

CREECH ST MICHAEL PARISH COUNCIL

Draft Minutes for the Meeting of Creech St Michael Parish Council held at Creech St Michael Village Hall on **Monday 8 April 2024 at 7.00pm**

Councillor Attendance

Cllr. Annabelle Peters – Chair	AP	Present	Cllr, Neil Davidson – Vice Chair	ND	Present
Cllr. Kieran Roe MBE	KR	Present	Cllr. Charlie Cudlip	CC	Present
Cllr. Barbara Williams	BW	Present	Cllr. Stephen Greenhalgh	SG	Present
Cllr. David Griffin (from 7.35pm)	DG	Present			

Also Present: Twelve (12) members of the public, Cllr David Fothergill (Somerset Council) and Cllr. Norman Cavill (Somerset Council) and Andrew Williams, Creech St Michael Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer.

Meeting started at 7.00pm

1.0	Chair's welcome
	The Chair welcomed members of the public to the meeting and encouraged contributions to the meeting.
2.0	Public Question time - Questions asked by the Public and Press will be noted.
	A resident spoke at length on the matter of opposition to planning application 48/24/0008 and the negative impact of solar panel installations on wildlife and the environment. The resident encouraged the Parish Council to oppose the application. A representative from the developer responsible for application 48/24/0008 clarified that the original proposal was for the installation of a commercial orchard and not a community orchard and as a result the area would not have been accessible to residents.
3.0	To receive Somerset Council Councillors' Reports
	Cllr Fothergill provided a summary of key issues. Mendip local plan consultation: Following a High Court Order to make amendments to the Mendip Local Plan Part 2 (LPP2) Somerset Council is undertaking a formal consultation to review and reconsider housing sites for at least 505 dwellings in the Mendip area. The consultation runs until 12 April 2024 and can be accessed at https://somersetcouncil.citizenspace.com/planning/mendip-local-plan-part-ii-limited-update-reg-18/ Somerset Road Safety: Tragically, 30 people died while travelling on Somerset's roads in 2023 – nearly 43 per cent up on the figure for 2022 and the highest number of fatalities in 10 years. According to Avon and Somerset Police 76 per cent of the collisions involve one or more of the following five behaviours: Intoxicated driving, (drink or drugs); Careless or inconsiderate driving;

	<p>Excessive Speed; Mobile phone use or distraction or Failing to wear a seatbelt. Of the 30 fatal casualties, 11 were car drivers, 12 motorcyclists, four were car passengers, and three were pedestrians.</p> <p>New electric buses: Twenty-five new electric buses are being funded by a £2.2 million grant from the Department for Transport's (DfT) Zero Emission Bus Regional Area scheme, along with a further £12.5million investment from Buses of Somerset. The electric buses will replace part of the current diesel fleet.</p> <p>Voter registration: Residents are being urged to register to vote and check their Voter ID so they can have their say on who represents them in the Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner election. The deadline to register to vote is midnight on Tuesday 16 April.</p> <p>Purple chair scheme: Purple chairs are being installed in Somerset's libraries in Bridgwater, Chard, Frome, Glastonbury, Taunton, Williton and Yeovil to provide a safe space for women and girls to get information about health and wellbeing, as well as support and resources available to them.</p> <p>Additional funding for swimming pools: Somerset Council has been awarded £316,700 of grant funding from Phase 2 of the government's Swimming Pool Support Fund (SPSF).</p> <p>Digital Innovation Centre: The Firepool Centre for Digital Innovation is set to officially open its doors in Taunton.</p> <p>Former Bridgwater Hospital Site: Repair and maintenance works are being carried out on the former Bridgwater Hospital site at Salmon Parade in Bridgwater. The Grade II listed building, which has lain empty since 2014, will have a new lease of life as a state-of-the-art Somerset Academy for Health and Social Care.</p> <p>Go Green Scheme: Somerset Council has secured £100,000 from the Government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund to support 150 eligible companies under the Go Green Scheme. www.gogreenscheme.org.uk</p> <p>Green Business Grants: These grants are available for Somerset based SME's who already have sustainability plans in place. The aim of the grants is to provide financial assistance to take forward identified measures to reduce energy consumption and costs as well as carbon emissions. More information can be found at https://www.somerset.gov.uk/business-economy-and-licences/funding-and-grants-for-business/</p>
4.0	Apologies for Absence
	<p>4.1 To receive apologies for absence.</p> <p>Apologies had been received in advance from Cllr. Giles, Cllr. Birch and Cllr. Tucker. It was also noted that Diane Philips had resigned from her role as Parish Councillor and the vacancy was now being advertised.</p>
	4.2 To approve any apologies for absence.

	Apologies for Cllr. Giles were approved.				
	Prop: SG	Sec:AP	In Favour:6	Against:0	Abstain:0
	Apologies for Cllr. Birch were approved.				
	Prop: SG	Sec:AP	In Favour:6	Against:0	Abstain:0
	Apologies for Cllr. Tucker were approved.				
	Prop: SG	Sec:AP	In Favour:6	Against:0	Abstain:0
5.0	Declarations of Interests				
	5.1 Declarations of Individual Members None.				
	5.2 Dispensation Request None.				
6.0	Minutes				
	To Review and Approve the minutes of the meeting held on 4 March 2024. [M] The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 4 March 2024 were approved and signed by the Chair.				
	Prop: CC	Sec:ND	In Favour:6	Against:0	Abstain:0
7.0	Review and Monitor the Actions Outstanding from Past Meetings – See Appendix A for details of action points and progress toward the completion of each action.				
	Items for Decision				
8.0	Planning Applications – to Consider and Make Recommendations to be passed to the relevant authority on the following Planning Applications (links to the relevant application are available via the planning reference). [M]				
	<p>14/24/0005 Removal of Condition No. 03 of application 14/19/0025 (occupancy of dwelling) at Hillview Barn, Adsborough Lane, Creech St Michael. [M] CC commented that he felt that the application did not present any issues as the property had been used as accommodation for some time. It was proposed that no objection would be raised with the application and this was approved.</p>				
	Prop:CC	Sec:AP	In Favour:6	Against:0	Abstain:0
	<p>48/24/0008 Installation of a ground mounted photovoltaic system (solar panels) to generate carbon free electricity on land off Sweeting Close, Creech St Michael. [M] A representative for the developer spoke about the application and explained that the site was originally intended to be a commercial orchard, but that the developer had decided that the installation of solar panels was a more productive use of the land. CC advised that there was a need for solar power generation and that small sites such as this should be approved as part of efforts to reduce climate change. It was proposed that no objection would be raised subject to assurances being received about planting to the South of the site, to ensure that the view from the canal footpath was protected and that</p>				

	wherever possible, wildflower planting should be used on the site and this was approved. BW objected to the application.				
	Prop: CC	Sec: AP	In Favour:5	Against:1	Abstain:0
	<p>14/24/0003</p> <p>Application for Outline Planning, with all matters reserved, for the erection of 1 No. bungalow in the garden to the side of Spinneyfield, Creech Heathfield Road, Creech St Michael.</p> <p>CC raised concerns about the location of the proposed development as it was out of line with existing properties. CC also raised concerns about the impact of the proposal on the local landscape.</p> <p>It was proposed that the application be objected to on the grounds that the location of the proposed development and the impact that it could have on the landscape and this was approved.</p>				
	Prop:CC	Sec:SG	In Favour:6	Against:0	Abstain:0
9.0	Committee Appointments				
	<p>9.1 To receive nominations for the role of Chair of the Parish Council Planning Committee and to appoint a member to the role. [M]</p> <p>No nominations were received and the proposal was deferred. DG joined the meeting.</p>				
	<p>9.2 To receive nominations for the appointment of three members to the Joint Committee of Creech St Michael Parish Council and West Monkton Parish Council and to appoint members to the roles. [M]</p> <p>CC, DG and KR were nominated as members of the Committee and were approved.</p>				
	Prop:AP	Sec:SG	In Favour:4	Against:0	Abstain:3
10.0	<p>LCN Working Group Appointments – to receive nominations to the LCN Highways Working Group and the Community Youth Project Working Group and to appoint members to the roles. [M]</p> <p>Nominations were received for BW for the LCN Community Youth Project Working Group and SG for the LCN Highways Working Group and were approved.</p>				
	Prop:CC	Sec:AP	In Favour:5	Against:0	Abstain:2
11.0	<p>Adoption of a Bench – proposal for the Parish Council to adopt, repair and maintain a bench. [M]</p> <p>A resident had asked the Parish Council to take responsibility for a bench near the river, which had been built by a resident and had fallen in to dis-repair. The proposal was approved.</p>				
	Prop:AP	Sec:SG	In Favour:7	Against:0	Abstain:0
12.0	<p>Grant Donation - proposal to donate £200.00 to Creech St Michael Village Hall from Party in the Park funds. [M]</p> <p>The proposal was approved.</p>				
	Prop:SG	Sec:ND	In Favour:7	Against:0	Abstain:0
13.0	<p>Reserves Policy – proposal to approve a Reserves Policy. [M]</p> <p>The policy had been considered and approved by the Parish Council Finance Committee. The proposal was approved.</p>				
	Prop:SG	Sec:AP	In Favour:7	Against:0	Abstain:0

