

Trull Parish Council
Canonsgrove Liaison Working Group (CLWG)
Report to Parish Council Meeting 20th September 2021

Date of Meeting

The meeting was held on 8th September 2021 by zoom commencing at 6pm and ending at 7.50pm.

Attendance

1. Present: David Taylor (DT/Chair), Councillor Dawn Johnson (DJ), Simon Lewis (ST) representing Somerset West and Taunton ("SWT"), Jonica Walkinshaw (JW) representing YMCA Dulverton Group ("YMCA DG").
2. Councillor David Lindfield gave his apologies

Documents considered

1. Report by SWT and YMCA DG to Parish Council meeting 20th September 2021
2. Draft publicity article.
3. Police Report to Parish Council for period 18th July to 15th August 2021

Issues and Topics

This report utilises the headings of the SWT/YMCA DG_report for September 2021 which is attached as Annex A.

This report is longer than we anticipate future report will be. This is because it summarises some of the processes and procedures operating at Canonsgrove that will not need to be included in future reports unless significant changes have been made.

Updates to Reports

SL: Nothing to add.

JW: The start of the horticulture course and the literacy and maths work has been delayed because of the Bridgwater and Taunton College (BTC) summer vacation. These are now being actively chased and a telephone meeting with BTC has been arranged for 10th September. Volunteers will be used to support these projects. There is a particular need to provide education in Maths and English to enable residents to use IT which is now an essential skill needed to access many services online.

Site Management

1. Numbers of Canonsgrove Residents: As of 8th September 2021 there were 56 residents. The maximum capacity is 66, but YMCA DG would not go over 60.

2. JW agreed to provide in future reports a breakdown of the number of residents who have been admitted, rehoused and evicted, together with some information as to the success of the rehousing and whether any former residents have returned to Canonsgrove because their move on has been unsuccessful. This report will be put together between YMCA DG and SWT Rough Sleeper team, who deliver tenancy sustainment support.
3. YMCA DG wish the numbers of residents to reduce to 40 by spring 2022. This is to ensure that appropriate plans can be made for staffing levels and resident support. SWT consider that approximately 20 residents are now ready to move on. The numbers of those admitted as rough sleepers is now pretty static and most of the group who were initially accommodated at Canonsgrove are now being supported in other accommodation or living independently.
4. Referrals and admission process: SL confirmed that SWT have a legal duty towards those who are homeless which exists no matter what other needs a person has. All Canonsgrove residents are admitted through the SWT homeless referrals process.
5. All must have a relevant local connection (see Annex C below) and are considered by a placement panel.
6. The panel include representatives of a number of agencies including mental health, drug and alcohol services, and providers of services including YMCA DG and Arc (Lindley House) and others. The panel assesses the applicants needs and their individual difficulties and decides which accommodation available is the most suitable for them which may not be Canonsgrove.
7. SL and JW both acknowledged that some residents have particularly complex needs and the involvement of NHS services including the dual diagnosis nursing staff (who deal with both drug/alcohol and mental health difficulties) play an important role in this assessment process and enables any such persons admitted to be provided with targeted support.
8. Some residents are admitted on a temporary basis (for instance if they are awaiting other accommodation) and referrals to SWT are on occasions accepted from Prisons and courts. All such referrals involve the panel also considering the views of the Probation Service and any MAPPAs (Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements) or MARACs (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences) assessments.
9. JW confirmed that drug dealers are not admitted and if a resident becomes involved in dealing, they will be evicted and links to the police are made.
10. Despite staffing and demands on services, JW was confident that all agencies involved in supporting residents are now playing an effective role. If the situation should change, the chair (on behalf of this group) offered to contact agencies directly to emphasise the importance of their roles. JW agreed to raise this with the chair if agency engagement deteriorated in the future.

Covid 19 issues

11. JW confirmed that the effect of track and trace and the “Pingdemic” had made staffing arrangements “quite difficult”, but this is now improving. All Staff have been double vaccinated. There have been no recent Covid cases at Canonsgrove and the single ensuite accommodation may have been a factor in this.
12. Concerns have arisen about residents not wearing masks on the number 97 bus (Hatch Green Coaches require all passengers to wear one unless exempt). JW agreed to arrange for the bus company to be provided with a supply of masks. These can be given to residents as they board the bus if they do not have one with them.

Incidents and antisocial behaviour

13. We had available the police report up to 15th August 2021 and the incident report attached to the SWT/YMCA DG report for July and August. JW had no further incidents to report to the meeting.
14. JW apologised that she had not received a report from Steve Keen (Trull Parish Council) as her email request had “bounced back” because of a mistaken spelling.
15. We noted that the police report contained useful details which enabled these to be cross referenced to the reports made direct to Canonsgrove.
16. DJ informed the meeting of reports made directly to her as follows:
 - a. She had spoken to a local resident who had problems with using the dedicated email which had “bounced back”. We noted that this appears on the incident report for 19th July. JW confirmed that this had been investigated by her IT department and they had reported that no errors had been detected. JW agreed to keep this under review.
 - b. There had been a lot of siren activity through Staplehay over the last weekend. JW confirmed that she was aware that the police had attended twice over the last couple of days. JW wished the meeting to note that she is not on site daily and the Canonsgrove Manager will be likely to have better information.
 - c. Some reports have been made to DJ direct that Canonsgrove residents have been cycling on the footpath and also on the wrong side of the road. JW explained that a number of residents have their own cycles. YMCA DG are in discussion with “On your Bike” charity and discussing two different bike related courses for residents. She will ask that they include some cycle safety training and encourage the use of helmets and lights.
 - d. There have been incidents of suspected drug dealing (by locals not County Lines gangs) in Penny’s Field Comeytrove (back of Tesco store) and the police were involved. JW said she was not aware of any such incidents and she would expect to be informed if Canonsgrove residents were suspected.

