Parish Council News 2021

**FEBRUARY 2021**

**MARK PARISH COUNCIL**

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

A Meeting of Mark Parish Council was held via Zoom on Tuesday 5th January 2021 at 7.00 p.m.

**REPORT OF THE COUNTY COUNCILLOR**

County Councillor Huxtable reported upon possible proposals for a village gateway on the western approach to Blackford which was actually in the parish of Mark. This Council would be kept inform of any developments. He also reported upon the consultation plan for the proposed safety improvements in the vicinity of Mark First School. It was agreed to request an extension of the hatching up to the gateway of Ampthill House and for the siting of a sign to be checked following the rebuilding of a wall. He also reported that future funding of the 67-bus service was still being negotiated and undertook to chase up the provision of 30 mph repeater signs at Blackford Road.

**VACANCY**

It was agreed to co-opt Mr D. Sellers to serve on the Parish Council to fill the casual vacancy caused by the resignation of Mrs J. Horn. Mr Sellers would be requested to sign a declaration of acceptance of office prior to the next Meeting.

**FINANCE**

**Balance of Accounts**

It was reported that the balance of accounts at 1st December were as follows - Current £14,029.55, Reserve £26,770.43.

**Authorisation for Payment**

It was agreed that the following payments be confirmed: -

000916 GB Sport & Leisure   play equipment maintenance          £991.70

000917 PKF Littlejohn           audit fee                                       £240.00

000918 Mark Community Association    grant                             £3947.07

000919 GWB Services           grass cutting                                    £311.00

000920 Parish Clerk             expenses & sundry payments             £532.41

**Audit of Accounts, Risk Management Report and Statement of Internal Control**

The Council considered and approved a Risk Management Report and Statement of Internal Control for 2020/21. The outcome of the audit of the 2019/20 accounts was also noted.

**Mark Cricket Club**

Following a request for financial assistance, it was agreed to make a grant of £1,000 to Mark Cricket Club towards the cost of facilities at their new ground.

**PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

It was agreed to confirm recommendations made relating to the following applications since the last Meeting:

**024** Erection of a dwelling on the site of an agricultural building to be demolished and erection of a garage/car port, Fairview Farm, Blackford Road, Mark – P. Bonell. Parish Council commented 18.11.2020

**043** Variation of Condition 4 of Planning Permission 33/18/00020 (Erection of garage and work area partly on site of existing garage to be demolished.) to be used solely as a private garage/workshop and shall not be used for a commercial business, Victory House, Northwick Road, Mark – P. Anderson. Parish Council recommended refusal 23.12.2020

**044** Erection of house and formation of access, Norville, The Causeway, Mark – Altinok Construction. Parish Council recommended permission 21.12.2020.

**045** Prior approval for change of use of agricultural building to dwelling and associated operational development, Littlemoor Farm, Littlemoor Road, Mark – Mr & Mrs S. House. Parish Council made observations 18.12.2020.

**047** Change of use of agricultural land to tourism for siting up to 6 shepherds huts, Moor View, Yarrow Road, Mark – Mr & Mrs Hann. Parish Council recommended permission 23.12.2020.

**048** Erection of 1.8m high timber fence along part of southern boundary, Sunnyside, The Causeway, Mark – Mr & Mrs G. Peters. Parish Council recommended permission 21.12.2020.

**PUBLIC AREAS**

**Highway Matters**

It was agreed to report road defects at Blackford Road and fly-tipping deposits at Green Drove and opposite the White Horse Inn. It was agreed to defer the Village Clean- up Day until the spring due to Covid restrictions. It was noted that temporary road closures were planned for Harp Road and Dutch Road. It was agreed to request County Highways to investigate the road markings and signage in the vicinity of the eastern end of The Causeway, the Harp Road/Causeway junction and at the Southwick crossroads where there had been recent accidents. The District Council would be requested to replace a damaged nameplate for The Causeway.

Councillor Francis had reported that a grant of £20,000 had been approved by National Grid towards the cost of 6 more advanced SIDs for use in Mark, Burnham Without and East Huntspill.  County Highways would be requested to approve new sites and provide poles for these SIDs.

**Play Area**

It was noted that essential maintenance work to the play equipment had been completed following the recent safety inspection.

**Public Rights of Way**

Councillor Human undertook to investigate and, if necessary, report specified issues at Green Drove to the appropriate authorities.

**Village Hall /Football Pitch Area**

It was noted that the Mark Community Association were investigating replacement of the goalposts.

**Church Street Parish Noticeboard**

It was agreed to make arrangements for the noticeboard outside the Village Stores to be refurbished.

**WEBSITE**

Councillor Mrs Weekes reported upon statistics relating to visits to the website during December.

**NEXT MEETING**

It was agreed that the next Meeting be held on 2nd March 2021 starting at 7.00 p.m.

**LOCAL SUPPORT IN THESE TROUBLED TIMES**

**Mark Village Community Support.** Due to the return to lockdown, the support group has been re-established to bring together those who need help during these difficult times and those residents who can and will provide support to members of the community. If you need assistance due to isolating contact the community support group co-ordinator, Amanda Ballam, on 01278 641111 or email peteballam@hotmail.com

**Places selling food around Mark Village.**

* The village stores and post office
* White Horse new takeaway Menu on Friday and Saturdays plus Hannah’s cheesecakes and cocktails (with food), also Sunday lunches
* The Old Spot Bakery with homemade bread & pastries
* The Pizza Van, Northwick Road on Thursday & Friday
* Glebe Farm shop, Harp Road, for fresh fruit & veg
* Stuart House, Littlemoor Road, for boxes of beef & pork
* The cake stall in Dutch Road
* Jacci Cawte for Sunday lunches

**Other vital support businesses in Mark Village**

* Amesbury & Puddy for Animal feeds, Pet food and household supplies/equipment
* Averys Garage Vehicle MOT testing service and repairs

**Somerset County Council COVID-19 support**

For Coronavirus (Covid-19) information and advice read the pages at

[Coronavirus (COVID-19) (somerset.gov.uk)](https://www.somerset.gov.uk/coronavirus/)

**DOG FOULING - A "BLIGHT ON OUR COMMUNITY"**

If you've come out of hibernation this winter for a walk with the family, there's no way you can have missed the particularly hardy crop of dog poo in bags hanging from the hedgerows and trees of our Parish and especially in Northwick Road.

And it's a real pet hate (no pun intended) of ours as they have become a blight across the countryside.

If you're one of those people who leaves their dogs' deposits hanging from hedgerows and trees like Christmas ornaments, here's what you need to know about what you're doing. **It *is* actually an offence.**

Thanks for picking up the dog poo but as a dog owner you're expected to poop and scoop and discard in your own black bin or in dog waste bins provided by the council.

If anybody is spotted hanging their dog mess from hedgerows or trees, they are risking a fine, even though the mess is bagged.

It's classed as littering, as you're knowingly discarding bagged waste. Keep our community clean as **Dog mess is the most unacceptable and offensive type of litter on our streets.**

**MARCH 2021**

**MARK PARISH COUNCIL**

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**Dogs and sheep – Walking with dogs**:

This is the time of year that there are a lot of sheep with their lambs in fields around the Parish so please take extra care when out and about walking with your dogs.

It can be all too easy to become complacent when walking your dogs, after all it is something we do every day. But remember, the resulting loss of life if your dog escapes your control - even for a moment - can be devastating.

Do not be caught out - follow these top tips:

* Be aware of the effects of sheep-worrying, and let others know too.
* Make sure you know where your dog is always.
* If you are letting your dog off the lead be confident there are no livestock nearby.
* Be sure that your dog will return to you promptly on command and if in doubt, keep them on the lead.

**Litter Picking Day**

February should have seen the Parish Council’s Litter Picking Day take place, this would have been the 18th year of holding this event but due to the Covid Restrictions this did not happen. The Council is not sure when they will be able to arrange the day again but will inform the village in due course.

We would ask you all to please **KEEP OUR VILLAGE TIDY**.  Unfortunately, there are a few who do not i.e., cans/ litter/ dog poo, to name but a few of the items left around our roads and grass verges.  There are two Dog Rubbish bins in the village - one on Jubilee Green opposite the White Horse Pub, with the other at the village hall car park. The Council is looking into placing one along The Causeway near Harp Road.

The Parish Council would like to thank Mick Lockyer and other folk who do litter pick on a regular basis around the village, so if you can please all of you **TAKE YOUR LITTER HOME**

**Fly Tipping and Roadside Litter**

The Parish Council is keenly aware of fly-tipping and discarded rubbish thrown in verges and reports such deposits to Sedgemoor District Council.

If you know about those who fly-tip, inform your district council immediately. If you see fly-tipping take no risks.  Do not touch anything fly-tipped or approach fly-tippers, but when it is safe, please contact our [local council customer services](https://www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/contact-us/) at Sedgemoor District Council with any details.