14.0	Financial Transactions Report – to review and approve the Financial Transaction Report for the period between 24.02.2024 and 31.03.2024. [M] The Financial Transaction report was approved and signed by the Chair.				
	Prop:SG	Sec:AP	In Favour:7	Against:0	Abstain:0
	Items for Discussion				
15.0	LCN Community Youth Project Working Group meeting feedback. As no one from the Parish Council attended the meeting, no feedback was available.				
16.0	CPRE Community Energy Visioning Project Update. No update.				
	Updates from Committees, Panels and Working Groups				
17.0	Finance Committee				
	17.1 End of Year Financial Summary The Clerk and RFO summarised the year-end position and reported that expenditure was expected to come within the agreed budget.				
18.0	Staffing Committee ND commented that the process for conducting the Clerk and RFO's appraisal had started and that he would be contacting members for input. The Clerk and RFO confirmed that all other appraisals had been completed.				
19.0	Planning Committee No updates.				
20.0	Traffic Panel No update from the panel. The Clerk and RFO shared information on a new device that acted as an Automatic Speed Watch Detector that could be operated 24 hours a day. These were linked to the Police and would produce letters to the motorists. KR questioned the impact of the Speed Indicator Devices and Speedwatch on motorists within the Village of Creech St Michael.				
21.0	Canal Panel ND to arrange for the panel to meet.				
22.0	Party in the Park Working Group No updates.				
23.0	Events				
	23.1 Tug of War An update will be provided following a meeting that will be held on Thursday 10 April 2024. A face painter is being sought along with referees for the Tug of War. Help will be needed on the day to erect gazebos, etc.				
24.0	Footpaths No updates.				
	Other Matters				
25.0	Health & Safety				
	25.1 Incident Report – Recreation Park. The Clerk and RFO advised on an incident where a member of the public had tripped and fallen in the Recreation Park Car Park. The Member of the Public had met with the Clerk and RFO and				

	identified the issue, which was an old metal post that was protruding from the ground. This needed to be cut away with an angle grinder.
26.0	Correspondence
	26.1 To consider any correspondence received that Councillors wish to raise that has already been circulated.
	26.2 To note items of correspondence received by the Clerk and RFO deemed appropriate to be brought to the attention of the Parish council. CC shared feedback from a resident on the Langaller Park planning application. 26.2.1 Somerset Council - City, Town and Parish Council Update Regarding Sandbags The communication was noted.
27.0	New Matters to be Carried Forward
	None.

The meeting ended at 9.06pm

[V] = Where a resolution (vote) is expected

Andrew Williams, CSM PC, Clerk and RFO, 07708 680797, email clerk@creechstmichael.net

The next Creech St Michael (CSM) Parish Council meetings are on:

Annual Parish Meeting 7 May 2024
13 May 2024

at 6.30pm in the CSM Village Hall
at 7pm in the CSM Village Hall



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Date of Original Meeting Action Raised	Minute Ref.	Action Point	Responsibility & Timeframe	Date Completed	Outcome/Further Actions	Complete
05.02.2024	2.0	Explore option for clearance of the footpath alongside Lipe Lane.	Clerk and RFO 04.06.2024		<p>01.03.2024 Meeting held with Community Payback Project Officer to consider works that need to be undertaken.</p> <p>25.03.2024 Follow up requesting update on the likelihood of the project progressing made.</p> <p>24.04.2024 Community Payback Project Officer confirmed that they are unable to progress the works.</p>	✓
05.02.2024	8.0	Implementation of budget proposals.	Clerk and RFO 31.03.2024		<p>12.02.2024 Notice given of cessation of service to Walford Security.</p> <p>13.02.2024 Notice given of cessation of funding to the Community Youth Project. Dialogue opened with Community Youth Project and Somerset Youth Alliance to explore external funding opportunities.</p> <p>13.02.2024 Contact made with West Monkton Parish Council to explore viability of sharing use of their mower.</p> <p>26.03.2024 A positive response from West Monkton Parish Council received, subject to insurance and agreement of a schedule and financial contribution.</p>	

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08.01.2024	12.0	Clerk and RFO to submit a request to the DHSC for funding for two defibrillators, one to be sited at the Recreation Park and one at or near to Adsborough.	Clerk and RFO 05.02.204		08.01.2024 Resident at Adsborough contacted and asked to assist in finding a suitable location for the Defib. 25.01.2024 Defibrillators shipped and arrived and now in storage. 16.02.2024 Defibrillator installed at the Recreation Park. Second location under discussion.	
06.11.2023	29.2.1	Clerk and RFO to contact West Monkton Parish Council to collaborate on a submission to Somerset Highways to address the issues with large vehicles using Coombe Lane.	Clerk and RFO 04.12.2023		27.11.2023 Contact with West Monkton Parish Council made and details of the issue shared. West Monkton Parish Council to consider and respond. 13.12.2023 Email sent to Somerset Roads requesting that the Lane be designated with a maximum weight of 7.5 tonnes. 15.12.2023 response received and request for more evidence received.	
02.10.2023	9.0	Members to identify risks that are not listed on the draft Risk register and forward these to the Clerk and RFO.	All members 06.11.2023			
05.06.2023	2.0	Clerk and RFO to contact the relevant parties to request that the issue of overgrown hedges be dealt with on the lane between Hyde Lane and Leighton Drive.	Clerk and RFO 03.07.2023		20.06.2023 Managing Agent contacted and confirmation received that they are not responsible for Hyde Lane vegetation. Response awaited from David Wilson Homes. 07.11.2023 Letter written to David Wilson Homes requesting that the vegetation be dealt with.	

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					<p>09.11.2023 Holding response received from David Wilson Homes.</p> <p>22.11.2023 David Wilson Homes confirm that a consultant has been appointed to address the outstanding adoption issues.</p> <p>18.12.2023 Chasing email sent and response received to indicate it had been passed to another team to respond.</p> <p>19.01.2024 Chasing email sent and response received to indicate it had been passed to another team to respond. No progress being made on this issue.</p> <p>27.03.2024 Deadline of 08 April 2024 given for resolution of the matter or legal steps to be taken to resolve the matter.</p> <p>28.03.2024 Response received from David Wilson Homes stating that the delay in resolving the matter sits with Somerset Council.</p> <p>02.04.2024 Request made to Cllr. Fothergill to intervene.</p>	
05.06.2023	23.2	To request that the markings for the virtual pavement at North end are reinstated to improve visibility.	Clerk and RFO 03.07.2023		03.07.2023 A recent meeting with the Highways Officer from Somerset Council had confirmed a commitment to reline the Virtual Footpath.	

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15.05.2023	15	The Clerk and RFO would confirm the approved sites for the Speed Indicator Devices with Somerset Council Highways.	Clerk and RFO 05.06.2023		<p>23.05.2023 request sent to Somerset Council Highways requesting confirmation of approved sites.</p> <p>05.06.2023 The Clerk and RFO confirmed that the two existing sites were the only that had been fully approved and that a meeting with highways to discuss further sites was being scheduled for late June or early July.</p> <p>04.12.2023 Highways to confirm locations and await the installation of new poles to accommodate solar SIDs. Likely to be delayed until May/June 2024.</p> <p>21.02.2024 Further contact held with Traffic Engineer to arrange a site meeting.</p> <p>30.04.2024 Awaiting further meeting with Speedwatch and Traffic Panel to agree sites.</p>	
06.02.2023	12.0	Clerk and RFO to pursue the use of the Money Claim service to seek the recovery of the funds paid to Oakleaf Joinery & Design.	Clerk and RFO 06.03.2023	15.02.2023	<p>15.02.2023 Money Claim online started and evidence submitted.</p> <p>16.03.2023 A request to issue a County Court Judgement was made via the Money Claim service.</p> <p>24.03.2023 County Court Judgement issued and received.</p> <p>15.05.2023 Request to be issued for a Warrant of Control.</p> <p>12.07.2023 case transferred to Yeovil Crown Court and a warrant issued.</p>	
09.01.2023	3.0	Update the Neighbourhood Plan in light of the changes being	TBC		15.05.2023 To be considered at the next Planning committee meeting.	

