

## Community Governance Review for Taunton: Survey results

### Summary

- Amongst survey respondents there is widespread support for the unparished areas of Taunton being served by a new council(s).
- Most believe that the current unparished area should be served by a single council and that the new council should be confined to the existing unparished area, without incorporating nearby urban areas of other parishes).
- If a new council(s) were to incorporate parts of existing parishes, most respondents feel that the remainder of existing parishes should remain individual where viable.

### **Total number of respondents: 201**

191 are local residents.

17 are local business people

22 are local employees

18 are official representatives of community organisations

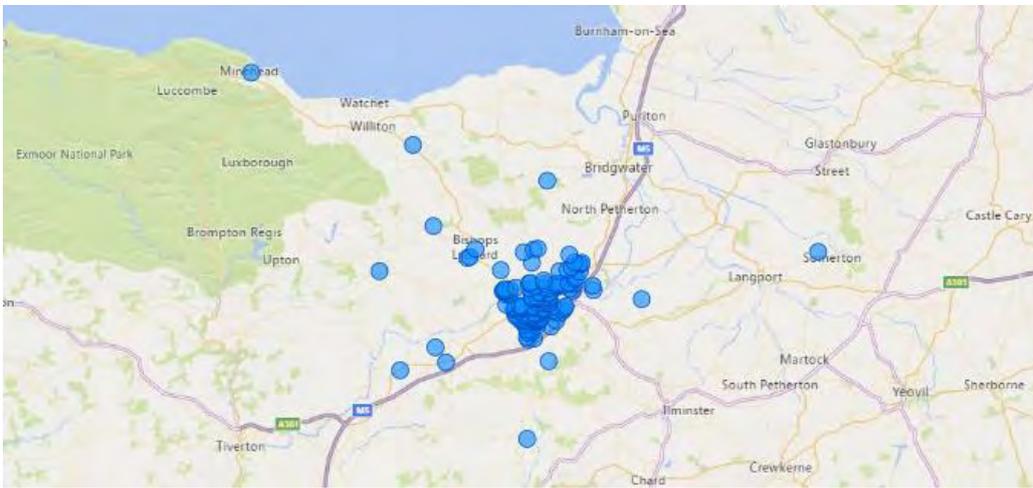
### **No. of respondents by location**

Due to low numbers of respondents in many parishes, care should be taken when looking at percentages of respondents when broken down by parish.

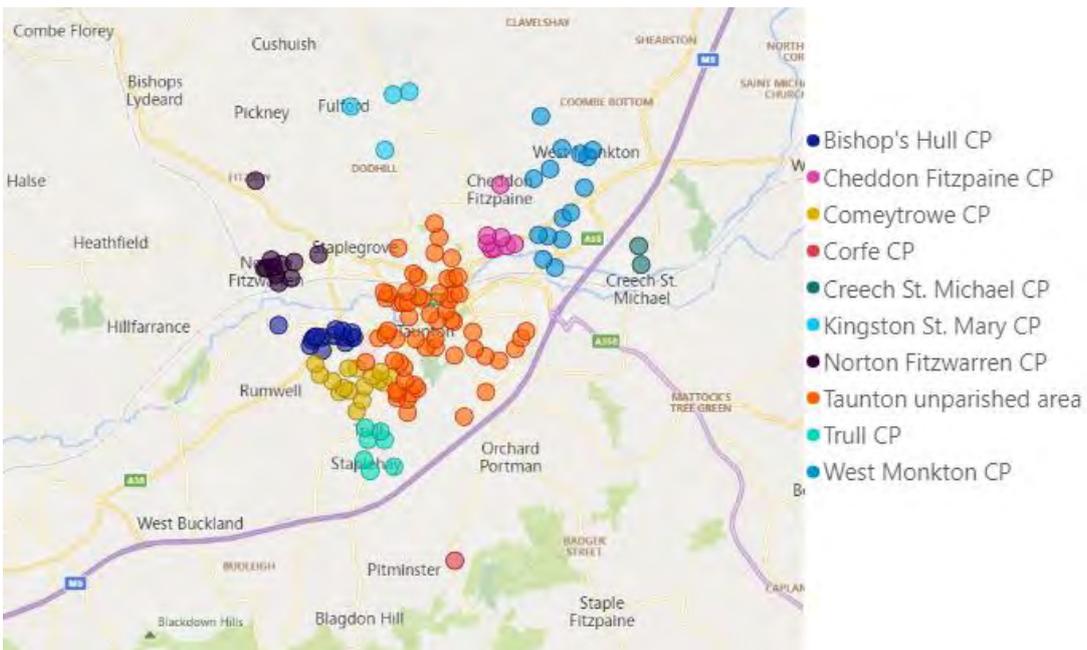
<b>Parish</b>	<b>No. respondents</b>
Taunton unparished area	67
West Monkton CP	23
Bishop's Hull CP	22
Comeytrowe CP	20
Cheddon Fitzpaine CP	16
Norton Fitzwarren CP	16
Trull CP	9
Kingston St. Mary CP	5
Bishop's Lydeard CP	3
Staplegrove CP	3
Creech St. Michael CP	2
Sampford Arundel CP	2
Wellington CP	2

Bicknoller CP	1
Churchstanton CP	1
Corfe CP	1
Enmore CP	1
Lydeard St. Lawrence CP	1
Minehead CP	1
North Curry CP	1
Somerton CP	1
Wiveliscombe CP	1
Unknown / invalid postcode	2

### Locations of respondents



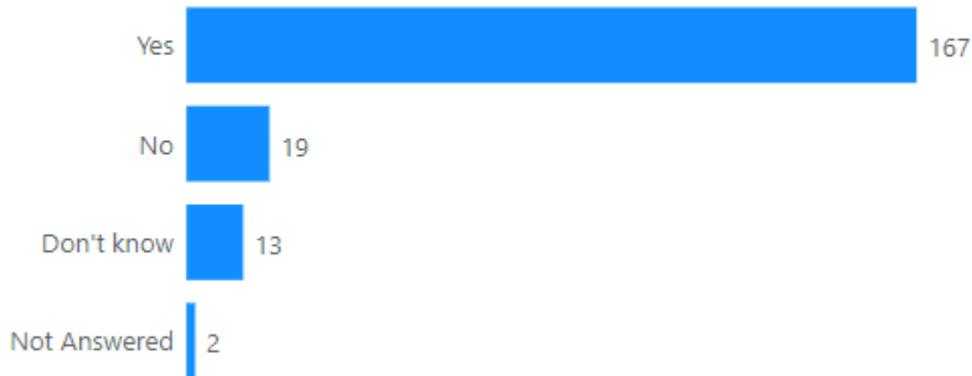
### Taunton area respondent locations



**Q4. Should a town or parish council or councils be set up to serve the parts of Taunton that do not currently have them (the 'unparished areas')?**

A large majority (84%) of respondents agreed that a town or parish council(s) should be set up to serve the current unparished areas.

4. Should a town or parish council or councils be set up to serve the parts of Taunton that do not currently have them (the 'unparished areas')?



Aside from Minehead parish and Wellington parish who only had 2 and 1 respondents respectively, West Monkton was the only parish with over 20% of respondents who disagreed that the currently unparished areas should be served by a town or parish council(s).

Q4 responses by parish:

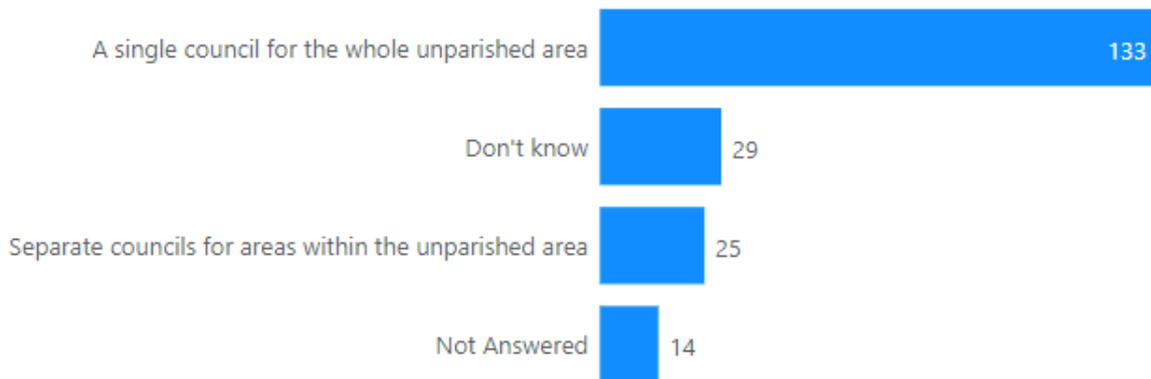
Parish	Yes	No	Don't know	Not Answered
Bicknoller CP	100%			
Bishop's Hull CP	86%	9%	5%	
Bishop's Lydeard CP	67%		33%	
Cheddon Fitzpaine CP	94%		6%	
Churchstanton CP	100%			
Comeytrowe CP	80%	15%	5%	
Corfe CP	100%			
Creech St. Michael CP	100%			
Enmore CP	100%			
Kingston St. Mary CP	80%		20%	
Lydeard St. Lawrence CP	100%			
Minehead CP		100%		
North Curry CP	100%			
Norton Fitzwarren CP	56%	13%	25%	6%

Sampford Arundel CP	100%			
Somerton CP	100%			
Staplegrove CP	67%		33%	
Taunton unparished area	93%	4%	3%	
Trull CP	89%		11%	
Wellington CP		100%		
West Monkton CP	74%	22%		4%
Wiveliscombe CP	100%			

**5. Should a single town or parish council be set up to cover the whole of the currently unparished area of Taunton or should there be separate councils for any area(s) within the unparished area?**

Excluding those who skipped this question (those who answered 'No' to the previous question were instructed to skip to Q7), 71% of respondents believe that a single town or parish council should cover the whole of the current unparished area. 13% believe there should be separate councils within the unparished area, and 16% answered 'Don't know'.

5. Should a single town or parish council be set up to cover the whole of the currently unparished area of Taunton or should there be separate councils for any areas(s) within the unparished area?



Belief that separate councils should be set up to cover the unparished area was mostly strongly held in Norton Fitzwarren (5 of 15 respondents) and West Monkton (5 of 18 respondents) parishes. Respondents from the current unparished area answered 88% in favour of a single council.

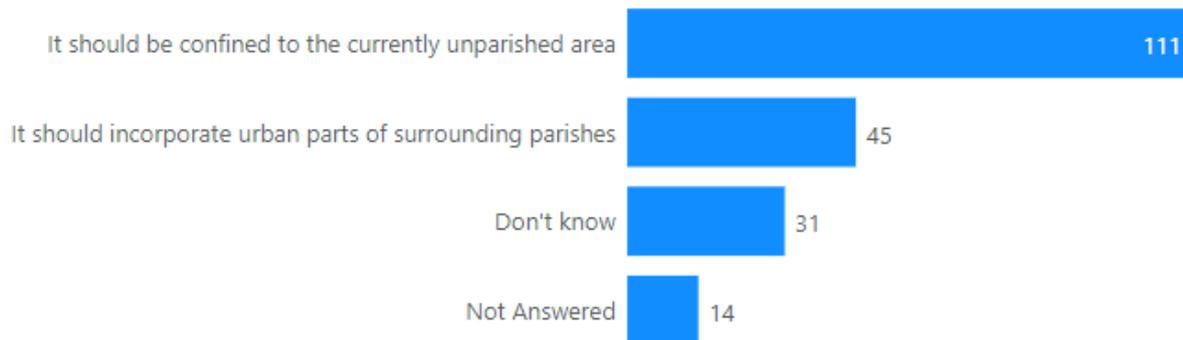
Q5 responses by parish:

Parish	Single council	Separate councils	Don't know
Bicknoller CP	100%		
Bishop's Hull CP	55%	15%	30%
Bishop's Lydeard CP	100%		
Cheddon Fitzpaine CP	63%	13%	25%
Churchstanton CP	100%		
Comeytrowe CP	67%	17%	17%
Corfe CP	100%		
Creech St. Michael CP	100%		
Enmore CP	100%		
Kingston St. Mary CP	80%		20%
Lydeard St. Lawrence CP	100%		
Minehead CP	100%		
North Curry CP	100%		
Norton Fitzwarren CP	40%	33%	27%
Sampford Arundel CP	100%		
Somerton CP			100%
Staplegrove CP	33%	33%	33%
Taunton unparished area	88%	6%	6%
Trull CP	78%	22%	
West Monkton CP	50%	28%	22%
Wiveliscombe CP			100%

**6. Should any new parish or town council that is set up in the currently unparished area of Taunton also take in the urban parts of any surrounding parish(es)?**

The majority (59%) of respondents believe that any new council(s) should be confined to the existing unparished area, rather than incorporating urban parts of surrounding parishes.

6. Should any new parish or town council that is set up in the currently unparished area of Taunton also take in the urban parts of any surrounding parish(es)?



This sentiment was strongest in Cheddon Fitzpaine (14 of 16 respondents) and West Monkton (16 of 19 respondents) parishes. Comeytrowe (8 of 18 respondents) and Kingston St Mary (3 of 5 respondents) were the only Taunton area parishes which favoured urban areas of surrounding parishes being incorporated into a new council(s).

Q6 responses by parish:

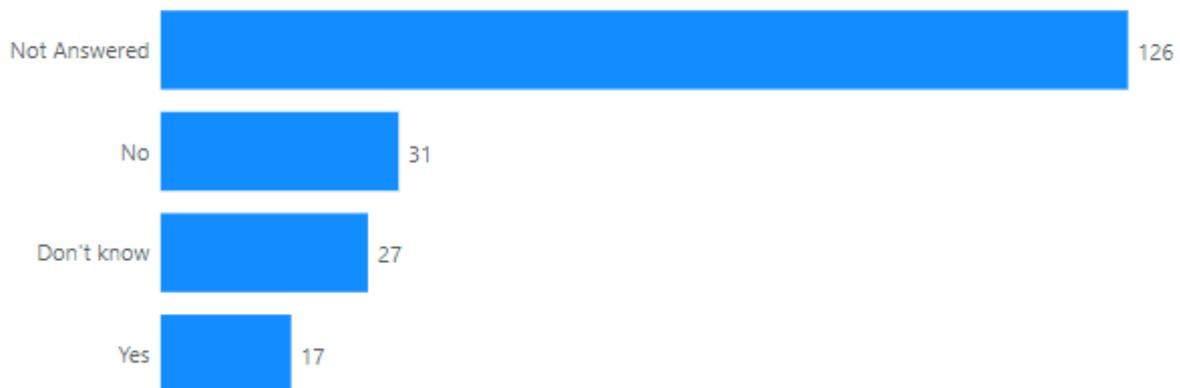
Parish	The new council(s) should be confined to the currently unparished area.	The new council should also take in the urban part(s) of surrounding parishes	Don't know
Bicknoller CP	100%		
Bishop's Hull CP	65%	20%	15%
Bishop's Lydeard CP		100%	
Cheddon Fitzpaine CP	88%	13%	
Churchstanton CP		100%	
Comeytrowe CP	39%	44%	17%
Corfe CP	100%		
Creech St. Michael CP	100%		
Enmore CP			100%
Kingston St. Mary CP	20%	60%	20%
Lydeard St. Lawrence CP	100%		
Minehead CP	100%		
North Curry CP		100%	
Norton Fitzwarren CP	86%		14%
Sampfords Arundel CP	100%		
Somerton CP	100%		
Staplegrove CP	33%	33%	33%

Taunton unparished area	47%	27%	26%
Trull CP	67%	33%	
West Monkton CP	84%	5%	11%
Wiveliscombe CP			100%

**8. Do you think there are other (non-parish) forms of community governance (eg community partnerships/forums, area committees, residents' and tenants' associations, neighbourhood management programmes, community associations) that have been, or could be, made to promote community representation or engagement in the area under review, either as alternatives to, or stages towards, the establishment of town or parish councils?**

Only 17 respondents (8%) believe there are other forms of community governance which could promote community engagement and representation. 153 respondents (76%) either didn't answer the question or responded 'Don't know'.

8. Do you think there are other forms of community governance that have been, or could be, made to promote community representation, either as alternatives to, or stages towards, the establishment of town/parish councils?



West Monkton was the parish with the most respondents who answered yes to this question on alternative forms of community governance.

Parish	Answered 'Yes' to Q8
Bishop's Hull CP	2
Bishop's Lydeard CP	1
Comeytrowe CP	2

Kingston St. Mary CP	1
Lydeard St. Lawrence CP	1
Minehead CP	1
Norton Fitzwarren CP	2
Taunton unparished area	2
Wellington CP	1
West Monkton CP	4

**9. In the event that a new parish/town council is established taking in both the currently unparished area of Taunton and the urban parts of one or more surrounding parishes, what arrangements should be made for the remaining (rural) parts of those parishes?**

A majority (62% excluding those who didn't answer) of respondents believe that if a new council were to incorporate urban areas of surrounding parishes, that the remainder of the existing parishes should remain as individual small parishes where viable.

9. In the event that a new council is established taking in both the currently unparished area of Taunton and the urban parts of one or more surrounding parishes, what arrangements should be made for the remaining (rural) parts of those parishes?



Remaining as individual parishes was the majority opinion from respondents in all parishes except Wellington, where the 3 respondents were split evenly between the options.

Q9 responses by parish:

Parish	If viable, they should remain as individual, smaller, parishes each with their own council	Don't know	Consideration should be given to merging or grouping them into a smaller number of areas	They should also be absorbed into the new town council(s) serving Taunton
Bicknoller CP				100%
Bishop's Hull CP	59%	5%	18%	9%
Bishop's Lydeard CP	33%		33%	33%
Cheddon Fitzpaine CP	69%	19%		
Churchstanton CP	100%			
Comeytrowe CP	50%	10%		35%
Corfe CP	100%			
Creech St. Michael CP	100%			
Enmore CP		100%		
Kingston St. Mary CP	100%			
Lydeard St. Lawrence CP				
Minehead CP		100%		
North Curry CP	100%			
Norton Fitzwarren CP	75%	13%		
Sampfurd Arundel CP	100%			
Somerton CP				
Staplegrove CP	67%		33%	
Taunton unparished area	48%	13%	12%	18%
Trull CP	78%		22%	
Wellington CP			50%	50%
West Monkton CP	52%	22%	13%	4%
Wiveliscombe CP		100%		

**10. Do you think town or parish council(s) should consider delivering some local services that are currently provided by Somerset West and Taunton Council and for these to be paid for by the town council precept?**

Respondents slightly favoured the idea of town or parish councils delivering some local services which are currently delivered by SWT. Excluding those who didn't answer, 55% were in favour and 45% were not.

10. Do you think town or parish council(s) should consider delivering some local services that are currently provided by Somerset West and Taunton Council and for these to be paid for by the town council precept?



Those in the current unparished area responded 69% in favour of a town or parish council delivering some local services that are currently provided by SWT. Other Taunton area parishes were mixed – Bishops Hull, Comeytrowe, and Staplegrove showed in favour, whilst Cheddon Fitzpaine, Kingston St. Mary, Norton Fitzwarren, Trull and West Monkton all were mostly opposed.