SDC Clean Surrounds has an investigation capability and will challenge suspects provided there is the evidence, such as labels, invoices, documents giving names and addresses and, of course, sightings.  Local intelligence of offenders is essential.  While ‘professional’ fly tippers tend not to leave anything linked to them, someone, somewhere knows who these people might be.  In the meantime, the Parish Council will continue to report deposits, at present about once a week.

**Blocked Sewerage System in Mark**

We have been advised that with all the rain we have experienced over the last few weeks there have been major problems with the main sewerage system pipe, down The Causeway, filling up with water.

You are probably aware that the sewerage system in Mark is a suction system dependant on regular suction valves throughout its length to create suction in the system. Wet Wipes, cotton buds, and other materials which do not break down or dissolve, that are flushed down the toilet can cause blockage of these suction valves meaning the sewerage is not sucked back up the system.

Sewage flooding is miserable and can cause damage to your or your neighbours’ homes and we appeal to all households not to flush material and bathroom waste which will not decompose down your toilets.

**Somerset’s Covid-19 Weekly update - Thursday 11th February 2021**

This update is provided by the Somerset Covid-19 Engagement Board and is designed to provide a weekly update on the current Covid-19 situation in Somerset.

As the vaccination programme continues to roll out across Somerset, anyone who is over 70 and has not yet had their vaccine, can now contact the NHS directly to book an appointment on this link: [Book a coronavirus vaccination - NHS (www.nhs.uk)](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/book-coronavirus-vaccination/).

Over 1,275,000 people in the South West have now been vaccinated, and that is wonderful progress.  However, we must continue to stress how important it is for everyone to understand that while the vaccine is designed to prevent serious illness and death from Covid-19, anyone who has received the vaccine could still catch coronavirus and might still be able to pass it on to others. It takes between two and three weeks to build protection once you have had the vaccine, it isn’t instant protection. Therefore, we urge you to please keep adhering to the ‘Hands-Face-Space’ guidance in order to protect yourselves and others, and to share this important message with your networks.

With half term next week, and increasingly lighter evenings, we appreciate that it may be tempting to go out more often and venture further from home. However, we are still under a national lockdown, so we urge everyone to stick to the stay at home rules and help us all to stay safe and protect each other and our NHS.

*‘Remember, everyone can catch it, anyone can spread it’.*

Vaccine Hesitancy

We are aware that some people are very concerned about having the Covid-19 vaccine, because of things that they might have seen on social media or heard from friends.  We would like to help you to address these myths with the following information:

* Some people are concerned that the Covid-19 vaccine might actually give them the virus.  This is not the case - you cannot catch Covid-19 from the vaccine as none of the current vaccines available contain live virus and are therefore unable to cause disease. The vaccines contain a genetic code that our cells use to make a little bit of the Covid-19 virus which causes our immune system to produce antibodies and other anti-virus immune responses.
* Some people have concerns around whether the vaccine contains animal products.  Vaccine manufacturers [AstraZeneca](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/regulatory-approval-of-covid-19-vaccine-astrazeneca/information-for-uk-recipients-on-covid-19-vaccine-astrazeneca) and [Pfizer/BioNTech](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/regulatory-approval-of-pfizer-biontech-vaccine-for-covid-19/information-for-healthcare-professionals-on-pfizerbiontech-covid-19-vaccine#ingredients) have confirmed the vaccine does not contain any animal ingredients and no animal-derived cells were used.
* And for those who have heard rumours that the vaccination affects fertility there is no evidence to suggest that the vaccines affect fertility. The [Public Health England](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-vaccination-women-of-childbearing-age-currently-pregnant-planning-a-pregnancy-or-breastfeeding/covid-19-vaccination-a-guide-for-women-of-childbearing-age-pregnant-planning-a-pregnancy-or-breastfeeding) guidance states there is absolutely no advice to avoid pregnancy after receiving the Covid-19 vaccination.
* In terms of pregnancy and breastfeeding, while there is no evidence to suggest that the vaccines could cause harm to a pregnancy, the vaccines have not yet been tested in pregnancy, so until more information is available, those who are pregnant should not routinely have this vaccine.  There is no data on the safety of Covid-19 vaccines in breastfeeding or on the breastfed infant. Despite this, they are not thought to be a risk to the breastfeeding infant, and the benefits of breast-feeding are well known. [Public Health England](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-vaccination-women-of-childbearing-age-currently-pregnant-planning-a-pregnancy-or-breastfeeding/covid-19-vaccination-a-guide-for-women-of-childbearing-age-pregnant-planning-a-pregnancy-or-breastfeeding) has recommended that the vaccine can be received whilst breastfeeding.

For more information on the NHS vaccination in Somerset please visit: [https://www.somersetccg.nhs.uk/health/local-services/health-services-during-coronavirus/covid-19-vaccinations-in-somerset/](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.somersetccg.nhs.uk%2Fhealth%2Flocal-services%2Fhealth-services-during-coronavirus%2Fcovid-19-vaccinations-in-somerset%2F&data=04%7C01%7CEMcKee%40somerset.gov.uk%7C9c74f1e1ecc14491c69c08d8c91df0a4%7Cb524f606f77a4aa28da2fe70343b0cce%7C0%7C0%7C637480477706881645%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=XJ6zcsVF%2FVsym%2FC%2FdOZcG8yoOTxo6o7exUFYXDphTVE%3D&reserved=0)

For more information on the COVID-19 vaccine please visit: [https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/coronavirus-vaccine/](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.nhs.uk%2Fconditions%2Fcoronavirus-covid-19%2Fcoronavirus-vaccination%2Fcoronavirus-vaccine%2F&data=04%7C01%7CEMcKee%40somerset.gov.uk%7C9c74f1e1ecc14491c69c08d8c91df0a4%7Cb524f606f77a4aa28da2fe70343b0cce%7C0%7C0%7C637480477706891601%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=DORnVav9bPwuDEDAFaQDAbaER7YtLVAHMWDO3JuB%2FNA%3D&reserved=0)

Resources and further information:

Please do keep an eye our Healthy Somerset website, which has a huge amount of information and resources to help keep everyone healthy happy and safe at this time:

<https://www.healthysomerset.co.uk/covid-19/>

For the latest local information.

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/coronavirus/>

The Parish Council has received the following details of this interesting, forward looking project from Sedgemoor District Council.

**Environmental Champions in Sedgemoor**

I would like to share with you an upcoming opportunity to share information on climate emergency action with your parish, and feed back to Sedgemoor District Council on climate activity within the area.

If you or an individual or group you know would be in a position to take on this responsibility, we would be very glad to have you on board. We are in the process putting out feelers to understand interest in the scheme and gather feedback from volunteers and groups about what you want from the scheme. Here is some info on the upcoming programme for Environmental Champions in Sedgemoor:

What is an Environment Champion?

This is an exciting opportunity to contribute towards positive climate emergency action in Sedgemoor. You will be an ambassador for climate change awareness in your community and help spread information and positive action throughout the district. You may be representing a parish or group in the district, or you may be an individual who is interested in learning more about combating climate change. Your role can be as big or small as you like; from spreading the word about environmental projects or helping neighbours to reduce their carbon footprint, to leading projects and helping us stay on the right tracks for our carbon neutrality goals. Each of you will have a unique part to play in protecting the environment in Sedgemoor.

What will be involved?

Although some things will have to wait until the pandemic situation is a little clearer, there are a few actions we can get started on now:

* Events (online, with a view to in-person long term) to encourage networking and knowledge sharing among groups and individuals. We hope to include guest speakers to share environmental knowledge and local projects.
* Newsletter with environment/climate information from Sedgemoor District Council. As Environment Champions, you will be able to contribute and shape content to share to other champions across the district. You can help us by sharing this info with your group/neighbours/parish.
* Online networking platform for collaboration and resource sharing amongst groups, parishes and Environment Champions.

What do you need to do next?

Respond to this email to let us know if you are keen to be involved. Feel free to forward this to anyone who might be interested in becoming an Environmental Champion – we are hoping to increase the network. As it is early days, if you have any feedback on what you would like to see involved in the scheme, please let us know!

With warm wishes,

Sedgemoor District Council Environment Champions

Climate Change <Climate.Change@Sedgemoor.gov.uk

**Next Meeting of Mark Parish Council**

The next Meeting is to be held via Zoom on 2nd March 2021 starting at 7.00 p.m.

**APRIL 2021**

**MARK PARISH COUNCIL**

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A Meeting of Mark Parish Council was held via Zoom on Tuesday, 2nd March 2021 at 7.00 p.m.

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Sellers to his first Meeting of the Council.

