

Trull Parish Council

Minutes of a Meeting held in the School Hall, Trull
on Monday 17th September 2007 at 7.15 pm.

Present: Mr. G. Hewett (Chairman)

Mr. S. French, Mr. D. Archer, Mr. C. Ralph, Mr. N. Hancock, Mrs.
J. Wooldridge, Mrs. A. Hudson and Mr. P. Parris,
together with 64 Members of the Public.

In attendance: Mr. S. Martin-Scott – County Councillor
Mr. M. Edwards – District Councillor
WPC Polly Tomlinson (part)
Mr. J. White - Footpaths
Mr. S. Watts - Clerk

84/07 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. S. Jeffery and Mrs. F. Drew.

85/07 Declarations of Interest

The following declaration of interest was received: -

Name	Minute No:	Personal/Prejudicial	Reason and Action Taken
Mr. C. Ralph	90/07	Personal	Rents land from Summerfield Developments. No action taken.

86/07 Chairman's Report

It was advised that the community beat officer, WPC. Polly Tomlinson, was in the audience and would answer any questions from the public.

Mr. Gordon Hart had now installed the sign at Carter's Way (Minute 70/07 refers). Mr. Archer stated that Mr. Parris had kindly arranged for two members of his staff to weed the landscaped area earlier in the year, but the work was required again. He had obtained a quotation of £25 per occasion from a known contractor, Mr. Ian Perry, and recommended that the Council consider undertaking the work three times per annum. Mr. Parris stated that, if agreed, it should be reviewed after one year.

Resolved: That Mr. Archer make arrangements for Mr. Ian Perry to weed the landscaped area at Carter's Way. This would be undertaken three times during the forthcoming year and at the cost of £25 per occasion.

Mrs. Lesley Webb, TDBC Rural Housing Unit Manager, was introduced and welcomed to the meeting. The Chairman then explained the procedure for discussing the Agenda items on affordable homes in Trull and the proposal by Summerfield Developments.

87/07 Minutes of Previous Meetings

The Minutes of the Meetings held on 17th July and 20th August 2007 were agreed, and signed by the Chairman.

88/07 Matters for Report

Goal Post (Minute 069/07 refers).

Mr. Ralph referred to the matter of the goal post, and advised that he had now inspected it and considered it to be unsafe for use. Mrs. Wooldridge confirmed that one upright had become detached from the top rail, and that consideration should be given to removing the whole structure.

89/07 **Affordable Homes in Trull**

Mr. Archer explained that the Local Authority had been the main provider of social housing within Trull to date, but resources were now very limited. He referred to the Housing and Development section of the Trull Action Plan 2005 (TAP) and specifically action point 3: -

“That a housing needs feasibility study be undertaken in the Trull and Staplehay area”

Mr. Felix Marsh of the Somerset Community Council for Somerset had recently made a presentation on affordable homes to the Council (Minute 67/07 refers). Mr. Archer had since made further enquiries with the organisation regarding undertaking a housing needs survey, and explained the format of the questionnaire that would be distributed within the parish. It was noted that information would be required on items such as local connection, annual income, the size of the household and the housing requirement. It would then be sent via Freepost back to the Community Council for analysis, and the assessed needs conveyed to the Council

Mr. Archer then invited questions from the public. He was asked if a housing needs survey had been undertaken previously, and replied that to the best of his knowledge it had not. It was put to him that, since Trull is in planning terms an associated settlement of Taunton rather than a separate village, the housing needs of a wider area would be relevant to any application to build affordable housing here, and he and Mrs Webb agreed.

90/07 **Summerfield Homes Development Proposal at Comeytrove Road**

The Chairman referred to the Summerfield Developments (SW) Ltd proposal to build 80 affordable homes at Comeytrove Road. At this stage, it was a proposal only and a planning application had yet to be submitted. However, the proposal and the recent presentations that had been organised by the company had generated a considerable amount of controversy. He invited Mrs. Webb to address the Council and the audience on this matter, and Mrs. Webb advised that although she would discuss the current TDBC policy, this would not include the Summerfield Homes proposal specifically.

Mrs. Webb gave details on housing needs surveys that had been undertaken by consultants during 2002 and 2005. This had identified that some 564 affordable homes across the Borough were required each year in order to meet demand. It was noted that only 53 had been built in the last year, with the primary reason for the shortfall being the lack of suitable land.

The main development at the present time was the Firepool site in line with the ‘TauntonVison’ and this would provide a limited number of affordable units. The distinction between ‘Exception’ and ‘Departure’ sites was explained, and that developers were required to submit their planning applications giving a proportion of between 20% and 35% of affordable homes for schemes providing more than 15 units of accommodation. It was noted that, in general, applications were below the threshold of 15 and there are current discussions as to whether the percentages will be increased in the Local Development Framework (LDF).

Mrs. Webb made reference to a Summerfield Homes scheme currently under construction at Wellington. This was for 36 low cost outright purchase homes, and potential purchasers had exceeded the number available. There had been some resistance to the granting of planning permission for the site but approval was eventually given.

The current shortage of land had meant that a working group had been set up to review possible exception sites, and to consider exception and departure sites that had already been received. The Comeytrove Road proposal was in this category, but it was emphasised that there was also a rigid matrix of criteria that must be satisfactorily addressed before the project could progress.

Mr. Archer referred to the outline plan that he had obtained from Summerfield Homes, and gave a detailed explanation of the proposal. The Chairman invited questions from members of the public, of which the main points are summarised as follows: -

- Development of a site on the scale and location of the proposal should not proceed without the necessary improvements to the associated infrastructure. The TDBC Forward Planning Unit Manager, Mr. Willoughby-Foster, had confirmed this during a presentation to the Parish Council on 18th June 2007 (Minute 44/07 refers).
- Comeytrove Road, and in particular the junctions with Dipford Road and Honiton Road, could not accommodate additional traffic. A further 80 homes would increase the likelihood of traffic related incidents.
- Comeytrove Parish Council would be considering the overall impact of the proposal at their next meeting.
- TDBC Planning Officers and Somerset Highways had had preliminary discussions on the proposal, and letters of support or objection should be sent to the two organisations now, in lieu of waiting for an application to be submitted.
- The most effective way to support or object to a planning application was to attend the relevant planning committee and make full use of the individual 3-minute allocation for members of the public to address the committee.
- Properties being built in Taunton town centre were likely to be sold to landlords, with the subsequent rent or leases being beyond the income of those seeking affordable homes.
- Low cost out-right purchase schemes were gaining in popularity, and were an easily controlled method of providing homes.
- Developers were not keen to provide affordable homes, but it was acknowledged that the current works at The Crescent would provide 75 affordable units.
- Compulsory purchase of sites is not the current policy of TDBC, although Government is encouraging this approach.
- There were perceived issues with occupiers of affordable homes integrating within the local community.
- The ongoing development at Monkton Heathfield would provide 35% of the yet to be determined total dwellings being designated as affordable units.
- There appeared to be a departure from the policy given in the TDBC Local Plan, which indicates that a housing needs survey was required in advance of consideration of further development.
- Should planning permission be granted for the Summerfield Homes proposal, it may lead to an escalation of other developments in the area to the west of Comeytrove Road. However, this could also be interpreted as only implementing current Government policy.
- Effort should be made to retain Trull as a separate village to Taunton.
- It was unlikely that Summerfield Developments would be deterred and therefore an application was anticipated.
- In the event that planning permission be granted for the site, the policy for the allocation of the units would be linked to the Section 106 agreement. Although it would consider those with local links, it would also incorporate those residing in neighbouring parishes.
- The existence or route of the mooted Southern Distributor Road was as yet unknown.
- Comeytrove Road was subject to regular flooding due to poor surface water drainage.

The Council discussed the issues raised in some detail, and it was evident that any future proposals or decisions should be based on information acquired from a recent housing needs survey.

