**Parish Council News – 2019**

**OCTOBER 2019**

**MARK PARISH COUNCIL**

[**www.markvillage.co.uk**](http://www.markvillage.co.uk/)

A Meeting of Mark Parish Council was held in the Church Hall, Vicarage Road, Mark on Tuesday, 3rd September 2019 at 7.00pm.

**ADMINISTRATION**

Our financial balance of accounts and reserves continues to be healthy.

**Planning Portfolio 33/19**

The following planning applications were considered-

014 Change of use of agricultural building to dwelling, Wellfield Farm, Vole Road, Mark – Mrs L. Kent – recommend permission.

015 Coppice of hedgerow, east of Harp Road, Mark – M. Popham – recommend permission.

017 Erection of balcony to south elevation, Elmfield, Church Street, Mark – P. Moody – recommend permission.

**PUBLIC AREAS PORTFOLIOS**

**Highway Matters**

It was noted that all recent highway defects and fly-tipping deposits had been reported to appropriate authorities. It was understood that County Councillor Huxtable was still pursuing the installation of flashing warning lights in the vicinity of the School.

The County Council had made the Traffic Order to extend the 30 mph speed limit at Blackford Road but the new signage was still awaited. It was agreed to send a reminder and also to report damaged warning signs at Blackford Road and Mark Causeway. It was also agreed to seek additional street/pavement cleaning possibly after autumn leaf fall.

Councillor Francis gave an update on the refurbishment of historic finger post signs and it was agreed that he proceed to the completion of the project. An update on progress would be placed on the web-site. He also reported upon the operation of the shared SID scheme. The possible purchase of an Auto Speed watch device by the group of parishes was currently on hold.

 Mike Schollar had decided to retire as Co-ordinator of Mark Speed watch. It was agreed to thank him for his work in connection with Speed watch over a long period of time and to advertise for a new Co-ordinator via the parish magazine and web-site.

**Play Area**

The Chairman and Councillor Mrs Horn attended the 2019 Somerset Playing Fields’ Association Field of the Year Presentation Evening held at Woolavington Village Hall on 6th September 2019. Mark Parish Council and Mark Community Association received a commendation award for the Children's Play Area at Mark Village Hall

**Public Rights of Way**

No issues were raised.

**Village Hall /Football Pitch Area**

Councillor Mrs Horn reported that the defibrillator at the Village Hall would need to be replaced in the autumn following advice by the South West Ambulance Service. Details of a package available from South West Ambulance was outlined which would cost £1,800 on a four-year agreement for one defibrillator and an additional device could be added for a further £1,000. It was felt that there was need for a defibrillator in Church Street and Councillor Mrs Horn undertook to seek agreement from a property owner for an additional defibrillator to be located in that area and, subject thereto, it was agreed to enter into a support package with the South West Ambulance Service for two units at a cost of £2,800 plus fitting costs by an electrician.

**FLYING OF MODEL AIRCRAFT AND DRONES IN PUBLIC SPACES**

Mark Community Association had clarified the position regarding the flying of drones or remote-controlled aircraft from the field or surrounding area.

Mark Community Association and The Parish Council urge residents to note that when flying any small unmanned aircraft or drones, it is the pilot’s responsibility to familiarise themselves with the legal requirements relating to their chosen activity and to ensure that they operate safely within them. Failure to do so could result in prosecution by the Civil Aviation Authority and a significant fine!

**Be familiar with the legal requirements relating to your chosen activity.**

**Do not endanger person or property.**

**Ensure that the proposed flying location is appropriate and safe.**

**Maintain line of sight for the purposes of control at all times (see CAA**

**Exemption for specific details of FPV flight permissions).**

**Charging for flights renders the activity Aerial Work.**

**Do not constitute a nuisance.**

**Do not invade privacy.**

**Ensure that appropriate liability insurance cover is in place to protect you in the event of an incident leading to a claim against you.**

Advice can be obtained on line from The British Model Flying Association. https://bmfa.org/Info/Know-the-law

**WEBSITE PORTFOLIO**

Councillor Mrs Weekes reported upon statistics relating to visits to the web-site during August. Usage of the website continues to be high each month with 4037 visitors to the website in August 2019.

**CEMETERY**

Councillor Mrs Corkish reported that a number of headstones were leaning due to ground settlement but were not unstable. It was noted that responsibility for any remedial work rested with the owners of the graves.