**Report of the County Councillor**

County Councillor Huxtable reported upon a decision of the County Council to provide 20 mph zones outside all schools including private schools. He also reported that future funding of bus service 67 was still to be determined and outlined work recently carried out to provide a village gateway on the western approach to Blackford.

Councillor Huxtable remained present during discussion of a schedule of proposed improvements to road signs, road markings and a 20 mph zone in Blackford Road/Church Street compiled by a number of Members with a view to increasing road safety in the village. A copy of the schedule is appended to the signed copy of these minutes. It was agreed that all Members give detailed consideration to the proposals prior to formal submission to County Highways with a copy to Councillor Huxtable.

**Finance**

Balance of Accounts

The balance of accounts at 1st February were as follows - Current £7,387.87, Reserve £26,770.87.

Planning Portfolio

It was agreed to recommend permission in respect of the following application:-

002 Reserved matters for the erection of a dwelling and garage adjoining Larches, The Causeway, Mark – Mr & Mrs R. May.

**Public Areas Portfolio**

Highway Matters

A number of road defects and fly-tipping deposits had recently been reported to the appropriate authorities.

Councillor Francis reported that a grant of £20,000 had been approved by National Grid towards the cost of 9 more advanced SIDs for use in Mark, Burnham Without and East Huntspill. Approval was currently awaited from County Highways for new sites for poles for these SIDs in Watchfield and Mark.  Community Speedwatch checks were also recommencing.

Play Area

It was agreed that minor maintenance work be carried out to the benches and paint on the slide and quotations be obtained for a new notice for the play area gate.

Public Rights of Way

It was agreed that Councillor Sellers take over the Public Rights of Way Portfolio with Councillor Francis concentrating on Highways/Road Safety. Councillors Sellers and Francis had carried out maintenance work to repair a bridge and remove brambles along a footpath.  Mr Bickers had recently replaced a post on the gate on the footpath to the south of Littlemoor Road. It was agreed that a mechanism be provided to ensure that this gate closes more efficiently.

Village Hall /Football Pitch Area

It was noted that the Mark Community Association were arranging to replace the goalposts.

Church Street Parish Noticeboard

It was agreed to make arrangements for the posts on the noticeboard outside the Village Stores to be revarnished.

Web-site Portfolio

Councillor Mrs Weekes reported upon statistics relating to visits to the web-site during February. A “What’s New” feature had recently been added and ideas for future improvements were sought.

**It was agreed that the next Meeting be held on 4th May 2021 starting at 7.00 p.m.**

**Highways Mark**

Mark Parish Council has carried out a survey covering the Highways Problems in the Parish. A copy of our concerns has been forwarded to Highways Department and our County Councillor.

Most of the problems are to do with signage and speed awareness especially at the road junctions and sharp bends. These include the crossroads at Harp Road/The Causeway, crossroads at Southwick Road/Butte Lake Road, the sharp bend at The Causeway – Locksbroad Triangle and Jubilee green.

It has also been noted that there is a need for increased signage at the East entrance to the village on Blackford Road  (30 mph) and at the West entrance close to the Triangle on The Causeway.

We have been advised that Somerset County Council is proposing that a speed limit of 20mph to be mandatory outside all schools.  In the case of Mark this will be outside  Mark First School on The Causeway and outside Sedgemoor Manor School at the east end of the village. We have not been advised when this will be actioned, but the signage and lights have already been approved for Mark First School and should be started once lock-down is lifted.

We have also expressed a wish to extend the 20mph speed limit from the traffic calming chicane outside Sedgemoor Manor School to the traffic calming chicane on Church street.

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| --- | --- |
| **Topic****Proposed New Road Signage and Revamp of signs for Mark Village** | **Action recommendations agreed by Parish Councillors following discussions at PC meeting 2nd March 2021. Document submitted to Highways Department.** |
| Blackford Road B3139 | Repeater 30mph signs to be placed along Blackford Road from Sedgemoor Manor School (formerly Mark College) to the “National Speed limit” signs exiting the village East B3139.Rumble Strips to be painted on road surface on the western approach to the village prior to the existing 30 mph signs |
| KingswayVehicle Near misses | Approach to the village on Kingsway at the junction with Church Street B3139. Re-position Stop signs in Kingsway. |
| Harp Rd Crossroads at junction of The Causeway. B31393 serious RTA Jan – Feb already in 2021 |  1) Introduce a new 30 mph Speed limit on Harp road well in advance of the junction at The Causeway and paint rumble strip road markings2) Re-position the Stop sign on Harp Rd Prior to the junction so that it is clearly visible and away from Hedging etc, refresh the “Stop” road markings.Paint rumble strip road markings with the word SlowThe same positioning of signage to be introduced to Yardwall Rd on the opposite side of Harp RD.Review the location of crossroad signs on The Causeway and Mark Causeway approaching the junction of Harp Road/ Yardwall Road. |
| Butt lake Rd and Southwick Rd | Stop signs to be re-positioned at this junction to be clearly visible in advance of the crossroads also Cross Road signs to be in installedA review of the speed limit would also be advisable at this junction |
| The Causeway with Yarrow Rd,Locksbroad TriangleB31391 RTA death 20153 Serious RTA in the last 6 months | There should be better signage on the The Causeway as you approach Locksbroad Triangle, traveling East B3139 showing a sharp left-hand bend on the road.Chevron signage to be re-located to provide advance sighting for drivers. |
| Mark Causeway (West end)B3139 | Refresh Rumble Strips signage on the entrance to Mark Causeway from Watchfield |
| Blackford Road into Church StreetB3139.Hazard area for pedestrians: Incomplete footpath from Cemetery to the Church.Blind spot for vehicles exiting Vicarage Lane onto B3139.Pedestrians crossing the road to village shops and post office at several points.School children crossing the road to access School Bus Stops in Church Street. | Request Review for the introduction of a 20-mph zone between the two-existing traffic “priority” Chicanes located at Sedgemoor Manor School and Church Street, west of Merryfields. The infrastructure is already in place such as kerbing etc. |

**National Grid**

National Grid continue to construct the Haul Rd between Bason Bridge and Tarnock, due to connect   at Vole Rd. They are building the foundations for the T-Pylons driving concrete and steel piles into the ground the work on each site will be 2-3 days, some of you will have heard the noise and maybe felt the vibrations, depending on how close you are to the dig, which was in Southwick Rd 1st week in March and is now moving up into the village.

The Bat Barn at Ash Trees is near completion and hopefully the Bats will be installed and enjoy their new home.

For further info please visit National Grid/Hinkley Point C Connection Project, e mail hinkleyconnection.co.uk   If you have any complaints or queries regarding this work please go to their Complaints webpage or phone 0800 377 7347.

**Footpaths**

David Sellers has recently taken over as the Footpath Liaison Officer for the Parish Council. His contact details are david@quickenham.co.uk or 07816682173 if you wish to contact him or report any issues.

We have recently cleared the footpath between Dutch Road and Puddys Lane. The state of the footpath was raised on the Mark Village Life Facebook page, so we have tried to rectify the issue. The style on Dutch Road was very overgrown and the bridge giving access to the end of Puddys Lane was inaccessible due to masses of brambles. Now both are cleared and should be useable.

**MAY 2021**

**MARK PARISH COUNCIL**

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**PLAY AREA MARK VILLAGE HALL – DOGS NOT ALLOWED**

During these difficult months it has been encouraging to see that the Play Area and other facilities at the Village Hall have been well used and given an opportunity to many for outside recreation.  However, we have received complaints of dogs being taken into the Play Area which is an infringement of the usage rules posted on notices at the site.

Dogs in children's playgrounds can represent a major health and injury hazard:

1. Toxocariasis - a rare infection caused by roundworm parasites, most commonly found in cats, dogs and fox’s faeces.

2. Children and young adults are usually affected due to contact with contaminated soil or sand within play areas.

3. There is evidence that dogs can also carry E. coli and hepatitis in their faeces.

4. There are over 7,000 admissions to hospital for dog bites and attacks annually in the U.K

**MARK VILLAGE WEB SITE**

The Mark Village website is functioning well. There is evidence that those closely associated with the Parish regularly visit the site for news.  During the year, Councillor Jendy Weekes managed an extensive refreshment of the site and in general the website is receiving over 1500 hits per month.

Mrs. Jendy Weekes receives updates for the website, especially events in the Parish, but would very much like to receive any information that Clubs and Organisations wish to be advertised.

The Council always welcomes practical advice and suggestions to ensure that our website is vibrant, informative and current. As always, businesses and commercial enterprises are invited to promote their activities on the website. Jendy can be contacted either through the website or on jendyweekes@btinternet.com or both.

