

CPRE SOMERSET

ACTION MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT EDINGTON SCHOOL ROOM ON 22nd MARCH 2018

Present: Chris Lewis (Chairman), Stuart Eyles, David Lloyd, Don Parkinson, John Roberts, Fletcher Robinson, Tim Whittingham, Becky Collier (Branch Manager), Liz Payne (Planner)

Apologies: Cathy Nicholls

1. **Minutes:** 1st February 2018: Approved
2. **Matters Arising:** none
3. **Reports**
Treasurer's report - see report.

Chairman's Report - see report. CL, BC and DL gave a verbal report on the recent trip to Porlock Bay Oysters. Trustees agreed that CL's draft letter to Crispin Truman re population issues was appropriate and timely and CL agreed to send it off.

Branch Development - see report. DP had brought a copy of the Langport Leveller, dated March 15th which had an article on brownfield land availability, prompted by BC's press release.

BC had just had a meeting with the Editor of a suite of Somerset newspapers (eg Wells Journal, Cheddar Valley Gazette, Shepton Mallet Journal, Central Somerset Gazette, Frome Standard, Western Gazette) regarding their new [Somerset Village of the Year Competition](#) and they are happy for CPRE Somerset to take part as sponsors of a Village Shop of the Year competition. We would have to offer £150 in prizes (£100 for the winner and £50 for the runner up) but BC believes we would gain a lot of publicity and positive promotion by being involved. Shops would be nominated by their local community and the award would be presented at a special evening in October, which Somerset Live (online version of Somerset papers) would organise. Judging would take place in September and FR kindly offered to help out.

There then followed a discussion about other potential awards which CPRE could offer; FR suggested "best maintained public footpath". BC felt that this was outside our remit and JR was concerned about the practicalities of judging. LP suggested an award for the best pub acting as a community hub. CL mentioned a [House of Lords report](#) released that day stressing that 80% of people living in the countryside were not landowners or involved in land management and he wondered if we could do something to help them. BC said this was already CPRE's remit as we campaign for better rural services, housing and transport. DP suggested an award for good, well-designed development and BC reiterated that, in time, she would like our Branch to follow the example of CPRE Gloucestershire which has a generic award for good developments in the countryside and how several examples can win each year ie: they are not in competition with each other but the award scheme helps to highlight and champion good development.

ACTION: *FR to circulate a note on his footpath award idea.
BC to research possible awards run by The Ramblers*

Planners Report - see report and planning cases spreadsheet. LP is currently working on letters about the Beckington Car Showroom case, Cuckoo Hill in Frome and she has just written about the North Wootton case where a landowner has tried for many years to build a large house in a village by also including several affordable homes. This case was

approved by Mendip DC then revoked after a judicial review but a new application has now been submitted. The issue is that there is no proven affordable housing need. LP was frustrated by the slow progress of many cases in getting to a decision, particularly with Mendip DC. Not all of LP's work is on the spreadsheet - she often gives advice to people about planning cases but CPRE doesn't necessarily comment on every case.

LP would like to write to Glastonbury TC and question the validity of their recent questionnaire about a new bypass proposal. She is concerned about the landscape impact of a new road proposed beneath the Tor. JR urged her to be careful saying that the road was not on any Somerset CC list as a priority but other roads were, such as a new road bypassing Walton & Ashcott. These may happen sooner so we should be aware of them and be prepared. The major road network consultation is happening now and is open to everyone and JR thinks that the Glastonbury A361 plans won't get very far.

LP outlined the major proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) including:

- The addition of the phrase "making effective use of land" which is welcome
- Ancient woodland and veteran trees have now been added to the list of features needing special care
- Housing delivery test - if rates fall below certain levels, the Local Authority will have to write an action plan
- Lots of support for new settlements, which can then be protected by a green belt.
- Paragraph 72 - mention of "entry level exception sites"; allowing market housing outside development limits in villages if a high proportion is allocated to housing is for first time buyers or people renting for the first time. There is no mention of housing need, which is a concern. SE recognised that the more of these loopholes there are, the more the NPPF could weaken a Local Plan.
- Recognition of tranquillity and dark skies and the need to mitigate if these are damaged
- FR mentioned a new clause saying that any harm to heritage will be given greater weight in the planning decision making process

The discussion then moved on to the [Somerset Strategic Housing Framework consultation](#) which has been written by Housing Officers at Somerset CC so is separate to District Council Local Plans. It mentions Hinkley C, which LP reported was having a negative effect on housing issues in Bridgwater, pushing up prices and rents. The paper says that 48% of people living in Somerset are living in rural areas. 3112 dwellings are second homes and 1/3 of these are in West Somerset. BC pointed out that many of these may be holiday cottages for rent so might be adding to the local economy. The document is a useful resource for statistics like these. BC also mentioned <http://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk/> which has lots of Somerset based statistics and produces a useful monthly e-bulletin.

Branches are also being asked to contribute to a one-CPRE response to the agriculture bill

ACTION: BC to forward the consultation to DL and CG

CL gave an update on the Norton St Philip village green application; the Inspector has ruled that only part of the area can be considered as a village green so a new application must begin. LP clarified that a Local Green Space, as identified in Local Plans, can be on private land if it adds significantly to the street scene or to local character. Village greens come under different legislation and are administered by the County Council.

BC mentioned that the Callow Rock Quarry Extension application was going to Somerset CC regulation committee that day.

Post meeting note: the Callow Rock application is actually going to Cttee on 12th April, along with the application for three large tips at Moons Hill near Stoke St Michael.

LP plans to attend a meeting organised by CPRE Glos regarding the effectiveness of Neighbourhood Plans.

4. Any Other Business: DP asked if Local Authorities monitor if barns are actually being used for agriculture before they are allowed to be converted into homes. LP explained that for a Class Q conversion which does not need full planning permission, the barn should have been in agriculture until 2013. If full planning application is made, the barn just needs to be empty at the time.

SE referred to Crispin Truman's paper "Shaping the Future" which had been circulated to all and said that he liked the tone of it and the potential future direction for CPRE.

5. Date of next meeting: 10.00am, Tuesday 12th June 2018 - West Monkton Village Hall, Monkton Heathfield TA2 8NE. It was hoped that Anna Mathieson, CPRE's Branch & Regional Development Officer, could join us at this next meeting but the date does not suit so we will invite her to the following meeting instead.

.....

Chair, CPRE Somerset

Date: