KINGSTON ST MARY PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING, HELD ON 12th DECEMBER 2023
AT THE VILLAGE HALL, KINGSTON ST MARY, STARTING AT 19.00

Item No	Item	Action By
1.0	**Attendance and Apologies -** In attendance: Cllr P Townsend (Chairman) Cllr P Boyce Cllr P Chicken Cllr S Hancock Cllr A Simpson Cllr D Stripp Mrs K Gibbins (Parish Clerk) Cllr D Darch (Somerset) Apologies: None ` 4 members of the public were in attendance.	
2.0	**Councillors' Declarations of Interest** – None	
3.0	**Approval of Minutes of Ordinary Meeting held on 14th November 2023** **Resolved:** The minutes of the meeting were approved and will be signed as a true record at a future date.	
4.0	**Planning** **a) Applications –** **Case Ref: 20/23/0044** - Removal of Condition No. 05 (holiday occupancy) of application 20/05/0005 on Plots 15 to 18 Mill Meadow, Parsonage Lane, Kingston St Mary **Case Ref: 20/23/0045** - Variation of wording to Condition No. 03 of application 20/06/0039 (Condition No. 01 of appeal decision - holiday occupancy) to allow full residential use of Plots 19 and 20 Mill Meadow, Parsonage Lane, Kingston St Mary The Council considered the above referenced planning applications and fully supported them based on the following material planning considerations: 1. The proposals help meet the need for additional two/three bedroom residential housing in Kingston St Mary, as evidenced in Kingston St Mary's 2021 Housing Needs Survey. The provision of smaller residential accommodation is a social benefit to the community, meeting the documented need for more affordable housing for local residents who wish to purchase their own property and for those who wish to downsize and remain in the Parish. This complies with para 78 of the NPPF, which states that in rural areas, planning policies and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing development that reflect local needs. 2. The Mill Meadow site is not located in open countryside and is in a sustainable location. The site is surrounded by existing properties in the heart of the Mill Cross residential area of Kingston St Mary Village. Mill Meadow properties are serviced by a regular return bus service to Taunton (route 23/23B) and are within a safe walking route (via The Spinney and Church path) of under a mile to Village amenities, namely the Village Hall, Church, School, Playing Field and The Swan Inn. This accords with para 79 of the NPPF, which states that to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning	

policies should also identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services.

3. Mill Meadow plots 19 – 20 are already built and plots 15 – 18 already have planning permission. The Parish Council would prefer that these six properties were available for full time residential occupancy rather than as holiday homes, as this is considered to be a more efficient use of the land. Removal of the holiday occupancy restriction, would enable owners of these properties to identify with Kingston St Mary as their home and to make a positive contribution towards Parish activities, helping to sustain the vitality of the local community.
4. Mill Meadow properties are eco houses of an exceptional design. The existing properties achieve an air tightness which comfortably exceeds building regulations and the new properties will be built to achieve/exceed the standard for Passive Houses. This provides the properties with high levels of energy efficiency, making the dwellings more resilient to climate change. The wooden materials and construction methods for the new houses will result in a net negative carbon footprint for these properties, due in part to the carbon capture of the timber used for their construction. In addition, to help future proof the site each plot will have its own EV charging point and residents will be able to participate in a subscription scheme to have the use of a EV pool car, should they so wish.
5. Although not obligated, the applicant is willing to offer an affordable housing provision in perpetuity, for people who satisfy a local connection eligibility requirement or a financial contribution in lieu of affordable housing, equivalent to 25% of the six properties included in these two planning applications, secured by a legally binding S106 agreement. Affordable properties are in very short supply in Kingston St Mary, due to none being built since the late 1990s and a lack of available sites, which would satisfy the affordable housing contribution trigger of six or more new properties. Consequently, the applicants voluntary offer of affordable housing options, secured by a S106 agreement, is very much appreciated by the Parish Council and valued by the local community, as evidenced by Kingston St Mary's Housing Needs Survey. Somerset Council have recently released Kingston St Mary's Neighbourhood Plan for their Regulation 16 consultation, which runs until 11 January 2024. The Neighbourhood Plan is based on a 'Vision' formulated from the preferences of local residents, which states that 'Modest development will be welcomed to secure the long term sustainability and prosperity of the Parish, meeting identified housing, social, community and economic needs, enabling the population to grow whilst retaining the rural character and protecting the strong sense of identity'.

For the reasons stated above planning applications 20/23/0044 & 20/23/0045 are fully supported by Kingston St Mary Parish Council, have the support of local residents and their approval would make a practical contribution towards bringing the communities vision for the future of Kingston St Mary to life.