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		brought about by local government reorganisation.			05.06.2023 See agenda item 20.1. 27.11.2023 To be discussed by the Planning Committee.	
09.01.2023	3.0	Clerk and RFO to respond to Cllr. Fothergill's enquiry about a bus shelter for Creech Heathfield.	Clerk and RFO 06.02.2023		27.01.2022 See item 22.2 on the agenda for meeting held on 06.02.2023. 16.03.2023 Awaiting a response from Somerset Council Highways. 25.11.2023 Cllr. Peters in contact with resident about the issue. 11.12.2023 Contact with Roads Records initiated following advice from Somerset Highways. 12.12.2023 Request submitted to First Bus Group for data on bus stop use for the previous 12 months. 12.01.2024 response received from Somerset Road Records received outlining process. Initial costs of £765.00 to cover application, licenses and legal costs. Planning Application may also be necessary.	
COMPLETED ACTIONS						
04.12.2023	8.0	Clerk and RFO to contact Somerset Bus Partnership to obtain more information on the scale of funding required.	Clerk and RFO 08.01.2024		05.12.2023 Contact made with Somerset Bus Partnership and request made. Response received and awaiting further information. 31.12.202 Information shared that 4 decals had been sited within Creech St Michael. 500 decals have been printed to cover Somerset.	✓

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05.09.2022	18	Clerk to contact Somerset West and Taunton Council to arrange for the installation of the small combined bin and to enquire of the cost of moving the dog waste bin on the site.	Clerk & RFO 03.10.2022		<p>22.09.2022 Request submitted to Somerset West and Taunton Street Scene team.</p> <p>23.09.2022 Response received – cost of relocating dog waste bin £100.00 + VAT. 03.10.2022 Plan to be drawn up to locate larger bin and replace dog waste bin.</p> <p>07.11.2022 Site meeting to be arranged for councillors by the Clerk and RFO.</p> <p>15.06.2023 Clerk and RFO contacted the Street Scene team at Somerset Council to approve installation.</p> <p>20.07.2023 Contact with Street Scene Manager made. Awaiting quotation for costs of installation and supply of waste bin.</p> <p>25.07.2023 Costs confirmed as previously agreed and purchase order issued. Lead time likely 7 to 8 weeks.</p> <p>30.10.2023 A further update has been requested from the Street Scene team on the likely installation date.</p> <p>06.11.2023 Telephone call with Somerset Council Street Scene team. Installation committed to within 14 days.</p>	✓
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					11.12.2023 Bin installed.	
06.11.2023	14.0	ND would seek a meeting with the local store manager to discuss the issues with the opening times of the Post Office.	ND 04.12.2023		ND spoke with store staff and received assurances that the issue was being addressed with the addition of more trained staff members.	✓
02.10.2023	14.0	Contact to be made with the Woodland Trust to explore the offer of free trees for planting within the community.	Clerk and RFO 06.11.2023	10.10.2023	90 small hedge plants and 30 small copse trees will be delivered in March 2024.	✓
03.07.2023	20.0	The Clerk and RFO to obtain a quote from Walford Security for a locking and call out service for the car park.	Clerk and RFO 04.09.2023		02.10.2023 No longer required.	✓
04.09.2023	4.0	Clerk and RFO to present a proposal to implement a member attendance policy.	Clerk and RFO 02.10.2023		02.10.2023 See item 7 on the agenda.	✓

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03.07.2023	3.0	Cllr. Cavill asked that the Parish Council write to the owner of the property on the corner of Paddock Close to request that their hedgerow be cut back as it was causing pedestrians to have to walk in to the road.	Clerk and RFO 04.09.2023		07.08.2023 Letter written to the resident. 25.08.2023 No response received and no action taken by the resident. 04.09.2023 vegetation has been reduced and no longer presents an issue.	✓
15.05.2023	14	It was agreed that CC and ND would contact the landowner and arrange to meet and discuss the proposed allotment site lease.	Cllr. Cudlip and Cllr. Davidson 05.06.2023		05.06.2023 Cllr. Davidson confirmed that he had spoken to the landowner and confirmed that he was willing to sign an agreement on the terms proposed. The Clerk and RFO to send an agreement to the landowner. 13.06.2023 Lease agreement sent to landowner. 20.07.2023 Signed lease agreement received from the landowner.	✓
03.07.2023	8.0	Clerk and RFO to contact Somerset Council to seek a formal arrangement for the disposal of waste from the Recreation Park.	Clerk and RFO 04.09.2023		23.08.2023 No such service available from Somerset Council. Advice from SC is that "All businesses producing any waste should have a trade waste agreement with a registered waste carrier or take their refuse to a site licensed to accept trade waste."	✓

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Item 13.

Meeting Dates

1.0 Proposal

To approve a schedule of meeting dates for all parish council committees for the 2024/25 calendar year.

2.0 Proposed Schedule

Full Council	Finance Committee	Staffing Committee	Planning Committee	Joint Committee With West Monkton Parish Council
07.05.2024 (Annual Parish Meeting)	22.07.2024	15.07.2024	21.05.2024	TBC
	21.10.2024	21.10.2024	25.06.2024	
13.05.2024 (Annual Meeting of the Parish Council)	16.12.2024	17.02.2025	30.07.2024	
	24.02.2024		20.08.2024	
			24.09.2024	
03.06.2024			29.10.2024	
01.07.2024			26.11.2024	
02.09.2024			28.01.2025	
07.10.2024			31.03.2024	
04.11.2024				
02.12.2024				
06.01.2025				
03.02.2024				
03.03.2024				

3.0 Recommendation

That the schedule of dates is approved.

Andrew Williams
Clerk and RFO
15.04.2024

Item 15.

Recreation Park Security

1.0 Proposal

To consider a number of options to improve the security of buildings and assets at the Rec. Park and to minimise the impact of anti-social behaviour on users of the Park and neighbouring residents and to approve an approach for implementation.

2.0 Introduction

The Rec. Park has been subject to a number of incidents of anti-social behaviour, damage and a report of an assault on a young person. From 01 April 2024, the locking and unlocking service provided by Walford Security ceased and as a result, the Park gates were left unlocked overnight. Within a very short period of time, reports were received of anti-social behaviour being witnessed in the evenings.

Whilst every effort to maintain the security of the buildings on site, evidence would indicate that someone gained access to keys to allow them entry to the Pavilion Building and as a result damage was done to an electric radiator within the changing rooms and there was evidence of substance misuse found within the building.

Following recent incidents, the lock on the Pavilion Building door was changed and the locking and unlocking service resumed. This paper sets out a series of options to provide improved security at the Rec. Park.

Note: A recent survey undertaken by a specialist access control provider identified a health and safety risk from the Pavilion Building doors. The main doors are the only access route in and out of the building and can be locked from the inside. This presents a significant risk in the event of the need to evacuate the building.

3.0 Options for Consideration

3.1 Restrict Access

This option seeks to minimize short term costs, but will restrict access to some users.

- Maintain the locking and unlocking service with Walford Security.
- Installation of restricted keyway locks on the Pavilion and Engine Shed Buildings, to remove the risk of key duplication.
- Restrict access to keys for all buildings to Parish Council employees and employees of designated service providers such as the Community Youth Project.
- Cease hiring of the football pitch.

Annual cost of £8,400.00 (ex VAT).

Initial cost of £600.00 (ex VAT)

Loss of income of approximately £500.00 per annum.

3.2 Manage Access

This option seeks to maintain access to buildings to all users.

- Install a commercial standard of CCTV system to provide whole-site coverage, including night vision.
- Replace doors of the Public Toilet, Pavilion and Engine Shed building with aluminium/composite doors to facilitate the installation of keyless fob entry and/or time controlled entry.