Q10 responses by parish:

Parish	Yes	No	Not Answered
Bicknoller CP		100%	
Bishop's Hull CP	55%	45%	
Bishop's Lydeard CP	33%	67%	
Cheddon Fitzpaine CP	31%	63%	6%
Churchstanton CP	100%		
Comeytrowe CP	55%	40%	5%
Corfe CP	100%		
Creech St. Michael CP	50%	50%	
Enmore CP			100%
Kingston St. Mary CP	40%	60%	
Lydeard St. Lawrence CP	100%		
Minehead CP	100%		
North Curry CP	100%		
Norton Fitzwarren CP	38%	56%	6%
Sampford Arundel CP	100%		
Somerton CP			100%
Staplegrove CP	100%		
Taunton unparished area	69%	27%	4%
Trull CP	22%	78%	

Wellington CP		100%	
West Monkton CP	26%	61%	13%
Wiveliscombe CP	100%		

Ward Area	Number of Responses
Blackbrook & Holway	4
Blackbrook & Holway/Victoria	1
Comeytrove and Bishops Hull	43
Creech St Michael	2
Halcon & Lane	1
Hatch & Blackdown	1
Manor & Tangier	7
Minehead Central	1
Monument	2
North Curry & Ruishton	1
North Town	13
North Town/West Monkton & Cheddon Fitzpaine	1
Norton Fitzwarren & Staplegrove	24
Priorswood	7
South Quantock	5
Trull, Pitminster & Corfe	10
Victoria	10
Vivary	3
Wellington North	1
Wellington South	1
Wellsprings & Rowbarton	3
West Monkton & Cheddon Fitzpaine	37
Wilton & Sherford	10
Wiveliscombe & District	1
Postcode Not Given/Could Not Be identified	12

Total 201  
Total Within Unparished Area 59

Parish	Number of Responses
Bishops Hull	23
Cheddon Fitzpaine (Cheddon Ward)	5
Cheddon Fitzpaine (Maidenbrook Ward)	11
Comeytrove (Part 1)	13
Comeytrove (Part 2)	7
Kingston St Mary	5
N/A / Cheddon Fitzpaine (Cheddon Ward)	1
Norton Fitzwarren	16
Staplegrove	3
Trull (Trull Ward)	8
West Monkton (Part 1)	20
West Monkton (Part 2)	2
Postcode Not Within These Parishes	76
Postcode Not Given/Could Not Be identified	11

Total 201  
Total Within Wider Taunton Parishes 114

Responses from Unparished Area	59
Responses from Wider Taunton Parishes	114
Responses Outside Unparished Area and Wider Taunton parishes	17
Postcode of response not given/could not be identified	11
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>201</b>

<b>Based on where you live (or work/other connection with the area under review), which town, parish, area or locality do you feel you belong to?</b>	<b>Number</b>
Taunton	61
Bishop's Hull	16
Norton Fitzwarren	15
West Monkton	13
Cheddon Fitzpane	10
Trull	6
Kingston St Mary	5
Taunton Town	5
Comeytrove	4
Cheddon Fitzpane Parish	3
Galmington and Comeytrove	2
Goosenford	2
Monkton Heathfield, Taunton	2
Wellington	2
West Monkton Parish	2
Bathpool/West Monkton	1
Belmont Drive	1
Bishops Hull and Taunton	1
Bishops Hull, Taunton	1
Bishops Lydeard - just adacent!	1
Blackbrook/Taunton	1
Borough of Taunton	1
Both Trull and Taunton	1
Central Taunton. Victoria Ward	1
Cheddon	1
Cheddon Fitzpaine Conservation Area Village	1
Comeytrove Parish	1
Corfe	1
Creech St Michael	1
CSM	1
Galmington/Comeytrove	1
I am in Comeytrove Parish but feel I belong to Taur	1
Minehead	1
Monkton Heathfield	1
N/A	1
Nerrols	1
None	1
None - I live in Comeytrove, but it has no identity	1
North Taunton	1
North Town	1
Northtown	1
Norton Fitzwarren Parish	1
Priorswood	1
Sampford Arundel	1

Sampford Arundel and Wellington	1
Sherford	1
Staplegrove Parish Council	1
Staplegrove, Taunton and Somerset	1
Taunton - French Weir	1
Taunton Bishops Hull	1
Taunton Unparished; Work Cheddon Fitzpane Parish	1
Taunton, and specifically, Galmington	1
Taunton/Firepool	1
Town	1
Town Centre Priory and Trinity are very similar Victoria Ward	1
town centre, Priory part of Victoria Ward	1
Town of Taunton	1
Trull Parish	1
Trull Parish Council	1
Trull, Taunton	1
Trull/Sherford/Taunton	1
Upcott, Bishops Hull	1
Victoria Ward	1
Wilton & Sherford/taunton	1
Wilton & Sherford	1
Wiveliscombe	1

Total

199

N.B. 199 answers were received to this question.

**4. Should a town or parish council or councils be set up to serve the parts of Taunton that do not currently have them (the 'unparished areas')? -**

**Reasons/comments**

**Commentary**

The most common themes raised by those who answered Yes to this question were; the need for local representation for the unparished area and a voice for the area, concern about the extent to which local matters would be dealt with without a Town Council given that a new Unitary Council being formed, the need for local matters to be dealt with locally, the need to resolve the anomaly of the unparished area and to bring Taunton Council into parity with other towns and areas in the county. It was noted by several respondents that a Town Council would encourage a sense of community. It was noted by some respondents that the remainder of the parish and town councils' precept across the district is currently used to financially support the unparished area and it was suggested that having a Town Council would be more equitable.

Meanwhile, some of those who answered No to the question raised that having a town or parish council would lead to increased costs for residents of the unparished area. Other themes raised by respondents who answered No included suggestions that there would be no benefit to residents as access to services would not change, a preference for having fewer tiers of government in place, that the current structure with Somerset West and Taunton Council was sufficient, concerns were raised that assets from surrounding parishes would be transferred to any new Taunton Town Council. It was also suggested that a town or parish council involving incorporating the wider parishes as well would be better.

Some of those who responded Don't Know raised the need for further information.

The full list of Reasons/Comments given by respondents to Question 4 is listed below. Each row is a separate respondent's answer.

<b>Reasons/Comments given by those who responded 'Don't Know'</b>
Need more information on the benefits

Unparished wards are an anomaly that should have been addressed when Somerset West and Taunton Council was formed.

During the A358 consultation, the old Killams and Mountfield ward (now Vivary) had no statutory rights to be consulted despite being the most impacted community.

Should development occur unparished wards do not get any of the Community Infrastructure Levy funding.

Here in Vivary there are parts of Killams that remain in Trull parish - Again, this should boundary anomaly should have been rectified Somerset West and Taunton Council was formed.

We already have a parish council in Norton Fitzwarren

for some things but not others - many dont recognise the locality of such places especially in Tauntin

I have no idea who is 'unparished' or the consequences of them being so.

**Reasons/Comments received from those who responded 'No'.**

Areas that are currently unparished should have the right to remain unparished despite this survey outcome.

Despite being in an unparished area I have access to the exact same services so there is no benefit.

This is obviously a revenue income and it is insulting to suggest this isnt

I consider no further 'governing' tier structures should be put in place in addition to the SW&T structure presently in place. Tier structure upon tier structure simply fragments consistent governance across areas and creates further financial burden to local communities.

Taunton Council should take all these areas under its wing and include them within its governing structure. If it needs to expand its staff to manage the responsibility and workload, then it should do so. That is preferable to creating more and more tier structures when it was recently voted upon to 'consolidate' our county governance.

The current system appears to work well. Taunton, as the major populated area in Somerset West and Taunton, is already well represented on the SWT council.

Because in creating a town council you intend to rob the assets of surrounding parishes by "incorporating" them into the town.

A strong Town Council with adjoining Parishes will make a significant contribution to the future prosperity of our County Town by giving a real voice to their local communities.

Council tax is already a great burden. Homeowners are going to be hammered again with increases for social care and police. Pensioners cannot afford these constant increases!

**Reasons/Comments given by those who responded 'Yes'.**

Local matters should be covered by those that directly affects, not by a remote organisation.

Local communities will have clear local government arrangements and representatives who are focused on addressing their issues.

Certain areas have no local presence, for example Wellington Road Cemetary.

The current set up makes no sense.

Because the remainder of the parish and town councils precept has to be used to financially support the unparished area and the residents of the unparished area need to have parity with other parish's ref planning applications and many other issues regarding their locality.

To ensure all areas are parished

We need local representation who understand the needs of, and the affect on residents in the area

It is vital that a conduit remains between the 'local' community and the next layer of governance particularly in terms of planning.

With unitary council it is vital that Taunton has its own voice and the community enabled to make decisions for the town.

If there is going to be just one large unitary body serving the whole of Somerset then it is essential there should be a parish or local council to look after the local needs of residents in all the 'unparished areas' of Taunton. Without anyone to represent them these needs are at risk of being either overlooked or considered too insignificant to deal with.

Currently there is no representation.

Taunton needs to be represented at local level as are all the other towns in Somerset

Yes, a Town Council should be set up to serve the unparished areas in the middle of Tauton but only the unparished areas, there is no justification to add the outlying parishes, such as West Monkton, Trull, Norton Fitzwarren into the Town council, especially as they border the countryside not town or urban areas.

This is a clear anomaly and needs to be rectified.

Taunton needs a town council to give it a unified direction in terms of projects and initiatives. At the moment apart from inertia, there seems to be no consistent approach to project planning to move the town forwards and as a result Taunton is becoming more meaningless and less relevant as the county town it should represent.

It is the only area left unparished across Somerset and requires a Town Council in place prior to Somerset Unitary Authority coming into existence and it is currently an anomaly.

New areas that are not yet established should have the opportunity to vote to see whether they would like their own local representation.

To represent the residents at a local level

The borough council is being abolished. Somerset is a big area with coast, moor, hills and the levels. There are many small villages and small towns. Taunton has a very different character to other Somerset towns - in fact Minehead, Bridgwater, Somerton, Shepton Mallet, Yeovil and Frome are all very different which is why abolishing the district councils is absurd.

Taunton's needs could be overlooked if other towns have an administrative structure and Taunton does not. Taunton has some very disadvantaged areas and it is important that these don't get forgotten. It is important that such a council is set up quickly because otherwise other towns may be able to take advantage of Taunton not having an administrative structure.

It would help with fairness, it also seems to just make sense - and will benefit Taunton.

Local residents can have representation regarding where they live.

Provides cohesive community and specialist knowledge of the local area that someone who doesn't live in the parish might not be able to provide.

Local residents need to be consulted on matters that directly affect them. What are their concerns, what do they feel is important etc. Parish/town councils are best placed to consult more closely with their residents and should be able to play a constructive role ensuring important issues/concerns are addressed fully and transparently.

Everyone should have local representation to look after their needs and to offer help when needed, not some faceless buricat

People should have local representation

Taunton requires a town council. Similarly to other towns in the district of SWT.

It has always needed a formal / parished town council. This opportunity provides us the chance to recognise Taunton and its parishes the way it should have always done.

Leadership, responsibility and authority particularly for planning, like all other towns in Somerset

To ensure they are served as the other Parish areas

So all areas of the community are supported equally.

Local parish issues are best served by a local parish council.

Better representation

I think there should be a town council to serve the interest of the businesses and communities living and working in the centre of Taunton and to represent their interests locally and regionally informing government of the cultural and economic development needs.

it would make it faster to get through to someone who can implement changes for the local area

We have always been at a disadvantage in not having anyone to fight our corner for funding and many other things that the district council do not hold responsibility for - as this becomes a unitary authority this will only worsen.

However, having attended a local Parish Council Meeting to hear the SWaT representatives talk on this subject - I feel most strongly that the New Taunton Town Council should be SPECIFICALLY for the un-parished area ONLY.

It is wrong to take this opportunity to try and also change the current boundaries, this should be done democratically and at a different time altogether.

But not just the unvarnished areas

These currently don't have a very local tier of government below district level

Everyone should have the right to express their opinion on issues which affect their immediate area

To ensure the needs of this area are represented.

This area needs the same kind of council the rest of us have so it can properly care for its residents.

Previously , in years gone by , when Taunton was a lot smaller , the central 'unparished area' would have been served by a Taunton council of that day . Things have moved on somewhat since then , and its right and proper that area is now better served with its own town council . This is particularly important as more of the central town area is converted to residential use , from retail/commercial .

The unparished areas are quite large. It is difficult to see how local issues in the smaller communities contained within the unparished areas can be properly understood by a large council covering the whole area.

So that there is a body that has a direct interest in Taunton.

There are no local grassroots representatives in Taunton - and with the new unitary, no District Councillors, just a couple of Unitary Councillors for the whole of the town. We need a local council that has vision and drive for our town, not countywide initiatives.

I think there needs to be a town council. Local needs can be addressed with local representation and as a resident I want to feel connected to the council that represents me. Somerset Council is a failing authority in so many ways and I would trust a local version of democracy over a county council.

Equality of representation.

If there is no Town Council, Taunton will only receive governance from the new unitary authority, with little local representation

It is vital that a town council is set up so that the town has its own voice when the district council ceases to exist, so that it has more power to act over local matters.

Having local representation and say at the more local level seems more appropriate

Local issues are best dealt with at grass roots level. Not a unitary council.

It is grossly unfair that the Parishes within SWaT pay for services in Taunton through the District rate that are a Parish charge as well in their own area. The situation should be rectified as soon as possible.

Long overdue.

from the inception of the new Somerset Unitary Council they will not fund the maintenance of green spaces, public toilets, community buildings or many town centre management duties. we have to have a realistic local precept to cover this, from study of other SW county towns it is likely to be £1.8 million annually meaning a band D home charge of £120 per year. As co founder, chair or secretary of Priory Community Association active 1982 to 2013 am very aware there is no formula to fund town centre expense any other way No is an impossible answer. In a question to the December Chartered Trustees Meeting I argued the current consultation listing 16 Shadow councillors is unattractive. The new Weymouth town council has 27 elected members in proportion we should try for 25 elected Town councillors. Better to reflect the wide range of small communities and allow more ordinary working people as councillors.

Local issues would not be sufficiently visible in the new unitary authority.

Taunton is an increasingly urban area, which has a different set of needs and interests to the wider (and predominantly rural) Somerset area. But as things stands it doesn't have the necessary distinct democratic representation to reflect that. The best way to address this issue would be to create a town council for Taunton.

But only the unparished areas  
No land grab for political reasons.  
Leave Current Parishes alone they are succesful

There is a greater sense of community among small populations, especially when served by a community building such as a hall, church, family hub. That sense of togetherness encourages voluntary work in the community and awareness of and looking out for neighbours. There is less of a feeling of "them and us " between residents and councillors.

Local representation.  
Some requests for simple things like dustbins are ignored as we are unparished.

Taunton needs a voice and representation. Somerset Unitary is too remote for many services and will lack local knowledge/understanding. It will be 'top down' A Town Council will hopefully be less procedurally bogged down and less risk averse than existing SCC, so in a better position to get some things implemented. Frome seems to be a good example of a TC reflecting local needs.

Compared to its neighbours Taunton often feels like it has lost its way and is not focused on creating a vibrant attractive place to live and work. One reason for this might be that they have town councils whereas Taunton does not and it has been the responsibility of a council with a larger remit.

I live in the unparished area at present. We have no voice, for instance on planning applications, no parish meeting where we can express our points of view.

There are parts of the unparished areas adjacent to the North end of Galmington Road, which may be better served if they were to be part of the existing Cometrowe parish. I am thinking particularly of the Trident Youth and Community Centre and the Allotments alongside. It would also seem sensible to include the area up to and bounded by Wellington Road and Musgrove Park Hospital.

It can only be described as bizarre that a major part of the county town with a population of over 30,000 has no elected body to deal with the interests of its residents.

Currently it appears that several "parishes" have more tiers representing them than others, and I feel every person, no matter where they live, should all have the same amount of representation. However, this does not mean I think it should be Parish Councils or just the County Council, as long as everyone is equal.

It's important that we all have another level of council which can support locals with decision making and act as the voice of local communities.

It makes no sense to have such a large area of the county town without local representation. This is an anomaly that has been going on for far too long, and it should be redressed as soon as practical.

As a community it needs a a voice. Also, good governance should see decisions made locally.

The current unparished areas do not have a voice and this would give them a voice and allow the residents to be involved with local decision making but if you enlarge the town council by including the parished areas their voice could be lost. The parished areas are currently well run and do not need any alterations.

As I live in the unparished part of Taunton, I feel that there isn't an appropriate body to represent my views. This has been particularly difficult with the current proposals for additional housing in the North Taunton/Staplegrove area. Staplegrove and Kingston St Mary Parish Councils can represent their residents who may be effected but as I live in the unparished part of Taunton, there is on equivalent body that I can turn to.

Even without the imminent creation of a unitary authority for Somerset, it would benefit the residents of Taunton to have the very local tier of local government that a town council would offer. I believe town councils :

- \* offer the opportunity for local issues to be decided a-politically, in the best interests of local residents and business, without being beholden to national party politics;
- \* provide greater visibility of and accountability by local government;
- \* encourage greater participation in and greater understanding of the democratic process by residents and businesses;
- \* provide opportunities to run community assemblies and truly consult local businesses and residents;
- \*give councillors a greater understanding of the need of residents, businesses and the local built environment;
- \* specifically in TaUnton it could really focus on regenerating the town and give it a sense of pride once more. It would allow a people centered, green and sustainable focus on the Garden Town vision

To give local residents in the town some say in issues / amenities / anning and business opportunities. Without it Taunton residents will only have unitary councillors from across the whole of Somerset making decisions for them.

Significant missing part of local governance, will be essential to an appropriate democratic arrangement under a Unitary structure.

I would thoroughly support the creation of a Town Council for the centre of Taunton covering the current Unparished area. This has been imperative for years in order that proper representation is given to local residents.

Every area of the town and its surrounds needs to be able to have a voice separate to County Council (soon to be unitary Council). There are always local matters which crop up and which need attention, which under one massive authority may just get missed.

As the County Town as well as a significant economic and cultural community it is imperative that Taunton has a democratically elected body to represent and promote it.

There is a need for local democratic accountability at a finer level than that which will be provided from 2023 with the local government reorganisation of Somerset.

We strongly support having a Town Council for Taunton. Taunton in its own right is often ignored whereas other villages and towns in Taunton Dean have their own town councils.

We need democratically elected people so that subjects that people continuously moan about online can be addressed and resolved!

Taunton is the only non-parished town in the county without this level of local governance. I know of other town councils, e.g. Frome, Langport, where local residents make a strong contribution to the quality of life in their areas, and that such councils can be extremely proactive in promoting local views and voices, as well as shaping some local services.

There needs to be a level of local government for all areas. Residents need to feel that they are represented at a local level and we lost this when Taunton Deane Borough Council merged with West Somerset.

It seems that the local contribution to Taunton would be harder if the representation was not, itself, local.

All the rest of the county is represented by a town or parish council and I feel we are underrepresented.

Taunton is the only town in Somerset without its own Town council and needs its own strong voice after Somerset West and Taunton is absorbed into the new Unitary. Also the Business case for the Unitary by David Fothergill lists a range of local services likely to be devolved to Town and Parish councils and a Town council would be the best and most cost-efficient way to deliver these services for Taunton.

Yes I believe as the County Town of Somerset, there should be a Town Council set up to represent the local residents and services

As we are going to have a unitary council rather than a district or county council, it is vital that local residents have a town council which will represent their views and understand the unique nature of living in this area so as best to serve the business, residential, educational, transport needs and so on of the people and the locale. Each town in the county has its own distinct needs and what is needed in Taunton, for example, is very different to what is required in Yeovil, Shepton Mallet, Minehead or Burnham on Sea. Living in Somerset differs hugely from area to area, and a town council which represents each distinct area is necessary to accurately represent the views and needs of residents, businesses and service providers.

I feel strongly that a town council would help promote community spirit and also help local decisions be made by local people.

Town centre residents should have a voice and representation at a parish / town council level.  
To promote a sense of community.

Planning and other decisions affecting Taunton should be made by councillors elected to represent Taunton residents and others who use Taunton facilities.

Every town has specific issues which need to be addressed locally. Taunton needs that local focus from residents and workers. It is meant to be a garden town and we must make that happen and bring the natural environment into clear focus. The centre of Taunton has been forgotten over the last many years and the heart needs to be restored. Thinking through 'new' style town centres for the future will be essential.

Yes. Services such as street cleaning, litter removal, emptying of litter bins and others have noticeably declined in residential central Taunton areas which are only 5 minutes' walk from the main shopping street but are getting limited pro-active attention from the council. The resulting decline is not good for our town on numerous levels. Businesses in East Reach were given scant consideration when anti-social behaviour was having a severely negative effect on their activities prior to the pandemic. I feel that more local representation will give those of us who live and work in the unparished area a voice and a better chance of improving this area in so many ways which could and should be a priority to attract more visitors and therefore more trade to our town.

They need a Parish Council to serve them and their local issues and needs

The unparished area of Taunton is the only area in Somerset which does not have the advantage of having a Parish/Town Council or Parish Meeting. SALC has for many years been concerned about this democratic deficit and has pressed for the unparished area of Taunton to be parished. The Association has not expressed a preference as to whether this was by establishing one single council for that area or a number of smaller parish councils covering the unparished area.

There will be increased residential development in the town centre and unparished area. Currently resident views and the quality of the environment take second place to traffic flow and business considerations.

A town the size of Taunton should have its own Town council, especially as SWaT and SCC will become one Unitary

I believe that a town needs a strong central identity, and sense of ownership and engagement by those that live within it, and a Town Council gives this, which the present arrangement does not.

This is certainly the case in nearby Wellington and Wivaliscombe, and also is the case for parishes with strong identities like Trull and Bishopshull, which have a village feel, and good community resources like a community hall or church hall. The Blackbooke community hall on Holway Road, was, some years ago, subsumed by the GP practice. The medical facility needed to expand, but it shouldn't have been to the loss of a community facility.

With the disappearance of the District Councils, I consider it essential that there is adequate truly local representation.

Every local area should have a representative on a wider town council.