17. We noted that there is a common theme that current incidents relate mainly to residents travelling to and from Canonsgrove rather than incidents elsewhere.
18. DJ said it was pleasing that appeared to have been a reduction in reported incidents, but she remained concerned that incidents were not being reported.
19. Outcomes of incident reports: JW explained that all incidents reported were dealt with in one of two ways:
 - a) If the incident was not directed to anyone specifically (such as late-night shouting), provided that the person involved could be identified, any agencies (including any police) working with that resident would be informed and the residents behaviour reviewed. This would then lead either to advice or further support being given. In repeat cases the residents would be warned that they may lose their accommodation provision.
 - b) If the incident was directed at a person, the same process would take place but would start at a warning that accommodation at Canonsgrove was in jeopardy.
20. In both cases if there was any Probation involvement they would also be informed and warned that the accommodation may be in danger.
21. We reviewed each of the incidents contained in the reports available to us. We were satisfied that the action taken appeared to have been appropriate.
22. The incidents on 3rd July and 23rd July involved the same person and likewise the incidents on 22nd July and 1st August involved the same couple. The Working Group will monitor any further similar incidents to ensure the response remains sufficient to reassure the community.
23. The risk of further incidents adversely affecting the local community is directly related to the individual residents needs and background and the management of any difficulties arising including the response taken.
24. Overall, we were satisfied that the number and seriousness of the incidents reported appears to be reducing and the work being done to support residents appears to be bearing fruit.
25. However, in view of the number of residents currently at Canonsgrove and the fact that some have a complex background we will continue to monitor further incidents carefully.

The Canonsgrove Minibus

26. At the section 106 planning committee hearing on 22nd July, the planning committee requested that the issue of transport to and from Canonsgrove should be reviewed and suggested that this group should undertake this.
27. This section of the SWT report sets out the history and how the minibus is now being used.
28. Although most reported incidents now relate to residents travelling to and from Canonsgrove we agreed that re-deploying the minibus to provide a service for

residents to travel to Taunton and back would be unlikely to prevent the majority of incidents occurring. Most occur late at night when a minibus would not be available. Furthermore, re-deploying staff to drive the minibus would adversely affect staffing available to help support clients on site.

29. Should the pattern or frequency of incidents relating to travel to and from Taunton alters we will ask that the usage of the minibus is reviewed.

Accommodation Strategy and new accommodation solutions.

30. SL confirmed that providing alternative long-term accommodation for those ready to move on was a priority. The SWT report outlines action being taken. SWT are developing a strategic plan for single homeless accommodation. This was to be considered at Full Council on 7th September, but this has now been put back to October.
31. SL explained that only 20% of his workload is allocated to homeless provision but this has been taking up 80% of his time. To ensure sufficient resources are available to progress rehousing of Canonsgrove residents, an additional staff member is being recruited.
32. DJ was aware that a recent funding application made by SWT to the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government had been unsuccessful. SL explained that this bid was being resubmitted and was not likely to have a significant impact on the ability of SWT to provide the amount of move on accommodation required.
33. SL confirmed that the refurbishment and redesign of Lindley House (operated by Arc) is still at the design approval stage and will be subject to planning permission. The refurbishment, once agreed will need to be delivered in a staged approach, requiring temporary decant of groups of residents as each section is completed. Early discussions have taken place with YMCA DG about the potential to accommodate these people at Canonsgrove while the work takes place. SL added that SWT will ensure that numbers do not exceed the current levels at Canonsgrove.
34. SL was hopeful that he will be able to provide further details about the progress of funding and move on accommodation at future meetings.

Matters agreed.

1. JW will ensure that Hatch Green Coaches will be provided with a supply of face masks to be given to Canonsgrove residents as they board the 97 bus if they do not already have one.
2. The use of the available minibus to provide a transport service to and from Taunton would not be likely to result in a significant reduction of incidents.
3. Any further problems with email reporting to the dedicated YMCA email address will be promptly investigated and any faults found rectified.

4. The text of the publicity article was agreed. Subject to the approval of the Parish Council the chair will arrange for this to be placed on Parish Council noticeboards, the Hive Cafe, Trull stores and the Trull Community Facebook page.

Matters remaining unresolved.

The Working Groups response to any further incidents reported by Steve Keen. Chair will note and take back to the working group.

Action Points for next meeting

1. **SL:** SWT report to include figures for new admissions, rehousing, evictions and any persons returning to Canonsgrove because move on accommodation has failed.
2. **SL:** SWT report to include outcome of further funding applications and details of any move on accommodation becoming confirmed
3. **JW:** Incident reports to include information from Steve Keen
4. **DT:** publicity article to be circulated.

Recommendations to Parish Council Meeting

1. Confirm approval of the publicity article.
2. Parish Council to encourage reports of all incidents to be made directly to the dedicated Canonsgrove email address Canonsgrove@ymca-dg.org
3. To note this report and in particular that likelihood of incidents occurring in the future are directly related to:
 - a. How referrals are assessed as suitable to be accommodated at Canonsgrove.
 - b. The support available to individual residents in light of their own individual needs and difficulties.
 - c. A prompt and effective response being made to any incidents or antisocial behaviour affecting local residents.

David Taylor (Independent Chair of Canonsgrove Liaison Working Group)

10th September 2021

Annex A: SWT/YMCADG report for September 2021

Annex B: Publicity article approved by members of Working Group.

Annex C: Definition of Local Connection.