**FLY TIPPING**

Fly-tipping is the illegal disposal of waste without a waste management licence.  It is covered by the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and amendments of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 with the legislation ranging from the dumping of a single black bin bag to thousands of tonnes of waste.  Unfortunately, part of the law is that the responsibility for a fly tip dumped on private land lies with the landowner. The Environment Agency can advise on disposal.  Local authorities are responsible for disposal of deposits in public areas including verges.

Members of the public are invited to report incidents in the Parish of Mark to Sedgemoor District Council giving a location and content. A photograph is useful. Contact Sedgemoor District Council 0n 0300 303 7803 or email customer.services@sedgemoor.gov.uk.  Please note: If you interfere with a fly-tip, it becomes your ‘property’ and you will then be held responsible for its disposal.

**HEDGE TRIMMING CLOSED PERIOD - 1 March to the 31 August**

If you own or occupy land next to a public road or footway you are responsible for maintaining hedges and trees to ensure that they do not obstruct the movement of vehicles and pedestrians or block the view of drivers. Traffic signs must not be obstructed nor the safety or convenience of road users affected. In most cases roadside hedges should be cut in February.  Cutting any hedge from the 1 March to the 31 August can be considered a cross compliance breach and can lead to penalties unless the operation is required for the health and safety of road users. If the hedges are not causing an obstruction to movement or view then they should not be cut in the closed period.  If you need to cut during the closed period in order to comply with the legislation you should ensure you have clear evidence for doing so.

**INFORMATION FROM SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCIL**

**Somerset Coronavirus Support Helpline:** A single phone number continues to be available for anyone in Somerset who needs Coronavirus-related support. **0300 790 6275**, is open seven days a week from 8am to 6pm.

**Vaccination programme roll-out**: Teams across the wider health and care system have worked round the clock at 13 GP-led community vaccination sites, two hospital hubs, two large vaccination centres (Taunton Racecourse and the Bath and West Showground) plus seven local pharmacy sites. As a result, Somerset has one of the highest vaccination rates in the country.

**One Somerset:** The government’s public consultation into changing the way local councils work in Somerset ended on the 19th April. The County Council’s proposal is to replace the county’s five existing councils with a simple, single unitary model to end confusion for residents, remove waste and duplication, and  free up funding to invest in vital public services is a key part of the consultation.  It would also offer more powers for local Town and Parish Councils and one strong voice to lobby for funding and support. For more information visit:  [www.onesomerset.org.uk](http://www.onesomerset.org.uk/)

**Next Meeting of Mark Parish Council**

The next Meeting be held via Zoom on 4th May 2021 starting at 7.00 p.m.

**JUNE 2021**

**MARK PARISH COUNCIL**

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

**A Meeting of Mark Parish Council was held via Zoom on Tuesday, 4th May 2021 at 7.00 p.m.**

**Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman**

It was unanimously agreed that Councillor S. Emary be elected Chairman and that Councillor Francis be elected Vice-Chairman for 2021/22. The Chairman would sign a declaration of acceptance of office.

**Finance**

A number of documents associated with the Councils yearly requirements and 2020/21 accounts were formally approved:

The Financial Statement for 2020/21

Annual Governance Statement

2020/21 Accounting Statement required by the External Auditors

Review of Insurance Cover

Balance of Accounts

Authorisation for a number of individual payments

**Planning**

It was agreed to confirm recommendations of permission in respect of the following applications:-

20/023 Change of use of land to domestic and erection of replacement garage, 6 The City, Mark – I. Jones.

004 Change of use of agricultural buildings to three dwellings and associated works, Totney Farm, Blackford Road, Mark – A. Comer.

**Public Areas**

**Highway Matters**

* A number of specified road defects would be reported to County Highways.
* No action had been forthcoming from the County Council regarding completion of the signage following the extension of the 30-mph speed limit at Blackford Road, nor upon the agreed schedule of proposed improvements to road signs, road markings and a 20-mph zone in Blackford Road/Church Street with a view to increasing road safety in the village.  No further information had been received regarding the provision of 20 mph zones outside all schools including private schools nor upon the future funding of bus service 67.  It was agreed to raise the lack of action in dealing with these matters with senior staff/Members at County Hall. An appropriate design for a village gateway on the western approach to Blackford had been agreed and this would be paid for by Wedmore Parish Council.
* Councillor Francis gave an update regarding the acquisition of 9 more advanced SIDs for use in Mark, Burnham Without and East Huntspill. Approval was currently awaited from County Highways for new sites for poles for these SIDs in Watchfield and Mark and a Memorandum of Understanding was being completed.

**Play Area**

Minor maintenance work had taken place to the benches and paint on the slide and a new notice had been fixed to the play area gate. Complaints had been received regarding dogs in the play area and this would be monitored.

**Public Rights of Way**

Councillor Sellers reported upon possible clearance work by the County Council to AX23/15 and Councillor Human reported upon negotiations with National Grid to allow access along a bridleway across the haul road when work was not taking place.  Mr Bickers had adjusted the mechanism on the gate on the footpath to the south of Littlemoor Road to ensure that it closed more efficiently.

**Information concerning PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY**

The Parish of Mark is criss-crossed with several Public Rights of Way usually prefixed by the letters AX. In brief, a public right of way is not, strictly speaking, a path, but a right possessed by the public to pass along linear routes over land at all times along signed route. The Public Rights of Way in the Parish of Mark are listed on a definitive map issued by Somerset County. Examples are:

**Bridleways**: on which there is a right of way on foot, on horseback and leading   a horse. Cyclists may use bridleways provided that they give way to other users. In some cases, as in Mark, droves double as public rights of way. We are very fortunate that farmers keep most droves maintained.

**Footpaths**: on which there is a right of way on foot.

**Roads Used as Public Paths**: highways mainly used by the public for the purposes that footpaths or bridleways are used.

**Restricted Byways**: highways used as footpaths and bridleways on which there is a right of way for all traffic.

**Cycle Tracks**: paths with a right of way for all types of pedal cycles, but not mopeds, including electrically-assisted cycles, with or without a right of access on foot. Cycle ways are not shown on a definitive map.

Vehicles may be used by farmers accessing fields and property adjacent to droves, which are also Public Rights of Way.

**Village Hall /Football Pitch Area**

Councillor Human reported that he had been approached by a parishioner regarding an issue caused by model aircraft being flown on the football pitch area. This area fell within the remit of the Mark Community Association and Councillor Human would attend their next Meeting when the issue would be raised.

**Wainbridge Farm**

Councillor Human agreed to contact National Grid to ascertain their intentions for this property which was falling into disrepair.

**Web-site Portfolio**

Councillor Mrs Weekes reported upon statistics relating to visits to the web-site during April. The Council always welcomes practical advice and suggestions to ensure that our website is vibrant, informative and current.

**Update from Somerset Waste Partnership April 2021**

**Summary**
• The majority of Garden Waste Service subscribers will have a change of collection day next month due to a rerouting of rounds to make them more efficient. The changes take effect from 10 May and those affected will be written to.
• Recycle More is scheduled to launch South Somerset at the end of June and engagement with the public will start in earnest from next week.
• Recycling sites continue to be busy. Current on-site safety measures will continue at least until the next stage in the lifting of Covid restrictions.

**Garden Waste – collect day changes**
Due to a rerouting of collection routes, the majority of subscribers to SWP’s garden waste service will see a change of collection day next month.

This follows a review of all the collection routes to make them more efficient, reducing mileage wherever possible and thereby limiting impaction the environment. It also aims to improve the service quality and reduce levels of garden waste missed collections.

There are around 54,000 subscribers to the service, and in the region of 45,000 will see a change in their collection day from 10 May.

All those having a change, whether renewing a subscription from last year or starting with the service for the first time, will be written to.

Due to the Covid disruption of the garden waste collections last year, existing subscriptions were extended. Renewed and new subscriptions will run for 12 months from 10 May this year.

The service is going sticker-less for the first time thanks to new technology. Stickers will no longer be issued for bin lids, with the crews instead using in-cab tech and real-time information to know who has subscribed and needs a collection.

**Recycle More update**
The expanded recycling collections continue to perform well in Mendip and attention is now focussed on the introduction of the new service in South Somerset. This is scheduled to happen at the end of June.

As well as reducing waste and helping protect the environment, the new service will cost all partners less. You can find details of the new service and how it is being introduced in phases here www.someretwaste.gov.uk/recycle-more

Key points include:
• Extra items added to weekly recycling collections – notably plastic pots, tubs and trays (as well as cartons, small electrical items and small household batteries)
• All residents issued with a new recycling container – a Bright Blue Bag – to help hold some of the extra material
• Rubbish bins collected every three weeks instead of two – more recycling means less rubbish

Engagement with elected members and wider stakeholders in South Somerset is underway. Public awareness raising and engagement will start in earnest in the coming weeks. This will see increased interest in the change and we will be encouraging South Somerset residents to get ready for the new service, for example by making sure they have the full range of recycling containers.

