals.

During discussion, the officers responded to points of detail raised including further information about:

- The design of the Visitor Centre and isolated location of the proposal.
- Access to utilities and security for the site.

Several members indicated their support for the project and commented that Ham Hill was a great asset. It was proposed and seconded to approve the application, as per the officer recommendation, and subject to the change in wording to condition 13 as detailed in the officer updates prior to presentation of this application. On being put to the vote, the proposal to approve, was carried unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED: That planning application 22/02539/FUL be APPROVED, as per the officer recommendation, subject to a change of wording for condition 13 (for clarity the revised wording for condition 13 is included below):

Justification:

01. The scheme represents a well thought out proposal that will bring significant local benefits. Subject to the use of appropriate conditions there will be no demonstrable harm to visual amenity, residential amenity, highway safety, biodiversity, heritage assets or archaeology in compliance with Local Plan Policies SD1 Sustainable Development, EP8 New and Enhanced Tourist Facilities, EQ2 General Development, EQ3: Historic Environment, EQ4 Biodiversity and TA5 Transport Impact of New Development and policy guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Subject to the following conditions:

01. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To accord with the provisions of section 91(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

02. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

23-010 Location Plan
1326 Structural drawings
23 060 - Cross Section
23 052 - Elevations
23 051 - Elevations
23 040 - Roof Plans
23 030 - Floor Plans
23 050 - Elevations
23 020 - Site Plan
23 070 - Bin Store
BTC20068 - Transport Statement
Amended drawing BTC20068 GA_04 P4
Ecological Impact Assessment - August 2022

Landscape Proposals- July 2022

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

03. A Memorandum of Understanding shall be entered into with the Highway Authority to secure the following mitigation matters are achieved prior to the occupation of the visitor centre:

- New boundary 'gateway' features
- Improved access to car parks
- New footways and informal crossing points
- New crossing points, and works to the existing Public Rights of Way

Reason: In the interest of highway safety and in accordance with policy TA5 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

04. Before the new development is brought into use, the new pedestrian and cycle arrangements to include cycling and walking access across the site shall be laid out, constructed, and drained in accordance with a detailed scheme to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, once constructed they shall remain in perpetuity.

Reason: In the interest of highway safety and in accordance with policy TA5 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

05. Prior to first occupation of the visitors' centre hereby permitted the proposed car park accesses over at least the first 6 metres of their lengths, as measured from the edge of the adjoining highway, shall be properly consolidated and surfaced (not loose stone or gravel) and drainage installed in accordance with details which shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Once constructed the access shall thereafter be maintained in that condition in perpetuity.

Reason: In the interest of highway safety and in accordance with policy TA5 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

06. For Norton Car Park - 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 33 metres either side of the access. Such visibility shall be fully provided before the development hereby permitted is occupied and shall thereafter be maintained in perpetuity.

Reason: In the interest of highway safety and in accordance with policy TA5 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

07. For Twin Car Park West, Twin Car Park East, and Limekiln Car Park. 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. Such visibility shall be fully provided before the development hereby permitted is occupied and shall thereafter be maintained in perpetuity.

Reason: In the interest of highway safety and in accordance with policy TA5 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

08. For Limekiln Car Park, prior to occupation the parking spaces including the electric vehicle charging infrastructure is provided in accordance with the submitted plan and retained as such in perpetuity

Reason: In the interest of highway safety and in accordance with policy TA5 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

09. The Development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until the parking spaces for the Limekiln Car Park have been provided, marked out and surfaced within the site in accordance with details shown in the submitted plans. Such parking spaces shall be kept clear of obstruction in perpetuity and shall not be used other than for the parking and turning of vehicles in connection with the development hereby permitted.

Reason: In the interest of highway safety and in accordance with policy TA5 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

10. Any entrance gates erected shall be hung to open inwards, shall be set back a minimum distance of 9 metres from the highway edge and shall thereafter be maintained in that condition in perpetuity.

Reason: In the interest of highway safety and in accordance with policy TA5 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

11. No works to the Visitors' Centre shall take place until a construction management plan or construction method statement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved plan/statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction period. The plan/statement shall provide for:

- 24 hour emergency contact number;
 - Hours of operation;
 - Parking of vehicle of site operatives and visitors (including measures taken to ensure satisfactory access and movement for existing occupiers of neighbouring properties during construction);
 - Routes for construction traffic;
 - Locations for loading/unloading and storage of plant, waste

- and construction materials;
- Method of preventing mud being carried onto the highway;
- Measures to protect vulnerable road users (cyclists and pedestrians)
- Any necessary temporary traffic management measures;
- Arrangements for turning vehicles;
- Arrangements to receive abnormal loads or unusually large vehicles;
- Methods of communicating the Construction Management Plan to staff, visitors and neighbouring residents and businesses.