**HOLY CROSS CHURCH - CLOCK OUR HISTORICAL HERITAGE**

The Church of St Mark (also known as Holy Cross) in [Mark](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mark%2C_Somerset),  dates from the 13th century, but is mainly a 14th and 15th century building with further [restoration](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victorian_restoration) in 1864. It has been designated as a Grade I [listed building](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Listed_building).  There may have been a chapel in the village from the 12th century however the current church was dedicated by [William](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_of_Bitton_I), [Bishop of Bath and Wells](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bishop_of_Bath_and_Wells) in April 1268 as The Church of the Holy Cross. The [nave](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nave) has a [Barrel roof](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barrel_roof) decorated with the heads of religious figures. In the [Choir](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Choir_%28architecture%29) is a wooden sculpture of the [Four Evangelists](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Four_Evangelists) made by a Belgian sculptor named André in 1524 for [St. Salvator's Cathedral](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Salvator%27s_Cathedral) in [Bruges](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bruges), which was moved in 1794.

The tower was built around 1407 It contains a peel of eight bells. **The clock** celebrates the jubilee of [Queen Victoria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Queen_Victoria) in 1887 and we are sure that the community are not only proud of the magnificent Church Building but also the **Clock** which has been ringing out the hours for over 130 years.

A few weeks ago whilst Smiths of Derby were carrying out the last annual service on the clock they discussed some restoration work and repairs of the clock dials.  They recommend to access the clock dial from rope access, remove the clock hands, dial and dial works.  The dial works pass through the fabric of the building and rarely receive full servicing attention, and it would be prudent therefore to carry out this work during the restoration operation. The driving tubes would be separated and all corrosion removed, the tubes re-polished and correctly lubricated. The gearing would also be serviced and adjusted as necessary for correct operation. The result of this would be that the clock would be under less strain and wear. Smiths would sympathetically abrade the dial down to a sound base and repair the fractures, followed by the application anti corrosion treatment and primers, undercoat and finally weatherproof gloss, for maximum protection. The dials would then be baked in an oven at 80°c to achieve a hard enamel like finish and for maximum longevity.

Any previously gilded areas would be sized, followed by the application of gold leaf, as specified above. This is particularly long lasting and attractive and is used in preference to ordinary gold paint. The latter soon loses its fresh appearance and deteriorates quickly, whereas gold leaf has an expected life span of 20 – 25 years (subject to local conditions). The hands would be similarly treated.

The Parish Council will be discussing working with others to finance the work which does not come cheap and would welcome offers of financial support  or any other ideas from the residents of Mark. We are sure that the community would like to see it carried out so the clock can continue ringing out the hours for another 100 years.

**WALKING WITH DOGS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE**

A reminder that walkers with dogs should take particular care when crossing fields where animals are being grazed.

Section 1 of the Dogs (Protection of Livestock) Act 1953 makes it an offence for a dog to be at large, ‘that is to say not on a lead or otherwise under close control’, in a field or enclosure containing sheep. It’s also an offence for dogs to attack or chase livestock and farmers are allowed to shoot dogs that are worrying, or are about to worry, farm animals. This is set out in section 9 of the Animals Act 1971, which also states that the farmer isn’t liable to compensate the dog’s owner in such circumstances.

Chasing by dogs can do **serious damage** to sheep, even if the dog doesn’t catch them. The stress of worrying by dogs can cause sheep to die and pregnant ewes to miscarry their lambs.

Sheep fleeing from dogs are often killed or seriously injured by their panicked attempts to escape, and dogs chasing ewes and lambs can cause mis-mothering issues, with lambs dying from starvation or hypothermia when they become separated from their mother and fail to find her again. Dog bites can cause death in sheep or necessitate them being put down at a later date. .

**It is vital that you keep your dog on the lead around livestock**, even if you can usually trust it to come to call.

Farmers appreciate lots of people like their dog to enjoy the countryside with them, but as much of the UK’s rural landscape is maintained by grazing sheep there is always a strong chance you will encounter some while out with your dog.

**Next Parish Council Meeting**

**Please Note. The next Parish Council Meeting will be held on Tuesday 5th November 2019 at the Church Hall starting at 7.00pm.**

**NOVEMBER 2019**

**MARK PARISH COUNCIL**

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**MARK FIRST SCHOOL TRAFFIC ISSUES**

This month, the start of the new term brought with it problems of road safety, as reported in social media, and due no doubt in no small part to the intake of new pupils from outside of the parish.  Our County Cllr David Huxtable and members of the Parish Council attended a recent meeting of the school PTFA to listen to what parents and the school were reporting and have a discussion on what could be done to address the traffic issues and improve child safety, at school drop off and pick up times.  It was felt by PTFA members that a meeting of the whole PTA should be called to facilitate such a discussion.