All residents will be written to twice before anything changes and extra advice and support will be provided to help the change go smoothly. Recycle More is scheduled to be rolled-out in the Taunton Deane area in the autumn and Sedgemoor and West Somerset early next year. Further updates will be provided as progress continues.

**Recycle sites**
All 16 sites continue to operate with additional safety measures and remain busy. These measures will continue at least until the next stage of the easing of lockdown restrictions in mid-May, as will our ‘essential journeys only’ message.

The Reuse Shop has reopened at the Priorswood site, with facemasks required and limits on the number of people in the shop at any time.

**Next Meeting of Mark Parish Council**

The next Meeting be held in the Church Hall, socially distanced of course, on 6th July 2021 starting at 7.00 p.m.

**JULY 2021**

**MARK PARISH COUNCIL**

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

**Blocked Sewerage System in Mark**

The main sewerage system in Mark continues to have problems. Over the last few weeks there have been major problems with the main sewerage system pipe, down The Causeway, filling up with water.

You are probably aware that the sewerage system in Mark is a suction system dependant on regular suction valves throughout its length to create suction in the system. Wet Wipes, cotton buds, and other materials which do not break down or dissolve, that are flushed down the toilet, can cause blockage of these suction valves meaning the sewerage is not sucked back up the system.

Sewage flooding is miserable and can cause damage to you or your neighbours’ homes and we appeal to all households not to flush material and bathroom waste which will not decompose down your toilets.

**The Planning Process:**

Planning is probably the most contentious and most difficult subject that our Parish Council has to address.

**Parish Councils have the right to be informed of planning applications** within the parish. The Parish Council can give comments on planning applications whether they “support” or “object”. The local planning authority must take into account the views of the Parish or Town Councils.

Some applications can be administered, after due consideration, usually by voting using e-mail with the result posted to our Parish Clerk. Others may result in debate either within the Parish Council or during representation from members of the Public either by letter/e-mail or verbally at meetings. The Parish Council will only comment on what are known as “material considerations” – issues, for example, such as boundary disputes between neighbours or loss of views will not be considered.

The views of the community are important to the PC in reaching their decision and we welcome you sending us your views and comments on planning applications near you.

It is important to appreciate that the Parish Council is a Consultee, as are members of the Public. Applications and comments are passed to Sedgemoor District Council where they are reviewed by the Development Committee, in an executive role, which votes either *Approved* or *Refused*. It can and does override Parish Council recommendations.  Applicants also have right of appeal to the Planning Inspectorate in Bristol against a decision of the District Council.

***Methods of Publicising Applications***

* Sedgemoor District Council notify residents in the vicinity on applications with details of how to make representations.
* Sedgemoor District Council post notices near the entrance to sites, such on telegraph poles or a gate.
* Sedgemoor District Council broadcasts planning applications to the local press e.g., Burnham Weekly News and on line.
* Five days before the next scheduled Parish Council meeting, planning applications due for consideration are listed on the two Parish noticeboards at the Village Shop and the lay-by at Laurel Farm.

**Fly Tipping and Roadside Litter**

The Parish Council is keenly aware of fly-tipping and discarded rubbish thrown in verges and reports such deposits to Sedgemoor District Council.  Sedgemoor District Council Clean Surrounds has an investigation capability and will challenge suspects provided there is the evidence, such as labels, invoices, documents giving names and addresses and, of course, sightings.  Local intelligence of offenders is essential.  While ‘professional’ fly tippers tend not to leave anything linked to them, someone, somewhere knows who these people might be.  In the meantime, the Parish Council will continue to report deposits, at present about once a week.

**Advance Notice from the organiser - 2021 Great Weston Ride**

This is an item regarding the 2021 [Great Weston Ride](https://www.greatwestonride.com/), the challenge bike ride from Bristol to Weston-Super-Mare via the Mendips & Somerset Levels, to notify you of arrangements for this year’s event.

The route goes through Long Ashton, Barrow Gurney, Winford, Chew Stoke, Compton Martin, Ubley, Blagdon, Cheddar, Rodney Stoke, Wedmore, Mark, Highbridge, Burnham, Uphill and Weston so, as you can see, the event passes either through or near your local community, and this year’s Ride is scheduled to take place on **Sunday 18th July 2021**.

Ideally, we would have liked to have notified you about this much earlier (as per our normal practice), but we’re sure you can work out why we’ve had to leave it to this relatively late stage this year.  We do apologise for that, but we hope you understand that we wanted to have the best-possible understanding of the likely situation & conditions etc at the time of the event.

But obviously we’d still like to try to minimise any inconvenience that the Ride may cause by alerting as many people as possible in advance, and hopefully some people might also want to support - or even take part in – this major West Country challenge event.  And with the majority of participants coming from the Bristol and Somerset area it’s likely anyway that there will be people from your area already taking part.

**Email Government Scam.**

Published on May 24, 2021

Avon and Somerset Police are advising residents that there is an email claiming to be from the government that your National Insurance Number has been disabled due to fraudulent activity, the email claims that to reactivate your NIN number you must press the Red (Start Now) button shown on the attached document.  If you receive this email do not follow the instructions and DELETE immediately.

**Next Meeting of Mark Parish Council**

The next Meeting is planned to be held in the Church Hall, socially distanced of course, on 6th July 2021 starting at 7.00 p.m.  If Covid controls do not change on the 21st June other meeting arrangements will be made and the meeting may well be held remotely via Zoom.

**AUGUST 2021**

**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 Lane, Mark on Tuesday, 6th July 2021 at 7.00 p.m.**

**FINANCE**

It was noted that the Internal Auditor had inspected the 2020/21 accounts and had no issues to raise with Members.

It was reported that the balance of accounts at 1st July were as follows - Current £10,575.31, Reserve £28,504.22.

**PLANNING PORTFOLIO**

It was agreed to confirm recommendations made in respect of the following applications:

006 Variation of condition 2 of 33/20/004 – Erection of an agricultural building and formation of a vehicular access to amend the design of the proposed building, south of Blackford Road, Mark – O. Seymour. Recommendation of permission.

008 Erection of a two lane "English Cricket Board" and approved cricket practice net 7.3m wide x 4m high x 18.3m long to the west of Vole Road, Mark – Mark Cricket Club. Recommendation of permission.

009 Erection of an agricultural storage shed and formation of hard standing area for parking at Yarrow Road, Mark – Miss M. Vearncombe. Recommendation of permission.

010 Erection of single storey extension and first floor rear extension to provide a self-contained annex and holiday let, Ridgemoor, Blackford Road, Mark – C. Barrow. Recommendation of permission.

012 Change of use of agricultural land to residential curtilage and erection of a three-bay garage with storage over, The Cottage, Northwick Road, Mark – Mrs S.V. Baker. Recommendation of refusal.

013 Erection of two storey side extension and demolition of rear conservatory, Syringa, The Causeway, Mark - Mr & Mrs Shortland. Recommendation of permission.

015 Certificate of Lawfulness for the siting of caravan and its use as a dwelling, together with the site as residential curtilage, The Dolls House, Northwick Road, Mark – M. Waller. Recommendation of refusal.

The following new applications were considered: -

014 Erection of timber agricultural workers dwelling south of Rookery Farm, Northwick Road, Mark – C. Petheram – recommend permission.

016 Erection of extensions, Larches, The Causeway, Mark – Mr & Mrs R. May – recommend permission.

**PUBLIC AREAS**

**Highway Matters**

A number of specified road defects would be reported to County Highways.

A reply had been received from the County Council in response to the Parish Council’s schedule of proposed improvements to road signs, infrastructure and markings with a view to increasing road safety in the village but Members were not satisfied at the level of action proposed, including a lack of information held at County Hall on road traffic collisions in the village and were opposed at the suggestion of the Parish Council meeting the cost of new traffic orders. No further information had been received regarding the provision of 20 mph zones outside Mark First School and Sedgemoor College.  The County Council had still taken no action to complete the signage following the extension of the 30-mph speed limit at Blackford Road.  It was agreed to obtain press publicity in connection with the poor response of County Highways in dealing with matters raised by Mark Parish Council over many years, following which the issue be raised again with senior staff/Members at County Hall.

It was agreed to support Wedmore Parish Council in their bid for a 40-mph speed limit along Blackford Road and Mr Bickers would be requested to strim around the Mark stone at Blackford Road. The condition of the layby at Jubilee Green had deteriorated recently and it was agreed to seek a specification from Nigel Haggett for remedial work to include more robust foundations and possibly a tarmac finish. The County Council would also be requested to remove vegetation from the River Bridge near Burtle and to clarify the position regarding the operation of the bus service 67 on Saturdays.