Reason: In the interest of highway safety and in accordance with policy TA5 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

12. The proposals for Mitigation and Enhancement as set out in Clarkson and Woods Ecological Impact Assessment August 2022 shall be implemented prior to occupation of the visitor centre.

Reason: For the conservation and protection of species of biodiversity importance in accordance with NPPF and Policy EQ4 of the South Somerset Local Plan, and to ensure compliance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and The Habitats Regulations 2010.

13. Programme of Works in Accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (POW) The applicant, or their agents or successors in title, must implement the programme of archaeological work as set out in the submitted Written Scheme of Investigation (Written Scheme of Investigation for Construction of Visitor Centre and associated bin store, services, car park, highway and drainage works at Ham Hill, Stoke-Sub-Hamdon, Somerset, Cambridge Archaeology Unit).

Reason: In the interests of protecting any buried archaeology

Informatives:

01. Before this development can commence, a European Protected Species Mitigation Licence (under The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 2010) will be required from Natural England. You will need to liaise with your ecological consultant for advice and assistance on the application for this licence. Natural England will normally only accept applications for such a licence after full planning permission has been granted and all relevant (protected species) conditions have been discharged.

(Voting: Unanimous)

27. Planning Application 22/01298/FUL - Barrington Court, National Trust, Eastfield Lane, Barrington TA19 0NQ (Agenda Item 14)

Proposal: Installation of property gates at the end of Water Street and along the access drive to Barrington Court.

The Principal Planner (Development Management) presented the application, and explained in detail the location of proposed gates. He highlighted the key considerations and also the objections raised by Barrington Parish Council. It was noted that the SSDC Conservation Officer had no objection to the proposal on heritage grounds.

A representative for Barrington Parish Council addressed members in objection to the proposal, some of his points included:

- Concerns about pedestrian and mobility scooter access if gates placed at end of Water Street.
- Acknowledge Water Street been a no through road for over 20 years but the road is still used as a run through for many local vehicles.
- If Water Street blocked off how will bin lorries and other large delivery vehicles manoeuvre back up along the street as there isn't a turning area? It is a narrow lane and may be an accident if lorries have to reverse all the way back along the street,

The Operations Manager for the National Trust (NT) at Barrington Court then addressed members in support of the application, some of his points included:

- The property attracted approximately 125,000 visitors a year.
- The pathway from the main car park crossed the junction at the end of Water Street. Over the years some erratic driving had been seen with people using Water Street as a short cut, and unfortunately there had been some near misses with pedestrians. The proposed gates were to enable pedestrian safety for visitors.
- The driveway is effectively private land.
- The end of Water Street isn't a public Right of Way. They had worked with the parish council and local residents, and the NT were prepared to enable access for pedestrians and wheelchairs to enable safe access to the footpaths.
- The estate fences and gates were also needed in order to secure the property.

Ward member, Councillor Mike Stanton, thanked the National Trust for agreeing to potentially provide pedestrian access at the end of Water Street as that was important to the village. He explained his reason for asking for the application to be referred to Committee was because of the problem for turning vehicles, especially lorries. If gates were to be installed at the end of Water Street there was nowhere for vehicles to turn. A solution would be to provide a turning area, and there was possibly land available which was owned by the National Trust, and he made reference to the report and the pre-application stage. He expressed his disappointment that the National Trust weren't doing more to work with the community to provide a solution for turning vehicles, He queried if an alternative solution might be to relocate the gates to a different position that may also facilitate the turning of vehicles. He did not support the application.

At the invitation of the Chairman, the representative for the National Trust, responded to some of the points of detail raised about the location of an existing gate and the suggestions for a turning head on Water Street. He noted the erection of boundary

features was the right of the landowner and it should not be conditioned for the NT to provide or fund a turning area to serve a public highway.

The District Solicitor & Monitoring Officer advised members that they should focus on planning reasons, and if determining the application as detailed in the agenda, it would need to be on planning grounds. She also reminded members that they could defer the application if they wished which might give the applicants an opportunity to reflect on their application having heard the comments made during discussion.

During discussion several comments and suggestions were raised by members, some of which included:

- The proposed gates at the end of Water Street will effectively create a cul-de-sac. Without a turning point they will have no option but to reverse back along the street and residents will be inconvenienced not only by the vehicles but also the bleepers that go with them.
- Could more be done to improve signage along Water Street.
- Struggling a little with the approach and attitude of the National Trust.
- Slightly relocating the gate at Water Street may provide a solution
- The bonds that the National Trust has forged with local communities are vital.

At the end of debate, it was proposed and seconded to defer the application for a site visit. It was also agreed that the Parish Council be invited to attend the site visit and a Highways representative, or County member for Highways. On being put to the vote, the proposal to defer for a site visit was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED: That planning application 22/01298/FUL be DEFERRED for a site visit.

(Voting: Unanimous)

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Chairman