

TRULL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of an Extraordinary Meeting of Trull Parish Council held via Zoom
on Thursday 3rd September 2020, at 7.15pm.

Cllrs present: Mr L Forgham, Mrs J Wooldridge, Mr B Pretty, Mrs A Hudson, Mr S Keen, Ms T Dean and Mr D Lindfield.

In attendance: Mrs S Millard-Jones – Clerk
Cllr S Wakefield and approximately 19 members of the public.

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, members of the public were asked to wait until the end of the meeting to comment.

09/01 Apologies for Absence.

Apologies of absence received from Mr A Kent and Mr N Hancock.

09/02 To receive declarations of personal/prejudicial/disclosable pecuniary interests/to review Register of Interest.

None

09/03 To discuss the outcome of the meeting (regarding Canonsgrove) with F Smith-Roberts/YMCA Dulverton/SWT/Police.

Cllr S Wakefield started by providing a summary of the meeting that took place on the 25th August 2020;

1. Canonsgrove (or part of it) has been leased until the end of October 2020 as a refuge and is also seeking to provide addiction and mental health support for the homeless so that at least some of them can be moved to more permanent accommodation and seek employment. It is hoped to extend this project at this location for a further 6-12 months and an options appraisal is being carried out which will include looking at sources of essential funding.

2. There are 42 people accommodated there at the moment (but they can take up to 60 I believe).

3. The staff running the facility (basically Dulverton YMCA with support from SWT and a number of other bodies) do not operate a curfew but reception is staffed and they record residents going in and out of Canonsgrove and they do have CCTV on site. They are looking to improve the transport available into town.

4. Canonsgrove has consent for use as a residential facility and the planning condition (referred to at the meeting) that it was limited solely for student use will need to be looked at after the Covid emergency use has passed. (I will follow up on this).

5. Those running the centre emphasised that not all of their residents are causing problems and they indicated that they can deal with issues reported to them - they are going to set up an email and provide phone numbers which work 24/7 so that they can respond swiftly. Sometimes a photo on a phone could help to identify the person or persons causing a nuisance too. We were assured that there is limited alcohol available on site which is supplied only to alcoholics being housed and treated there - people have to buy their own generally.

6. The police said that they wanted to be told about anti-social and criminal behaviour and that they do log all calls. However, there is a local concern about how long it takes to give information and a seeming reluctance to respond. It was suggested that logging such matters online may be an easier process where no immediate action is required.

7. Trull shop is dealing with people using it and buying alcohol there but has not reported any problems to the police or to Canonsgrove staff. However, in my view it is likely that the owners do not want to get involved in the matter but simply to run their business.

8. The PC reiterated that it had not been properly consulted before Canonsgrove started to be used for the homeless during the lockdown. It was made clear that the PC do expect to be included in any review or extension of this use and to be consulted for their views. An offer was made for PC members to visit the facility and possibly to meet some of the residents.

Concerns were raised amongst the councillors that some residents appeared to have been ejected from the Canonsgrove site, which has caused local disturbance. Questions were asked about how to approach the issue regarding such individuals. There had been an issue with a member of the security staff telling a member of the public that actually a record wasn't kept on the comings and goings of all residents. A member of the Parish Council attended site and spoke with the Canonsgrove Manager who assures us that this was due to agency staff who hadn't been following protocol, and that this would be discussed again with all security staff.

09/04 To consider a letter to Trull residents regarding Canonsgrove.

Members of the Parish Council considered it a positive step that the meeting had taken place and that it had instigated communication between the various people involved. The overarching theme seemed to be that SWT, YMCA Dulverton and the police were unaware of the extent of the problems and the message was to encourage everyone to report all issues. If incidents remain unreported, then it will be very difficult for the Canonsgrove site to address the concerns felt by the Trull residents.

A draft letter had been circulated amongst members ahead of the meeting.

RESOLVED:

It was unanimously resolved that the draft letter should be circulated to all 2500 residents of Trull. These letters will be delivered by members of the public voluntarily.

It was suggested that the letter should include contact telephone numbers for the Canonsgrove site for the public.

RESOLVED:

The clerk to ensure that Canonsgrove and SWT are happy for the contact details to be shared.

The chair informed the public that a meeting is due to take place on a monthly basis with SWT, YMCA Dulverton and the police and that they will be invited to attend the Parish Council Meetings.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 20.28.

Chair Signature.....Date.....