Councillor Francis gave an update regarding the acquisition of more advanced SIDs for use in Mark, Burnham Without and East Huntspill. Approval was currently awaited from County Highways for sites and the installation of new poles for these SIDs in Mark.

**Play Area**

It was agreed to purchase a quantity of top soil to fill defects alongside the path leading to the play equipment.

**Public Rights of Way**

Councillor Sellers reported upon a stile at Dutch Road and the situation relating to AX23/15

**Village Hall /Football Pitch Area**

It was understood that the issue caused by model aircraft being flown on the football pitch area had been considered by the Mark Community Association.

**Wainbridge Farm**

Councillor Human had circulated a response from National Grid regarding their intentions for this property. They had carried out some stabilisation work and were working to achieve vacant possession.

**Web-site Portfolio**

Councillor Sellers kindly offered to assist Councillor Mrs Weekes with the web-site.

**Next Meeting of Mark Parish Council**

**The next Meeting is planned to be held in the** **Church Hall, socially distanced of course,** **on 7th September July 2021 starting at 7.00 p.m**.

**Dead Fish in the Mark Yeo River by the bridge**

On Monday July 5th the Environment Agency aerated the Mark Yeo River by the Bridge to mitigate the ecological impacts of low dissolved oxygen levels. Low oxygen levels can be caused by pollution, but in this instance it’s a combination of warm weather, duckweed covering the water surface and low flows. Summer storms can also be factor. They reported that there were 20-30 dead fish with others in distress which was a natural result of duck weed cover causing very low dissolved oxygen levels. They introduced a fresh flow of water from the river axe to improve oxygen levels. However, by the weekend the flow of water did not seem present and more dead fish were present with duckweed cover retuning so on Sunday 11th the PC reported the problem once again to the Environment Agency who said they would again investigate.

Early in the morning oxygen levels are low because photosynthesis doesn’t happen at night and also the duck weed shades out most other plants so there is very little opportunity for natural oxygenation. The causes of duck weed can vary but often it is due to high levels of nutrients in the water, the sources of which are many. Including, discharge from Sewage treatment works, septic tanks, misconnections of the foul water drainage in settlements to the storm water systems and some from agriculture too. Due to the protected nature of large parts of the Levels and Moors most of the agricultural nutrients are likely to come from the wider upstream catchment.

**Emma Fairbrother - report on Facebook Sunday 11th July**

Hello villagers. I am a Fisheries Officer and I work for the Environment Agency. Just to reassure you, the fish kill is not caused by a pollution but is a naturally occurring drop in dissolved oxygen levels that sadly happens every year at this location, and also many other locations on the Somerset levels and moors. Myself and a colleague came out last Monday and I came out again tonight (in my own time, not for work) to assess the ongoing problem. A lot of larger fish have sadly died over the last week, which is causing the bad smell as they decay. I will try and organise for the dead fish by the bridge to be removed tomorrow (it will probably be me, since nobody else will want to do it!).

Unfortunately, we cannot have aerators permanently in there so I expect more fish will die, which is very sad. I will try and arrange a more extensive weed cut and removal of more floating duckweed, which might improve the situation. We also diverted more water down the Mark Yeo from the Axe last week, which I will try and arrange again. This might help a little bit. The duckweed is the main problem. It grows and spreads extremely quickly. It prevents oxygenation of the water on the surface that would normally occur from the wind, and it respires at night and uses up oxygen that the fish need.

We DO care and we ARE aware of the situation, and doing what we can. I think it is important that the dead fish are removed, and I’m sorry that didn’t happen last week. I will make sure that is sorted.

On a brighter note, I saw an otter by the river right in the village last week, no doubt feasting on the fish. You have a lovely river on your doorstep, and I’m glad you care about it! We do too.

**SEPTEMBER 2021**

**MARK PARISH COUNCIL**

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

**Mark Community Action for Road Safety.**

On Tuesday 3rd August Mark Community Action for Road Safety held its first meeting where several strategies were discussed to increase road safety in and through our village. In conjunction with Mark Parish Council, this group has been created to lobby for increased road safety in the village.

Several ideas were discussed and a start made on formulating a plan. The group will be asking for support in various ways to gets plans in motion

Firstly - **PLEASE JOIN THIS GROUP**

It will be crucial in the campaign to show there is full village support. The better the numbers the louder our voices become. A picture needs to be built on what road safety measures have been ignored and for how long. The group can be contacted via their Facebook private messenger page or via email to Markcommunityaction@mail.com. Please send the group any of the following:

- documentation you may have sent to the County Council, letters emails and so on.

- any correspondence sent to councillors or MPs

- and accidents (of any type) that have happened in the village.

Thank you for your help.

Together we can make the village safer for all road users.

**Check Your Speed Campaign B3139 Watchfield to Wedmore**

We have received the following from Road Safety Education RoadSafety@somerset.gov.uk

I am emailing to let you know that as part of our work with Avon & Somerset Police, the annual emphasis on traffic speed has been done differently this year.  It has been decided to focus on communities, like yours, which we are aware have raised speeding concerns regularly with us and the Police. The enforcement campaign has therefore been developed to include temporary Check Your Speed road safety signs, which will be used alongside of the enforcement activity. The focus is on areas, that have demonstrated concerns raised by community, may have an active Community SpeedWatch and there has been previous work done to resolve the problem, including enforcement and engineering solutions. Whilst the campaign concludes on Sunday August 8th, this is routine work for the police, so they will continue to encourage road users to check their speed.

If you have any queries, please let me know.

Nick Cowling – Service Manager Transport Data and Road Safety

**Maintenance of Hedges next to Public Roads**

If you own or occupy land next to a public road or footway you are responsible for maintaining hedges and trees to ensure that they do not obstruct the movement of vehicles and pedestrians or block the view of drivers. Traffic signs must not be obstructed nor the safety or convenience of road users affected. If this occurs you can be notified by the authorities such as Somerset Highways to trim the hedges in question.

In most cases roadside hedges should be cut in February. Cutting any hedge from the 1 March to the 31 August can be considered a cross compliance breach and can lead to penalties unless the operation is required for the health and safety of road users. If the hedges are not causing an obstruction to movement or view then they should not be cut in the closed period.

If you need to cut during the closed period in order to comply with the legislation you should ensure you have clear evidence for doing so and that you can comply with the Code of Practice for Safety at Street Works and Road Works.

You must also make a careful check for nesting birds and chicks, mark and avoid any possible nest sites and then proceed with caution.

Do not cut the ‘field’ side of the hedge – only cut the side which faces the road and only the minimum length required to allow unrestricted movement of vehicles and pedestrians.

Hedge tops should only be cut where a view is obstructed at a junction or corner.  Remember to clear hedge trimmings from footpaths and roads as they can cause a hazard to pedestrians and road users.

**County-wide Bus Services**

Following the Government’s announcement in March of the new National Bus Strategy – ‘Bus Back Better’ a £3 billion pot of funding is being made available to improve bus services across the country and Somerset County Council can bid for a share of this in partnership with operators. But first, the Council needs to know about residents’ experience and where the gaps in services are.

You can take the survey at: -

<https://somerset.inconsult.uk/somerset.bus.survey/consultationHome>

Below is a summary of comments received from residents in response to the Mark Parish Council survey regarding the 67 Bus service, Burnham on Sea to Wedmore and on to Wells. A copy has been sent to Cllr Burrows who is co-ordinating the response from Parish surveys.

There is great appreciation of this service by all who use the bus and a continued service is a must for villages like Mark.

- Three buses/day running East through MARK  09-45 11-43 13-45. Which means that you can stay in Wells for 18mins or 2hours 57 mins

- Three buses running West through MARK 10-10 11-35 14-05 Which means that you can stay in BOS for 10 mins or 2hours 30mins.

- The option is not great, but it does mean that you can get to do shopping on any day of the week during the midday period.

- It is one bus going back and forward and therefore the only option when going to Wells or BOS is taking the first bus in and the last bus out.

- Most travellers are going to Burnham on Sea from Mark with the next highest journey going from Mark to Wells.

- More Buses to run all day giving great time slots this comment is on all the forms returned to the Parish Council

- Bus service to run on Saturdays and Sundays

- Smaller style buses would be good.

- For those using the bus service it’s the only way out of the village for them to go shopping visits to the Dentist or Doctors

**Mark Village WEB SITE**

The figure of visitors for the website records that there were 1353 in July 2021. We welcome receiving your views for additional content on the web site and any other regular information you would find of use.