Case Ref: 20/23/0046 - Replacement of conservatory with erection of a single storey extension to the side, with part first floor extension and part balcony above, construction of 2 No. dormer windows to the front, with associated works at Millgrove House, Staplegrove

The Council considered the above planning application and resolved to fully support it. The Parish Council noted that this 1970s property is in need of updating from an environmental and architectural perspective. The proposed alterations will greatly improve the properties energy efficiency, appearance and use materials which match the existing building, making it more suitable and comfortable for the family to enjoy. The planned works and improved insulation will reduce the properties carbon footprint making the dwelling more resilient to climate change. The property is already well shielded from nearby residents and the proposed alterations will have little impact on neighbouring properties and will

not be visible from the road. From a material planning consideration, the proposed alterations will satisfy the environmental objective of enhancing the built environment and adapting the property to climate change by reducing its carbon footprint and help with the move to a low carbon economy.

Case Ref: 38/23/0347 - Variation of Condition No.s 02 (to amend the approved Masterplan and add Parameter Plans), No. 24 (to deliver the spine road on Staplegrove West only), removal of Condition No. 25 (the temporary access road to Corkscrew Lane) of application 34/16/0007 on land at Staplegrove West, Taunton (The Staplegrove Garden Community)

The Council considered the above referenced planning application and resolved to make the following comments and proposals.

The Parish Council decided to focus on those variations that would directly impact Kingston St Mary Parish residents, namely:

I. Amendment to Condition 24, to allow construction and occupation of the consented Staplegrove West development prior to construction of the full Spine Road through Staplegrove East and removal of the Spine Road's 5-year completion requirement.

II. Removal of Condition 25, that seeks a first phase of development from Corkscrew Lane and as a result, the development would be served from the main Silk Mills/A358 junction.

III. Variation to the Section 106 Agreement, to amend the trigger for requirement to deliver a school from prior to 250 units to prior to 575 units.

The Parish Council fully supports the variation to condition 24. This change would enable the main access/exit to the Staplegrove West development to be delivered earlier than originally envisaged, thereby allowing Staplegrove West to come forward ahead of finding a developer for the Staplegrove East development. The Parish Council also fully supports the developers proposed variation to remove the Spine Road's 5 year completion requirement, which presents an opportunity to revisit the Spine Road's proposed junction with Kingston Road. The Parish Council considers the proposals for this large signalised junction to be out of character with Kingston Road, which is a narrow rural road and proposes that it should be redesigned to match the current street scene. In addition, its placement will give rise to dangerous road conditions, as queuing traffic will be unsighted to vehicles approaching from the nearby bends in the road.

The Parish Council fully supports the variation to condition 25, which would allow the Staplegrove West development to commence from the main Silk Mills/A358 junction. This change removes the need for the proposed drop down road from Corkscrew Lane, which is unsuitable, due to its width and configuration, for large construction vehicles to use. It will also help remove traffic from Staplegrove Village that would otherwise result from residential vehicles using Corkscrew Lane as the main access/exit to/from the Staplegrove West development, until the Spine Road is completed. However, to encourage active travel, it is proposed that;
i. pedestrians and cyclists should be able to gain access to Staplegrove West at the previously proposed drop down road junction, thereby avoiding having to use Whitmore Lane and the Spine Road, which would not be LTN120 compliant, when traversing the development;
ii. the shared use path from Clifford Avenue to Greenway Road be improved, as it's currently too narrow, not fit for purpose and not LTN120 compliant. This route will only get busier as the Somerset West development progresses and it needs upgrading, as it provides an active travel connection between the Staplegrove West development and the town centre.

The Parish Council were unable to reach a conclusion concerning the variation to the trigger for delivering the new primary school, due to a lack of expert knowledge in this area and had no reason to challenge the 'Education Landscape Review', commissioned by the Staplegrove West developer, which concluded that: 'There are currently 395 spare places in schools within a two-mile radius of the