Annual costs of £500.00 (ex. VAT)

Initial cost of approximately £18,000.00 to £20,000.00 (ex. VAT).

3.3 Fully Secure

- Maintain the locking and unlocking service with Walford Security.
- Install a commercial standard of CCTV system to provide whole-site coverage, including night vision.
- Replace doors of the Public Toilet, Pavilion and Engine Shed building with aluminium/composite doors to facilitate the installation of keyless fob entry and/or time controlled entry.

Annual costs of £8,900.00

Initial cost of approximately £18,000.00 to £20,000.00.

4.0 Financial Implications

The budget agreed earlier this year did not make allowance for the continuation of the locking and unlocking service. Neither did it allocate funds for the installation of a CCTV system. Both these will have to be funded from reserves or the reallocation of funds from other cost centres or from CIL funds. CIL funds currently stand at £7,436.45.

5.0 Recommendation

That members consider the options presented and determine an approach that can be investigated further by the Clerk and RFO, with the provision of detailed plans and quotations for each agreed proposal to follow in due course.

Andrew Williams

Clerk and RFO

01.05.2024

Item 16.

Recreation Park Electricity Supply

1.0 Proposal

To approve a quotation for a new contract to supply electricity to the Recreation Park.

2.0 Introduction

The two fixed term supply contracts with EDF Energy are due to expire at the end of June 2023, these supply the Pavilion Building and the Engine Shed/Ticket Office buildings. Both supplies are fitted with Smart Meters.

3.0 Proposal

After extensive research, the following quotations are proposed for consideration.

Pavilion Building

The current tariff is a standing charge of £0.60 per day and a kWh charge of £0.7537, resulting in an annual charge of £1,032.99

Supplier	Standing Charge (£ per day)	Kwh Charge (£)	Predicted Annual Cost (£)	Contract Length
Yü Energy	0.48877	0.26495	464.52	36 Months
EDF Energy	0.60	0.271	511.68	36 Months
Opus Energy	1.34	0.2599	769.79	36 Months

Engine Shed/Ticket Office Building

The current tariff is a standing charge of £0.25 per day and a kWh charge of £0.2110, resulting in an annual charge of £101.80

Supplier	Standing Charge (£ per day)	Kwh Charge (£)	Predicted Annual Cost (£)	Contract Length
Yü Energy	0.2825	0.3092	118.57	36 Months
EDF Energy	0.60	0.271	232.55	36 Months
Opus Energy	0.94	0.2599	356.10	36 Months

4.0 Profile of Providers

Yü Energy

Yü Energy is a leading independent energy supplier to over 20,000 locations across the UK. They are a business energy supply specialist, part of Yü Group PLC.

EDF Energy

EDF Energy are one of the leading suppliers of both domestic and commercial energy in the UK.

Opus Energy

Opus Energy is part of Drax Group and supplies over 130,000 UK premises. Drax runs the UK's biggest single-site renewable power generation plant.

4.0 Variable Tariff

The predictions for the commercial energy market for the immediate period is that prices are likely to continue on a downward trend as wholesale prices reduce. The current EDF tariff under their Freedom for Business plan is a standing charge of £0.60 per day and a kWh charge of £0.7537. The option to remain on a variable tariff is available.

5.0 Recommendation

That the quotation provided by Yü Energy is accepted and approved.

Andrew Williams
Clerk and RFO
01 May 2024



Item 17.

Tree Survey report – Canal Car Park

1.0 Proposal

To receive the report of the survey of trees at the Canal Car Park and to approve expenditure of £600 excluding VAT to allow for urgent works to be completed.

2.0 Introduction

Arboricare Ltd was appointed by the Parish Council to undertake a survey of trees in the Canal Car Park and the Recreation Park. The survey of the Canal Car Park was conducted on 30 April 2024.

The agreement sets out the Parish Council's responsibilities for maintaining the use of the SIDs and the locations that are used to site the devices.

3.0 Findings

The report details an appraisal of 26 trees and finds that four are in a dangerous condition, requiring urgent works. A further three are identified as being in poor condition, requiring attention within the next twelve months, with others identified as needing some remedial works.

4.0 Recommendation

That members give approval for the urgent works to be undertaken by Arboricare at a cost of £575.00 (excluding VAT).

5.0 Financial Implications

The Canal Car Park was allocated £500.00 in this year's budget. To progress the full works required within twelve months, it is proposed that £1,000.00 be transferred from reserves to the Canal Car Park budget,

Andrew Williams
Clerk and RFO
03.05.2024

TREE REPORT

TITLE

Canal Car Park, Creech St Michael

INSPECTED BY;

COLIN INDER AA Tech Cert. Tech Arbor A.

ARBORICARE LTD

NEW RENDY FARM

OAKE

TAUNTON

SOMERSET

TA4 1BB

INSTRUCTED BY

Mr Williams

DATE

April 2024

TREE REPORT

SUMMARY

1.0 INSTRUCTIONS

1.1 I was instructed by Mr Williams to carry out a tree inspection of the trees within the grounds of the Canal Car Park at Creech St Michael. I was asked to report on the following.

- A) Health, safety, and overall condition of the trees.
- B) Make recommendations regarding any future management needs.

REPORT LIMITATIONS

- 1.2 An inspection was carried out at ground level.
- 1.3 The inspection was carried out using visual methods.
- 1.4 All measurements are in metres (m) and centimetres (cm) and millimetres (mm) and are approximate.
- 1.5 Words written in *italic* please refer to the Glossary.
- 1.6 Trees are living organisms whose health and condition can change rapidly, the health, condition and safety of trees should be checked on a regular basis, preferably once a year. The conclusions and recommendations in this report are only valid for a period of one year. This period of validity may be reduced in the case of any change in conditions to the tree, or in proximity to the tree.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The trees were inspected on the 30th April 2024 conditions were overcast.
- 2.2 It is not known if the trees are covered by *Tree Preservation orders* or situated within a *Conservation Area*
- 2.3 The trees are of mixed deciduous species.
- 2.4 The trees are within a car park area and several foot paths run through and beside the trees. These are consider *Targets*

3.0 CONCLUSION.

The site is a busy car park. Many of the trees have low growth over footways and car parking areas which require pruning works to mitigate a nuisance. Several trees have been identified as being dead or have major structural defects and require prompt felling to mitigate a relatively high risk of property damage or injury. Please see attached findings and work recommendations.

4.0 FINDINGS

Tree ID	Tree Type	Height (m)	Maturity	Overall	Branches	Leaf/Buds	Roots	Stem	Work Category 1	Work Item 1	Priority 1	Cost 1 £ excl VAT	Work Category 2	Work Item 2	Cost 2 £ Excl VAT	Comment
T1	Oak	10	Semi-mature	Good	Minor dead wood; Low hanging branches	Normal	No visual defects	Ivy covered; No visual defect	Raise low canopy		1 yr.	30				Crown biased towards track. Low canopy over car park. Raise to give 2.5m clearance over the car park.
T2	Lime	11	Mature	Good	Minor dead wood; Low hanging branches	Normal	No visual defects	No visual defect; Ivy covered	Raise low canopy							Low canopy over car park. Raise to give 2.5m clearance over the car park.
T3	Lime	11	Mature	Fair	Low hanging branches	Normal	No visual defects	Weak fork Cavity's, Ivy covered	Raise low canopy							Low canopy over car park. Raise to give 2.5m clearance over the car park.
T4	Lime	11	Mature	Good	Minor dead wood; Low hanging branches	Normal	No visual defects	Leaning; Ivy covered	Raise low canopy							Low canopy over car park. Raise to give 2.5m clearance over the car park.
T5	Hawthorn	8	Mature	Good	No visual defects	Normal	No visual defects	No visual defect; Ivy covered	No action							Low canopy over car park. Raise to give 2.5m clearance over the car park.
G6	Maple	11	Mature	Fair	Minor dead wood; Weak fork	Normal	No visual defects	Weak fork; Ivy covered	No action							Seven trees in the group
T7	Ash	8	Semi-mature	Poor	Major dead wood; Apical die back; Major cavities; Old pruning wounds; Minor dead wood; Epicormic growths	25% dead / absent	Soil compaction	Bark wounds	Fell	Fell and remove stump(s)	6 Mnth	250				Tree beside foot path and car parking area Fire damaged branches. Ash dieback stages 2-3. Branch and stem base wounds.