**5. Should a single town or parish council be set up to cover the whole of the currently unparished area of Taunton or should there be separate councils for any area(s) within the unparished area? - If separate councils for areas within the unparished area please specify those separate areas**

**Commentary**

Themes raised by those who answered separate councils for areas within the unparished area included that areas within the unparished area had their own particular identities and communities and that having a parish council covering each smaller area within the unparished area would allow local issues to be fully concentrated on and prevent local matters and areas being overlooked or neglected. Various geographical areas for areas for separate councils to cover were suggested.

Themes raised by those who answered a single council for the whole unparished area included a larger local authority being more likely to gain interaction from the populace, the areas overlapping in interest and working together being worthwhile for lots of services, that it would be better to start with a single council and then review later, the areas within the unparished area all having similar urban characteristics, the cost of running services being spread more evenly, reduced bureaucracy and the potential for all of the areas within the unparished area to have representation on the single council.

Those who answered don't know cited feeling that the question was one for those who lived in the unparished area to answer, needing more information on the pros and cons, there being benefits to each option of a single council for the unparished area or multiple councils in the unparished area, local government organisation making it difficult to know what will be best and a Taunton Town Council that expands beyond the unparished area being a better option instead.

<b>Comments received from those who responded 'A single council for the whole unparished area'.</b>
A single council would be easier, although with the growth intended in areas such as firepool and Monkton Heathfield this mat ned to change in future
Common needs of urban area
I recommend one Town Council to cover all aspects of life within the Taunton Unparished area.
I reject the idea of four separate Parish Councils (Lyngford, Priorswood, Fairwater, and Killams). It is not necessary to have all the bureaucracy necessary for four separate parish councils.

If there were an umbrella council for all unparished areas this may work as long as there is a representative from each of the unparished areas involved

It would seem that the new Unitary authority will devolve several areas of competence to more local groups. As such, it would seem appropriate for any new local council to cover all of the currently unparished areas.

It's a small area of similar urban character.

Most people in England don't like paying for administration. Many people will not be interested so to get enough interested people there needs to be only one council. In addition the areas are close together and overlap in interest so for a lot of things its better to work together. Its sometimes important that people from one part of Taunton know what is going on in other parts of Taunton

Start with one and see if it becomes unmanageable or add parts of the unparished to existing.

Taunton contains a population of over 48,000. Unlike any other community in the county they are disenfranchised. They do not have a single voice representing their community.

The town deserves to be heard:

in setting national and regional policies;

in influencing and in providing where appropriate local services eg public loos, parks, transport;

in supporting and encouraging cultural and economic development in the town;

by raising local rates.

The area looks geographically similar in most respects, but as I don't live there, I am sure more local responses would be more suited.

The key factor is the major expenditure falling in the town centre main parks, public toilets, markets, meetings and meeting hall, promoting town, plus many other duties the new Unitary council will want to transfer.

If a town wide council is £120 at band D, the a pattern of lower spending parishes around the town centre might be afforded with precept in range £50 to £60 for a band D home.

This would leave leave the 25% town centre residents to fund the major balance of the £1,800,000 town wide precept for centre duties, likely a band D cost of £300.

Any 2nd stage proposal for this needs an extra income to the local council tax via investment properties, or transfer of car parks to minimise disproportionate local tax.

With average LCNs of 25,000 this is a difficult question because the Green Wedge suggests an East West split to a non councillor with no significant knowledge of issues within the town.

The best balance for the town seems to be one LCN of 50,000

**Comments received from those who responded 'Don't Know'.**

A Town Council should be a whole of Taunton area not the very limited and dated area in the unparished wards.

Less than 50% of the people of Taunton live in the unparished wards so council tax costs would disproportionately fall on one area.

Already the Mayor and Deputy Mayor have "mission creep" where they attend events outside the unparished area. Also, twinning organisations are now wholly funded from unparished wards funding despite benefiting parished wards across greater Taunton.

As above

Feel this is a question for those living in unparished areas but logic of having a larger parish and Town council

I think a single Town Council is appropriate but as I am not a resident of the town, it is not really up to me

Need more information on pros and cons

SALC has no view on whether the unparished area should be parished with a single town council or a number of smaller parish councils. This matter is best decided by local residents.

Separate councils would acknowledge the differences between the parishes, which definitely exist in practise. However, a unified whole town approach could benefit Taunton as a whole. Taunton is in desperate need of a vision to move it into the future so it can be a place that people want to invest in and live in, and so that it is competitive educationally and from a business perspective and has high quality public services and lots to offer recreationally. At the moment, the town is dying and residents deserve MUCH better than is currently being provided. Perhaps a unified Town Council approach would help this.

With the impending creation of unitary authority it is inevitably unclear.

It is desirable that the relationship of the unitary authority to the individual parishes or councils is broadly consistent. Different levels of authority and accountability for each council is administratively complex although some argument may be made to separate predominantly rural from urban areas.

If the goal were to create new parish councils in the unparished area of Taunton similar in size to the adjacent eight, this may be achieved through alignment with the main road network and largely reflects the character of the different parts of town:

1. Galmington, Wilton, Sherford - bounded by Wellington Rd and Vivary Park
2. Halcon, Holway - bounded by Vivary Park and A358
3. Lyngford, Pyrland - north of Priorswood Rd and Greenway Rd
4. North Town, Tangier - bounded by Wellington Rd, Staplegrove Rd, Greenway Rd
5. Central - Obridge, Firepool, Station, Town Centre

**Comments received from those who responded 'Separate councils for areas within the unparished area'.**

All

All unparished areas

Areas have their own particular Community and identity. Halcom and Lane Estate, Manor and Wilton, Priorswood and others. If there are Parishes on these areas people will take ownership and pride in their areas and in doing so will build a still better Community.

As provided on your "unparished" map.

Definitely keep Bishops Hull Parish Council. John Hunt is amazing working for us. He knows local people and local issues. We are kept informed and know who to go to. The parish council is VERY active.

Each area requires a council so that only issues concerning the one area are fully concentrated on. Spreading a large council too thinly is counter productive, as we've already witnessed in recent years. A blanket approach by local authorities does not fit all and local matters are overlooked, leaving areas neglected.

Please see previous comments.

Sherford Wilton and Galmington.

Holway.

Halcon.

Rowbarton.

Priorswood Lyngford and Pyrland.

There may need to be appropriate adjustments of boundaries with adjoining existing parishes.

Taunton Town Council would cover the central area with a population similar to that of Wellington, which is a good example for Taunton to follow.

The areas that separate the main town of Taunton from its outlying villages is rapidly becoming filled in with new housing. The clear identity of, say Monkton Heathfield, is now very unclear. Bishops Hull likewise has, to me, always been part of Taunton. However, I suspect that the residents of Trull and Kingston St Mary would see themselves as quite separate from Taunton with a strong community identity of their own.

The unparished areas are quite large. It is difficult to see how local issues in the smaller communities contained within the unparished areas can be properly understood by a large council covering the whole area. Precise and accurate local knowledge is key for correct decision-making by councils eg the impact of planning decisions on an area.

There are a number of unparished areas that would probably include themselves in Taunton e.g. Bishops Hull and also a number of unparished areas that would look for local representation e.g. Kingston St. Mary

We need to keep our identity as a parish. We are not joined to Taunton we are our own Village.

**6. Should any new parish or town council that is set up in the currently unparished area of Taunton also take in the urban parts of any surrounding parish(es)? - If yes, which surrounding parish(es)?**

**Commentary**

Themes raised by those who answered No to this question (not in favour of taking in urban parts of any surrounding parishes), included comments that the current parishes were effective, the exercise was not warranted, and to concentrate on the unparished area first.

Themes raised by those who answered Yes to this question (in favour of taking in the urban parts of any surrounding parishes), included comments around any new parish for Taunton taking in parts whereby the character of an area would be urban due to development impacts, effectiveness in serving the whole area rather than smaller parts.

Those who answered Don't Know felt that this was a question they could not answer without more information, including taking into account the voices of those currently living within those areas.

<b>Comments received from those who responded 'Don't Know'.</b>
Depends on what the people in those adjoining areas
If it looks to really listen to the voices of those in rural areas, then yes. However, it depends on what a town council's objectives would be. If it is solely to get money, jobs and people into the town, then I don't know what they would be able to provide to those in outlying villages. Rural life is very different to town life and it is a vital part of our economy and an important reason people want to live in Taunton Deane. If a town council can promise to listen to rural residents and to protect our rural areas and residents needs and wants, then bringing town and countryside together could be a very positive thing.
That should be up to the parishes themselves
That's rather an ambiguous question for a lay person to respond to to be quite honest.
There are arguments both ways and they need to be examined. To answer yes or no in ignorance is not helpful.
This is a difficult question to answer. It is important that jobs are not just created but are necessary. There is, IMO far too much "jobs for the boys", all of which have to be salaried by us, and take much needed funds away from getting things done.
<b>Comments received from those who responded 'No'.</b>

ABSOLUTELY NO! This is a land grab and makes it financially unviable for rural parishes to survive. We need our local Parish Councils as they are.

Absolutely NOT, especially not West Monkton Parish Council as they have an adopted Neighbourhood Plan, which they are in the process of updating, they have a very proactive Parish Council, with dedicated Parish Councillors and Clerks, who work incredibly hard on behalf of the parish. Evidence of this can be seen in the detailed WMPC Minutes. West Monkton borders the countryside and Creech St Michael, we are villages, not "town" locations. West Monkton houses the new Taunton Country Park! The clue is in the wording "Country" Park. There is absolutely no justification for changing the 8 existing parish councils into a single Town Council. The way the full Council Meeting and Working Party was "ambushed" by Cllr Mike Rigby should not have been allowed. The actions and behaviour of the elected Cllrs was totally unbelievable. In view of this the "voice" of the residents of Taunton and the surrounding villages MUST be heard and respected. If the response from the parishioners and Parish Councils is "NO" it should be respected and mean "NO". My fear for the 8 parishes, having listened to the webcast, is that "lip service" only will be given, and that this will be "pushed through" at the Full Council Meeting in 2022 because some of the SWT Councillors quite arrogantly "think they know best".

Any proposals to change Parish boundaries should come out of a future independent Parish review process.

At the moment I think it makes sense to concentrate on the unparished areas. The new areas of development like Monkton Heathfield need to strengthen their identity, as with the other areas on the outskirts of the town. The idea of the 15 minute city, I think should inform these new developments, especially now that more people will be working from home, or retired in the area and reliant on public transport (we should be cutting down the use of cars, and creating more cycling and walking infrastructure that is pleasant and safe to use.

I wish Norton Fitzwarren to retain it's own parish council

It is the strong view of the Association that, initially, this should only be for the unparished area. The parish councils surrounding Taunton have a long history of service to their local communities which often have different, and sometimes opposing interests to the residents of the unparished area. The new council, if it is established, will be an untested body and adjoining councils may wish to see how it operates before considering whether or not they wish to be part of that body.

We recognise that some of the existing boundaries in the urban areas adjoining the unparished areas may be historical rather than logical but it is our view such issues may be handled through a future governance review undertaken with appropriate consultation once the issue of the unparished area has been resolved and the new council (or councils) has been in operation for a few years. We have discussed the proposals with representatives from all the adjoining parishes and there is clearly a majority view that they do not wish to be included at this point. There are a couple of adjoining parishes that feel unable to express a view at this stage and feel there is a need for far more information.

It would simply add to the debate and complexity of the changes unless there is an overwhelmingly convincing argument.

The only material issue may be Boundary Commission proposals for revisions to parliamentary boundaries. Ideally the aggregate of parish boundaries should align with constituency boundaries.

The creation of a unitary authority, and the inevitable reorganisation required, makes it both possible and very desirable to align local and national democratic structures.

**NO - DEFINITELY DO NOT TO TAKE THE CURRENT EXISTING EIGHT PARISH COUNCILS INTO THE TOWN COUNCIL URBAN AREA.**

The current SWT Council is not qualified to assume responsibility for the wider community. This is a Land Grab by any other term. SWT Council has currently not demonstrated its capability to run the current system adequately; There are many failures, oversights, and mis-management.

NO there should not be a land grab.

Please note that I do not agree with the proposal that it should cover the whole of the unparished area !

Please ensure that this distinction is maintained when counting the answers to this question.

The manner in which the SWT have conducted themselves in this matter to date has generated a great deal of mistrust in their motives. SWT did not follow the advice of its own working group when it made its decision in October 2021 and I would ask them to respect the outcome of the consultation when completed.

As a resident of Cheddon Fitzpaine Village I am concerned to maintain the unique character of this Conservation Area. I believe Cheddon Fitzpaine PC is better placed to understand and support the needs of this area. Conservation Areas have statutory protection but also rely on the local councils respecting the intent of this legislation not just the letter. I don't think a single Taunton council could do this successfully.

There is a real risk that if the Cheddon Fitzpaine PC was abolished it would send a signal to potential developers that there is no distinction between the centre of Taunton and these outlying villages. Taunton should be doing everything they can to preserve these areas and the creation of a single town council would be a very deliberate step in in the other direction.

The neighbouring Parish Councils already work well and removing all or part of their area of responsibility would weaken them. On the basis of the principle of: "If it ain't broke, don't fix it", they should be left well alone!

There may be small areas such as around Bindon Rd. However if you go out wider taking larger areas of Parish then there is the likelihood that Communities will be destroyed. Instead of free Volunteers serving Parks , Halls, Parish Councillors and many other activities, residents will pay a Town Council not 'locally connected', which will be unlikely to organise and support all those small groups. As a consequence such groups will most likely be lost and the parish areas will be the poorer for it

This sudden proposal by councillors who wanted Stronger Somerset, replacing 5 councils with 5 new organisations, is deeply suspicious. The councillor poll after the government consultation was misguided on criteria and unfair on information given to voters.

The surrounding parishes already have good democracy and authority if they want it and will have the same authority within LCNs as a town council.

It would be quite wrong to subvert the LCN concept with a huge new super council.

**Comments received from those who responded 'Yes'.**

All of them.

All parishes

All PC's to the west of Taunton eg Bishops Hull and Galmington.

All with contiguous urban areas - including planned developments for Staplegrove and Comeytrowe etc.

All, with the possible exception of Kingston St Mary

All.

Any new Town Council for Taunton should be based on modern developed urban boundaries and NOT limited to the area of the unparished ward only.

All urban extensions that are currently part of parished wards in Greater Taunton should clearly form part of a Greater Taunton area in any new Town Council.

As said above, probably Bishops Hull and Monkton Heathfield.

At the eastern tip of the Trull parish area , part of Killams is just included . I personally feel that area would be better served alongside the other areas of Killams , and as part of the new town council .

because it should be a single control area not lots of small ones.

bish lyd - but only for soem issues - transport especially

But, just the urbanised areas (areas of high density housing) of parishes closely inked to the centre of Taunton.

Certainly the following parishes:

Galmington  
Bishops Hull  
Staplegrove  
Cheddon Fitzpaine

Possibly also West Monkton and Norton Fitzwarren because of the huge new developments there. I guess the same could be said for Trull once the Comeytrowe extension is built.

It will be essential, whether existing parishes are amalgamated into a new town council or not, for all areas to work together and to think more widely than their own boundaries. Central Taunton is the hub round which they exist and whose services they need to access for shopping, leisure, transport, etc

Comeytrowe to be part of a new town council

Comeytrowe  
Monkton Heathfield  
Bishops Hull  
Staplegrove

Comeytrowe. I live in Comeytrowe which is as much part of Taunton as the neighbouring unparished area. It is the most obvious urban parish to join a Town Council as it shares all the concerns of the town and would benefit from being represented on the Town Council. Also I think a Town Council would be a more effective way of delivering any services devolved from the new Unitary to Comeytrowe, as I don't think the current Parish council for Comeytrowe would have the capacity.

Comeytrowe. It is entirely urban, with no rural parts on its outskirts. I have lived in Comeytrowe for a long time and always felt it to be a natural part of Taunton.

I am writing only in reference to Trull. The development known as Orchard Grove falls almost entirely within the current Parish Boundary of Trull and yet is very much considered part of the Taunton Urban Extension. It seems that it would be wise therefore for area of Orchard Grove to be separated off from Trull PC's area and reallocated - probably to a new PC/TCouncil for Taunton's currently unparished areas.

The existing Trull PC do a wonderful job serving the existing village but I suspect the demands of providing, establishing the legal frameworks and then running the substantial community facilities for Orchard Grove anticipated by both the s106 and CIL funds is probably beyond both their capacity and willingness. A separate PC or amalgamation into a new Taunton PC/TC therefore seems appropriate.



I live in Comeytrowe and have no objection to this area becoming part of Taunton
If there were to be a town council, it should preferably include the town of Taunton, as well as all 8 unparished areas.
It would be much more effective if the whole area of Taunton was under the same council but I can see that parish councils are well established and may wish to remain as they are.
It would made sense on terms of efficient and consistency of service provision but I understand that come parishes maybe reluctant
Most of them now include what in reality is an expanded Taunton, and the urban extensions will add to this. Given that 25% of CIL moneys go to parish councils with a neighbourhood plan, it would be iniquitous for those windfall funds to be spent only on those parishes, rather than the whole town.
Obviously the parishes would need to be consulted, but a large part of Staplegrove parish is in north Taunton, and the new housing at Nerrolls Farm also a part of north Taunton is in Cheddon Fitzpaine parish. as is the Maidenbrook estate, also in Cheddon Fitzpaine parish, these are closer to the Taunton urban area than to the centre of Cheddon Fitzpaine. The question of the new housing at Bathpool/Monkton Heathfield is more open I feel. If it were included in the urban area of Taunton it may better protect the rural community of West Monkton as a separate parish. I do believe we need to protect the small rural villages outside of Taunton with a strict green belt, Cheddon Fitzpaine, West Monkton, Staplegrove and Kingston St Mary. they will be more easily protected I believe if the rural villages are separated from the urban parts of their parishes. Norton Fitzwarren is another example of a parish that is now ajoined to the urban area of Taunton. Bishop's Hull should be part of the town.
Only those parts that the Parishes are happy to lose. Trull still has a strong sense of village that is valued by the community and that needs to remain as a parish council area.
Other areas / parishes should be adopted where their local communities are in effect part of the urban area of Taunton. For example the southern parts of Cheddon Fitzpaine and all the urban area of Staplegrove, plus Cometrowe. Areas where there is an identifiable and active community should continue with the minimum of boundary changes. Parishes where current or planned development is due to increase the number of houses significantly (> 10%) should not be adopted by the new town parish at this time.
Staplegrove, comeytrowe, Bishops hull
Surrounding parishes with new building developments should be included (for example in Heathfield, Comeytroe and Staplegrove) as they will be increasingly urban areas.
The idea of parishes is outdated

The urban extensions - the actual built form of the conurbation. If too difficult then the unparished area.

The urbanised, Taunton, element of the current Cheddon Fitzpaine parish, should be included in any new parish, quite simply as the needs and character of that urban area are different to those more rural needs and character of the remaining Cheddon Fitzpaine area. I would expect the same argument to be valid for the other rural parish council areas that have been encroached into by Taunton's expansion.

The whole town needs to speak with one voice.

Trull Parish Council wish to remain as a Parish Council representing Trull & Staplehay and fiercely defend being consumed by the Town Council. However, it is believed that the Killams area may be better represented by the Town Council as opposed to Trull Parish Council.

Trull, Bishop's Hull, Comeytrove, Norton Fitzwarren, Staplegrove, Kingston St. Mary, Cheddon Fitzpaine, West Monkton

Trull; Comeytrove; Bishops Hull; Staplegrove; Cheddon; Monkton Heathfield; Bathpool.

Yes - BUT only the heavily urbanised area in our case - very distinctive - the new Housing planned for Staplegrove East and NOT the area set aside around it as green zone.

## Question 7

### Why do you think that a town or parish council or councils should not be set up to serve the currently unparished areas of Taunton?

#### Commentary

Themes in response to this question centred on issues such as the cost of a layer of local government being placed in the area and additional bureaucracy it may be felt to create.

Reasons/Comments Received
Another tier of local government is unnecessary. Yet more people being paid for doing very little and achieving nothing.
Any new Town Council for Taunton should be based on modern developed urban boundaries and NOT limited to the area of the unparished ward only.  All urban extensions that are currently part of parished wards in Greater Taunton should clearly form part of a Greater Taunton area in any new Town Council.
Because in creating a town council you intend to rob the assets of surrounding parishes by "incorporating" them into the town.
Because they already have parish councils working very well
Because they legally have access to the same facilities as any unparished area.  This is a revenue exercise, disguised as a solution to a problem that doesn't exist.
Because Unitary Council is the big driver for creation of a Town Council and in order to have a strong local voice, we need a coordinated effort involving all the adjoining Parishes otherwise important decisions may be made by the Unitary.
By having a centrally controlled council any money received through development will go to a central South West and Taunton pot where there is no guarantee that the moneys will be spent in the relevant parishes
Cost saving.
Disagree with that statement .