We are advised by David Huxtable that orders for the installation of warning lights at the school have been issued and are currently with SCC Traffic Management. The Parish Council has agreed to contribute £2,000 towards the cost of the scheme.

We would encourage those dropping off or collecting children to approach from Watchfield, and to continue along Mark Causeway, as opposed to trying to turn right when leaving the lay bye at the school driving into opposing traffic and not turning round on The Causeway thus causing congestion with traffic movements. The Parish Council fully understand the frustration and challenges being faced and will continue to monitor the situation and assist where possible.

**MARK COMMUNITY SPEED WATCH**

You are probably aware that the County Council was unable to continue providing a Speed Indicator Device (SID) programme due to a lack of take-up to fund it.  The Parish Council in partnership with Burnham Without Parish Council and East Hunstpill Parish Council purchased upon the operation of the shared SID scheme  their own SID which is installed regularly in Mark Village and on The Causeway to measure the speed of vehicles driving through Mark. Consideration is presently being given for the parishes to purchase an Auto Speed Watch unit to work alongside the SID operating 24 hrs a day and recording vehicle detail.

**COMMUNITY PUNISHMENT PAYBACK**

Under the Community Punishment scheme a group was brought to Mark on Saturday 5th and 12th of October to finish the refurbishment of the Mark Church Railings. They also carried out other clean up tasks along Church Street and at other locations in the village.

Community Payback is a nationwide scheme where unpaid work is carried out, under supervision, by offenders like: removing graffiti, clearing wasteland, decorating public places and buildings. etc.

**PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

**33/19/00019/CM.** Erection of agricultural building to house livestock and fodder on land At, Southwick Farm, Mark, Highbridge, Somerset. *Recommended*

**33/19/00018/ML2.** Protection works to main staircase to include construction of an independent stud wall with a glass balustrade at Mark College (3), Blackford Road, Mark, Highbridge, Somerset, TA9 4NP. *Recommended*

**VILLAGE WEB SITE**

Usage of the village web site in September continued to be high with 3513 visitors. The most visited pages were Contact Us, Village News and Village Information.

**THE BURNHAM & WESTON ENERGY SUNSHINE FUND**

A reminder for voluntary groups, clubs, charities social enterprises, schools and many other community-led organisations. The Burnham & Weston Energy Sunshine Fund is open for applications until 15th November 2019.  Projects that have a real legacy in the local area might include:

- projects which help reduce energy costs and carbon emission.

- community-led activities that help reduce household energy costs and carbon emissions.

- projects which help develop local skills and knowledge, particularly in relation to energy, climate change and the environment.

- ideas that will help a community club or organisation (whatever it does) better serve your community. particularly the disadvantaged.

 Full details and a link to the application form can be found here: <https://www.somersetcf.org.uk/burnhamandweston>

**TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF CHURCH STREET, WEDMORE**

**Information for drivers travelling from Mark** please note that under Section 14(1) of the Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984, as amended by the Road Traffic (Temporary Restrictions) Act 1991, Somerset County Council have made an Order PROHIBITING ALL TRAFFIC from  proceeding along **Church Street, Wedmore** from **the junction with Glanville Road, eastwards to the junction with The Borough** a distance of **225 metres.**  The order will enable Somerset Highways to carry out resurfacing works and becomes effective on **11 November 2019** and will remain in force for eighteen months. The works are expected to last for **2 days (07:30-17:30)**.  Please visit www.roadworks.org for further information on the alternative route. For information about the works being carried out please contact Somerset Highways on 0300 123 2224.

**FLY TIPPING**

There have been several reports highlighting again the proliferation of Fly Tipping and rubbish within Parish boundaries and neighbouring parishes.  We are very lucky in Mark that one of our residents Mr Mick Lockyer, who regularly rides his bike around the village, picks up a lot of the rubbish. However Fly Tipping, another problem which very often seems to have been dumped by contractors, continues to blight our countryside.  People are also more likely to dump their rubbish when they see rubbish already dumped, so reducing the problem and staying on top of individual areas will help to dissuade people from offloading their waste onto the countryside.