Tree Report Creech St Michael Canal Car Park

April 24

Tree ID	Tree Type	Height (m)	Maturity	Overall	Branches	Leaf/Buds	Roots	Stem	Work Category 1	Work Item 1	Priority 1	Cost 1 £ excl VAT	Work Category 2	Work Item 2	Cost 2 £ Excl VAT	Comment
T8	Apple	7	Mature	Good	Minor dead wood; Old pruning wounds; Low hanging branches	Normal	No visual defects	Bark wounds	Raise low canopy			20				Low branches over car parking area
T9	Birch	8	Mature	Fair	Major dead wood; Stubs	25% dead / absent	No visual defects	Stubs; Tight union	Remove	Major dead wood		40				Beside car park
T10	Prunus	10	Mature	Dangerous	Damage / wounding; Weak fork	Normal	No visual defects	Cracked / included bark	Fell	Fell and remove stump(s)	Critical	325				Split primary union visibly moving in light winds.
T11	Birch	5	Dead	Dangerous		All dead / absent	Fungus or decay	Fungus or decay	Fell		Critical	150				Overhanging car parking – dead tree
G12	Hazel	7	Mature	Good	Low hanging branches; Minor dead wood	Normal	No visual defects	Tight union; Leaning	Raise low canopy	To 3.0m	3 Mnths	150				Low branches over car parking area
T13	Maple	12	Mature	Good	Minor dead wood; Ivy in crown; Tight union	Normal	No visual defects	Tight union; Ivy covered	No action							
T14	Ash	11	Mature	Fair	Minor dead wood; Weak fork; Low hanging branches	Normal	No visual defects	No visual defect	Remove	Faulted branch/lim bs. Raise low canopy to 3m height. Remove major deadwood	3 Mnths	100				
T15	Maple	11	Mature	Good	Minor dead wood; Low hanging branches	Normal	No visual defects	Ivy covered, multi stemmed	Raise low canopy	To 3.0m		40				Low branches over car parking area

Tree Report Creech St Michael Canal Car Park

April 24

Tree ID	Tree Type	Height (m)	Maturity	Overall	Branches	Leaf/Buds	Roots	Stem	Work Category 1	Work Item 1	Priority 1	Cost 1 £ excl VAT	Work Category 2	Work Item 2	Cost 2 £ Excl VAT	Comment
G16	Maple	11	Mature	Fair	Old pruning wounds, Pollard, tight union; Ivy in crown; Minor dead wood; Low hanging branches	Normal	No visual defects	Old pruning wounds; Ivy covered; Leaning	No action							10 trees growing beside and 1 growing through the wooden post and rail fence. Historically cut 120cm above the top of the fence line.
T17	Prunus	10	Mature	Fair	Minor dead wood; Major dead wood; Ivy in crown	Normal	No visual defects	Leaning, Stubs; Ivy covered	No action							Within group of trees
G18	Hazel	4.5	Mature	Poor	Major dead wood; Low hanging branches	50% dead / absent	Fungus or decay	Ivy covered	Coppice	To 0.5m stumps	3 Mnths	50				Two hazel stools. One dead and the other has partially failed. Coppice both trees. Both marked with red spots.
T19	Oak	12	Mature	Good	Minor dead wood	Normal	No visual defects	No visual defect	No action							
T20	Alder	9	Mature	Fair	Major deadwood	Normal	No visual defects	No visual defects	Remove	Major deadwood	3Mnths	80				Large dead branches within crown
T21	Horse Chestnut	10	Mature	Good	Low hanging branches	Normal	No visual defects	No visual defect	No action							
G22	Maple	12	Mature	Good	Minor dead wood; Low hanging branches	Normal	No visual defects	Ivy covered	Raise low canopy	To 3.0m	1 yr.	40	Remove	Faulted branch /limbs		Group of eight field maples beside fence.

Tree Report Creech St Michael Canal Car Park

April 24

Tree ID	Tree Type	Height (m)	Maturity	Overall	Branches	Leaf/Buds	Roots	Stem	Work Category 1	Work Item 1	Priority 1	Cost 1 £ excl VAT	Work Category 2	Work Item 2	Cost 2 £ Excl VAT	Comment
G23	Ash	12.5	Mature	Poor	Apical die back; Epicormic growths; Minor dead wood; Major dead wood	50% dead / absent; 25% dead / absent	No visual defects	Ivy covered	Fell		1 yr.	600				Two ash trees near entrance and neighbouring access road. Ash dieback stage 3
T24	Sorbus	4	Dead	Dangerous	Dead	All dead / absent	Fungus or decay	Leaning	Fell		Critical	50				Dead leaning Sorbus marked with a red dot.
T25	Oak	7.5	Semi-mature	Good	Minor dead wood	Normal	No visual defects	Ivy covered	No action							
T26	Maple	5	Dead	Dangerous	Major dead wood	All dead / absent	Fungus or decay	Fungus or decay	Fell		Critical	50				

5.0 General considerations

Before undertaking any works to the tree, it is advisable to check with the local planning authority to determine whether the trees are covered by a **Tree Preservation Order** (TPO) or whether they are within a Conservation Area. Planning consent is required to carry out works to a tree covered by a TPO. Six weeks' notice of intent will be required to carry out works to a tree within a **Conservation Area**.¹

Recommended tree works should be carried out by a Arboricultural Association Approved Contractor working to a minimum standard of **BS 3998:2010**

This report is for the sole use of the above named client and refers to only those trees identified within; use by any other person(s) in attempting to apply its contents for any other purpose renders the report invalid for that purpose.

Signed _____ *Colin Inder* _____ Date 30th April 2024 _____.

ABOUT THE TREE AUTHOR.

I have been working as an arboriculturist for 33 years, employing 8 staff at present. We carry out a range of Arboricultural tasks including tree inspections on a regular basis. I attained the Royal Forestry Certificate in Arboriculture in 1995 at Kingston Maurward College in Dorset. I hold an Arboricultural Associations Technicians Certificate and I have completed the LANTRA professional tree inspector's course.

REFERENCES

Occupiers Liability act 1957&1984
Diagnosis of Ill Health in Trees, Strouts & Winter 1994
The Body Language of Trees, Mattheck & Breloer 1994
Modern Arboriculture, Alex L. Shigo 1991
A New Tree Biology, Alex L. Shigo 1986
Mushrooms and other fungi of Great Britain& Europe, Roger Phillips 1981
British Standard Recommendations for Tree work, BS3998:1989
Principles of Tree Hazard Assessment & Management, Lonsdale 1999
Tree Preservation Orders a Guide to Good Practice. DETR 2000
Bats & Trees, The Bat Conservation Trust, Tel 01716278822
Veteran Trees: A guide to good management, Helen read 2000

Glossary

Targets: In tree hazard assessments persons or property or other things of value which might be harmed by mechanical failure of the tree or parts falling from it.

Tree preservation order; A specific instrument to protect amenity trees and woodland.

Conservation area; A protection order that allows the local planning authority 6 weeks to place a TPO on a tree.

BS 3998; A set of recommendations for tree works issued by the British standards institution. also a term sometimes used to describe the occluding tissues around a wound.

Arboricultural Association Approved Contractor: A quality assured tree care business that is regularly assessed for health and safety procedures, office and business practices, including customer care as well as their quality of work by the Arboricultural Association (AA). They will display the AA approved Contractor logo. Check the contractor's approval on the AA website www.trees.org.uk via find a tree surgeon.