Resolved: That Trull Parish Council will support and facilitate an affordable homes survey within the parish in partnership with the Community Council for Somerset's Rural Housing Project.

The Chairman thanked Mrs. Webb for her excellent presentation and advised the members of the public to write to the organisations concerned or discuss the matter with their District Councillor.

91/07 **Mid-Year Financial Position**

The Clerk advised that the balance as at 3rd September was £13,577.52. It was noted that working papers showing previously agreed commitments would be provided for the 10th December 2008/9 budget set meeting.

92/07 **General Maintenance and Budget Items**

The Chairman referred to the meeting held in July, when it was decided that a discussion on general maintenance and possible budget items was necessary. He then asked if the Council had any items for consideration.

Mr. French stated that the footpath at the bottom of the playing field was being regularly used, but became very muddy and slippery in wet weather conditions. It was agreed that the area would benefit from being levelled and a layer of hard core applied. The estimated cost for the work would be approximately £1,000. The Chairman requested that Mr. Parris and Mr. French obtain a quotation from a suitable contractor and report back to the Council.

Mr. French referred to the proposal to fence part of Trull Meadow to contain livestock (Minute 70/07 refers), and advised that SCC was unable to fund the whole of the project. Mr. White considered that the ROW team might be willing to fund the fence and kissing gate, if the Council provided the hardcore to the footpath area. The Clerk will raise the matter with SCC and report back to the Council.

Mrs. Wooldridge stated that following discussions with people using the playing field, there was a need for two picnic tables. These would ideally be installed at the bottom of the field in order to make full use of the late evening sun. There were concerns expressed regarding grass cutting and litter, but it was agreed to consider this at a later date when Mrs. Wooldridge had established the type and costs of a suitable table.

93/07 **Planning**

Mr. Archer advised the members of the public that the Council acted in a consultative role, and only made recommendations. He then gave an overview of the applications received from TDBC for the Council to consider: -

07/011 - The Old Rectory, Wild Oak Lane, Trull.

Outline Erection of two dwellings, with parking and turning areas, on adjacent land.

Mr. Archer explained that approval for a single dwelling on the site had been given in 2000, but had lapsed in 2005. It was noted that there were a number of trees that are subject to a TPO that would be affected, but would be retained or replaced.

Mr. Martin-Scott was invited to address the Council, and advised that the size of the two dwellings would be no more than the previously granted single dwelling. Mr. French stated that a single, large dwelling would be more appropriate for the location, and therefore did not support the application.

Mrs. Wooldridge abstained from voting because she did not agree with outline permissions on principle.

Resolved - To support the application.

07/038T - 3, Southwell, Trull.

Tree Felling of one Sycamore tree included in TDBC TPO 1984.

Resolved - To support the application.

07/039 - 6, South View, Comeytrove Road, Trull.

Erection of garage to side.

Mr. Archer gave a detailed summary of the proposal, and read out a letter received from neighbours in the area who were unable to attend the meeting. There were a number of concerns raised relating to the construction being sympathetic to the main building, hand drawn plans not being to scale, the garage being unable to accommodate a modern day vehicle and that a lean-to roof would be more appropriate. In addition, concerns were expressed regarding parking of contractor's vehicles during the build.

The applicant, Mr. Milburn, stated that due to its steel framed construction, the width would be sufficient, and that he would ensure any disruption would be minimised.

Resolved - To make no objection to the application.

Not listed on the Agenda but also considered were: -

07/036 - The Roundhouse, Chilliswood, Trull.

Erection of double garage.

Resolved - To support the application.

07/042 - Cutsey Grange, Cutsey, Trull.

Retention of timber clad store.

Resolved - To make no objection to the application.

The Clerk advised of the following decisions that had been received from TDBC: -

07/030 - 5, Gatchell Court, Gatchell Oaks, Honiton Road, Trull.

Permission granted for conservatory to rear.

07/031 - 7, Southwell Close, Trull.