Sedgemoor District Council  is responsible for removing illegally dumped waste from public land and roadsides and incidents of fly-tipping in Sedgemoor should be reported.  However, if it is on private land, then it is for the landowner to clear the tip.  If it is on a public highway or adopted road, then SDC will clear it but sometimes, if the fly-tipping is in a Rhyne, the drainage board will need to be involved in clearing it. Unnecessary expense to all involved due to a lazy thoughtless few.

SDC has said on its website: "Fly-tipping is a crime punishable by fine or imprisonment, a blot on the lovely local landscape and a potential threat to human health and that of wildlife and domesticated animals through injury or by polluting the environment. There is no excuse for fly-tipping and we all need to fight it together."

The council has given the following advice for what to do if you find someone fly tipping.  If you discover fly tipped waste, please follow these simple steps:

* Do not touch: fly tipped waste may be dangerous, as it can contain syringes, broken glass, asbestos, toxic chemicals or other hazardous substances.
* Visually inspect it - try to determine what it is and how much there is.
* Note the exact location of the waste and whether it is in a ditch or watercourse
* Do not disturb the site - there may be evidence that could identify and convict the culprits.
* Report it to Sedgemoor District Council Clean Surroundings Tel. 0300 303 7803
* or email. clean.surroundings@sedgemoor.gov.uk
* by completing online a form "Report Fly Tipping" provided on the Sedgemoor District Council web site.

**NEW PCSO FOR CHEDDAR AREA INCLUDING MARK**

**Sarah Dobbs**

PCSO 9992

Avon and Somerset Police

**Tel**    **101**

**Mob  07562 437366**

**Email**  Sarah.Dobbs@avonandsomerset.police.uk

**Next Parish Council Meeting**

**Please Note. The next Parish Council Meeting will be held on Tuesday 5th November 2019 at the Church Hall starting at 7.00pm.**

**DECEMBER 2019/JANUARY 2020**

**MARK PARISH COUNCIL**

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A Meeting of Mark Parish Council was held in the Church Hall, Vicarage Road, Mark on Tuesday, 5th November 2019 at 7.00 p.m.

**RLT 3 Grant Application**

Members considered an application submitted to the District Council by Wedmore Playing Field Association for a grant of £54,548 comprising the total of the RLT 3 funding remaining available to Cheddar Valley Cluster Parishes.   The money would be used to complete facilities in the upper storey of their pavilion.  It was agreed to formally object to this application as the MCA had plans to submit an application for refurbishment of their football pitch in the near future and it was considered that as Wedmore Playing Field Association had already received a substantial sum from this scheme towards their pavilion project, no further RLT 3 funding should be made available to them. (Councillor Human voted against and Councillor Mrs Weekes abstained).

**Finance**

**a) Balance of Accounts**

It was reported that the balance of accounts at 1st October were as follows - Current £11,406.39, Reserve £35,003.38.

**b) Authorisation for Payment**

The following payments had been made since the last Meeting:

DD                  Sedgemoor DC dog bin servicing                             £167.23

000892            PKF Littlejohn audit fee                                          £200.00

000893            SW Ambulance Service defibrillators                     £3,360.00

It was agreed that the following payments be made:

000894           GWB Services grass cutting                                      £881.20

000895           Parish Clerk expenses & sundry payments                 £260.60

**c) Audit of Accounts**

The External Auditors had completed their work on the 2018/19 accounts and had reported that on the basis of their review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in their opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR was in accordance with proper practices and no other matters had come to their attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements had not been met.  The Internal Auditor also had no issues to raise with Members.

**d) Bank Reconciliation**

A bank reconciliation as at 30th September 2019 was checked with the original bank statements and signed by the Members who did not sign cheques as part of the Council’s financial controls.

**e) Public Clock and 2020/21 Draft Budget**

It was agreed to include provision in the 2020/21 draft budget to enable the clock dials to be restored in situ and an application be made for a grant towards the cost involved.  Members gave preliminary consideration to the draft budget and suggested various amendments thereto.  The budget and precept would be finalised at the next meeting.