6.0 APPENDIX II

T1, T2, T3 & T4



G6



G6 Detail of a weak fork



T7, Ash



T7 Detail of branch cavity



T8 Apple





T11 Birch Dead tree



T11 Dead Birch tree



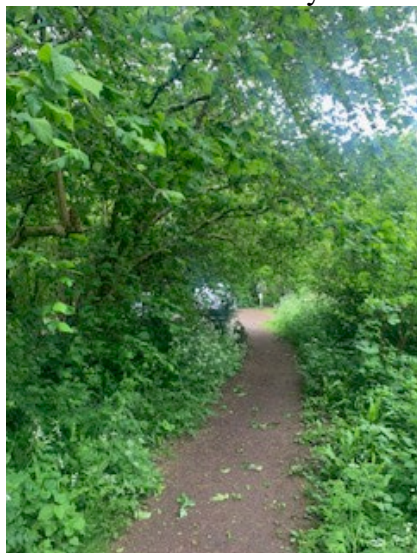


T11 Birch



T10 Cherry





G12 Hazel



T14 Ash





T13 Field Maple



G16 Field Maple Group



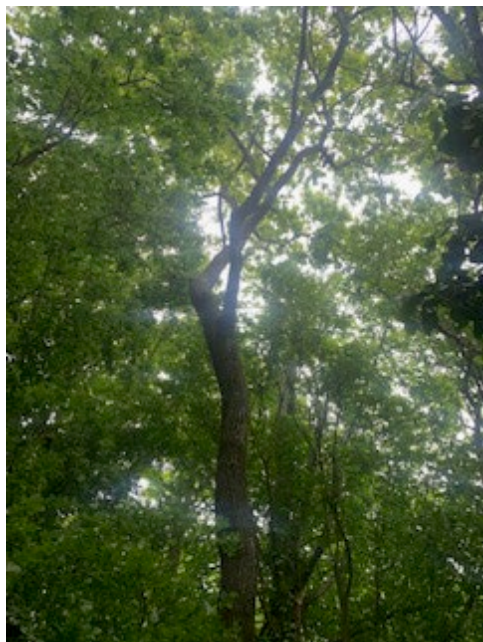
G16 Field Maple Group



G18 Hazel (fell)



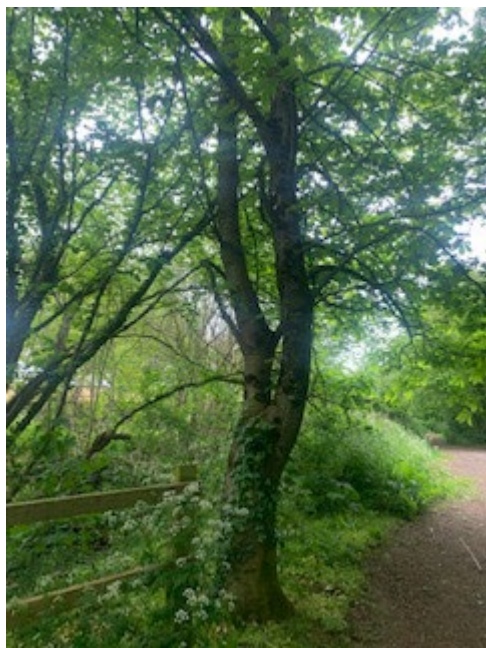
T19 Oak



T20 Alder



T21 Horse Chestnut



G22 Group of Maple trees beside fence



G23 Group of Ash trees dead/dying. (Infected with Ash dieback)



T24 Sorbus, dead tree.



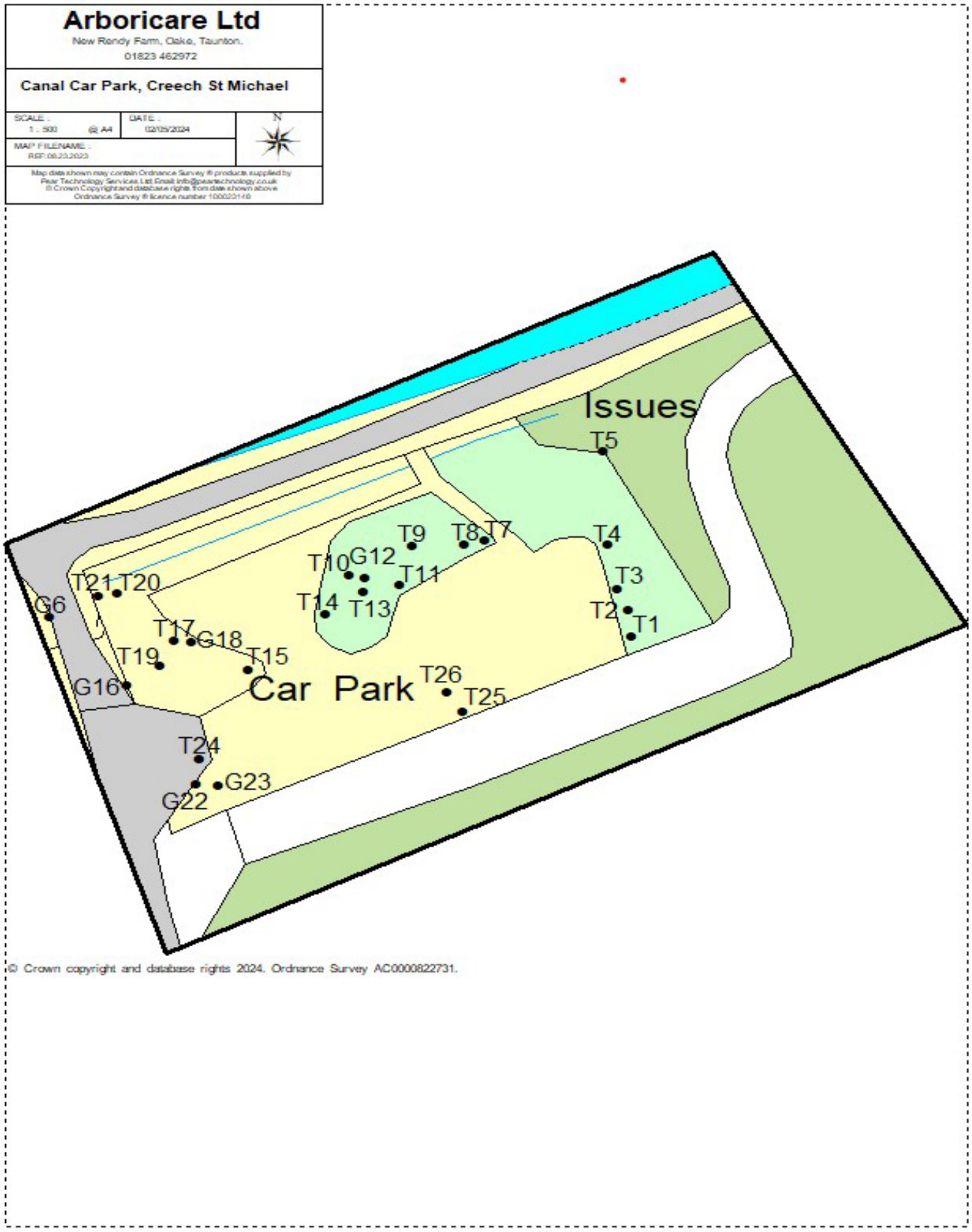
T25 Ivy covered Oak



T26 Maple, dead tree.



7.0 LOCATION MAP



Creech St Michael Parish Council

7 May 2024 (2024-2025)

PAYMENTS LIST

Vouche	Code	Date	Minute	Bank	Cheque No	Description	Supplier	VAT Type	Net	VAT	Total
1	Utilities (Electricity)	04/04/2024		Unity Trust Bank		Electricity Charges	EDF	L	83.42	4.17	87.59
2	Utilities (Electricity)	04/04/2024		Unity Trust Bank		Electricity Charges	EDF	L	7.96	0.40	8.36
4	Member Training	04/04/2024		Unity Trust Bank		Training Course Charges	Tim Burton Planning Ltd	E	251.70		251.70
3	Security	04/04/2024		Unity Trust Bank		Locking & Unlocking Service	Walford Security Ltd	S	714.00	142.80	856.80
5	Member Training	04/04/2024		Unity Trust Bank		Training Course Charges	The Somerset Association	E	20.00		20.00
6	Repairs & Maintenance (Play E	04/04/2024		Unity Trust Bank		Signage Production	The Great Outdoor Gym Cc	S	72.00	14.40	86.40
7	Membership & Subscription Fee	16/04/2024		Unity Trust Bank		Annual Membership Charges	Somerset Playing Fields As	E	15.00		15.00
8	Cleaning	16/04/2024		Unity Trust Bank		Bus Shelter Cleaning	Reflections	E	75.00		75.00
9	S137 Grants	16/04/2024	08.04.2024 item 12	Unity Trust Bank		Donation	Creech St Michael Village F	E	200.00		200.00
10	Mobile Phone Charges	22/04/2024		Unity Trust Bank		Mobile Phone Charges	Tesco PLC	S	15.83	3.16	18.99
11	Venue Hire	24/04/2024		Unity Trust Bank		Room Hire Charges	Creech St Michael Village F	E	82.50		82.50
13	Tax & NI	25/04/2024		Unity Trust Bank		Tax and National Insurance Co	HMRC	E	2,902.82		2,902.82
12	Pension Contributions	25/04/2024		Unity Trust Bank		Pension Contribution	NEST	E	176.98		176.98
14	Salaries	26/04/2024		Unity Trust Bank		Salary and Expenses Payment	Andrew Williams	E	1,843.71		1,843.71
14	General Administration Expense	26/04/2024		Unity Trust Bank		Salary and Expenses Payment	Andrew Williams	E	69.20		69.20
15	Salaries	26/04/2024		Unity Trust Bank		Salary Payment	Francis Reading	E	484.09		484.09
16	Salaries	26/04/2024		Unity Trust Bank		Salary Payment	Karen Hutchings	E	594.91		594.91
Total									7,609.12	164.93	7,774.05