I believe Parish and Town Councils are an additional financial burden upon the Council Tax payer and do not necessarily offer good value for money. Here in Bishops Cleeve the precept has risen by over 22% in the last two years. The Parish Clerks wages and allowances currently account for 45% of the total precept and appears to be significantly higher than other Clerks salaries in Somerset. In addition minutes of meetings have not been published in a timely manner on their website. Usually 2 further meetings have passed before they are published - this makes it extremely difficult for the public to raise issues in a timely manner. Further I do not believe there is an effective overseeing body for Parish Councils to hold them to appropriate standards. As for the issue of a town council for Taunton I do not believe this is necessary and would simply lead to additional costs to the council tax payer. It is instructive to note that a friend of mine living only a few hundreds away in Taunton itself has a house in the same band as myself but does not pay a precept either for Parish or Town Council and yet has the same services.

This begs the question why would you need a PC or Town Council in a properly structured unitary authority where its council members are there to represent their own communities and its staff are organised in such a way as to ensure a fair distribution of services and funds for its various communities.

I can only speak for Norton Fitzwarren.

We have a highly popular and effective parish council. They are active, vocal and representative of the local area. In my relatively short time living here I have been very impressed with the Community feel to the area and value not just being a 'suburb' of Taunton

I consider no further 'governing' tier structures should be put in place in addition to the SW&T structure presently in place. Tier structure upon tier structure simply fragments consistent governance across areas and creates further financial burden to local communities. Too much management exponentially causes too little 'positive' effect.

Taunton Council should take all these areas under its wing and include them within its existing governing structure. If it needs to expand its staff to manage the responsibility and workload, then so be it. That is preferable to creating more and more tier structures when it was recently voted upon to 'consolidate' our SW&T county governance.

I do agree that a Town Council should be formed.

I don't.

I think it's unnecessary to have another council(s) when Somerset merges into a unitary authority. Somerset is not a populous county, and I do not think the new authority will be too overworked to be able to serve the needs of the unparished areas of Taunton. It would therefore be a waste of taxpayers money to duplicate the functions by having additional councils set up. However if residents do prefer the unparished areas be represented by a council, I would prefer if it was a single council rather than several separate councils, to better reflect the feeling that the unparished areas are just as much a part of Taunton as the charter town area is.

I think the current system serves my local community very well and I would want that service to continue and get stronger.

If you go out wider taking larger areas of Parish then there is the likelihood that Communities will be destroyed. Instead of free Volunteers serving Parks , Halls, Parish Councillors and many other activities, residents will pay a Town Council not 'locally connected', which will be unlikely to organise and support all those small groups as Parish Councils do. As a consequence such groups will most likely be lost and the parish areas will be the poorer for it.

Parish Councils have a local perspective of the needs for their Parish and are able to react quickly to produce a truly local solution. Are prepared to work with other parishes for the common good.

It has not been properly explained what the need is for the unparished areas to have a new Taunton council. What is the problem that is being addressed?

It will divert money away from local areas to areas considered more in "need" and remove the freedom to make decisions that benefit the immediate local area.

It's ok as long as good existing parish councils aren't got rid of

Norton Fitzwarren Parish Council works hard for the village so why should we change.

Parish Councils are extremely effective at managing local issues in a knowledgeable and prompt way.

Responsibility a level of self policing

Taunton town needs an improved identity

test

The existing parish councils serve their populations, providing a voice for the less populated areas surrounding Taunton. As the main urban area within the SWT, council area, Taunton is already well represented. Adding a town or parish council for the unparished areas of Taunton creates an unnecessary bureaucracy for those areas, presumably including a parish council tax precept, adding to the burden on local taxpayers.

To many councils as we already cause to much red tape. With one council in charge of paths another the roads. And with so many councils, to many people will have their own agendas

to provide a voice for local residents and business

Trull is a distinct village outside of Taunton and the needs of the village differ to the Taunton and should be represented accordly

We don't want it. It's another level of bureaucracy that the poor Council tax payer will be charged for. The idea that Cllrs still want to have another system when we don't is unacceptable. We have one authority coming in. That's good enough and CHEAPER. Getting fed up with Cllrs pulling the wool over the public on this. This idea of certain faction needs to be binned. No need at all for it. This consultation will no doubt be a sham. As others were in past. Democracy . Yer right.

We don't want to be included in Taunton town via the council. We're happy with the arrangement as it is.

Wellington's Band D council tax is £62 more expensive than Taunton's unparished area.

Yet another layer of control, cost and bureaucracy is not needed. This will be another cost on local residents which is not welcome at this time

**8. Do you think there are other (non-parish) forms of community governance (eg community partnerships/forums, area committees, residents' and tenants' associations, neighbourhood management programmes, community associations) that have been, or could be**

### **Commentary**

Themes for this question to those who answered No raised concerns around bureaucracy.

Themes for this question to those who answered Yes were that these could all work and in practice are in place in the unparished area. Some felt that these could not substitute for a Parish Council.

Themes for this question that answered Don't Know queried the bureaucratic nature, level of knowledge of those participating of their local area and mentioned citizens assemblies to address climate change.

<b>Those who answered 'Don't Know'</b>
Citizens' Assemblies to address the climate crisis?
Could be a further level of beaurocracy
It largely depends on the depth of knowledge these committees/associations etc have of a particular area and whether they can be trusted to make informed and fair decisions about an area.
<b>Those who answered 'No'</b>
I think the problem is too big and this would add too much bureaucracy and layers.
Keep it as simple as possible

No - it complicates the issue by having too many organisations. There may be reasons for specific associations, but not as a whole.
None are a substitute for a full elected town council
These groups should be involved as active partners of any new Town Council but not as substitutes for one.
These will not be holistic in perspective
<b>Those who did not select an answer.</b>
All of them could be but we still need a parish council
<b>Those who answered 'Yes'.</b>
A Citizens Assembly
Any of the above could work - doesn't have to be the same for every area
Anything that does not involve robbing the assets of surrounding parishes by "incorporating" them into the town.
Arts group, Business forum/groups and educational establishments are just a few examples along with the above mentioned ones.
Climate change groups
community partnerships/forums, area committees, residents' and tenants' associations, neighbourhood management programmes, community associations
I don't see these as being part of new parish councils but hope they can work closely with them

In the unparished area of Taunton.

By and large in the Parish areas, the Parish Councils do the work you describe above.

The more local people are involved in their area the better. It enhances wellbeing, communication, and mental health and removes unnecessary bureaucracy

There is a place for various local community organisations to have their voices heard but I see no need for their voices to be filtered through the additional layers of a parish or town council.

To be heard

To many councillors promise you the world, once in you never hear from them or they don't see them at council meetings

Too many to mention  
Currently the area is represented by District councillors who should be held accountable.

Town centre cultural and Heritage Assets Team. I.E Museum of Somerset, Brewhouse and West Somerset Railway CICCIC and Hestercombe.

Wilton and Sherford Community Association was set up over 20 years ago to give this unparished area a voice and could continue to do so, there are other Community association in the unparished area that could also be involved

www.gocallee.com is a proposed community partnership that could be made to promote and representation engagement for all retail, business services, individuals and communities to come together for the betterment of local development. It could be:

A Global Powerhouse Marketplace....for Shopkeepers, Corporates & Communities!

It would be an online trading & 'community' 'MARKETPLACE' where shopkeepers & corporates may work from their own shopfronts / offices. Even 'individuals' may register to sell goods or provide services online to battle against Covid-19 pandemic effects. All Vendors will pay a nominal sum to cover the website overheads only & then keep all their own profits. Gocallee.com will show you how. It will also generate its own profits for communities via advertising & marketing services (globally), but then 'GIVE-BACK' 100% of all its net profits! So it ostensibly exists for THE PEOPLE.

This 'community' trading marketplace will provide a much greater Power House platform than sole websites. So everybody will get a much greater reach to increase profits. Gocallee.com will forge a 'partnership' between businesses & communities in many different ways to help our spirit of coming together. It will provide a way to keep wealth locally & build prosperity so the multi-millions generated by online commerce ultimately rewards the local people that spend; not just 'others' deep pockets.

Corporates websites pretend to help...but actually 'take' the riches! Gocallee.com will not take the RICHES from traders & people. It will seek to foster partnerships via its products & services to generate profits. So, Traders will get 'more' profits & Gocallee.com profits (100%) will go back to the people.... quarterly, via my 'GIVE-BACK' system to COMMUNITIES. That way, wealth will go back into developing & building local projects so we may have a better, happier & more 'prosperous' society. We need to reduce suffering by 'sharing' the wealth.

Gocallee.com Shopping, Services & Communities website will also provide Make Money Online (MMO) opportunities, activities, forums, blogs, education to learn & trade, restaurant ordering systems / take-aways, jobs board & much more!  
All should see this across the world & follow our SW&T philosophy.

Support Gocallee.com to get the community Gocallee.com profits 'GIVE-BACK'!  
(email: [info@gocallee.co.uk](mailto:info@gocallee.co.uk))

Yes I think community partnerships / forums could be an alternative.

**Question 9 - In the event that a new parish/town council is established taking in both the currently unparished area of Taunton and the urban parts of one or more surrounding parishes, what arrangements should be made for the remaining (rural) parts of those parishes?**

If consideration should be given to merging or grouping them into a smaller number of areas please specify:	Reasons/comments
<b>Those who responded 'Consideration should be given to merging or grouping them into a smaller number of areas'.</b>	
?	Why do the rural areas of parishes need to be excluded? The rural parts of Trull firmly feel part of Trull parish. Why would they not be included?
Can't be specific	this would make sense as each needs councillors.
Economies of bigger units vs loss of local accountability	
I can't specify particular places but it seems to me that if the urban part of specific parishes are subsumed into the town, and converted to wards, the remaining rural areas might not be viable in terms of size, and therefore would need to join with others to create a new rural identity (as in the case of Cheddon and West Monkton - which both have their own churches and parish halls, but are one unit.	The people in the area need to be consulted as to where they identify, with meetings on line or on zoom, where the different options can be explained by those with wider knowledge of similar deliberations from elsewhere, and people have time to deliberate together so that decisions are well thought through and considered. I was on a advisory group for the consideration of the pedestrianisation of St James Street, and on the East Street consultation meetings and I thought they were very well conducted so that we heard from a range of people with different perspectives and could make balanced decisions, which I believe we did.
It should avoid community names and be areas such as South Taunton and west Taunton etc	It would prevent a particular community having primacy over others parts within the sane group
Let the parishes decide.	Some of the parishes would not be viable without merging.

<p>Non urban Staplegrove to join Kingston, non urban Cheddon Fitzpaine to join West Monkton.</p>	<p>As there are generally better links in urban areas plus rural to rural alignment of parishes can help the cohesiveness of the areas. Rural areas retain their sense of identity. It should promote effective and convenient local government.</p>
<p>On the western part of the Trull parish area , majority of the land currently used for agriculture , there is major development now starting ( known as the 'Comeytrove Development' or 'Orchard Grove' ) . Ultimately there will be 2000 new houses , the vast majority of which fall within the existing Trull boundary . It would not be right that the existing Trull Parish Council have responsibility for that , alongside its responsibilities for its existing residents . We are already a very busy parish council , and do not have capacity for more . The Orchard Grove development would be much better served either by a brand new parish council of its own , or to be consumed into the new Taunton Town Council . Major decisions are needed for this new area in the yaers to come , and for suitable spending of the CIL monies coming through , and those decisions should not rest with Trull Parish Council . The existing village of Trull , streching to Staplehay , should keep its 'village feel and identity' , hence a change in the Parish Boundaries to reflect this .</p>	
<p>Perhaps three areas to cover areas to east, north and west of the town, or:</p> <p>West Monkton + Cheddon Kingston St Mary + Staplegrove Norton Fitzwarren + northern section of Bishops Hull Trull + southern section of Bishops Hull</p>	<p>Most would lose their original village core so merger seems sensible.</p>

<p>Perhaps even 'restore' Taunton Rural District Council to cover them all.</p>	
<p>The unparished areas should be grouped together and not be part of Taunton</p>	
<p>Yes merging with areas in close proximity with whom we are familiar.</p>	<p>It could be a benefit because it is smaller and therefore more easy for us to identify with . Working together makes us stronger.</p>
<p><b>Those who responded 'Don't Know'</b></p>	
<p>As a starting point I object to the 'urban' (or any) parts of Norton Fitzwarren (NFW) being taken into a new Taunton Town Council (TTC). Under no circumstances should existing 'surrounding parishes' be carved up into pieces, splitting the 'urban' from 'rural' elements. On any analysis NFW is not a 'surrounding' parish, so it should not be taken into the TTC in the first place.</p>	<p>NFW is NOT a 'surrounding' parish. Its boundary is not contiguous to the boundary of the unparished areas. It is entirely inappropriate to consider it, or any part of it, for inclusion within the TTC. This is all about control, and NFW should be allowed to continue to retain its own control over its own assets and resources for the benefit of its residents, not having it snatched away by the TTC which will not pay heed to the demands and needs of the local residents. It should be left alone and allowed to continue to manage its own assets and revenues for the benefit of the community of NFW, which its parish council has been doing very successfully to date. Splitting 'rural' from 'urban' parts of NFW would destroy community cohesion and distinctiveness. I am in NFW, albeit on the outer reaches in Fitzroy, and I want to remain in NFW.</p>

	<p>the Village Hall and associated facilities, which is a massive vibrant hub of the NFW community. Carving that out of the heart of NFW and into the TTC would be devastating.</p>
<p>Impossible to answer without knowing how much will be taken. The TOR gives quite draconian powers, that in the Parish areas there is potential to take all new and existing housing and business areas that join up with the unparished area and also areas likely to be developed within the next 5 years. So what will be left</p>	<p>It is difficult therefore to see that there may be any sensible joined up area of a decent size left, let alone with enough rateable value to make a Parish Council that is able to do much. In addition taking these Parishes into a Town setup will mean there will be little chance for those that are left to make up a new Unitary Local Community Network of the appropriate size with a commonality of interest.</p> <p>As LCN's are proposed for the new Unitary Council as a way of enabling additional and improved local decision making. Removing Parish Councils seems to be completely contrary to the forthcoming Unitary proposals.</p>
<p>It depends how much of a land grab is achieved. Leave the outlying Parishes alone. There was no help from the Council when it imposed Urban Extensions on outlying areas of Taunton - so now they have made the best of it leave them alone and don't come back to grab their Council tax.</p>	<p>Unimpressed by any of the arguments - its just a land grab from politicians who couldnt get their own way with Unitary</p>

<p>Stop referring to the larger villages as "urban parts", instead call them "the bits we want to rob in order to set up a Town Council".</p>	
	<p>Best to ask the people who live there (or wait until they too are built on)</p>
	<p>Because I believe that you are assuming the you will try and grab as much land as you can. Leave the Parishes alone, sort out unparished areas only.</p>
	<p>This is an outrageous leading question - this should be part of the independent Parish review process and not the remit of a Council led initiative.</p>
	<p>Some are probabaly doing a great job but the more we break down the areas of authority and representation, the more we water down te chances of true representation for the whole of Taunton</p>
	<p>I would need to hear the argument both ways before making a decision.</p>
<p><b>Those who responded 'If viable, they should remain as individual, smaller, parishes each with their own council'.</b></p>	
	<p>The existing parishes should remain. They give local residents a voice, enabling these lower population areas to express a view on matters of local interest which may be different to the opinions of the majority of people in the main urban area of Taunton.</p> <p>There is a tendency in government at all levels to centralise power, despite rhetoric of decentralisation. The existing parish councils should not be absorbed into the new touch council for Taunton</p>

<p>A new town council should be established for the current unparished area to ensure it is up and running on 1 April 2023. . If any existing neighbouring parish wishes to be subsumed into that new body it should be able to do so in the fulness of time. The process of setting up a Town Council must not be delayed to satisfy the self-interest of any individual or corporate body. If a parish council does not feel able to make a decision about its future then a local referendum should be conducted of all the electors within that Parish.</p>	<p>see above</p>
<p>But, if not viable, it should not be assumed they are also absorbed into the new town council or a smaller number of areas, consideration should be given that they are absorbed into other rural parishes.</p>	<p>Rural communities to remain under rural parish councils.</p>
<p>Different needs and issues arise in different parts of the town ie the centre of the town vs the outlying areas, so one council for all will not be appropriate and outlying areas should not be paying for schemes only benefiting the centre. Local democracy and distinctiveness is essential.</p>	
<p>Many of the smaller areas are semi rural and may see themselves as having differing needs to the rural area of Taunton thus it would help if they were separated</p>	
<p>My preference is not to consider merging them. However I would observe that Cheddon Fitzpaine Village and West Monkton Village are both similar in character and already work closely together on things like the country park. There are new developments on the boundary of the town which are different in character.</p>	<p>My preference is to retain the current Cheddon Fitzpaine parish in its current form as it serves the Specific needs of the area. This could not be done by a single larger town council.</p>

Parish councils are important.	
See Comments above on Q6. In relation to Trull, I strongly recommend that the existing Trull PC be retained to serve the existing village - a task is well-equipped and able to do.	
The needs of town areas and rural areas are very different. The government of the town centre needs proper focus in order to reverse some of the decline and enable it to appeal to existing residents, new residents and visitors.	
This does not apply to Comeytrove as there are no rural parts	see above.
This is a led question - i don't feel that urban parts of surrounding parishes should be part of the unparished area,	
This question does not apply to Comeytrove as it is the only urban Parish Council with no rural hinterland, so the entire Parish should join the Town council. I cannot speak for other Parishes.	see comment in previous box.
We are definitely viable if the urbanised area is taken away. Please leave Kingston Parish alone!	
	Local knowledge is key to making fair and informed decisions about an area.
	Local representation is important. I can walk to my local council office. I see councillors in my community. Absorbing my local council into part of a larger council will reduce local democracy.
	The needs of a rural village are very different to urban / suburban areas

	<p>This question displays a wish by the proposers to create a super council, contrary to the design of Somerset Council with its LCNs</p>
	<p>A number of areas on outskirts of taunton already have a parish Council who will proactively represent their needs and issues and this should remain</p>
	<p>A Town Council in these rural parishes would mean the end of "community" and that is one of the most important reasons a person chooses to buy or rent in these areas, they have not brought/or rented a "Town" property.</p>
	<p>We need to make these areas part of the community and able to respond to local concerns swiftly.</p>
	<p>There may be cases where future negotiation could transfer parish lands to a town council, two examples  Longrun Meadow with the Bridgwater and Taunton college fields could be inside a new town council boundary, transfered from Bishops Hull, very few residents effected.  Also beyond junction 25 eastwards the areas of land (Ruishton or Stoke St Mary) that form the current park and ride site should be in the Taunton parish, so that a future much need upgraded bus and coach station can be operated and promoted by the Town Council as a Taunton transport hub.</p>

	<p>Each rural area/parish has its own character and identity. It is vital these area's needs are governed by a council that isn't compromised by a conflict of interest caused by having differing demographics under its governance - e.g. urban and rural. A further factor is due to urban areas having a greater population density, any decisions based on populous will be skewed towards urban ideas. Given district councils cover geographic areas, decisions should be based on geographic representation.</p>
	<p>Village areas are quite different from urban areas and have different issues to contend with</p>
	<p>For simplicity, and for a 'Step 1'. This could be considered say 5 years after establishing the Taunton town parish</p>
	<p>Norton Fitzwarren should remain a parish council as it is now</p>
	<p>Trull Parish Council wish to remain as a Parish Council representing Trull &amp; Staplehay and fiercely defend being consumed by the Town Council.</p>
	<p>Consideration should also be given to merging with (the remaining part of) an adjoining parish eg the non urban parts of Staplegrove could merge with Norton Fitzwarren and/ or Kingston St Mary</p>
	<p>I think this is best decided by the parish councils themselves.</p>

	<p>Many of the existing parishes have a key identity that should not be lost.</p> <p>Although I feel strongly that any new council covering the unparished area of the town might also benefit other areas already part of a parish, I would not wish to see those absorbed unless their residents really do wish that to happen.</p>
	<p>The eight surrounding historic parishes each have a strong sense of identity and community built up around their churches and community halls . These parish councils have supported the local needs of their parishioners over a long time through elected parish councillors many of whom live in their parishes . If any of these surrounding historic parishes were absorbed into a new town council then that long established sense of identity and community would be diluted or lost . For this reason I cannot support the absorption of any existing parish into a new town council .</p>
	<p>The eight surrounding historic parishes each have a strong sense of identity and community built up around their churches and community halls . These parish councils have supported the local needs of their parishioners over a long time through elected parish councillors many of whom live in their parishes . If any of these surrounding historic parishes were absorbed into a new town council that long established sense of identity and community would be diluted or lost . For this reason I cannot support the absorption of any existing parish into a new town council .</p>
	<p>I absolutely do NOT think bringing in urban parishes into a central town group works for Bishops Hull.</p>