	development site. This far exceeds the child yield of 575 dwellings, and is actually the child yield of over 1,200 dwellings. This spare capacity will rise in line with the falling projections;' **Case Ref: 20/23/0048** - Demolition of detached annexe and erection of 1 No. detached dwelling with associated parking at Brantwood, Lodes Lane, Kingston St Mary The Council considered the above referenced planning application and resolved to fully support it. The Parish Council noted that Brantwood is located within Kingston St Mary's settlement boundary and Conservation Area and within the Quantock Hills Natural Landscape. The Heritage Statement, commissioned by the applicant, describes the one-bedroom ancillary accommodation annex, which is to be demolished, as '…an existing modern (circa 2013) suburban building which is poorly designed and untraditional in form, colour and materials.' Consequently, removal of this annex, which has no aesthetic value or historic significance, will not negatively impact upon Kingston St Mary's Conservation Area or the setting of the nearby heritage assets comprising the Church of St Mary's (Grade I) and The Manor House (Grade II*). The Heritage Statement also states that 'Every effort has been made to ensure that the proposed development is of a high quality design that is in keeping with the traditional built form, materials and landscape setting of the conservation area and the setting of the listed buildings. It is hoped by this approach that the new dwellings will provide a sensitive infill that will make a positive contribution to the locality…' From a material planning consideration: • demolition of the detached 1 bedroom annex and construction of a 3 bedroom property of one-and-a-half storeys in height, will make more efficient use of this brownfield site; • this proposed sympathetic addition to the housing stock accords with Kingston St Mary's 2021 Housing Needs Survey, which highlighted the need for more 2/3 bedroom accommodation in the Parish; • the provision of a well-designed property in keeping with existing heritage assets using resources drawn from a local palette of materials to reflect the traditional local vernacular, will protect and enhance the character of Kingston St Mary's Conservation Area; • the incorporation of solar panels, high levels of insulation, air tightness, low energy light fittings, water conservation and provision for electric vehicles, into the property's design will enhance the dwelling's sustainability by reducing its carbon footprint making it more resilient to climate change; • the impact on the surrounding area will be mitigated by retaining the existing trees and landscaping, planting additional trees and reinforcing the north-western boundary hedgerows with additional tree planting. The proposal to establish a traditional orchard between Brantwood and the Church, will be a welcome addition and an echo to the area's heritage, when Kingston St Mary Village was surrounded by orchards. The Parish Council suggests that the landscaping features of this proposal be secured by making them a planning condition, to be approved by the local Planning Authority. The landscaping scheme should include details of the species of the trees to be planted and for heritage value, the proposed orchard should include 'Kingston Black' apple trees.	
5.0	**Matters Outstanding from Previous Minutes –** **i.** **Noticeboard - Staplegrove Rural Area** – The Clerk advised the Council of the process it will need to follow to erect a noticeboard and the first step is to obtain a licence for a fee of £165.00. The Council decided to speak first to the neighbours on Edgeborough Road before proceeding.	Chair/Cllr Stripp

	ii. **D-Day 80th Anniversary Beacon and Fete - 8th June 2024** – The Chair advised the Council that the application for a grant had been rejected. Cllr Stripp updated the Council on the position with the beacon. He also said the band has been organised, he has booked the pizza van and is working on the refreshment van. iii. **Marquee Hire** – The Clerk advised she had spoken to the insurance company and there was an uplift of £10.80 in the premium, but Zurich has waived this fee. Zurich did say the premium would increase by c£20.00 next year to cover the addition of the marquees. iv. **Grit Bins** – The Chair said he finally received an answer from Highways and the Parish Council will need to fill the new grit bins themselves. The Chair said it will cost about £300.00 to buy one tonne of grit and each bin has a capacity of 200 litres. The grit bin in Nailsbourne is full of water and a few holes need to be drilled in it. Cllr Darch said she will sort this out. The Council discussed how they might distribute the grit once delivered and felt it should be ordered before Christmas if possible. **v.** **Playing Field Shelter** – The Chair has received a second quote for £11k. The first quote was £6.5k and needs to be updated as it was received back in March for insurance purposes. vi. **Tree Inspections** – The Clerk advised the tree work will be done in January/February and the contractors will let us know once they have scheduled the works. **vii.** **Flash Flooding and Flood Rapid Response Catchments** – The Chair advised that the Somerset Rivers Authority are consulting on its flood action plan for the next 10 years. Kingston is mentioned in the plan and the Council agreed to respond to the consultation and ask the Somerset Rivers Authority to consider doing some water management in Kingston St Mary. **viii.** **Funding for Projects Using Nature to Increase Flood Resilience** – This agenda item was not discussed as the outcome will not be known until the New Year. **ix.** **Gifts and Hospitality** - Cllr Stripp said he had no update on this and would report back when he does.	Cllr Stripp Chair
6.0	**Kingston Relief in Need Charity** – appointment of a trustee and Clerk to the Charity The Council agreed to appoint Stuart Thorne as a trustee to the Kingston Relief in Need Charity.	Clerk
7.0	**Dog Fouling -** The Chair advised the Council that there have been some concerns raised on Facebook about dog fouling. Cllr Boyce read the post to the Council and the replies. The Council discussed the problem and other areas in the village where dog fouling is occurring. Cllr Darch said this is an enforcement issue so it is a difficult problem for the Council. The Chair said that West Somerset has put a Public Spaces Protection Order in place for dog control which covers various things including dog fouling with penalties and enforcement. The Council decided a softer approach was better, an "appeal to cooperation". Some areas in Taunton have put poo bags up for people to use. The Council agreed to put something in Link Up in the first instance.	Chair
8.0	**Condition of Kingston Road -** The Council heard from a member of the public about the recent accident on the Kingston Road involving a motorcyclist who came off his motorbike on the ice on the road because of surface water from recent flooding. He believes there are multiple problems on the Kingston Road which are causing the flash flooding including drains which are not robust enough and have extensive root growth through them. He said there are problems with drains and water systems both on Parsonage Lane and Kingston Road and this is a source of angst for many villagers. Unfortunately, the drains are not being maintained and neither are the water ways. He feels that unless	