Creech St Michael Parish Council

7 May 2024 (2024-2025)

PAYMENTS LIST

Vouche	Code	Date	Minute	Bank	Cheque No	Description	Supplier	VAT Type	Net	VAT	Total
17	Bank Charges	03/04/2024		SOLDO Debit card		Bank Charges	SOLDO Software Limited	S	18.00	3.60	21.60
18	General Administration Expens	08/04/2024		SOLDO Debit card		Printer Paper	Sounds Wholesale Ltd	S	21.02	4.20	25.22
20	General Administration Expens	08/04/2024		SOLDO Debit card		Meeting Refresments	Sainsbury's Supermarkets I	E	4.00		4.00
19	Consumables	08/04/2024		SOLDO Debit card		Cleaning Products	Cleaning Supplies 4 U Limit	S	218.45	43.69	262.14
21	Grounds Maintenance (Internal	18/04/2024		SOLDO Debit card		Painting Materials	B&Q Limited	S	31.26	6.25	37.51
23	Other Events	24/04/2024		SOLDO Debit card		Advertisement	Meta Platforms Ireland Lim	E	8.00		8.00
22	Repairs & Maintenance (Buildin	25/04/2024		SOLDO Debit card		Key Cutting	Timpson Ltd	E	15.00		15.00
25	Bank Charges	03/05/2024		SOLDO Debit card		Bank Charges	SOLDO Software Limited	S	18.00	3.60	21.60
24	Other Events	03/05/2024		SOLDO Debit card		Advertisement	Meta Platforms Ireland Lim	E	8.00		8.00
Total									341.73	61.34	403.07

RECEIPTS LIST

Vouche	Code	Date	Minute	Bank	Receipt No	Description	Supplier	VAT Type	Net	VAT	Total
3	Lottery	04/04/2024		Unity Trust Bank		Lottery Sales Income	West Somerset Lottery	E	4.00		4.00
2	CIL Receipts	26/04/2024		Unity Trust Bank		Community Infrastructure Levy	Somerset Council	E	5,319.94		5,319.94
1	Precept	30/04/2024		Unity Trust Bank		Precept Payment	Somerset Council	E	90,552.00		90,552.00
Total									95,875.94		95,875.94

Local Community Network Meeting Notes

Meeting Title: Local Community Network - Hestercombe

Date: Wednesday, 17 April 2024

Time: 7.00 pm - 8.46 pm

Location: North Newton Village Hall

Chaired by: Stuart Haskins (West Monkton Parish Council) (Chair)

LCN core membership attendance:

Name:	Representing
Norman Cavill (Vice-Chair)	Somerset Council
Helen Barrington	Thurloxtton Parish Council (clerk)
Hendrick Coombs	Thurloxtton Parish Council
Charlie Cudlip	Creesh St Michael Parish Council
Katie Gibbins	Kingston St Mary Parish Council (Clerk)
Kieran Roe	Creech St Michael Parish Council
Philip Spencer	North Petherton Town Council
Paul Townsend	Kingston St Mary Parish Council
Andrew Williams	Creech St Michael Parish Council
Doug Wilson	Broomfield Parish Council
Sue Habberfield	North Petherton Town Council
Joy Norris	North Petherton Town Council

Officer attendance:

Name:	Representing
Ollie Lindsell	Somerset Council
Sunita Mills	Somerset Council
Stephen Dury	Somerset Council
Emily Window	Somerset Council
Julie Cooper	Somerset Council

Other attendees:

Name:	Representing
Tina Talbot	Community Council for Somerset
Helen Barham	Little Steps Pre-School

Apologies:

Name:	Representing
Tom Deakin	

Summary of discussion:

Agenda Summary of key points of discussion and outcome: Action by: item:

Item 34: **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Cllr Tom Deakin.

Item 35: **Declarations of Interest**

There were no new declarations of interest.

Item 36: **Notes from the Previous Meeting**

The notes of the previous meeting on 21st February 2024 were approved as the correct record.

Item 37: **A Report on the recent LCN Chairs and Vice Chairs meeting at Somerton**

An update was provided on the recent work on LCNs, including issues like affordable housing, transport and road maintenance. There were updates on LCN working groups, such as youth and anti-social behaviour and the active travel group in Bridgwater, and the links with Spark Somerset.

During the discussion, the following points were raised:

- What does the loss of Democratic Services Support mean? *Currently Democratic Services produce the minutes, so the LCN team will need to produce their own minutes. The Terms of Reference are currently set up similar to council meetings. The hope is to make these less in depth.*
- On 25th April there is a Corporate and Resources Scrutiny, the 5th item on the agenda is LCNs and their terms of reference. You can attend via teams.
- Can information about these meetings be shared? Yes, *will consider how it can be circulated.*
- LCN team will also be writing reports on their activities. It is important to remain flexible, and be responsive to feedback.
- Are LCNs secure going forward? *At the moment, the council is committed to LCNs. Obviously can't predict the future.*
- On devolution, a lot of the changes parishes are concerned about won't happen until 2025, to give parish councils time to prepare.
- There have been opportunities for chairs of LCNs to put forward their views.
- Where does the resource for the 9 officers who support the 18 LCNs come from? Who are they accountable to? *Funding for LCN Officers is from existing revenue money. We are accountable to the councillors, and link officers are an efficient use of resources for the LCNs. We also*

support working groups, and bring issues from LCNs to both councillors and officers. There is commitment in areas such as highways working groups, climate change, flooding, etc.

- *Is one LCN half of a full-time job? There is a lot more than just the LCN meetings that goes into the LCNs, especially as more priorities come forward.*
- *Has the proposal for the £50,000 pothole filler been put back? There has been a delay in the Highway Steward programme to give parishes time to make that decision as a result of feedback from parishes. Budget decisions change after consultation.*

There was an update on the Highways Working Group for Hestercombe LCN, who met for the first time the week previous. Three parishes attended and it was a very positive meeting. It is possible for an LCN to commission a steward, who would only be responsible for potholes that are not a safety issue. Somerset Council uses their own resources for potholes that are safety issues, based on depth.

Following this, further points were raised:

- In Thurloxtton, the issues are potholes, planning, and keeping the place tidy and drain covers are clear. Elsewhere in the LCN, parking is an issue. These are the ones brought to the Council's attention.
- One parish spends much of its budget on clearing drain covers and verges and gets a lot of positive feedback on this work.

Item 38: Active Travel Presentation

A presentation was given on Active Travel, which includes walking, wheelchair users, bikes, and scooters. It detailed the situation around the current Local Transport Plan, which is out of date, and they are currently writing a new plan incorporating an Active Travel Strategy which will be involved in allocating funding. This will be brought back to the LCN for consultation. A lot of the national guidance is based on towns, so Somerset needs to write its own guidance focused on rural communities. Examples of community led active travel such as the Strawberry Line Society were given, and the team wants to look at how they can facilitate that, through building a step-by-step guide for

communities, including information on how to bid for funding.

During the discussion, the following points were raised:

- Can looking at ways to get from villages to towns be part of the plan?
- Buses are not reliable. They are expensive, but if they are not reliable, people won't use them. Some figures of bus usage are not accurate due to non-paying passengers like pensioners.
- In new developments we want to get people involved in Active Travel.
- There are services you can book such as responsive transport that people are not aware of. There needs to be better communication about services available.
- Would people use a bus service that operated one day per week in villages?
- Bus journeys take longer than they used to.
- The LCN could be involved in better communication, find out how their community gets their information about transport.
- People can be signposted to village agents to find out if they meet criteria to register for some transport services.
- Where there is interest we can add areas to the list but with the financial situation there are no guarantees. A wishlist can be put together.

It was agreed that parishes would go back to their communities and find out what communication would be helpful and signpost people to village agents.

