

Somerset

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Organisation Name: Bridgwater Without Parish Council (Representative of parish/town council)

Comment text:

Related subject: Bridgwater East and Bawdrip

The parish council would like to comment on the consultation as follows.

Bridgwater Without is a varied parish with rural, urban, and industrial aspects. This area has seen tremendous changes and growth, with more to come. The parish electors are split by Bath Road divisions BAP1 and BAP2. The parish is bounded by Bridgwater Town, Puriton, Chedzoy BAU, Bawdrip, and Westonzoiland BCI, with the river Parrett separating it from Chilton Trinity and Northmoor Green. The additional planned growth will ensure the longevity of the parish.

Kings Down BAP1 area of the parish is located towards the north and is a community that lacks cohesion. This area is relatively new and has many issues, and the current division councillors are working with the PC to assist positive outcomes and greater understanding. Community activities have been successfully organised to encourage connection, focusing on age groups to strengthen links. Language barriers are experienced throughout the county as our communities become more diverse.

Community events focus on the parish in its entirety.

After consideration, the decision was taken to participate in a Community Review so that all parishioners' thoughts and ideas could be considered. Parish councillors spent time on Kings Down, ensuring that their voice was heard as well as those of other areas of the parish. Considering the review's outcomes, an action plan is being developed to improve the community and help create a stronger, cohesive community. The parish council remains committed to this. These outcomes will support the parish councillors as they have their say on the forthcoming planning applications for proposed developments.

Within the parish is a primary school which serves the parish and local shops, one of which is available for long hours as it is part of a fuelling station. Morganians RFC is on the edge of the parish and is the location for sports. There is a small hotel that includes a restaurant where locals

meet and is a source of community for the wider parish. On the Kings Down estate, there is a small hall where many sports are played, and keep-fit sessions are held for all, as well as baby sessions. The venue is used for other community-led activities.

Parish Councillors are commencing work on a neighbourhood plan based on information gleaned in their community review. They are committed to having a say in how the parish grows and develops, considering the needs of the parishioners and its history.

The parish will grow further with the proposed developments in Bower Lane and Dunwear Lane. Currently, the electorate is BAP1 1958 and BAP2 211, which is forecasted to change to approximately BAP1 3453 and BAP2 458, although the figure of BAP2 will depend on the completion of the development on Dunwear Lane. Currently, councillor numbers allow full support for the parishioners and parish councillors, and a reduction in this will have a negative impact on any support that the parish council might require for the post-community review action plan.

Bridgwater Without currently sits in the LCN with Bridgwater Town, a numbers exercise; see electoral numbers previously stated. The parish faces difficulty making its voice heard due to the LCN core membership and its connections with the town. Core members are unaware of the position of this parish, and creating links is difficult; however, the parish council are committed to continuing to try. Bridgwater Without is a lone voice at this and relies upon the county councillors to aid their views. Before the Unitary Council, communication with the town was rare, and this position remains the same. Communications with other parishes, Bawdrip, Chedzoy, Westonzoyland, and Puriton, are more frequent, most with Chedzoy. The LCN makeup would have more significant benefits if other parishes were included.

The parish is currently supported by two councillors whose input is invaluable, as is the immense knowledge of the parish councillors who know the parish and surrounding areas well.

Attached Documents:

None attached