	a proper water management plan is put in place there is a serious risk that multiple homes will flood. He said there are also problems in Yarford and Nailsbourne where properties are also at risk of flooding. The water is also damaging the surface of the road making it dangerous for cyclists and motorists alike. The Chair said the Parish Council wholeheartedly agreed but the question is, what can we do about the situation particularly recognising the financial position of Somerset Council? Cllr Stripp said the Council is starting to look at water management and has applied for funding for a feasibility study looking at flooding problems and possible solutions in the Parish. He also said that he and Somerset Councillor Darch attended the recent Hestercombe LCN meeting where they learned about a collaborative approach being coordinated by West Monkton Parish Council which is bringing multi-agencies together including FWAG to discuss the local flooding situation and look at solutions. Cllr Darch said that FWAG has put together a comprehensive report which includes mapping of the waterways and has identified flooding hot spots. FWAG has also suggested a range of actions such as leaky dams and farming techniques which should help ameliorate the situation. Referring to the problem on the Kingston Road, the member of the public explained how the siphon at the bottom of his drive functions to channel the water under his drive. Protection to the siphon is an overflow which goes into the drains about 10 metres upstream. As the drain has not been dredged the overflow has been artificially raised using sandbags and as a result the siphon is being damaged. The Council agreed the gully upstream appeared to be a major factor in the flooding on the road and needed to be cleared. Cllr Darch said she will liaise with Highways to see if she can get the drain on the Kingston Road cleared. Another member of the public spoke about flooding in a different part of the village. Cllr Stripp spoke about various Councils employing lengths men to do maintenance jobs in their parishes and this may be something Kingston St Mary Parish Council looks at getting involved in. The Chair stressed that the Parish Council will continue to work with other parishes on flooding issues as well as press relevant agencies including Somerset Council to address these issues.	
9.0	**Asset and/or Service Devolution –** The Chair said this is where the Council takes on services it normally gets from Somerset Council. The Council talked about the services they currently get from the list provided by Somerset Council. Cllr Stripp discussed his concerns about the bus service which is funded by the Council. He understands the Council has a statutory duty to provide bus transport at school time and whether the service out with this time is stopped is a big concern. The Council discussed this and felt it important to stress the fares currently are £2.00 each way. This subsidy is due to run until 31 December 2024. The Chair asked the Council whether they want to engage with this process. The Council agreed to approach Somerset Council and say they are interested in exploring certain areas and discussing what a service level agreement might look like.	Chair/Clerk

	The Council also talked about the highway lengths men LCN model and the arrangement West Monkton currently has in place. The Clerk agreed to ask West Monkton about the arrangement they have in place and enquire about hourly rates from a few local contractors.	
10.0	**Local Community Networks** – update LCN was discussed under agenda item 8.	
11.0	**Climate Change** – update Cllr Darch said climate change is happening and we are currently suffering the effects of it.	
12.0	**Neighbourhood Plan** – update Cllr Stripp updated the Council and said the NP has finally got to the Regulation 16 Consultation and the consultation will go on for 8 weeks rather than 6 as it straddles the Christmas period. The consultation will end on 11th January. The NP is available on the Somerset Council website. He has also been given 4 hard copies of the NP and one will be left in the Committee Room in the Village Hall and a second hopefully in the Swan. The next stage will be an independent examination of the NP and then a referendum.	
13.0	**Kingston Community Partnership** – update Cllr Stripp was pleased to advise that KCP was successful in getting the Festive Grant for £250.00.	
14.0	**Financial Matters -** The Council noted the monthly bank reconciliation and approved the following payments: • £12,643.12 – Somerset Council, 20/30mph speed limit scheme • £165.00 – Somerset Council, licence fee for erection of parish noticeboard	
15.0	**Items for Next Agenda -** The Spinney Please pass any other agenda items to the Clerk before the next meeting.	
16.0	**Items for Link Up and KSM Website -** The Chair will do a write up for Link Up.	
17.0	**Date of Next Meeting - 9th January 2024** The meeting closed at 21.12	
Signed:	**Dated:**	