	We have an active and thriving community that would be undermined by this action
	In the area where I live ( Norton Fitzwarren) we have an active parish council and though there is now little in the way of green fields bewteen us and Taunton there is a thriving local community.
<b>Those who did not select an answer.</b>	
All the current parished areas should be left alone	
As I have suggested I see no real need for Parish or Town Councils in Somerset regardless of where they might be. Provided there is proper representation for those communities.	
Comeytrowe is entirely urban, so it is logical to include all of it into Taunton	
I do not think I should comment on other parishes	
Don't merge them, leave them alone. We don't live in Taunton town.	Leave us out of Taunton town. We don't want to merge with them.
None of the above. This suggestion has been put in train without prior consultation of the parish residents	None of the above. This suggestion has been put in train without prior consultation of the parish residents
See already altering the consultation to suit your bias agenda. Sick of the Corruption at Council [REDACTED]	

<p>The very idea that there would be a few fields or rural areas 'left out' belies anyone having a sensible idea. How can they be left out? How can one possibly have an organisation to manage a few fields? It is ridiculous. I cannot agree or accept the idea regarding this question.</p>	<p>The question leaves very impractical administration. The question should be dismissed.</p>
<p>There should be no land grab. Any new council will have no more current powers than the existing bordering Parish Councils. Why on earth would they want to join the unparished area that has been so heavily subsidised by the rest of Taunton Deane and West Somerset.</p>	
<p>Why is there not a question in No.9 asking if we keep local Parishes exactly as they are?</p> <p>These questions are so weighted in SWaT's favour, of pursuing their wishes to set up a Town Council AND to change the Taunton boundary at the same time, effectively carrying out a land grab.</p> <p>It is outrageous that these two issues are being proposed together. I am also shocked to learn that whilst asking for public opinion on this, ultimately SWaT vote and make the final decision on this issue anyway?</p>	<p>SWaT should carry out a SEPARATE democratic vote for changing any boundaries at a later date.</p> <p>So many people buy houses in areas for schools, communities, all sorts of reasons, and it is so wrong that SWaT are looking to potentially change areas and boundaries under their objective of setting up a Town parish Council, which by itself, most people are in favour of.</p> <p>This all comes straight after voting for the Council Unity issues. SWaT is very much taking advantage of their power. It's very misleading to fire all these issues at people, just before Christmas.</p> <p>People have so much on their plates right now, it is so wrong that this issue is being rushed through (together?) with all the ongoing Covid difficulties.</p>
	<p>They shouldn't form part of the new Town Council</p>

	The wishes of the members of the relevant parishes should be taken into account in respect to this matter.
<b>Those who responded 'They should also be absorbed into the new town council(s) serving Taunton'.</b>	
<p>As Taunton is the focus for healthcare, education, retail, shopping and employment, rural communities should be integrated into the town council.</p> <p>Whilst their needs and priorities may be very different to urban areas, they are inevitably impacted by urban Taunton.</p> <p>However there is a strong argument for combining rural areas as a separate parish(es) to ensure that as a group their views carry sufficient weight on the council.</p>	
Comeytrove has no rural hinterland for which alternative provisions should be made.	
I prefer a whole of Greater Taunton boundary for any new Taunton Town Council but look at the examples in Bridgwater and Yeovil if parished areas are unwilling to be absorbed and become <Town Name> Without.	<p>Any new Town Council for Taunton should be based on modern developed urban boundaries and NOT limited to the area of the unparished ward only.</p> <p>All urban extensions that are currently part of parished wards in Greater Taunton should clearly form part of a Greater Taunton area in any new Town Council.</p>
	I'm sorry but i don't understand this segregation into "urban" and "rural" in already existing parishes - how do you define when an area has stops being "urban" and becomes "rural" - surely the two should be working together to support / benefit each other. Why create potentially fractious divisions by governing them differently. Is it not possible to define a rural area (parish?) with urban sectors or even an urban area with

	rural sectors and consider how these would operate as a whole?
	Costs kept as low as possible PLEASE!
	Absorbing them would be simpler. And they are bound to see new development in the future which would be contiguous with the town.
	Taunton is the hub round which the surrounding parishes all depend for essential services, so it would probably be better for them to all work together to work for the common good.
	<p>I consider no further 'governing' tier structures should be put in place in addition to the SW&amp;T structure presently in place. Tier structure upon tier structure simply fragments consistent governance across areas and creates further financial burden to local communities.</p> <p>Taunton Council should take all these areas under its wing and include them within its governing structure. If it needs to expand its staff to manage the responsibility and workload, then so be it. That is preferable to creating more and more tier structures when it was recently voted upon to 'consolidate' our county governance.</p>

**Question 10 - Do you think town or parish council(s) should consider delivering some local services that are currently provided by Somerset West and Taunton Council and for these to be paid for by the town council precept?**

If yes, please specify what sort of services.	Reasons/Comments
<b>Those who answered No.</b>	
Parish councils aren't civil servants and they can often be unqualified to provide a service (and sometimes opinion). Decisions about services need to be decided and delivered by Taunton council .	
The same currently for Parish Councils.	The idea of a Unitary Council is to take over the roles of District Councils. No new layers are needed and would be confusing and expensive.
Parks and Nursery	<p>This Q is unclear, it could be read that the town council would pay for Parks in Parish Council areas outside of the Town. The Town Council should pay for its own services and the Parish Councils for theirs unless there is a joint agreement between them to do otherwise..</p> <p>Both could and I believe should own and manage the Parks in their area.</p> <p>However I believe that such assets as Car Parks should be managed by the Unitary Council as part of an overall transport policy. If the Town Council controlled the Car Parks there might be a tendency to just maximise profits !</p>
Yes to the first part of the question and no to the second part. If services are devolved to Parishes then so will the revenue streams.	Yes to the first part of the question and no to the second part. If services are devolved to Parishes then so will the revenue streams.
	This should not be decided until we finally get rid of SW&T - it is a matter for the new Unitary Authority

	I would assume the new unitary council is taking on those local services which would mean a new Town/Parish Council didn't need to.
	The question (therefore answer) is specifically relating to SWT, once we have a unitary county authority my answer would probably change.
	No clear explanation of the benefits of either option.
The council has taken an age to decide what to do with the market site, has it done it's job in this case.	<p>Taunton town centre has largely unchanged in 20 years esp. the High Street, Fore Street, East Street and North Street.</p> <p>Taunton is largely forgotten about nationally and regionally, Yeovil is more recognised and Taunton is often mistaken as being in Devon.</p> <p>In a unitary Somerset Council, Taunton will I think be largely forgotten about. The town is in a dire state. The actual market site is still a mess over 10 years since the market closed. Taunton has no identity and I think that is the issue, no one knows what Taunton stands for. A town council would stand up for Taunton and it's county town status.</p>
	The design allows them to do this if they wish, but with council tax so expensive compared to income tax there should be a requirement to publish a cost comparison with services provided directly by council managers.
	Things are best left as they are. Any additions will no doubt lead to an increase in Council Tax for absolutely no benefit.
Isn't this academic as a new Unitary Council for Somerset will be established in early 2023?	

<p>The existing parishes are unlikely to have the skills of desire to deliver additional services.</p>	<p>I feel quite angry about the whole issue. It is clear that the entire argument for the Unitary authority was merely a way to try and cut costs, by reducing services, or having them delivered by volunteers.</p> <p>Combined with the unwanted merger of WSC &amp; TDBC, the whole process has been shambolic and a waste of tax payer's money.</p>
	<p>There does need to be accountability for an overview of the area and delivery of essential services. If this is devolved down the chain the accountability is watered down.</p>
<p>Taunton Council should reform the County Town from a shambles to a welcoming, vibrant, economically thriving town.</p> <p>One that the locality would be proud of and use more intensively</p>	

Town or Parish Councils could deliver with [www.gocallee.com](http://www.gocallee.com) this proposed community partnership that could be made to promote and representation engagement for all retail, business services, individuals and communities to come together for the betterment of local development. It could be:

A Global Powerhouse Marketplace....for Shopkeepers, Corporates & Communities!

It would be an online trading & 'community' 'MARKETPLACE' where shopkeepers & corporates may work from their own shopfronts / offices. Even 'individuals' may register to sell goods or provide services online to battle against Covid-19 pandemic effects. All Vendors will pay a nominal sum to cover the website overheads only & then keep all their own profits. Gocallee.com will show you how. It will also generate its own profits for communities via advertising & marketing services (globally), but then 'GIVE-BACK' 100% of all its net profits! So it ostensibly exists for THE PEOPLE.

This 'community' trading marketplace will provide a much greater Power House platform than sole websites. So everybody will get a much greater reach to increase profits. Gocallee.com will forge a 'partnership' between businesses & communities in many different ways to help our spirit of coming together. It will provide a way to keep wealth locally & build prosperity so the multi-millions generated by online commerce ultimately rewards the local people that spend; not just 'others' deep pockets.

Corporates websites pretend to help...but actually 'take' the riches! Gocallee.com will not take the RICHES from

Gocallee.com will generate its own profits for communities via advertising & marketing services (globally), but then 'GIVE-BACK' 100% of all its net profits! So it ostensibly exists for THE PEOPLE and not for corporates with deep pockets.

Gocallee.com will forge a 'partnership' between businesses & communities in many different ways to help our spirit of coming together. It will provide a way to keep wealth locally & build prosperity so the multi-millions generated by online commerce ultimately rewards the local people.

Gocallee.com shopping, services & communities website will also provide Make Money Online (MMO) opportunities, activities, forums, blogs, education to learn & trade, restaurant ordering systems / take-aways, jobs board & much more for communities. All should see this across the world & follow our SW&T philosophy.

traders & people. It will seek to foster partnerships via its products & services to generate profits. So, Traders will get 'more' profits & Golocallee.com profits (100%) will go back to the people.... quarterly, via my 'GIVE-BACK' system to COMMUNITIES. That way, wealth will go back into developing & building local projects so we may have a better, happier & more 'prosperous' society. We need to reduce suffering by 'sharing' the wealth.

Golocallee.com Shopping, Services & Communities website will also provide Make Money Online (MMO) opportunities, activities, forums, blogs, education to learn & trade, restaurant ordering systems / take-aways, jobs board & much more!

All should see this across the world & follow our SW&T philosophy.

Support Golocallee.com to get the community  
Golocallee.com profits 'GIVE-BACK'!  
(email: [info@golocallee.co.uk](mailto:info@golocallee.co.uk))

<b>Those who did not select Yes/No but still added a comment in the subsequent boxes.</b>	
Poorly worded question. Read it carefully!!!	
	Possibly, but there should be a chance for the public to be consulted as to which these should be and how they would be administered.
Why is there not a Don't Know option to choose?	
I don't understand what exactly is being implied by this question and the finances here - in my view, the whole finance structure needs to be re-structured FAIRLY if ANY changes happen.	
<b>Those who answered 'Yes'.</b>	
Street cleaning and open spaces management. walking and cycling provision and promotion (active travel). Somerset CC has not been proactive on this and SWT has been filling the gaps e.g. Wellington-Taunton, connections to the urban extensions, public realm improvements in the town centre, public realm design guidance etc. There is a case for some traffic regulation powers being devolved.	The unitary won't be doing these! Taunton has huge potential for more walking and cycling but SCC has persistently declined to take action. This would help the growing congestion problem. Segregated cycle routes into the town centre from the urban extensions should have been developed at the same time, but there's been nothing. If we want to make Taunton a healthy and attractive place to live, radically improving active travel and low speed neighbourhoods is the way to go. The unitary will not do this, so a new Taunton Town Council needs to drive this.

<p>Yes. Open spaces seems fairly obvious. Street cleaning. Public realm/. Events. Business support and promotion. Visitor Centre. Development management should be considered.</p> <p>I would also suggest walking and cycling provision and promotion (active travel). Somerset has not been proactive on this and SWT has been filling the gaps e.g. Wellington-Taunton, connections to the urban extensions, public realm improvements in the town centre, public realm design guidance etc. There is a case for some traffic regulation powers being devolved.</p>	<p>Explained above</p>
<p>I would suggest that the list of services provided by Frome Town Council, and those it encourages its residents to share is an excellent template, and I would hope would be given strong consideration.</p>	<p>Frome Town Council is an exemplar of a town council which is truly owned by the People of the town. Its web page is engaging and inviting and shows that the people of the town are at the centre of all they do.</p>
<p>Street cleaning and general appearance services</p>	<p>To provide a better governance of the services</p>
<p>Public conveniences, car parking/park and ride, minor planning applications, town centre management, public realm.</p>	<p>I'd like to see the town lead on transforming into a low car town, with walking, cycling and public transport prioritised. Gradually reduce parking in the town releasing land for housing,. introduce car clubs to reduce car numbers, build a cycle network.</p>
<p>Parks, play areas, traffic calming - ideally going beyond this to look at helping people travel sensibly to keep short journeys car-free.</p>	<p>Aim to keep decisions at the most local level possible and practicable.</p>
<p>Responsibility for Active Travel</p>	

<p>Bins/litter Local events, fetes etc The smaller jobs, leaving the main council to deal with things like the housing crisis, accessibility within town, homelessness. Also the levels of ASB seem to be sky rocketing since we lost the police station. What county town doesn't have a police station?!</p>	<p>Because the council obviously has too many responsibilities since it doesn't manage to stay on top of a lot of them, like litter/bins, keeping public places accessible to wheelchairs (it's not just about the pavement surface but also about not getting hit in the face by overgrown hedges etc)</p>
<p>NFW parish council deliver a huge range of services already that are not covered by SW&amp;T</p>	<p>Yes, with adequate funding</p>
<p>Local active travel promotion schemes.</p>	<p>SWT is useless on these issues.</p>
<p>Amenities</p>	
<p>Wiveliscombe is already providing and paying for toilets and Taunton should do the same.</p>	
<p>More investment in making the town look better e.g painting the town bridge, hanging baskets etc,</p>	
<p>All services directly associated with enhancing Taunton' county town status.</p>	<p>This will allow a new Taunton Town Council to take ownership of and mould the town's identity.</p>
<p>Not exactly sure what each level of council does at the moment, but I am sure some of the local services to the community should be provided by the Town/Parish councils. These could include Planning, Parks and Open spaces, Street Care and Cleaning, Parking and Climate Emergency.</p>	<p>They should be devolved to where they provide the best service for the community they serve.</p>
<p>Anything similar to the services Bridgwater and Yeovil town councils deliver</p>	
<p>It seems to make sense but I don't know which services would be best delivered at this level - need to look at what works elsewhere.</p>	

<p>Provision of allotments; parks and recreation grounds; public conveniences; control of litter; play areas; community centres; crime prevention; festivals and fetes; traffic calming; tourism activities and/or markets; street cleaning and any other services that are very localised.</p>	
<p>This would depend in large part about what Somerset Council would be willing to devolve. They currently seem to be ignoring the voices of people in Somerset and acting unilaterally. My personal view would be to move as much as possible to the town council and base a precept on the tasks taken away from Somerset County Council</p>	
<p>I would like to consider arguments both ways before deciding.</p>	
<p>Street cleansing, parks and paths, cemeteries</p>	
<p>Managing parks and open spaces (including cemeteries), managing and deriving income from council-owned property within the current unparished area. Resourcing the mayoralty and civic events. Promoting the economic, environmental and cultural interests of the town for businesses and residents. Advising on planning and transport matters. Funding charitable and voluntary activities.</p>	<p>It is imperative that decisions and funding are provided as near as possible to the people most affected. No other body will have sufficient and undiluted passion for the well-being and development of Taunton. The unitary council will need to be even handed across its area of jurisdiction and will be liable to lobbying from other towns which have cohesive democratically-accountable councils already established.</p>
<p>Yes, a new Town Council should take responsibility for better provision for walking and cycling in and around the area.</p>	<p>A well thought out plan needs to be put in place for safe routes for cyclists and walkers.  We need to encourage people to use alternative transport especially for local journeys as the car is not environmentally friendly and adds to congestion. People will not do this if routes are not joined up and safe.  A new Town Council should look at the Frome Schools Street Project which will trial the calming of streets near schools etc  Our cycle-path network is patchy, needs to be joined up and</p>

	<p>extended to the suburban areas of Taunton. SW&amp; T have started this (not SCC) and it needs to be continued.</p>
<p>They could have a voice in planning applications as planning affects Taunton residents directly  They could opt to operate by means of citizens assemblies in order to help all residents feel truly represented and for creative solutions to be fostered,  They could look at accessible and climate friendly travel options, greater emphasis on cycling , walking and bus routes. less focus on cars, car parking. Consider charging petrol cars for entry to centre of town (like Oxford) install public electric vehicle charge points.  Support community energy sharing projects/ community growing projects, Support small business co-operatives, support local small scale businesses to get rates discounts to foster creative solutions to growing and buying locally.</p>	
<p>Yes. Street cleaning, litter picking, emptying of bins more promptly. Please! Sadly lacking at present.  The seagull problem which gets worse each year in residential areas of the unparished area is another example of where a specific focus is needed.</p>	
<p>There is a list in the County council's Business Case for the new unitary. Most of these would be quite suitable for a Town council to deliver but very difficult for a parish Council</p>	

<p>I don't think there would be much choice as David Fothergill's list of devolved services is quite comprehensive. The most important are likely to be local Planning decisions, on and off-street parking including Resident parking management, recycling (unless that is devolved entirely to Somerset waste management) grass cutting and open space management including drainage, community safety, community grants, footpath lighting, town economic development, social housing and homelessness, local climate change initiatives. The main issue would be how to make them "cost neutral" as the Business case for the Unitary suggests. Also how to manage a service where policy decisions were made centrally by the Unitary, while delivery was delegated to Towns and parishes (e.g. Resident Parking policy, where Resident Friendly Parking Policy is urgently needed ?</p>	<p>continued from previous box.. On the issue of making devolution 'cost neutral' if Town and Parish Councils take on the costs of grass cutting and maintenance of verges and gullies, the Town or Parish may decide on the level of service and pay the costs, while the Unitary ceases to deliver this service. Will it make a financial contribution to the Towns and Parishes or make a corresponding reduction to the council tax levied by the Unitary ? It is not yet clear what happens if most, but not all, Towns and Parishes agree to deliver a service. Would the Unitary stop delivering it to any Councils who won't or can't take it on ? Will Parishes combine to deliver services or work with the new Local Community Networks ? Then there is the question of whether TCs and PCs will be allowed a 'pick and mix' where they are allowed to cherry pick some services to deliver and not others. How would this work if the Unitary retain the capacity and staff to deliver specific services both centrally to small parishes who can't take on anything and not to other larger PCs and TCs ? Will some way be found to retain economy of scale, using officers directly employed by the Unitary to perform services for TCs and PCs which the latter pay for ? Then there is the question of how much work will be expected of PCs. Will they need to identify members to take specific responsibility for certain services - a small scale equivalent of the Cabinet/Portfolio holders on SCC and SWaT ? Will the Unitary seek to divest itself of some services (hitherto run by Districts or County) altogether ?</p>
<p>But it depends if these services will still be efficient if delegated to local councils.</p>	
<p>Cemetary maintenance</p>	<p>Wellington Rd Cemetary currently a mess</p>

<p>Grounds maintenance  Cleansing  Town centre management  Markets  Street trading licenses  Car parking</p>	<p>These are better controlled locally</p>
<p>Public toilets, street cleaning, provision of rubbish bins, youth groups, play areas, mother and toddler groups, cutting of grass verges.</p>	<p>I have selected these because my expectation is that Somerset County Council will immediately vote to stop funding much of the above. For example, SCC are reluctant to cut the grass verges until it becomes a visual impediment to drivers despite their responsibilities under the Highways Act as Highway Authority.</p>
<p>Road signage and traffic calming - input into cycle and walking lanes (non-existent on narrow "rat-run" country lanes)</p>	<p>Dangerous village centres and lack of footpaths / cycle-ways</p>
<p>Not sure. Just want to see local accountability rather than top down governance</p>	
<p>Town centre management</p>	
<p>toilet maintenance, arts funding exercises, festivals and fetes. I understand that these may well disappear if there isn't a town council to back them</p>	
<p>Public toilets, parks, supporting cultural facilities eg the local theatre.</p>	
<p>In principle yes but to answer a list of possible services should be provided to inform responses to this question</p>	
<p>More voice and input in planning applications. More control of public open spaces and recreational facilities with the relevant budgets.</p>	