**Next Parish Council Meeting**

**Please Note. The next Parish Council Meeting will be held on Tuesday 7th September 2021 at the Church Hall starting at 7.00pm**

**OCTOBER 2021**

**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 Lane, Mark on Tuesday, 7th September 2021 at 7.00 p.m.**

**Present: -** Councillor S. Emary (Chairman) Councillors G. Francis, W. Human, D. Sellers, J. Spencer and Mrs J. Weekes with County Councillor D. Huxtable (until 7.25 p.m.) and the Clerk. Apology for absence received from Councillors D. Champion and Mrs E. Corkish.

**Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Mrs J. Weekes declared a personal interest in matters relating to the Village Hall.

**Minutes**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 6th July 2021 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**Report of the County Councillor**

County Councillor Huxtable reported upon issues relating to unitary authorities, Covid and highways. It was subsequently agreed to accept his offer to arrange for a speed survey to be undertaken along Blackford Road and for rumble strips to be installed on the eastern approach to Mark.

**Finance**

**a)  Balance of Accounts**

It was reported that the balance of accounts at 1st September were as follows - Current £5,892.10, Reserve £28,504.70.

**b) Authorisation for Payment**

      It was agreed that the following payments be confirmed: -

000933 Somerlap benches                                                             £411.84

000934 NA Haggett (builders) Ltd work to Jubilee Green                £1,440.00

DD       SDC salary recharge                                                           £975.00

It was agreed that the following payments be authorised: -

000935 GWB Services grass cutting                                              £1,002.00

000936 SALC affiliation fee                                                             £390.27

000937 PKF Littlejohn audit fee                                                       £240.00

000938 Parish Clerk expenses & sundry payments                            £119.61

**c) Bank Reconciliation**

A bank reconciliation as at 30th June 2021 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.

**d) Audit of Accounts**

The External Auditors had completed their work on the 2020/21 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.

**Planning Portfolio**

It was agreed to confirm recommendations of permission made in respect of the following applications: -

019 Erection of side extension and detached garage and formation of new driveway, Linden, Dutch Road, Mark – Mr & Mrs G. Fisher.

020 & 021LB Erection of extension to side elevation, conversion of stables to home office and garden store, replacement car port and alterations to dwelling, Laurel Farm, The Causeway, Mark – Mr & Mrs J. Griffen.

025 Erection of agricultural building, Reed Farm, Southwick Road, Mark – CL, AE & RC Sweet

The following new application was considered: -

026 Formation of a landscape bund to the south of Blackford Road, Mark – O. Seymour – recommend permission.

**Public Areas Portfolio**

**a) Highway Matters**

As action was taking place in respect of a number of the long outstanding highway issues, it was agreed to defer obtaining press publicity at the current time in connection with the poor response of County Highways in dealing with matters raised by the Parish Council.  Work was taking place on the provision of a 20-mph zone outside Mark First School and road makings were being refurbished throughout the village.  County Highways had also undertaken to contact a property owner regarding a safety issue concerning the remains of railings at the edge of the highway at Vole Road.  It was agreed to adjust a directional sign to the Bowls Club.

The layby at Jubilee Green had been refurbished and it was noted that the vegetation had been removed from the River Bridge near Burtle.  Bus service 67 no longer operated on Saturdays and it was noted that Councillor Mrs Corkish would be taking part in a Zoom Meeting regarding bus services on 14th September.

Councillor Francis gave an update regarding the acquisition of more advanced SIDs for use in Mark, Burnham Without and East Huntspill. Two new poles for these SIDs had recently been installed in East Huntspill.

**b) Play Area**

Two picnic benches had been replaced in the play area.  It was agreed to meet a representative of GB Sport & Leisure when undertaking this year’s inspection of the play equipment to discuss issues with the safety surfacing.  Councillor Mrs Weekes would attend the Somerset Playing Fields’ Association Presentation Event at Woolavington on 10th September.

**c) Public Rights of Way**

Councillor Sellers reported upon a bridge off Perry Lane along AX27/57 and issues along AX23/15.

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

Councillor Mrs Weekes reported that the Village Hall was being well used again and a junior football club would be using the football pitch this season.

**Web-site Portfolio**

Visitors to the website were recorded at 1448 in August 2021.  Councillor Sellers would discuss the web-site with Councillor Mrs Weekes.

**Next Meeting**

**The next Parish Council Meeting will be held on Tuesday 2nd November 2021 at the Church Hall starting at 7.00pm**

**............................................**

**National Grid Hinkley Connection Project update from National Grid.**

Work is progressing well all along the route from Bridgwater to Avonmouth and we are expecting to achieve some major project milestones over the next few months.

**Building T Pylons**

his month we are starting to build the world’s first operational T-pylons.

We’ve completed all the driven piling for the section of the route between Bridgwater substation and the cable sealing end compound (CSC) at Loxton, where it will join to the underground cables we’re installing through the Mendip Hills.

We have just three further foundations to build using mini-piling techniques and we expect this work to be completed in the autumn**.** [**This schedule shows where we are piling and when**](https://hinkleyconnection.co.uk/where-we-are-working-piling-locations/).

The T-pylon is the first new design for pylons in this country for almost a century. It has a single pole and T-shaped cross arms which hold the wires in a diamond ‘earring’ shape. It is around 35 metres high; about a third shorter than traditional 400,000 volt steel lattice pylons. It also has a smaller footprint and will use less land.

We will publish updates on our website [**www.hinkleyconnection.co.uk**](http://www.hinkleyconnection.co.uk/)  over the coming weeks and in our next quarterly newsletter.

Later in the year, we will start to remove the smaller Western Power Distribution (WPD) pylons and we’ll be in touch with more information nearer the time.

**Connecting Hinkley Point C power station**

Meanwhile, another of our contractors, Babcock, has started work to enable construction of a 4.5 km overhead power line north of Wick, which will connect Hinkley Point C and Shurton substation to the National Grid network, and the removal of a 2.3 km overhead line that runs to the Hinkley B power station.

We’re currently building temporary traffic access points and haul roads which will allow construction vehicles to reach the new pylon locations.

We expect to start pylon construction towards the end of the year. We’ll provide more detailed information on the construction programme as the works progress and let people know if there will be any disruptions to residents and businesses.

**Underground cables through the Mendip Hills**

Further north, we’re making good progress with installing the underground electricity cables beneath the Mendip Hills, from the cable sealing end compound at Loxton to Sandford.

In sensitive areas, such as road crossings and waterways, we’re using horizontal directional drilling (HDD) to push the ducts through the ground. We have only one more drilling site to complete, under the Lox Yeo River.

If you have any questions or would like to talk through the work in your parish, please don’t hesitate to email me, Donna Burnell, Community Relations Team, at hinkleyconnection@nationalgrid.com or call me on 0800 377 7347

**Information from Somerset Count Highways**

**- Reporting Potholes**

If you are reporting this defect outside normal working hours – Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5.30pm – and you believe it is an urgent problem and a risk to public safety, please phone the police on 101.

When you report a pothole it is inspected within 3 working days and a repair will be planned in as set out in our [Highway Safety Inspection Manual.](https://somersetcc.sharepoint.com/%3Ab%3A/s/SCCPublic/EUn1iqX_usZMvPhqGJJhMhgBbILIxJnAGkN_yIRaHjRuRA?e=Ag7eMo)

Please give us as much information as possible that will help our inspector find the pothole or road defect. The more information you give us, the easier it will be for us to find. Please tell us:

* Your name and phone number, in case we need to contact you
* Where the pothole or road defect is, including post code, road name and parish
* Is the pothole or defect outside a specific property, for example outside Number 4, or near lamp column number 27

**About potholes**

A pothole happens when the surface of a road or footpath has been worn away and a hollow forms.

As the road surface ages it becomes more porous, and rainwater gets in through cracks. In wet weather the pressure created by traffic passing over the area forces water further down into the road surface, weakening it.  In winter, as the temperature changes between freezing and thawing, there is a faster deterioration of road surfaces, because the water filling cracks freezes and expands, loosening chunks of the surface material.

Once a pothole has formed it will quickly grow as traffic continually dislodges and removes weakened and broken pieces of the surface.

Our inspectors check roads, footways and cycleways for potholes regularly. Quieter routes are inspected less often, so we ask you to help us identify and report potholes. When you report a pothole, we log it and schedule a repair where required.

You can find out more about how often we carry out our inspections in our Highways Safety Inspection Manual.

**How we repair potholes**

A pothole repair involves ‘cutting out’ the weakened area. The hole is then cleaned out and painted with a coat of a liquid bitumen binder which acts like a glue when the hole is filled with a hot layer of road surface material, which is then compacted.

**Paint marks on the road**

We make paint marks on the road to help us identify the exact spot to carry out the work. The markings used (lines, dots or letters) have no particular meaning. If a member of the public adds additional marks, this will not result in additional work being done.

**How long does it take to repair potholes and prioritising repairs**

When you report a pothole, it is inspected within 3 working days and a repair will be planned if it meets the intervention levels set out in our Highway Safety Inspection Manual. In some cases, we may do a temporary repair and a permanent repair will be carried out within 28 days.