**Planning Portfolio**

The following planning application was considered-

016 Replacement dwelling, The Homestead, Northwick Road, Mark – D, Waller – recommend permission.

**Public Areas Portfolio**

**a) Highway Matters**

It was agreed to report a defect and a tree requiring attention at Northwick Road.  It was noted that all recent fly-tipping deposits had been reported to the District Council.  It was understood that County Councillor Huxtable was still pursuing the installation of flashing warning lights in the vicinity of the School.  It was agreed to seek a meeting with the Head Teacher to discuss on-going parking issues.  Reference to danger caused by parked cars in the vicinity of the Kingsway junction would be made in the parish magazine.  The County Council had made the Traffic Order to extend the 30 mph speed limit at Blackford Road but the new signage was still awaited.  It was agreed to send a reminder and also to again report damaged warning signs at Blackford Road and Mark Causeway.  It was also agreed to request Community Payback to carry out street/pavement cleaning in the Church Street/Littlemoor Road area.

Councillor Francis gave an update on the refurbishment of historic finger post signs He also reported upon the operation of the shared SID scheme and Mark Speed watch.

**b) Play Area**

It was noted that a report on the annual safety inspection was awaited.

**c) Public Rights of Way**

Councillor Francis reported that he had checked an issue on a specified footpath

**d) Village Hall /Football Pitch Area**

Councillor Mrs Horn reported that the new defibrillators were awaiting installation by an electrician.  A poster detailing the location of defibrillators in the area would be placed on the notice boards to raise awareness.  As part of a nationwide Woodland Trust initiative to provide free trees to communities, additional trees would be planted in the Village Hall grounds and at the southern end of Jubilee Green.  The planting will be completed by a team from Wedmore Young Farmers during the weekend of 23rd/24th November.

**Web-site Portfolio**

Councillor Mrs Weekes reported upon statistics relating to visits to the web-site during October.

**Somerset Prepared Resilience Day**

The Chairman and Councillor Francis reported upon an event that they had recently attended. It was felt that a snow event or prolonged winter power outage would be the most serious emergency in Mark. Neighbourhood Watch would be best placed to identify and arrange assistance for vulnerable people and this matter would be progressed together with an update of the existing Mark Emergency Plan.

**Please Note. The next Parish Council Meeting will be held on Tuesday 17th December 2019 at the Church Hall starting at 6.30pm.**

**National Grid Hinkley Connection Project through Mark**

**Autumn Update**

The summer has been a busy one; we’ve made good progress with construction work and we’re gearing up to start further stages of work early next year – including getting ready to build the world’s first T-pylons here in Somerset.

**Fencing installation and vegetation clearance starts along T-pylon route near Mark and across Mark Causeway.**

Over the summer our contractor, Balfour Beatty, carried out ground investigation surveys between Bridgwater and Loxton.  In the autumn we’re erecting stock fencing and carrying out early vegetation clearance along the route of the new overhead line. Construction of the innovative T-pylons is due to start in mid-2020.  The pylon’s lower height and contemporary design is considered to have less of a visual impact on the landscape than traditional lattice pylons. More detailed information our project and all our current activities can also be found on our project website.

**www.hinkleyconnection.co.uk**

**hinkleyconnection@nationalgrid.co.uk**

The Parish Council has no doubt that this project will have a detrimental affect on vehicle movement along Mark Causeway and along other roads around Mark and will be monitoring the situation as it progresses.

A complete copy of the National Grid Autumn update can be found on the Village Web Site.

**Donate your Winter Fuel Payment so Somerset’s elderly**

**don’t have to choose between eating and heating**

**November 2019**

As we head into winter, many of us face an expensive – but essential - bill for heating our homes, while many of our neighbours face a stark decision between eating and heating: a shocking one in eight households in Somerset live in fuel poverty. Thanks to the bright idea of one generous pensioner, hundreds of older people in Somerset are being supported to stay warm, safe and well every winter through Somerset Community Foundation’s Surviving Winter campaign.

The campaign encourages people who don’t need their Winter Fuel Payment to donate some or all of it to help local older people who are unable to afford to heat their homes.

Last year, over 500 elderly people living in Somerset were helped through the cold winter months, thanks to generous local donors who donated over £100,000 to Surviving Winter.

Somerset Community Foundation (SCF) are also taking part in The Big Give, and **online** donations to the campaign that are made **during the week-long Big Give Christmas Challenge** - midday Tuesday 3 December to midday Tuesday 10 December - will be doubled!  So, not only will **your donation be worth twice as much**, but even more older and isolated people across the county will feel warmer and better connected this winter.

If you would like to donate to Surviving Winter, visit [www.somersetcf.org.uk/winter](http://www.somersetcf.org.uk/winter) or call 01749 344949.