<p>Weed killing  Provision of waste bins  Street cleaning  Litter picking  Grant system</p>	
<p>The new local authority has to transfer areas as outlined the question nr 4  the key objectives for a town council  Take over of all public green spaces, from the Weymouth model likely £800,000 annual cost meaning the Town council should have its own grounds depot and gardening workforce like Weymouth has won in the transition to Unitary Dorset.  Letter to editor in County Gazette in December advocating this.  Inherit the Market Charter for Taunton, meaning town must acquire the center Market House as a town operating base to organise indoor and outdoor markets, plus street events to promote the town.  Take over the running tourist information office and advance bus and coach facilities to maximise the non car visitors to the town centre  Take over community buildings across town, and seek smaller venues to serve areas with none at present. Look to upgrade buildings as in the Victoria Park pavilion small hall scheme with new safe park toilets as campaigned for since 2015.</p>	

<p>the new town council is supported and will automatically via the unitary process pass on to manage and fund all varieties of green spaces, public toilets, community buildings, markets and events. for us public toilets is a big issue, our external park toilets are closed being repaired. We since 2015 have procured feasibility studies to create smaller safer new toilets adjoining our pavilion buildings, allowing space to be freed to allow an improvement scheme to expand our community room to become a 75sm small village hall. Schemes have been chased but no capitol funding by TDBC or SWT district councils. We want a new town council to lead and have capitol funds to carry out these works, so we can be the Village Hall Committee. Across the town there will be demands for other public toilets and community buildings, requiring more capitol funds.</p>	<p>We are also a green flag park and wish a new Taunton Council to follow the example of recently formed Weymouth Town Council to set up its own parks and green spaces gardening team, redeploying some of our current park workers we know and love plus contractors for more specialist works. Taunton's green spaces are likely to cost circa £1million pounds per annum, we need a Taunton depot perhaps by inheriting the town nursery. This would be best to link closely with local councillors and green space groups, to maximise nature friendly situations, working with volunteers and encouraging more to help control costs. We may need pop up allotments in the town centre too.</p>
<p>Local Planning</p>	
<p>Litter collection Footpaths maintenance Weed killing Pavement sweeping Input on planning applications in the area Provision of litter and dog bins</p>	
<p>Ones which SWAT already fail to deliver, like street and foot way cleaning</p>	
<p>Car Parking; EV charging points; Community Energy schemes; a 'not for profit' buying consortium for environmental discounted products eg LED's; Allotments; Open Spaces; bus/travel subsidies; sustainable hedge and verge cutting; wildflower meadows a whole list of things</p>	<p>Using GPC which means T&amp;PC's can do anything that individuals can do, as long as it is lawful.</p>

<p>Town &amp; Parish Councils can do especially if they have access via their General Power of Competency</p>	
<p>Local community events e.g. Christmas lights switch on  Planning and housing - local neighbours will be affected by decisions. Also councillors with local knowledge might be better at finding solutions  Parks - Taunton is famous for its parks and a county wide council with lots of rural areas might be less interested  Climate change (some): actions in urban areas are quite different from actions in rural areas - also there might be a council elected that votes differently from Taunton residents so this gives Taunton residents more say.  Schools (some) - For climate change reasons it might be better for schools in Taunton to share resources and work together than county wide as there would be less driving</p>	
<p>I think match the 'norm/average' here, by looking at what the surrounding parish councils are delivering. This would be to start with, then review in say 5 years.</p>	<p>I would give tangible deliverable and therefore help with establishment. Also, closer connections with the community can only help the success of delivery by understanding local people's community needs.</p>
<p>Grass cutting etc.</p>	<p>Best done locally</p>
<p>Yes, for example, the current arrangement for litter is quite simply a disaster. There's no pride anymore and the standard of the service is appalling, undermanned and goes unmonitored, resulting in shoddy workmanship and neglect. Local residents are fed up with having to do this when they've already paid council tax.</p>	<p>There's no pride anymore and the standard of the service is appalling, undermanned and goes unmonitored, resulting in shoddy workmanship and neglect. Local residents are fed up with having to do this when they've already paid council tax.</p>
<p>Grass cutting, litter collection, churchyard and playing field maintenance, libraries and public toilets.</p>	

<p>Cultural, tourism, promotional ( Attracting inward investment ) and economic development services.</p>	
<p>Promotion and implementation of local active travel schemes to get more people out of their cars and walking and cycling for short journeys.</p>	<p>Somerset County Council are slow and unwilling to reduce local vehicular traffic. They seem ignorant of the benefits of a good quality connected segregated cycle network. Less traffic leads to a reduction in CO2 emissions and general pollution. Safer cycle paths will encourage greater physical activity resulting in better health and less of a drain on the NHS. Also there would be the knock on effect of children being more active (less childhood obesity) and not expecting to use "Mum's Taxi" as they presently do. They could cycle safely not only to school (reducing school run traffic) but also to their friends and for leisure.</p> <p>Currently, Taunton (our County Town) has a very fragmented cycle network much of which is poor quality, disconnected and stops altogether in places.</p> <p>Taunton should be a show case for modern active transport. Instead, SCC are 50 years behind the times and Taunton has become "Motor Town" not "Garden Town".</p> <p>I feel a local Town Council would have more vision.</p>
<p>Yes - housing, planning, town centre development, waste management should be given to a taunton town council.</p>	
<p>Verge cutting and wild flower planting,maintaining parks and recreation areas,litter picking</p>	<p>More likely to attract volunteers and other local interest and investment due to sense of ownership and belonging</p>
<p>As per existing parish councils</p>	
<p>Provision of local services such as parks, cycle routes, riverside enhancements etc. Also organising events in the town.</p>	

<p>It depends on the size of the councils and the facilities they already have. Some parishes already care for community centres, playing fields etc. Taunton may find it hard to cover the costs of servicing its large parks if the council tax charged covers only the unparished area, which includes many of the poorest areas of Taunton. these facilities are used by many in Taunton who live outside the unparished area.</p>	
<p>Community centres, litter management and dog bins, play areas.</p>	
<p>Arts and Culture Town Centre Management Parks, Public Spaces and Leisure Services Planning</p>	
<p>Planning, parks, licensing, waste management</p>	
<p>Parks Footpaths Arts and recreation Consultation on planning and development issues</p>	<p>To ensure enjoyment of local assets and views are respected</p>
<p>Not sure - but things that are very particular to Taunton, such as looking after our green spaces, finding new allotment spaces, litter picking, play spaces for children. Also things to do with attracting more people to come to Taunton such as festivals and markets. I also wonder if there is scope for tackling the isolation and loneliness of our elderly population (I work in social care, there is a lot of it about).</p>	
<p>public conveniences, street cleaning, events in the town, bus shelters, allotments, mostly the normal services allocated to town/parish councils</p>	

<p>A regeneration of our town should be a significant part of their delivery plans along with supporting all the green public open spaces, civic provisions, cemeteries, public conveniences, protecting our town centre traders and to ensure that our county town is clean and attractive in order to attract inward investment.</p>	<p>So that we have a county town that we can all be proud of.</p>
<p>Dog bin purchase, placement and maintenance including emptying. The current price is extortionate</p>	<p>The parish council already delivers road clearing and litter picking.</p>
<p>Maintenance of parks and roadside verges. Signage</p>	
<p>Active travel, roads, transport, public realm: Proactive approach on active travel, cycling, walking and public transport to combat climate change. Fast implementation of safe missing links for pedestrians and cyclists e.g. Wellington to Taunton, Kingston St Mary to Taunton and connections to the urban extensions. Making the town centre attractive again. Pedestrianising streets. Cycle parking. (Electric) bike hire. Parks and open spaces, tree planting to mitigate climate change.</p>	
<p>Maintenance of parks and open spaces. Assets buildings Electrics Floral displays / hanging baskets. Town centre events and activities.</p>	

<p>Cycling and walking provision, including more secure cycle parking.  Traffic control?  Parks and allotments</p>	
<p>Grass cutting (or not ie 'rewilding')  Street lights  Parking  Litter clearing</p>	<p>Many of these services are local-dependent eg residents keeping their own areas clear of litter etc. There will be more pride in an area that we have looked after ourselves</p>
<p>Yes, this is the whole point of a Town Council who should provide services for the local area.</p>	<p>Higher standards of cleaning would be the first item. Tackling litter problems throughout the town. Stopping litter getting into the waterways. Reducing seagull/bird nuisance, by bringing in a bird of prey into town. A higher standard of waste bins (I am aware new bins are starting to be rolled out; thank you), but this needs to continue and all the bins with rusty bottoms must be replaced.</p> <p>Shops: returning the High Street to be a vibrant place to be is imperative and the current SWT administration demonstrate this is lacking: Business rates should be set to attract businesses into town (not taxing them into oblivion). Just take a look at the town and the number of empty shops (not just because of the covid situation). Has anyone read the Gazette recently to see how the town has gone downhill over the past ten years? Higher standards should be adopted in all areas. No-one comes forward to promote the town.</p> <p>Interaction with the community and greater communication would enhance a feeling that the Town Council listens and acts on residents suggestions.</p>

<p>They should take on and pay for the same set of services as the current bordering Parish Councils.</p>	
<p>They should consider but the decision should not be imposed on them and if they do take them on then they should be adequately funded to do so, not out of their existing precept.</p>	<p>They should consider but the decision should not be imposed on them and if they do take them on then they should be adequately funded to do so, not out of their existing precept.</p>
<p>Parish councils should be able to opt to maintain public spaces</p>	<p>Local non political parish councillors are well placed to interact with the parishioners and are able to act in a neutral way that is best for their village</p>
<p>Allotments, parks, recreation grounds and play areas, festivals and fetes, street cleaning and control of litter, footpaths, possibly other leisure and community facilities</p>	<p>I feel these are local enough for the town council to provide.</p>
<p>There needs to be a minimum level of service mandated and funded by SWAT or the new unitary authority. Additional services - examples may include increasing charges depending on the needs, expectations and nature of local residents for - eg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- more frequent refuse collection</li> <li>- greater provision of child play areas</li> <li>- more frequent maintenance of grass verges</li> <li>- cycle paths</li> </ul> <p>The "one size fits all" communities is largely the case at present and is flawed.</p>	<p>Local democracy is an illusion. There is an expectation local councils are able to act in the interests of the local community, yet are denied the budget or authority.</p> <p>The presumption should be that local councils and parishes should have the discretion, accountability and budget to undertake all that locally which does not require central coordination, expertise, or impact materially on other areas. Delivering services may rely upon a central contract service provider.</p> <p>Individual parishes and councils would be far better able to meet the different aspirations of their local communities.</p>

Town planning, keeping verges and foot/cycle paths in good order, parking management and fees, local roads, drains and gully maintenance, parking zones, local bus provision, cycle paths etc.	A Town Council is best placed to deal with local issues.
all, including waste, high street but not planning as this should be dealt with via a separate body entirely.	
only if they are capable or with support - you need a consistent framework	
Parks (There may be others.)	Any service which is entirely local to Taunton should be managed by Taunton.
Things that effect the urban residents should be delivered by the town council eg. Housing, waste management etc.	
Planning , housing	It's essential that there is local knowledge of how these services will impact on those who use them.
cultural and arts festivals, 'green' initiatives, leisure facilities and parks, cycle infrastructure, local plan for Taunton, community assemblies, intergenerational community hubs and activies to rebuild community cohesion.	The creation of a new town council is an opportunity to re-energise the involvement of people of all ages in the governance and development of their communities, to truly capture the build back better, community help ethos that came to the fore in 2020/2021
Rights of Way signage and maintenance.	Because the current service provided by SCC is inadequate; it would let New Somerset focus on enforcement/diversions/closures.
open spaces management	Cohesive strategy to support ecological and climate emergency

**11. Do you have any other comments on governance issues or boundaries at the parish/town council level?**

A town council for the unparished area only is well overdue and one should have been set up in 1974

ALL areas of Taunton need to maintain the same level of specific/equal local representation.

As in the introduction, I would agree that any boundaries need to be drawn around an area that has meaning for the people within it, and have the facilities that encourage a sense of ownership and engagement e.g. community facilities, and good services for all ages, and with a strong emphasis on identities that are not car dependent.

Boundary review should be independently assessed by experts.

By establishing a town council for Taunton, the option should be left open for any of the existing surrounding parishes to join if they so wish.

Failure to obtain a clear view on the status of the rural parishes should not serve as an excuse for not establishing a parish council for the unparished area.

Clearly some boundaries need to be tweaked as time has moved on since the original definition of the parishes took place but this shouldn't involve a land grab from surrounding parishes who are administered in a much better way than SWT.

Community engagement is vital and should be encouraged through more LOCAL representation.

Creating an enlarged Town Council would be undemocratic

Do not wish the parish to be swallowed up by Somerset West and Taunton Council, please let Norton remain as it is ok.

Give Taunton the separate representation and the tools it deserves, and it will flourish!

Having an overall town council would not be good for Taunton. Local issues need to be dealt with at a local level, and by those who have an understanding and those who they directly affect.

I see no reason to change things at all, other than to create a Town Council from the unparished areas.

The local element that comes from a Parish Council is invaluable, and should not be underestimated. The support we had in our village from our P.C. in 2000, when help was required to replace our Memorial Hall was fantastic. They provided a grant, funded by a precept increase (agreed by local referendum), and along with much fund raising we managed to acquire Lottery, and local authority grants to complete the work. We now have one of the finest Halls in Somerset serving our community. Thanks in no small part to our local P.C. I do not think the same level of support would have been forthcoming from an amorphous Taunton Town Council.

I think Bishops Hull Parish Council does a lot for the community and so deserves to be given the opportunity to continue. However, it makes sense for the town to have strong leadership from a town council to make sure that the interests of the town are represented. Otherwise my suspicion is that SCC will divert funding from local, day to day services to prop up other areas of the council.

I think it is going to require looking at again as expansion happens outside of town, like Monkton sounds like it's going to be a huge area and will need separate governance because of decisions about development need to be made by people living it.

I think my comments cover this but I would also point out that given there does not appear to be an effective supervising body for Parish and Town Councils it would prove extremely difficult to ensure appropriate standards are maintained across the board.

I think Taunton should have a council for the currently unparished parts. However the idea of taking over all of the existing parish councils is a bad idea. The parish councils that already exist are responsible and accountable for ensuring investment needs and services are addressed in their parish. The danger with centralising all of the areas into one is that the local needs aren't addressed and accountability is lost for each parish.

I want Norton Fitzwarren to stay as it is and not be part of a town council where it will lose it's identity and funding to other areas

I will say it again. Local representation is important. I can walk to my local council office. I see councillors in my community. Absorbing my local council into part of a larger council will reduce local democracy.

I would have preferred to see a Town Council established and defer decisions about urban parish councils joining it until it became clearer how the Town Council will function and what services Parishes will be delivering. I gather that can't be done because it all needs to be decided under the present Local Governance Review and the Government will not allow a new review for many years. Somerset county Council made the successful Unitary bid, so they should have taken a more active role in explaining how the relationship between the Unitary and Town/Parishes would work, especially on devolved services. I am concerned that some Parish Councils will opt to remain outside the Town Council with no idea how difficult their task is likely to be, the likely costs involved and number of new volunteers who will be needed.

I would hope that such a Council would be free of party political interests, and find creative ways of getting input from the wider population

I would leave the current parish councils as they are and just create one new council for the unparished area

I would rather the parish council remains as it is I do not like the idea of being a small part of the larger part of Taunton. Over the years I have seen Bishops Hull grow to three times the size it was and taking away our parish council away would make us just part of Taunton rather than be a village community.

If the option for a series of smaller parish style councils were to be set up, those in the town centre would have to bear costs for major parks, public toilets, management of the town centre and other costs passed on from the new council. This would make our local tax many times that of the current parishes surrounding the town. which last year averaged £31 for a band D home. Additional income on top of the local tax precept would be needed to fund our area.

If the whole of Taunton and the unparished areas become one large block then local governance will be lost - because they will no longer have a budget.

It is essential that any new arrangement is less opaque and has a higher profile/ greater visibility than the current district council. In preparing for elections to the council, a people focussed, accessible public information campaign should be mounted to make people realise the power of engaging in the local democratic process. It should be made clear that local government is best when it is a-political and acts only in the best interests of residents and businesses

It is **WRONG** to restructure boundaries whilst setting up a new Taunton Town Parish Council, for all the reasons I have stated.

Restructuring boundaries should also entail restructuring the whole finance system, so that Village Parishes can survive and be paid fairly.

I attended a Parish Meeting on this subject - the whole issue of changing boundaries is wrong at this time. People are still consumed with Covid, this is SWaT rushing things through, just after the council unity issues, at a time when many people are staying home, working from home, their whole lives have changed.

**SWaT IS TAKING ADVANTAGE OF PEOPLE AND THEIR POSITION. I FEEL THEY NEED TO BE POLICED INDEPENDENTLY.**

I cannot believe that SWaT ultimately vote on what happens themselves - even though they are asking everyone about it. This is all so wrong.

It seems strange that including existing parishes was even thought to be a good idea. The only reason I can think of is to provide jobs to compensate for possible redundancies caused by the transfer to a unitary authority. We need less bureaucracy, not more. Cost savings not additional salary expenses.

No mention is given to a large chunk of Taunton and North West parishes being included in Devon for parliamentary purposes under the current boundary review. Politics is getting ever more complex

Leave it as it is. We don't want to merge with Taunton town

Leave our parish councils as they are, run by local people who know the area and the residents. Give the unparished area their own parish/town council.

leave the Parishes alone - its a very transparent land grab

Leave well alone. We don't want another corrupt regime . No town council.

Many villages have strong identities, any decision on their futures should not be made by anyone outside of the village itself.

More information is required before any decisions are made.

My concern is if we merge where will this end, would we then see further areas merging creating a variety of local requirements that only the majority will really benefit from. Surely the larger the parish the more difficult it will become to manage effectively.

Why change something that I feel works well, I would much prefer to see a new parish created, providing a more local support to the residents within. I am also sure the residents within the new parish would be much happier to receive local support based on their specific requirements.

Do local residents that are captured within the new parish get a say in how the new parish is established, as we have?

NFW is NOT a 'surrounding' parish. Its boundary is not contiguous to the boundary of the unparished areas. It is entirely inappropriate to consider it, or any part of it, for inclusion within the TTC.

This is all about control, and NFW wants to retain its own control over its own assets and resources for the benefit of its residents, not having it snatched away by the TTC which will not pay heed to the demands and needs of the local residents.

It should be left alone and allowed to continue to manage its own assets and revenues for the benefit of the community of NFW, which its parish council has been doing very successfully to date. Splitting 'rural' from 'urban' parts of NFW would destroy community cohesion and distinctiveness. I am in NFW, albeit on the outer reaches in Fitzroy, and I want to remain in NFW. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the Village Hall and associated facilities, which is a massive vibrant hub of the NFW community. Carving that out of the heart of NFW and into the TTC would be devastating.

Our Staplegrove Parish Council is best able to serve us as a community. It is local, the people are accessible and have a good track record. They are also fully aware of the needs of this area

Parish councils facilitate a sense of community, however, they can also be staffed by people who are not qualified to make decisions which could impact people's lives. This sounds like a way to offload work from Taunton council to laymen in the parish councils and it could become a bit "Wild West".

Please act before the sad demise of SWaT.

Please make sure that there is a recorded vote on the final decision whether to abolish any surrounding parish council. Several locals intent to campaign against any councillor who votes for this at the next election (regardless of party affiliations).

Question 9 is loaded by the condition of 'If viable'. This leaves it open for SWT to make its own decision of what is or is not viable and hence to override the choice of residents who want to retain the status quo. The option should be a simple and straightforward 'They should remain as individual, smaller, parishes each with their own council'

Retaining the existing parish councils gives their citizens choice and authority if they want it. Parish councillors would have more authority than they would within a new super council

See question 4 and need for representation of Taunton to be a minimum of 25 councillors. 25 councillors spread in one or two member wards would allow traditional community names to be used for third tier election wards. ie Victoria Ward now 2 district councillors has enough electors so can be expanded to host three town council councillors spread over Priory Trinity and Firepool This leaves council speak ward names like Victoria or Creechbarrow to be used for a new Unitary ward arrangement,

Seems to me this is a Lib Dem land grab! Hands off existing legitimate parish councils, if unparished areas require own council so be it, the rest must remain as is!

Small is smart and nimble

Some existing parish boundaries are in need of a review.

The Motorway built some time ago is a very clear boundary separating communities and travel between communities is restricted as a result. Indeed we are overdue in recognising this now long established boundary.

Land boundaries within Creech St Michael, Ruishton and West Monkton should be redrawn to address this issue.

some things are more strategic and need to be considered over a broader area

Sort out the anomaly where Killams is in Trull parish (also Killams Park). They should be in Vivary.

