



Glastonbury Town Council

Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday 15th March 2022 immediately following the Planning meeting

PRESENT: Councillors S Barnet, J Coles, J Cousins, N Cottle, S Henderson, P Lund, L MacDougall, S Roney-Dougal, M Smyth and I Tucker.

APOLOGIES: Cllrs Bishop, Keery and Prior. County Councillor Leyshon

IN ATTENDANCE: Town Clerk, 8 members of the public were in attendance.

Public participation: Three members of the public spoke during public participation on the subject of the draft Public Space Protection Order.

209. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations made by Councillors

210. MENDIP DISTRICT COUNCIL – PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDERS (PSPO) CONSULTATION

Mendip District Council are considering the adoption of a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) as part of a planned approach to help address issues relating to the volume of unauthorised encampments, within Glastonbury and neighbouring areas. The intention of this Public Spaces Protection Order would be to prevent individuals or groups of individuals from either having a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality, or from the likelihood of such an effect arising. The consultation exercise remains open until 20th March and Glastonbury Town Council has been invited to submit comments on the suitability of a PSPO to address the issues arising through unauthorised encampments.

A fifteen point questionnaire has been devised (although questions 6 and 7 are missing!) which has been prepared more for an individual response, as opposed to an authority response. Councillors endorsed the comments raised during public participation that the questionnaire discriminated against those who do not have access to the internet.

Councillors were reminded by the Mayor that they may choose to respond themselves to the questionnaire, yet for the purposes of compiling a response from the Town Council, the comments need to be reflective of all residents, including the travelling community.

After much discussion, a response was **AGREED** which included additional statements which were included in the final answer (15)

15. Do you have any further comments about the introduction of the proposed PSPO, its enforcement or effect on the district, that you would like to make? Please add any further comments below.

The problem that Mendip and the other local authorities are trying to address is one of 'the scale' against the tensions caused by the large number of travelling folk and van dwellers who have come here, and a residential community that is less tolerant than usual.

To put it into context, Bristol considers it has a serious van-dwellers issue. Bristol has a residential population of 467,099, the city covers 110 km² and has 600 vans - and the City Council considers it has a serious issue. Glastonbury has a population 8,932, the island is a little over 6 km² ...and has 137 vans (last recording). The number of van-dwellers parking along roadsides is unsustainable for such a small, and environmentally constrained place as Glastonbury.

The Council acknowledges that current legislation would be able to deal with the situation, however it has not been adequately resourced, or enforced. The real solution is for the District and County Council to create proper sites for the travelling community in Somerset. These need to be stop-overs/lay-bys, temporary sites, and permanent sites. The Council further acknowledges that the travelling community is diverse and only some people within that community cause problems.

Many local people, including young people have been forced to live in vans, as they have no other options and there is limited local access to social and affordable housing. The Council is concerned about the potential for discrimination within the order. This was emphasised by the questionnaire is only available on-line and therefore discriminates against members of the community who do not have access to the internet.

Councillors were encouraged by the Mayor at the end of the meeting to respond directly to the questionnaire if they wanted to submit their own messages. The meeting was reminded that the consultation closes on 20th March

The meeting closed at 9.45pm

Signed _____

Worshipful Mayor
12th April 2022