Permission granted for retention of annex and erection of two conservatories.

07/032T - Southay, Staplehay, Trull.

Permission granted for management work to one Cypress tree contained in TPO 1979 (TD151).

07/034 - Wild Oak, Honiton Road, Trull.

Permission granted for erection of extension and conversion of garage to utility room and book store.

07/035T - Rebmit Hose, Ladylawn, Trull.

Permission granted to fell one beech tree and to remove one stem of one 2-stemmed beech tree within Trull conservation area.

The Clerk reported that application number 42/07/033 to replace a bungalow with a new dwelling at 2, Gatchell Green, Trull, had now been withdrawn.

94/07 **Playing Field**

Mrs. Wooldridge referred to the RoSPA safety inspection report carried out on 9th July and the previously circulated summary sheet. There was considerable disappointment with the findings, and the fact that payment for the report had already been made. It was evident that of the ten pieces of equipment tested, six had either failed or been identified as a risk. As Zurich Municipal was imposing ever-increasing requirements for the inspection and maintenance of play equipment, there was no alternative but to adopt a 'repair, replace or remove' policy.

Mr. Parris stated that the requirements of BSEN1176 and 1177 were difficult to understand and open to interpretation. He stated that on-site assistance was required to explain the standards and give guidance on how to comply. A detailed discussion then ensued on each individual piece of equipment and the reported defaults.

Resolved: That the following action points be implemented at the earliest opportunity: -

1. That the two cradle seats in the 2 bay swing be replaced with flat seats,
2. That the slide and see-saw be removed for repairs,
3. That the Clerk and Mrs. Wooldridge assess what external assistance is available and the applicable charge,
4. That Mr. Parris and Mrs. Wooldridge prepare a costed action plan before, ideally, the December budget meeting,
5. That the Clerk investigates the costs of alternative accredited inspection companies, such as Zurich Municipal, prior to the next inspection.

The Clerk reported that the TDBC Parish Liaison Officer had confirmed a grant of £1,285 would be made for 2007/8. This was an increase on the 2006/7 allowance of £1,210 and a very welcome contribution.

95/07 **Footpaths**

Mr. White gave a report on the current issues relating to footpaths and the following points were noted: -

- A fallen tree adjacent to the stile at Lipe Hill Lane at T29/20 had now been cleared,
- Access to Trull Meadow via T29/2 from Queens Drive tended to be very wet and slippery in bad weather and was being investigated,
- Small areas of Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Balsam were reported near the bridge at the bottom of the playing field, and at footpath T21/30 from Honiton Road to Dipford. These have either been removed or added to the SCC weed treatment schedule.
- The bridge linking footpath T29/28 with WG3/19 at Herswell Farm is in a dilapidated condition and considered to be dangerous. An emergency closure notice on this particular section has been sanctioned until the structure is replaced. However, a temporary bridge is in position and the route is clear.
- The access around Herswell Farm at T29/28 and T29/26 is not obvious, and the owner is to be contacted to establish a permissive route.
- Adjacent to the junction of T21/14 and T21/2 at Three Bridges, the lead-in fence to the bridge has deteriorated. The wooden treads to the bridge are showing signs of rot and further investigation to resolve the issues is under way.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Parris and Mr. French for applying hardcore to the base of the stiles and gateways over Cotlake Hill.

96/07 **Highways**

Mr. Hancock reported on a liaison meeting with Somerset Highways and the following points were noted: -

- The condition of the road surface outside Trull Stores would be kept under review. It was explained that the surface was subject to excessive wear due to the high number of vehicle movements in that particular area.
- The overhanging branches at Dipford Road would be cut back where appropriate to approximately 4.2m in height. If this failed to resolve the problem, the Parish Council would need to consider undertaking further work at its own cost.
- There were numerous blocked gullies in the parish, particularly in Comeytrowe Road, and these would be given a priority.
- A second hedge-cutting programme would be carried out in the late Autumn.