Taunton has grown significantly in recent years and its urban encroachment into rural areas means the historical parish council boundaries no longer portray what they were originally meant to represent. Therefore I am in favour of re-aligning, In addition, there needs to be a restructuring of parish council influence, control and finances based on geographic representation in addition to the populous. Green areas, countryside and rural space needs valid, proportional representation, regardless of the number of people living in it.

Taunton should be seeking to become a city with responsibility for all the urban sprawl it has generated, but with as few politicians and salaried staff as possible

That resolving an unparished Taunton has been left so long is a concern. It seems that it is the transition to a unitary authority which has prompted action.

The time allowed for residents to properly comment on proposals is far too short. There is a real danger that changes agreed will be superficial and later prove inappropriate.

I was made explicitly aware of the consultation response required by 12th January only through a flyer delivered by my local councillor on 3rd January. This is unacceptable.

The current structure of established parish councils isn't broken and therefore doesn't need fixing. This is a cynical attempt by SWT to grab more land and CIL money and take control away from existing local communities. As such, it flies in the face of the established trend of devolving control down to community level.

The manner in which SWT have conducted themselves in this matter is dubious and I question the motivation for extending this consultation to include review of existing parishes outside the unparished area. SWT did not respect the recommendations of its own working group and I have no confidence it will respect the views in this consultation. This has been badly do.

Given the extent of other changes in local government in Somerset over the next few years it seems suspicious that this decision is being rushed through in advance. It would be more logical for this large structural changes to bed in before any merging or changes to existing parishes.

The most disgraceful part of the process has been the failure to examine these issues, and decide upon the necessary structure before making any decision on the future of the various councils.

It has been an appalling abrogation of responsibility by those promoting this unwanted change.

The Parish Council wish to submit a proposed boundary line between Trull and Comeytrove at a later date.

The parish councils serve their communities well. I do not see any reason for combining them into a Taunton Town council and should remain as is.

The review group only comprises of SWT councillors. The membership should be widened without it becoming to large to function.

the speed with which this council seems to move is frightfully slow. we need forward-thinking and energy not imaginary lines drawn up and nonsense plans being made to delegate responsibility to others. A single united Taunton Town council with the power and funding to operate for our local business interest. It is very frustrating to see such a lack of progress from one year to the next.

There does need to be accountability for an overview of the area and delivery of essential services. If this is devolved down the chain the accountability is watered down. Additionally funds are depleted by paying far to many individuals.

This consultation is a farce undertaken by a self serving administration that is only interested in holding power.

This is a LAND GRAB! Leave the Parishes ALONE!

This response supersedes by previous response ( [REDACTED] ) based on now having more information.

Specific to Kingston St. Mary, the only area that should be considered for inclusion into a new Taunton town council is the very southern extremity that is covered by planning for new housing (Staplegrove West), the green field part of this planning should absolutely remain part of the Kingston St. Mary parish.

This review must be about representing people not convenient administration blocks. Community areas are built up through relationships.

Ensure that the young members of the community are engaged, the 18-24yr olds. These are the next generation of mums and dads and community volunteers.

Ensure future developments are considered in any plans eg new housing near Rumwell.

TOWN COUNCIL = YES. LAND GRAB OF THE CURRENT PARISH COUNCILS = NO.

The following are all reasons for my distrust of SWT Council to administer for the local population.

1. Communication: this is currently very poor with the existing SWT Council. Everyone works in SILOS; only interested in their statutory matters, with little or no interaction with the current wider Parish Councils. There are some good members of staff who have limited remit in driving issues forward. There is no overall chain of command which is necessary with the amount of development ongoing around central Taunton. The past couple of years have seen Director level changes, and therefore there is no continuity. Continuity is retained in the smaller Parishes.

2. The Garden Town Project was promoted in 2017, alongside the Green Infrastructure strategy with the Maidenbrook Country Park as the key main strategic project to take forward. The land was handed over from the Crown to TDBC Council in August 2018, and to date very little or no communication has been made to Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Council, or Chairman. I was the Clerk, and asking any questions were met with intransigence, or blocking or by ignoring. (page 15 of the Vision of our TDBC Garden Town 2017 refers). TDBC Council had indicated they would own the land and the two fields of 30 acres would be managed jointly by Cheddon Fitzpaine & West Monkton Parish Councils once a lease was approved. This has been consistently blocked and has taken four years to action. Even now, it is incredulous to believe that SWT call it Monkton Country Park; it is NOT in Monkton, it is within the boundary of Cheddon Fitzpaine, and the name was chosen to represent the area it resides in: eg Maidenbrook. Again, this demonstrates no interaction by members of staff to the local community/parish.

3. The SWT Council wasted hours of my working time by offering ill-thought through options regarding purchasing/leasing the land, which took hours of the Parish Councillors unpaid time, and my time where there was little budget for remuneration. The two Parish Councils consisting of 15 Parish Councillors and 3 part-time Parish Clerks (18 in total) were speaking with one voice; it often felt as though there was a 12-headed monster in SWT Council as no-one person gave one coherent response and opinions were divided making it very hard to move a topic forward.

4. SWT Planning agreed in 2020 for a Forest School and Pond to be established within the Maidenbrook Country Park MCP. Grant funding was obtained from the SCC Climate Emergency Fund (approved January 2021), funding received summer 2021, and building works commenced Autumn 2021. In this last week (Dec 2021), work has been stopped by SWT on the Forest School which only requires the roof tiles to be placed. This proves there is no joined-up thinking; it was previously understood that planning matters had been correctly addressed in 2020. This is the more incredulous when the lease for the management of the MCP was granted by SWT to both CFPC & WMPC the week before (23 December 2021)!

5. To date, 3,500 trees have been planted by volunteers within the two Country Park fields. I am the volunteer co-ordinator; there is no funding from SWT, nor any SWT acknowledgement or support of the work undertaken by the local community who have embraced this project. How can the SWT Council claim the credit, when they had no input into the physical effort of tree planting?

6. Other matters that the District Council has not embraced, and left for Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Council to administer demonstrate the incompetence by District, and promotes the power and demonstration of the effectiveness of the local Parishes administering their own areas:

- Adoption of Cycle Route (Swingbridge to Tudor Park); administered and concluded by me in 2014.
- Adoption of estate roads: Waterleaze; administered and concluded by me in 2015.
- Adoption of the Public Open Spaces of Maidenbrook/Waterleaze: I spent 8 of 10 years on this

topic, and nearly got it over the line. Where was the District Council in this time? It was not my job, but no-one else followed through with the Developers (Bovis and Bryant/Taylor Wimpey) or kept track of the Adoption Managers. I succeeded in obtaining a six figure sum to repair gabians in Maiden Brook prior to adoption. It is understood that this matter is still outstanding after 22 years despite considerable efforts by the Parish. The SWT Council administers the maintenance of the grass/hedge/tree/ditch cutting for this estate; and every year every task has to be requested; again, wasting my time!

- Footpaths: why would the public have to request every footpath be trimmed back on each occasion when SCC/SWT know their responsibilities and liabilities? and then when a task is undertaken it is done appallingly badly and often incompetently.

7. WM & CF Parish Clerks had to claim the Developers Travel Fund money to commence the Bus Route No 2/2A. This is approved by Planning, and it should be followed through by SWT/Planning, or else the Developers are let off the hook. Whose responsibility is this? It's not the Parish Clerks, but is often left for us to chase.

8. Another reason for not accepting the Town Council takes in the wider area is because the current SWT administration cannot provide a new surface for the footpaths in Longrun Meadow. These have been requested for 8 years to my knowledge. What is holding up the repair/resurfacing? The Health & Well Being of local residents in wheelchairs/push-chairs are denied because of the water/mud on wheels for more than half a year. The Longrun Committee has consistently requested this is actioned for 'everyone's' benefits.

9.If the SWT Council cannot manage these relatively small matters, how does it think it can administer a wider area with all the new developments. The local CIL money should be retained and used within the Parishes that know their area, and who have undertaken Neighbourhood Plans. Cheddon Fitzpaine, West Monkton & Creech will become the size of Wellington Town Council, and therefore need to be considered separately to the rest of the Parishes as the local roads/infrastructure are linked, and the local Parish Councillors take the local residents views into account following the questionnaires that have been consistently sent to residents.

10. Finally, Somerset Association of Local Councils SALC - who provide excellent support to local Parishes have commented:

“It is the strong view of the Association that this should only be for the unparished area. We have not identified any ambition or inclination from any of the adjoining parish council areas that they should become part of a Town Council for Taunton. The Parish Councils surrounding Taunton have a long history of service to their local communities which often have different, and sometimes opposing interests to the residents of the unparished area. The new Council, if it is established, will be an untested body and adjoining councils may wish to see how it operates before considering whether or not they wish to be part of that body.

We recognise that some of the existing boundaries in the urban areas adjoining the unparished areas may be historical rather than logical but it is our view such

issues may be handled through a governance review undertaken with appropriate consultation in the future. The Association is of the view that we should make our view that the adjoining Councils should not have been "dragged" into this issue but we would prefer to have your views before doing so."

11. I appeal to the current District Councillors to consider their role very carefully when voting on the outcome of this consultation. I thoroughly disagree that the SWT Council administration can be judge and jury on this matter; possessing the power to destroy a century of proven Parish Councils administering to their local areas. I plead they see sense.

To conclude: I consider the current SWT Council unqualified to administer a Town Council including the eight Parish Councils surrounding Taunton. The Town Council should start by demonstrating adequate ability in the current Unparished Area.

Upcott is part of Bishops Hull and, as such, is covered by Bishops Hull Parish Council. But it has been noticeable on occasions that even the local council fails to completely understand local concerns and issues in Upcott. A change in council boundaries could mean they became even further removed from local issues.

We need to keep our parishes. No merging to become one. This is a ridiculous idea.

What will be the LCN boundaries?

Yes. Limiting the area of a new Taunton Town Council to the existing urban boundary, or that with planning permission or an Local Plan allocation doesn't sit well with a 20 year council area review period and further urban development than be expected within that time frame. There is a case to include the area of all "adjoining parishes" with the possible exception of Kingston St Mary, all of which contain areas of significant urban expansion. The elephant in the room is the parishes east of the M5 and anticipated development within them. Why doesn't this consultation include all parishes east of the M5 that adjoin the unparished area?

From:  
To:  
Subject:  
Date:

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Good Morning

AS I understand it the One Somerset Business case approved by the Minister includes provision for a Town Council to represent the current unparished areas and the unparished area fund I believe funded by all council tax payers. It is already in embryo with foundation trustees working on it.

The Minister did not accept the Stronger Somerset case I suspect because it showed the district councils had not got their mind round the remit of the county. Additionally having voted not to carry out a poll before Xmas the districts then in March after the formal consultation period during lockdown was complete they then spent £350K (our money) on a postal ballot with a "mistake" on the web address. Given the content of that website I do not buy the explanation of a "mistake". Mendacity?

Given the current track record of SWT for effective delivery I do not think there are any good reasons for expanding their rindirect remit at this point. They still have to prove themselves with effective action.

The prime object should be to Focus on the town centre not to argue with the existing surrounding parish councils who by and large do a satisfactory job. Let the town council start small with the existing unparished areas which have always been poorly represented particularly at planning level. and prove itself. I am not saying that individual local councillors are not working for their patch and they do not deliver but they do not even grasp their main remit and responsibility is to the district as a whole. When we did have a Town Centre Manager she was actually doing the work that councillors representing the town centre clearly were not.

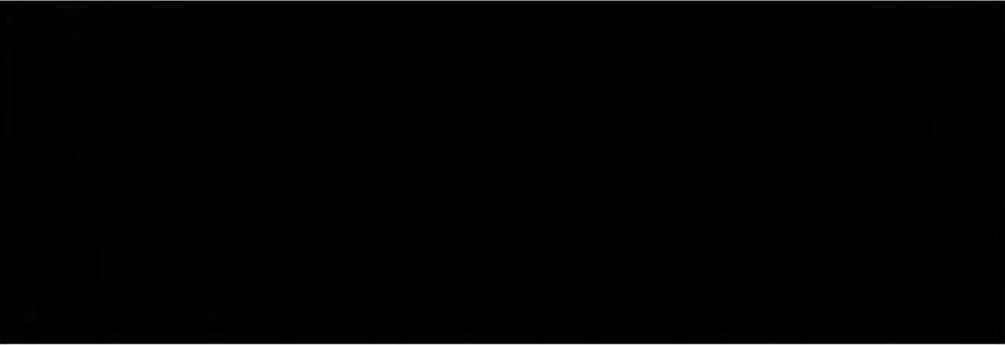
This consultation comes across as an attempt to recreate the UDC that existed before 1974 and b.....up the One Somerset Council with protests and objections. Taunton has suffered badly from these tactics over the eyears and it has put us well behind the times.

Taunton is already 20 years behind. Life has moved on . Covd has accelerated changes and shown clearly our system of governance is not fit for purpose. The bulk of local government is about service delivery. The One Somerset format was put into action during Covid and delivered well in the circumstances.

This consultation is not relevant to our needs, PIt looks to be plain petty politiking? This should not be taking up officer time and our tax payer's money. Just what we do not need. The task in hand is to create effective and aacceptabe LCNs.

I do not sense any understanding of or even will to address this important and pressing task.

[REDACTED]



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After all the debate over past decades and expectation for there to be a new Taunton Town Council as soon as it could be brought in, it is something that the previous Taunton Deane Borough Council and its members and Taunton residents should be ashamed of that it is only now, at this time of Unitary Somerset's birth and subsequent serious upheaval, that it is likely to happen.

After such long dithering, in which time Taunton on its outer boundary, defined by the present 'Unparished Area', has expanded in newly developed houses and housing estates like an out of control oil slick, then **ITS IMPERATIVE THAT THOSE DWELLINGS - THEIR RESIDENTS - BE GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE PART OF THE PROPOSED NEW TOWN COUNCIL, BASED UPON A CLEARLY DEFINED NEW BOUNDARY LINE FOR THIS 'EXPANDED TAUNTON' BEING PUT TO ALL AFFECTED RESIDENTS IN A COMPREHENSIVE CONSULTATION EXERCISE ORGANISED AND RUN BY PRESENT SOMERSET WEST AND TAUNTON COUNCIL very much as soon as practically possible and with regard to coming elections in May 2022 for unitary Somerset Council and all existing Parish and Town Councils throughout Somerset .**

In the fixing of this new outer boundary for Expanded Taunton it is very important that topmost regard be paid to the keeping all dwellings currently just outside the old 'unparished area', and now being included into the new Taunton Council , **MUST BE CONSIDERED IN WHOLE STREETS AT A TIME AND NOT SPLIT-UP** and such residents only should be allowed to opt-out of inclusion in the new town Council area if at least two thirds of any such whole street/s object in writing to the SWAT Council.  
Yours in active democracy,  


RECEIVED

12 JAN 2022

SOMERSET WEST  
and TAUNTON

Somerset West  
and Taunton

**Community Governance Review - Questionnaire**

# **A TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL FOR TAUNTON?**

## **INTRODUCTORY PAGE**

Somerset West and Taunton Council is carrying out a review to decide on changes to existing local governance arrangements, including whether or not a new town or parish council or councils should be set up in those parts of Taunton where they don't currently exist.

Full information about the review including the terms of reference and a timetable, are on our website at [www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk](http://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk)

All local residents, business owners and organisations within the area of the scope of the review are invited to give their views.

The Council will consider all feedback before making draft recommendations. These will then be subject to further consultation before final recommendations are published and considered by Councillors.

You can complete this questionnaire online, or obtain a paper version and return it to Governance Team, Somerset West and Taunton Council, PO Box 866, Taunton, TA1 9GS or hand it in one of our offices.

Alternatively you can tell us your views by e-mailing:  
[governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk](mailto:governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk)

This consultation will close on **Wednesday 12 January 2022**

**1. Please tell us whether you are a:**

- Local resident
- Local employee
- Local business person
- Official representative of community organisation – Please state which one.....
- Other (please state) .....

2. Please enter the postcode of your home (if a local resident) or work/other premises with which you have a local connection

TA2 8JU

3. Based on where you live (or work/other connection with the area under review), which town, parish, area or locality do you feel you belong to?

RESPONSE (free text) CHEDDON FITZPAINE

4. Should a town or parish council or councils be set up to serve the parts of Taunton that do not currently have them (the 'unparished areas')?

- Yes  
 No  
 Don't know

If 'Yes' or 'Don't know' go to Q. 5

If 'No' go to Q. 7

REASONS/COMMENTS (free text)

5. Should a single town or parish council be set up to cover the whole of the currently unparished area of Taunton or should there be separate councils for any area(s) within the unparished area?

- A single council for the whole unparished area  
 Separate councils for areas within the unparished area (please specify those separate areas)  
.....  
.....  
 Don't know

**6. Should any new parish or town council that is set up in the currently unparished area of Taunton also take in the urban parts of any surrounding parish(es)?**

Yes – the new parish/town council should also take in the urban part(s) of the following surrounding parish(es):

.....  
.....  
.....

No – the new parish/town council(s) should be confined to the currently unparished area.

Don't know

***For those who answered No to Question 4 - if you do not think a town or parish council or councils should be set up to serve the currently unparished areas of Taunton – please answer Q. 7 & 8***

***For all others please go to Q. 9***

**7. Why do you think that a town or parish council or councils should not be set up to serve the currently unparished areas of Taunton?**

REASONS/COMMENTS (free text) .....

8. Do you think there are other (non-parish) forms of community governance (e.g. community partnerships/forums, area committees, residents' and tenants' associations, neighbourhood management programmes, community associations) that have been, or could be, made to promote community representation or engagement in the area under review, either as alternatives to, or stages towards, the establishment of town or parish councils?

Yes (please specify):

.....  
.....  
.....

No

Don't know

9. In the event that a new parish/town council is established taking in both the currently unparished area of Taunton and the urban parts of one or more surrounding parishes, what arrangements should be made for the remaining (rural) parts of those parishes?

- If viable, they should remain as individual, smaller, parishes each with their own council
- They should also be absorbed into the new town council(s) serving Taunton
- Consideration should be given to merging or grouping them into a smaller number of areas (please specify);

.....  
.....  
.....

Don't know

REASONS/COMMENTS (free text) .....

I do not agree with any of these options. Any new parish council should only serve the current unparished areas.  
Keep our parish councils separate from Taunton Town!!!

**10. Do you think town or parish council(s) should consider delivering some local services that are currently provided by Somerset West and Taunton Council and for these to be paid for by the town council precept?**

- Yes (please specify what sort of services you think town or parish councils could deliver)

.....  
.....  
.....

- No

Reasons/Comments (free text) .....

**11. Do you have any other comments on governance issues or boundaries at the parish/town council level?**

RESPONSE (free text) .....

We are very happy with the current arrangement. Chedda Fitzpaine does a good and honest job.



RECEIVED

08 NOV 2001

SOMERSET WEST  
and TAUNTON

5th November, 2001

Dear Sir,

I understand there is a public consultation on whether or not there should be a new local council called The Taunton Town Council. Well, I am writing to you to express my support of this new council. I would like this new council to concentrate on the town called Taunton and nowhere else. Also, I would like this new council to be based at Deane House along Belvedere Road. The reason why is that there is a council based at Deane House which serves, in part, Taunton. I am sad that Taunton Deane and Somerset West Council is closing. I am also sad that Somerset County Council and its local councils are also closing. Feel free to pass this letter and/or its contents to any interested parties if you see fit.

Thank you for your time on these matters.

Yours Faithfully,



[REDACTED]

We wish to make known our views on the options for the future structure of Local Government in Taunton when the Somerset Unitary Authority is formed.

Our view is that there should be a Taunton Town Council, which should include the present Comeytrowe Parish, in which we live. Our reasons for this view follow.

Comeytrowe Parish as a formal entity is of relatively recent origin, largely covering an area of late-20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Century housing, with no traditional basis and no rural hinterland. Essentially it is an integral part of the town of Taunton, and would be affected by the great majority of decisions made in regard to the town as a whole. Most of the services to be devolved from the Unitary Authority to Town and Parish Councils would be much better provided on a whole-town basis, as their impact is on the town as a whole, including Comeytrowe. Although some services might be better provided more locally, there are too few of these to justify the retention of a Council for Comeytrowe Parish. Furthermore, since its incorporation, there has never been an election for members of Comeytrowe Parish Council, as too few people have come forward to offer themselves, and there have always been vacancies. Whether that would change with increased powers and responsibilities is unknown.

Though we recognise that we have missed the deadline for the initial consultation, we hope that our views will be considered.

[REDACTED]



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My wife and I are in favour of a Town council for this area i.e. Taunton and surrounding parishes.

 TA1  
4SY.