Pothole repairs are prioritised depending on their size and where they are. We also take into account the amount and speed of traffic using the road, and where the pothole is in the road.

As a general rule, potholes in the road that are 40mm deep will be repaired within 28 days, the same timeframe as for potholes on a footway or cycleway that are 20mm deep. These response times are reduced to 24 hours for busy A and B roads and town centres.

**MARK PARISH COUNCIL**

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

**Somerset Bus Service Improvement Plan** are part of them.  l

The following has been taken from Somerset’s Bus Service Improvement Plan.

**Spotlight on Somerset’s Bus service Improvement Plan Aims and Objectives**

**More extensive and frequent network of services -** Improve access and opportunity to travel by increasing the frequency and provision of bus services across the network to include evening and weekend travel and reducing journey times on key routes through a strategic network aligned to bus priorities and a flexible approach to feeder service provision. The longer-term aim being to establish more commercially viable services through increased patronage.

**Reduce the cost of travel** - Improve access for young people to education, training and employment and encourage families and groups to access social and leisure activities through reduced cost bus travel initiatives targeting the ‘next generation bus traveller, and four-year trials of local and reduced interurban travel products across the network.

**Improved co-ordination** – Intensively work with local bus operators and key stakeholders to ensure full integration between bus services and other modes across the network with a focus on rural connectivity, coordinated core corridors, enhanced cross-boundary services, and significantly increased Demand Responsive Transport.

**An easily accessible and reliable network** - Make it easier and more convenient for everyone to access and use public transport by focusing on the whole journey cycle, all passenger touch points, develop digital tools to enable real-time tracking and travel, and build in progressive bus priority measures to deliver improved punctuality and reliability.

**A comfortable network with improved facilities –** Focus initiatives to ensure a more comfortable experience and safer waiting environment for bus users across all parts of the journey cycle including the development of a bus stop design guide, an infrastructure hierarchy stimulated by service frequency and catchment population, and minimum passenger standards for buses used across the network.

**Decarbonisation Plan** - Reduce the carbon footprint in public transport provision, focusing on fleet replacement, minimum emission standards, infrastructure to support a move to a zero-emission fleet, electric buses for Taunton Park and Ride, and to enable modal shift to sustainable travel.

**The Somerset County Council BSIP** is an ambitious plan, focused on revitalising the local bus network, halting, and reversing the decline in local bus passenger use, meeting the aspirations set out by key stakeholders and the public through this process, and marking Somerset as a centre of excellence for rural transport provision

**Highway issues on The Causeway at Mark School**

We continue to discuss with Somerset Highways, the Police and others about work on improving road safety and reducing the disturbance to local residents from parked cars on The Causeway during school pick up and drop off times.

The Parish Council met with Fiona Robertson and Jo Collyer at Mark school to once again talk about the problems and several ideas to improve the situation were discussed at the meeting.

We are aware that the new road markings have caused some concern.  Whilst this is a Highways issue, we are trying together with Mark School to find a resolution to the congestion at drop-off and collection times.  Please continue to **NOT** park on the zig zag area at the front of the school or across residents’ driveways, as this reduces for all road users and adds to the already congested area.

**Community Involvement National Grid Hinkley Connection Project -** **Clearance of bridleway** **AX17/30 alongside Mark Yeo**

Over the last couple of months NG has started to build the world’s first operational T-pylons which have a single pole and T-shaped cross arms which hold the wires in a diamond ‘earring’ shape. They are around 35 metres high and about a third shorter than traditional 400,000volt steel lattice pylons. It also has a smaller footprint and will use less land.

We are delighted to let you know that National Grid, under their community engagement programmes with communities affected by the construction of the National Grid Hinkley Connection Project, supports projects and carry out work which will be of benefit to the local community and on October 26th National Grid carried out **clearance work on bridleway AX 17/30** starting at the old bridge north of bridleway AX23/15.

National Grid do not just want to be working in communities but  to be part of them.

**Next Meeting**

**The next Parish Council Meeting will be held on Tuesday 2nd November 2021 at the Church Hall starting at 7.00pm**

**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 Lane, Mark on Tuesday, 2nd November 2021 at 7.00 p.m.**

**Report of the County Councillor**

County Councillor Huxtable reported upon issues relating to Covid and highways. The County Council had agreed to arrange for a speed survey to be undertaken along Blackford Road.  Issues relating to highway safety in the vicinity of Mark First School and village gateway schemes were also discussed.

**Finance**

**Balance of Accounts**

It was reported that the balance of accounts at 1st October were as follows - Current £13,405.49, Reserve £28,504.93.

**Authorisation for Payment**

      It was agreed that the following payments be authorised:-

DD              SDC                  salary recharge                               £975.00

000939       GWB Services     grass cutting                                  £630.40

000940       Coram Construction

                                           Training  course fee                         £264.00

000941       Mark

                  Community Ass’n grant                                          £6,500.00

**Bank Reconciliation**

A bank reconciliation as at 30th September 2021 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.

**Planning Portfolio**

It was agreed to confirm a recommendation of permission made in respect of the following application:

028 Erection of agricultural building, Rookery Farm Creamery, Northwick Road, Mark – CS & JM Petheram.

The following new applications were considered:

003 Installation of three replacement first floor windows, Upper Southwick Farm, Southwick Road, Mark – Mrs I. Perry – recommend permission.

029 Demolition of outbuildings and erection of replacement farmhouse, Glebe Farm, Harp Road, Mark – M. Kidner – recommend conditional permission.

031 Erection of replacement dwelling, The Homestead, Northwick Road, Mark – W. Howard – defer for further consideration by Members.

Councillor Human undertook to contact National Grid regarding the condition of buildings at Wainbridge Farm.

**Public Areas Portfolio**

**Highway Matters**

It was agreed to report highway defects at the junction of Northwick Road and Vole Road.  A Working Party comprising the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Councillor Mrs Corkish would be formed to give detailed consideration to issues relating to parking in the vicinity of Mark First School. It was noted that a directional sign to the Bowls Club had been adjusted. Councillor Mrs Corkish would be taking part in a Zoom Meeting regarding bus services on 3rd November. A request for an additional dog waste bin to be located at Littlemoor Road would be considered with the Estimates for 2022/23.

Councillor Francis gave an update regarding the acquisition of more advanced SIDs for use in Mark, Burnham Without and East Huntspill. The new poles required for these SIDs had still not been installed by the County Council in Mark. Two SIDs would also be purchased by the Parish Council for installation at the eastern end of Blackford Road financed by donations from an appeal in memory of the late Lorraine Barrow.

**Play Area**

It was noted that GB Sport & Leisure had undertaken their annual inspection of the play equipment and that the report was awaited.

**Public Rights of Way**

Members reported upon work carried out by National Grid to help clear AX23/15 and a need for further work.

**Village Hall /Football Pitch Area**

Councillor Mrs Weekes reported that the Village Hall was being well used and a discussion took place regarding use of the football pitch by a junior football club this season.

**Web-site Portfolio**

Councillor Mrs Weekes had circulated statistics relating to the web-site.

**Next Meeting**

**The next Parish Council Meeting will be held on Tuesday 14th December 2021 at the Church Hall starting at 7.00pm**

**How to fight fly tipping**

Fly-tipping is a crime punishable by fine or imprisonment, a blot on Somerset’s lovely 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 advice is simple:

* Never fly-tip yourself
* Check that anyone taking waste away for you has the right licence and ask them where the waste will go
* Never pay cash
* Always get a proper receipt and a copy of the “waste transfer note”
* Record names, contact details and information about vehicles
* Take particular care in using social media to get waste removed

If you know about those who fly-tip, inform Sedgemoor district council immediately. To report a fly-tipping incident, or information about fly-tippers, [**contact Sedgemoor District Council customer services**](http://www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/contact-us/).

**Highway issues on The Causeway at Mark School**

We continue to discuss with Somerset Highways, the Police and others about work on improving road safety and reducing the disturbance to local residents from parked cars on The Causeway during school pick up and drop off times.

The Parish Council met with Fiona Robertson and Jo Collyer at Mark school to once again talk about the problems and several ideas to improve the situation were discussed at the meeting.

We also met Richard Greenwell, Constituency Support Officer to James Heappey MP, outside the school at the afternoon pick up time so that our MP is made fully aware of the Road Safety issues on The Causeway during school pick up and drop off times.

We are aware that the new road markings have caused some concern. Whilst this is a Highways issue, we are trying together with Mark School to find a resolution to the congestion at drop-off and collection times.  Please continue to **NOT** park on the zig zag area at the front of the school or across residents’ driveways, as this reduces access for all road users and adds to the already congested area.