- The highway issues in relation to the Summerfield Developments proposal had been discussed with the officer, and it was emphasised that letters of objection should be copied to the highways department at County Hall in advance of a planning application being submitted.

97/07 **Allotments**

The Clerk referred to the previously circulated 2005/6 charges for allotment plots within TDBC (Minute 72/07 refers), and it was noted that at £14.00 per plot per annum, Trull was slightly below the average cost.

98/07 **Trull Village Memorial Halls**

The Chairman referred to a letter of complaint regarding difficulties in car parking whilst attending a short mat bowls event. Mrs. Wooldridge was aware of the situation and advised that the event had unfortunately coincided with activities at both the Church and the School. This was not a regular occurrence, but the comments were noted.

99/07 **Trull School**

Mr. Archer proposed a vote of thanks to the Headteacher, Mrs. Cunningham, for allowing the meeting to be held in the Hall at such short notice, and this was agreed.

100/07 **SALC**

The Clerk referred to the previously circulated papers, and advised that the AGM would be held on Saturday 29th September at Barrington Village Hall. It was noted that Trull would not be represented at the meeting.

101/07 **Approval of the 2007/8 Asset Register**

The Clerk referred to the previously circulated Asset Register, and explained the format of the document and the requirement to undertake periodic updates.

Resolved: That the 2007/8 Asset Register be approved.

102/07 **Matters of Correspondence for Report**

The Clerk advised of correspondence that was of interest to the Council: -

Information regarding the Taunton Deane Area Working Panel (previously circulated).

Information regarding the TDBC Draft Play Strategy (previously circulated).

A copy of the TDBC Statement of Community Involvement.

Information received from SCC regarding a road safety study on the A38 highway.

Information received from the South West Regional Assembly regarding a review of additional pitch requirements for Gypsies and Travellers in the South West.

Information received from SCC regarding the outcome of the Unitary Council application.

Information regarding a review of polling stations within TDBC. (It was noted that there will be no change for Trull).

Minutes of the Taunton Deane Area Working Panel held on 4th July and Agenda for the meeting held on 13th September received from SCC.

An invitation from the Somerset Road Safety Partnership to attend a Road Safety Workshop on either 27th September or 1st October.

A request from SCC for information regarding HGV 'pinch points' in the area.

103/07 **Accounts**

Resolved: That the following accounts be authorised for payment: -

Mrs. J. Wooldridge – July Newsletter	-	£19.00
Clerk's salary – July	-	£300.00
SCS Design & Print – 3 x I.D. Badges	-	£21.21
Parsons Landscapes Ltd - July	-	£113.98
RoSPA - play equipment inspection	-	£111.63
Mr. Ray Shattock – Trull Green grass cutting - July	-	£48.00
Mr. Adrian Morris – clearance at Staplehay weir	-	£350.15
The Street Nameplate Company Ltd – Carter's Way sign	-	£79.31
Wessex Water – Allotment water usage - Jan to July	-	£41.47
Clerk's salary - August	-	£300.00
Parsons Landscapes Ltd - August	-	£113.98
EDF Energy – Changing rooms quarterly charge	-	£8.78
Zurich Municipal Insurance – Legal expenses cover	-	£61.95
Mr. Gordon Hart – Carter's Way sign installation	-	£15.00
Mr. J. Pepperell – Playing field gate maintenance	-	£386.00
Mr. Ray Shattock – Trull Green grass cutting - August	-	£48.00
Mr. Ron Vining – Securing of School premises after Parish Council meeting.	-	£20.00

104/07 **Items for the Next Agenda**

Items for the next Agenda will include: -

- Future of the Trull Parish Plan.
- Housing Needs Survey.
- 2007/8 Risk Assessment.

105/07 **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on 15th October 2007, in the Pearce Suite, Trull Memorial Hall, Trull at 7.15 pm. This will be preceded by an informal meeting with the allotment holders at 6.45 pm.

The Chairman closed the Meeting at 10.15 pm.

Signed.....
Chairman of Trull Parish Council

Date.....