Item 39: **Summary Report on Public Engagement over Peat Trials (Moors and Level report) including details of Local Nature Recovery Strategy**

Information was shared regarding the re-wetting of peat and the consultation Natural England are carrying out. There was also information provided about the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), the objects and the overall benefits.

During the discussion, the following points were raised:

- How many parishes have heard about this previously?
None of the parishes in attendance had heard about it. A letter had been sent to every Parish and Town Council.

- The importance of food security, as UK is the fourth most populous country in Europe. *Food security and nature recovery don't have to be in opposition, they can work together.*
- Linked with local planning, but they keep building new developments.
- The local plan is being developed and will have equal weight with the LNRS.
- Funding is being sought to increase biodiversity.
- What can parishes do to help? *Parishes can promote the poster and the survey, which closes soon. Survey found at <https://someset.gov.uk/lnrs>*
- For new developments, there is the biodiversity net gain process.
- Smaller areas can have a bigger impact on nature recovery, particularly where they do not have other uses. It can open up opportunities for funding.
- The Council can work together with communities to find a solution that suits all parties.

Item 40: **Report on Young People Working Group**

An update was provided on the recent first meeting of the LCN's Young People Working Group. The meeting had low attendance, and the LCN team would like to encourage parish councils to sign up. At the meeting, they discussed vandalism and how that links with provision for young people, and they have been working in West Monkton to survey young people and with the Youth Alliance to identify needs of young people across the LCN.

The next meeting is 2nd May, 2pm.

During the discussion, the following points were raised:

- What was attendance at the meeting? *3 parishes attended.*
- Kingston St Mary were not sent information about this and would like to be involved. How is the information sent out? *Through the LCN team. If you contact the LCN inbox, they will add you to the list. Information is sent out to all parish clerks and everyone who is signed up. Communication issues will be fed back to the LCN officer.*
- Village agents – can we have a summary of what their function is? *Village agents can help people with lots of*

different problems, helping find care, blue badges, help with transport, benefits, etc.

- Can information on village agents be sent to parish councils? Yes.

Item 41: **Public Question Time**

During the discussion, the following points were raised:

- Poor communication with parishes. There needs to be a point of contact and a distribution network. *This is the first time we are aware of communication issues. Information should be sent to parish clerks.*
- There is a large amount of information coming from the Council so we don't want people to be inundated. It's really key that clerks circulate the information. We will look at how we can improve that.
- Would like more updates on the highways working group meetings. Who do we contact around highways? *A list of names and contact details will be put together and circulated to parish clerks.*
- There are differences in communication between former district areas, so these need to be standardised.
- Please email the LCN inbox and the feedback can be circulated across the team.
- Contact lists for highways were promised a year ago for parish clerks, and we are still waiting for this. *The most effective communication with highways at the moment is through the working group.*
- The best way to resolve a pothole is to submit a request through the council website, which gets it added to a worklist. There should be a response from this.
- Some attendees reported there was no response about progress of complaints.
- There are also issues with reporting problems with rubbish collection. One area had six weeks with no collection, and no response to reports. Eventually took it to their local councillor. *Waste is a different system to highways, so can't speak to that.*

Item 42: **Update on Actions from the Previous Meeting**

The next meeting is on the 19th June, at Broomfield Village Hall. This will be the LCN's Annual General Meeting.

Contact officer for meeting: hestercombelcn@somerset.gov.uk

Parish Briefing

30 April 2024



Grassland Management and Conservation

Overview

Next month (May 2024) Somerset Council will begin summer grassland management routines across its highways, open spaces, country parks and council property grounds.

Since the creation of Somerset Council last April, work has been underway to align the approaches of the five former authorities and their relevant services into one consistent, cross-county approach to all aspects of grassland management.

Where appropriate and safe, grassland areas will be allowed to rewild, set seed and improve conditions for nature to flourish. The aim is to allow a broader range of species to thrive, while retaining the Council's commitment to ensuring safety.

Providing larger, higher quality and better-connected grasslands across the county is pivotal to ensuring habitats are of high quality and support a diverse abundance of species.

Defra has appointed Somerset Council as the lead for the [Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Somerset](#), and grassland networks that deliver well-connected pollinator-friendly spaces will form part of this. This also includes green spaces and parks that transition to the capable hands of our city, town, and parish councils, and as they take the reins, we will also encourage them to embrace the "leave it longer" spirit and leave space for nature to thrive.

Please note:

- we have chosen not to register for Plant Life's No Mow May campaign this year. While we note the excellent work it has done, we are keen to emphasise the merits of a year-round approach to grassland management which allow the full lifecycle of grassland and wildflowers to be realised.
- as some greenspaces and parks devolve to our city, town and parish councils, we will no longer have control of the way in which grassland management is carried out in these areas.

Our approach to Grassland Management

Highways

Grass cutting is vital to safety on the highway. In line with the [Somerset Pollinator Action Plan](#), cutting has been adjusted where possible to allow grassland species to flourish through the growing season.

For safety and visibility, on wider verges only a 1 metre swathe is cut, and the remainder of the verge is left. The service maintains a list of identified biodiverse verge sites where cutting programmes are further altered (avoiding flowering and seed maturation periods) to ensure species like orchids can flourish. The team is introducing improved monitoring at these sites to ensure these populations can thrive and expand.

Coming soon: The roadside grass-cutting team is currently pulling together the annual verge grass cutting schedule for this year, this will be uploaded to the [roadside grass cutting web page](#) as soon as it's available.

Local verges

Some verges in towns and villages are managed by our local Streetscene and grounds teams. Where safety is not compromised, these verges are increasingly being left to grow throughout the spring and summer seasons.

On larger verges a 1m edge strip will be cut, in line with our approach for Highway verges. Leaving the verge to grow allows plants to set seed and grow, while also providing longer periods of forage for pollinators. In areas where we are trialling this approach on new verges we will, where possible, put up explanatory signage.

Somerset Council does not own and manage all urban verges, some belong to private estates or landlords, although we are pleased to see a gradual shift towards less intensive grass maintenance on verges across the whole county.

Countryside Services

Will continue to manage grasslands to provide high quality habitats and public access. All sites have management plans that identify priority habitats and management practices required to conserve grasslands – a combination of grazing, scrub and invasive species control and hay cuts are deployed in appropriate circumstances.

Targeted conservation projects include those for the shrill carder bee and skylarks at Ham Hill and harvest mice at Riverside Park in Yeovil.

Open Spaces

Developing work from 2023 and previous years, parks and grounds maintenance teams will continue to introduce new areas for biodiversity including cut and collected meadow spaces and over wintering habitats in longer, dense clumps of thick grass known as tussocks.

Improvements in grassland diversity from last year will be monitored, and taking into account public comment, management will be altered to create more new spaces for nature in our parks. The grounds teams have completed training in managing biodiverse grasslands, and work to the agreed [Habitat and wildlife benefits of long grass \(somerset.gov.uk\)](https://www.somerset.gov.uk/~/media/2023/04/Habitat-and-wildlife-benefits-of-long-grass.pdf) approach.

Grounds and Property

Will develop management approaches from trials in 2023 at Brympton Way in Yeovil and the Taunton County Hall site. Various grassland spaces will be left, or infrequently mown to support pollinators and to encourage increased abundance of a variety of species. Where appropriate wildflower seed mixes or plug planting will be introduced to fast-track a diverse grassland flora.

Where we are implementing a management change, or in particularly high-profile spaces like County Hall, we will make use of appropriate signage to explain the changes and anticipated benefits to nature.

National Landscapes

Our amazing National Landscapes, including the [Quantock Hills](#) and [Mendip Hills](#) partners will continue their work at scale to deliver and influence conservation grassland management and restoration, through their nature recovery plans and new management plans that are being drafted and consulted upon this year.

Examples of good practice can be seen at Cothelstone Hill with 39Ha of grassland being managed through conservation grazing of Exmoor Ponies allowing acidic and natural grassland species to thrive, supporting many grassland bird species such as skylark, meadow pipit and stonechat. Late cuts allow seed banks to develop and extended rotations allow for a diverse sward improving the habitat for a wide variety of invertebrates.

On the Mendip Hills partners are managing a significant number of species-rich wildflower meadows and calcareous grasslands at a landscape scale allowing iconic species such as the pearl-bordered fritillary butterfly and black oil beetle to thrive.

For more information contact:

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