9 Jan 2022

Governance Team  
Somerset West and Taunton Council  
PO Box 866  
Taunton  
TA1 9GS

Dear Governance Team

## COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

### Review Process

The Terms of Reference for the review state: The Council will also 'have regard to the need to secure community governance within the area under review which:-

- Is reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area;
- Provides for effective and convenient local government; and
- Takes into account any other arrangements for the purposes of community representation or community engagement in the area'.

It is not clear how the Council will have this 'regard' and what evidence it will use to make its recommendations. The best people to decide are the people who live in the relevant communities and the Council should give greatest weight to their views and not to the unsubstantiated wishes, opinions, thin 'evidence' and management jargon adopted by political agendas.

It is also not clear how the Council will '...take into account the impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion and the size, population and boundaries of a local community or parish; and will seek to make recommendations that bring about improved community engagement, better local democracy and result in more effective and convenient delivery of local services'. These are fine words but what are the metrics and evidence for these considerations. Not clear. I suspect a preferred model already exists and that insufficient weight will be given to local people's views.

The principle should be that the will of local communities should be paramount and given great weight in the analysis of responses to the consultation. The opinions of councillors whose Council is about to be abolished when the Unitary Council takes over should be minimal.

Some of the Parish Councils (Cheddon Fitzpaine and West Monkton) seem bound up with their CIL money and that this is all a plot to grab their cash. They do not necessarily represent all their parishioners' views and their questionnaires should be treated with caution, both in terms of numbers of respondents and the partisan nature of some of the questions. However, the Parish Councils are a level of local government that needs to be listened to.

The ToRs of the consultation indicates that electoral numbers and projections for the parishes were to be made available 'as soon as possible' after publication (Paras 5.11 to 5.14). I cannot find these and the Council has not responded to my request with only three days of the consultation remaining. Hardly 'as soon as possible' and I wonder if the consultation may be void if these data have not been readily available to local people.

### Content

I support the retention of existing Parish Councils and the growth and engagement of new communities. This is 'change from the bottom up' where people move into an area and adopt the local identity. Change from the top down, driven by bureaucracy and a 'simplification' agenda rarely lasts and rarely works. Local accountability is everything and while merging or dissecting out new housing areas from parishes may appear to give identity and increase economies of scale, it does nothing for really local accountability.

I have no time for the rather sad 'they're taking our CIL money' approach from some parish councillors and the knee jerk reactions that go with it. Their focus, and the Council's should be on ensuring robust community cohesion now and into the future. This is a case of where improvement will achieve much more than a euphemistic 'transformation'. Make what there is work better; there is no guarantee that transformation will bring success. One only needs to look at the regular changes in governance at District and County levels to see how transient and inherently unsuccessful transformational change has been. Parishes have been around for a long time. If it ain't broke, don't fix it - give things a polish.

The M5 is a physical and social boundary, as indicated on the two maps. There are boundary anomalies, e.g. West Monkton east of the M5 and Creech St Michael west of the M5 that should be resolved. Cheddon Fitzpaine's boundary too could do with minor, common sense tweaks. e.g. around the Obridge but radical chopping and slicing is unnecessary.

The parishes are long established and perform well, though I don't always agree with them. That's democracy. The parishes should be given the opportunity to continue to grow and assimilate the new communities allocated them through the Core Strategy.

As I do not live within the unparished area of Taunton my opinion is of lesser importance compared with those who do live there. However, it seems pretty obvious that Taunton deserves a Parish/ Town Council and under Somerset Council's proposed Local Community Networks. Taunton and the existing Parishes can collaborate on the bigger issues of mutual interest. A single council would also

provide relevant economies of scale, without distorting local accountability within Taunton.

The Council (SWaT) will need to explain fully the benefits to Taunton residents as their Council Tax precept will increase significantly. They will no doubt need some reassurance that the new precept for Taunton Town Council within the Somerset Council arrangements will be proportionally no greater than they pay currently (notwithstanding any inevitable general increases we all have to pay).

#### Questionnaire

1. I am a local resident
2. Postcode as per the head of this letter.
3. I feel I am part of Cheddon Fitzpaine, geographically and through my postal address. However, I live in West Monkton. I'm OK with that.
4. Yes
5. A single council for the unparished area of Taunton.
6. No (see above text).
9. This question is odd. The premise of the question contradicts the yes/no option for Q6. See my response to Q6.
10. Yes. Public parks & gardens, crematoria, street maintenance, allotments, grants, venues, etc. Some of these may require a joint venture, e.g. similar to Somerset Waste Partnership. It would be impossible for each council to have a crematorium. These councils should not be expected to deliver statutory services that will be the responsibility of Somerset Council unless they enter into an appropriate service delivery and recompense agreement.
11. Somerset Council should undertake to do a review of whatever emerges in 10 years time.

Yours faithfully





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Parish councils have existed for the purpose of serving their communities effectively and efficiently for years. To merge with unparished councils will break their ties with their communities with no benefit. The Unparished councils, following Council reorganisation, can concentrate on their needs rather than have attention and efforts dissipated needlessly over larger areas.

  
 for Windows

## Response to Community Governance Review for Taunton

Q1. I am a North Town resident, provider of social housing in North Town, ward Councillor for the area and one of the Taunton Charter Trustees.

Q2. Home and work - TA1 1DN

Q3. I strongly identify as a proud Tauntonian. I grew up in Taunton and moved back with my family to enjoy a better quality of life. With compadres I set up North Town Community Support in March 2020 which has endured as part of Somerset Good Neighbours providing hyper local responsive support for anyone who needs it. Administratively speaking self organised community groups is what North Town has and that is what is appropriate I feel for us - a Taunton town council however would benefit North Town residents and the community.

Q4. Yes a Town Council should be established to include at the very least the unparished area. Ten reasons why I think we need a Town Council in no particular order of importance as they are all vital and co- dependent:

- To ensure that the people of Taunton have effective representation and an effective voice. Charter Trustees do not have the same status or clout as an elected Town Council in relation to planning policies and decisions, for instance.
- To secure Taunton's future as a vibrant centre for culture, independent retail, leisure and business - that will in no small measure hinge on having a dynamic town council to crystallise the town's ambitions, bring partners together around a progressive agenda and deliver improvements in line with local needs and wishes. In particular I am passionate about Taunton's strong tradition of arts and culture being both preserved and enhanced.
- To drive forward and deliver a zero carbon strategy for the town - Charter trustees are not empowered to do this. We have amazing green groups and networks and a new Climate Action Hub that I really want to see at the heart of this. A Town council could bring all those concerned to deliver on zero carbon together to deliver a practical action plan.
- To guarantee continuation of the Mayoralty which is so important for our civic pride.
- To ensure key services can be run as locally and responsively as possible.
- To safeguard Taunton's status as county town - to continue being the only town in Somerset without a proper council and the only. County town in the country potentially without a Town Council would be absolutely mortifying and signal we didn't care about our future when the reality is we have a populace seething with ideas ambition and commitment to put Taunton on the map and make our town sing.

- To secure local action to combat social, economical and cultural inequality. A Town Council for Taunton would be small enough to be responsive to needs across different wards and big enough to be able to do things to dismantle inequalities and build a more equitable social order.
- To ensure Taunton's residents and businesses can play a proper role in community involvement networks and generally in liaison with Somerset Unitary.
- To ensure specific priorities of Taunton residents get actioned by the Unitary. For example there is strong support here for default 20mph in places where people live, work, learn and play but no one to force the highways authority to the table. Places with parish or town councils have been able to force the issue.
- To safeguard important town and community assets.

Q5. A SINGLE COUNCIL FOR THE WHOLE UNPARISHED AREA. I don't think there is any point in parishing small wards in the unparished area - they would be too small to do much and their prosperity and well-being depends too much on having a strong infrastructure across the Town of Taunton as a whole. Each ward has hyper local community groups but they would be strengthened by a Town council.

Q6. I think it is a good thing that local councils, residents, businesses, groups in parishes neighbouring the unparished area have been included in this consultation. I imagine there could be certain parishes who may see their interests best served by inclusion in a new Taunton Town Council or who have urban areas which they would rather a new Town Council takes responsibility for and others will absolutely prefer to keep the status quo. It is not for me to say, rather SWT just needs to listen to local views and act accordingly.

Q10. I believe in the principle of subsidiarity i.e. the principle that a central authority should have a subsidiary function, performing only those tasks which cannot be performed at a more local level, that is how you get the most responsive democracy and the most responsive services. Unfortunately this is not the principle that informs our unwritten constitution. My assumption is a Town Council will be expected to run the usual types of services delivered by parish councils and it seems like we would need to bid for others to be devolved and I fear that we won't be able to get our hands on those that actually generate income (I hope I am wrong). My preference is for maximum assets (and income generating capacity) to be devolved to a future Town Council and for it to have the ability to run as many key local services as possible, not just the limited menu usually available. Taunton needs to retain its Town Centre Manager who plays such a key role in liaising with business, cultural groups, voluntary groups and in creating vibrant events for the town.



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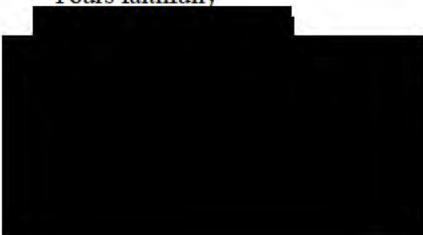
Dear Sir or Madam

Firstly, I have failed to navigate my round the consultation questions as I could not find them in spite of clicking on what I thought was the relevant option.

Secondly, what you propose looks as though Somerset West and Taunton want to grab control of a large area by setting up a Town Council that would cover existing parishes, Taunton and the unparished area.

I presume that this is so that it makes it even more difficult for residents to object to unsuitable planning proposals which would ultimately cut people off from the countryside. Personally I would prefer to see the unparished area have its own parish, for Taunton to have a Town Council and for the other parish councils to remain in place. Surely it is possible for parishes to co-operate or is that word not in the dictionary of councils and councillors?

Yours faithfully





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Dear SWTC,

Summary:

1. Support the formation of a Town Council to represent the unparished areas.
2. Object to the greater Taunton model including Kingston St Mary, Norton Fitzwarren, Trull and Monkton Heathfield.

I live near Bishops Lydeard and not directly affected by the boundary/governance change but strongly believe that the new boundary changes will remove the autonomy of the parish councils.

Parish councils work because they are local and address local needs. Establishing this wide ranging change will affect perfectly refined parish council policy and procedure. It will also take away council tax setting powers that will now be set in the centre of Taunton.

This is a step backwards in terms of democracy and destroys well established norms that local people can be easily involved with, and regularly do so.

I support taking control of the unparished areas of Taunton and lived in one such area. This anomaly has been neglected the residents of inner Taunton for decades and removed their representation and their voice. I support the proper take over and control of these unparished areas but no further.

As for the surrounding areas such as Bishops Lydeard, Norton Manor & Cotford St Luke it is a certainty that these areas will be slowly added to the Taunton Council as there will be nothing to stop this growth and loss of local democracy for these established and independent parishes.

To confirm:

1. I support a town council that is exactly that and represents the unparished areas of Taunton and this council to have the exact same powers as a parish council.
2. I strongly object to a greater Taunton model which included Kingston St Mary, Norton Fitzwarren, Trull and Monkton Heathfield as local powers will be absorbed and tax-raising and planning issues will be decided by a council that is too large and distant to appreciate the issues and nuances that already exist. The current system works extremely well and does not need changing.

Yours sincerely,





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I wholly support the proposal for a town council for Taunton and think, also, that it should include those parishes subsumed by development over the years including Cometrowe. Any area without a parish council will lack any influence at county council level and a town the size of Taunton now (and still growing) needs influence and a Mayor to bring focus to significant events happening in the town. I would even go as far as to suggest that parishes such as Trull and Bishops Hull (and perhaps others in the north of the town) should be persuaded to come under the umbrella of a new enlarged town council.

I am also a supporter of the plan for one council for Somerset as, being less parochial, that will give Somerset a bigger profile in national developments and consultations. Planning needs to be done at a wider level. The recent merger of the Taunton Deane and West Somerset councils was a shotgun marriage where the smaller (and broke) council seems to have ended up with the lion's share of influence!! I shall be happy therefore to see this council go!



[REDACTED]

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Dear Sirs, I have had a reply from Bailey Gibbins with regards your plans for this new Taunton Town Council and your so called plans for the parishes.

As the wife of the Vice Chairman of our local parish council I am disgusted that you would even consider destroying the parishes in the Somerset area, and as for taking 90% of there assets how dare you even think of going down that road.

Our council does a great job of looking after its community, something Taunton has never done without being pushed into it, if you want a town council, then go ahead, but don't think you have the right to break up our parish just to help this new town council. We in Norton have a council we can be proud of, they look after the residents, and keep them informed about all that is going on in the village and the surrounding areas.

We in Norton have a fantastic history, that goes back to Roman times, we have a village that was there long before Taunton, in fact we were a village community when Taunton was a small group of mud huts along the river bank.

So, yes, by all means have your town council, and good luck to you, but leave us alone to get on with what WE do best.

I also understand that S.W and T are to be disbanded like Taunton Deane, a lot of tax payers money was used to pay people off at that time, will the same be the case when this new council takes over, more tax payers money down the drain, and you want to take 90% of parish council assets just to keep your heads above water. Our parish council have plans that will go in for the next 5 years, we need every penny we can get to carry out those plans, giving you 90% of our assets wouldn't leave enough in the kitty to get our dog bins emptied next year.

So far for your information, 70% of people in Norton have said no to your ideas, they want to stay with the council they have, yes you can have your town council but not at the expense of Norton Fitzwarren

[REDACTED]  
Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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Dear Sir

Whilst there may be some merit in representation for the unparished area of Taunton I do not want to see a Town Council which seeks to "take over" some or part of neighbouring parishes. To me, this has the appearance of trying to re-create Taunton Deane when it has already been agreed that the existing five Councils should cease in 2023 and be replaced by a new Unitary Authority something which should have happened in the 1970's, instead of creating Avon which saw the decimation of the historical County of Somerset. However as a believer in democracy if the residents of the various parishes want it, then of course it should happen.

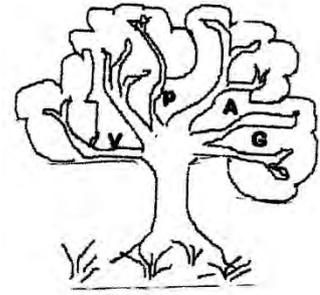
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

# VICTORIA PARK ACTION GROUP

Chairman: Dennis Durban  
5 St Augustine Street  
Taunton  
TA1 1QJ  
xxxxxxxxxxxx

Secretary: Roger House  
[roger@rogerhouse.co.uk](mailto:roger@rogerhouse.co.uk)  
01823 289395



## To Somerset West and Taunton Council

### Consultation on the Un-Parished area and Unitary Government

Here are our comments on the new Third Tier Council for the current unparished area.

This organisation was formed in 1995 as a friends group for the park. It has now superseded the Priory Community Association set up in 1982; some faces from the past are still here. Our current group uses the park pavilion community room for various meetings, before being slowed by Covid 19, we organise voluntary works in the park, run a weekly craft club, and hopefully will raise funds via monthly bingo again. Our pavilion community room has a floor area of 48 sq m area plus storage, was constructed as a cricket tea room in 1987. The external park toilets are shut. We mainly cover the Victoria district ward with committee members in Priory and Trinity but not yet Firepool. We are likely local to 5 or 6 thousand people. Northtown is the next like area ours, in any multi parish scheme we are in the town centre. Within the context of a new Council VPAG might become the Village Hall committee.

Appended at the end, is a letter to 2020 Parks executive member Richard Lees outlining from 2015 our efforts to fundraise a feasibility study for the upgrade of the external park toilets, freeing space to enlarge and improve the tearoom to become a small village hall. This has not happened with either TDBC or SW&T Councils who have the power.

Our biggest wish is that a new council will enable this scheme by building first new viable safer toilets and sports store and then follow up with a hall improvement closer to modern community standards of 75sm size. We do not think new town council needs or can afford a large town hall like Bridgwater or Glastonbury but we have a village hall deficit across the town.

On the subject of a series of parishes or one town council, we have differing views but we are aware of the high cost to maintain assets in the town centre, the big parks, public toilets and other town centre management duties. If smaller parishes are formed, the centre precept would be disproportionately much higher, without other major continuing non precept income support. A town council would ensure a Mayor. (Many past Mayors have visited us here)

Thirty odd years ago a shaky brick store building was demolished in the park. It originally served as toilets, a mower shed and accommodation for our gardener (Parkie). See the Weymouth info below and we wonder if a town council could turn back the clock to afford its own works team for all the Garden Towns varied green areas. The Unitary Council will be keen to transfer all mowing duties to the third tier. We think green spaces will be such a major expenditure (from the Weymouth budget perhaps £800,000) so that the new town could be split into sections. To start four - north of the railway, our central area extended west and then split the balance to make east and south divisions. Four works teams could be formed and then with local councillors using the small halls for **devolved parish meetings**, real contact with communities can be maximised to:

Reintroduce (since 1974) financial accountability: make a town council more appealing.

Enable a Taunton Council to own a garden works depot and have more control.

Mobilise and encourage volunteers as far as possible to limit cost, link with village hall groups or local centres. It would help balance under representations of Councillors in a large council.

It would help in monitoring all the landscaping changes that we need to beat climate change.

Local meetings will stumble across issues that Council staff or elected members can try and help.

The other big consideration after decades with no active town body, **there is a big capital funding problem for the new town council**, but the current SW&T council is sitting on all our assets. They are the most wealthy of the four district councils before a unitary merger.

Besides our need for safe park toilets and a hall there are other toilets to reopen, Coal Orchard and Firepool have lost public toilets but new developments now require them. Community buildings may need to be upgraded at centres like Priorswood and Halcon and more sites must be procured for small halls in neighbourhoods without them. The old PCA supported the Produce Market on Firepool and won inclusion of a replacement site in the 2008 Taunton Town Centre Action Plan enquiry, Taunton needs a covered produce market to replace the building on Firepool that SW&T are now to demolish.

All these items existed in the town with Taunton Borough Council in 1974, before the creation of TDBC, succeeded by the SW&T Council, We have lost the Municipal Buildings, the Youth and Community Centre and the Chestnut Tree so new small halls would be their replacement.

There is clear need for a **transition capitol fund** arising from assets of the outgoing district council to build new toilets, a new covered market and to acquire sites for other parish halls. This funding must be fairly assessed and saved for the brand new third tier council. The Council will then be able to run these facilities.

The writer is aware of revue guidance item 154 on electoral arrangements with town or parish councils of over 20,000 electors currently having (13 to 31 elected members) The new Weymouth town council has 29 elected members. The likely number of Town Councillors that the Boundary Commission will allow is a key part of the coming consultation. The workload of too few councillors will exclude many people from standing.

Enlarging a Town Council with adjoining parishes around makes it too big and discussions other than for minor boundary alignment are not supported here. There would be a bigger area over which to spread limited elected councillors.

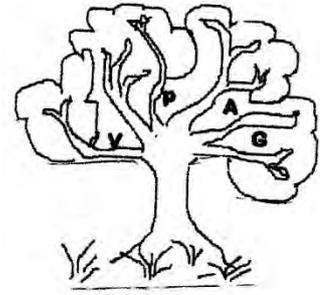
Roger House Secretary

*RJ House*

# VICTORIA PARK ACTION GROUP

Chairman: Dennis Durban  
5 St Augustine Street  
Taunton  
TA1 1QJ  
07

Secretary: Roger House  
[roger@rogerhouse.co.uk](mailto:roger@rogerhouse.co.uk)  
01823 289395



To Cllr Richard Lees,

Somerset West and Taunton District Council.

## **Restoration or replacing Victoria Park Toilets**

This is a request to find if there is a future SWT project, to improve or ideally replace the current closed external public toilets in Victoria Park. These are needed for various park users, perhaps maximised when weekend sports occur, plus town centre workers for parks, parking officers and for the waste recycling gangs. The current and likely long closure is particularly unfair for the ladies who will find it harder to use the bushes, cut down to less than one metre in height by the council, to improve visibility.

In the past we have with TDBC support obtained a feasibility report on up grading the toilets to safer single stainless steel units, some hall improvements and a new ladies referees changing room. This was costed at £250k plus VAT at 2016 price levels. We now think any village hall element will need to wait until the painful process of forming both a new Unitary Authority (West Somerset without Taunton) and a new Taunton Town Council

Attached later is an amended rough plan for a pair of accessible new toilets added externally to the pavilion main entrance, with an external sports store for the Wyverns American Football Team. We have commented on a recent town planning application which wished to rely on the park for play facilities that the cost to reinstate toilets is likely £200,000. We said the safe toilets are an urgent priority for the District Council to sort before passing the whole park to a fledging town council. I am very aware of the creation of Weymouth Town Council, and the need for them to get established with financial reserves before any major new projects.

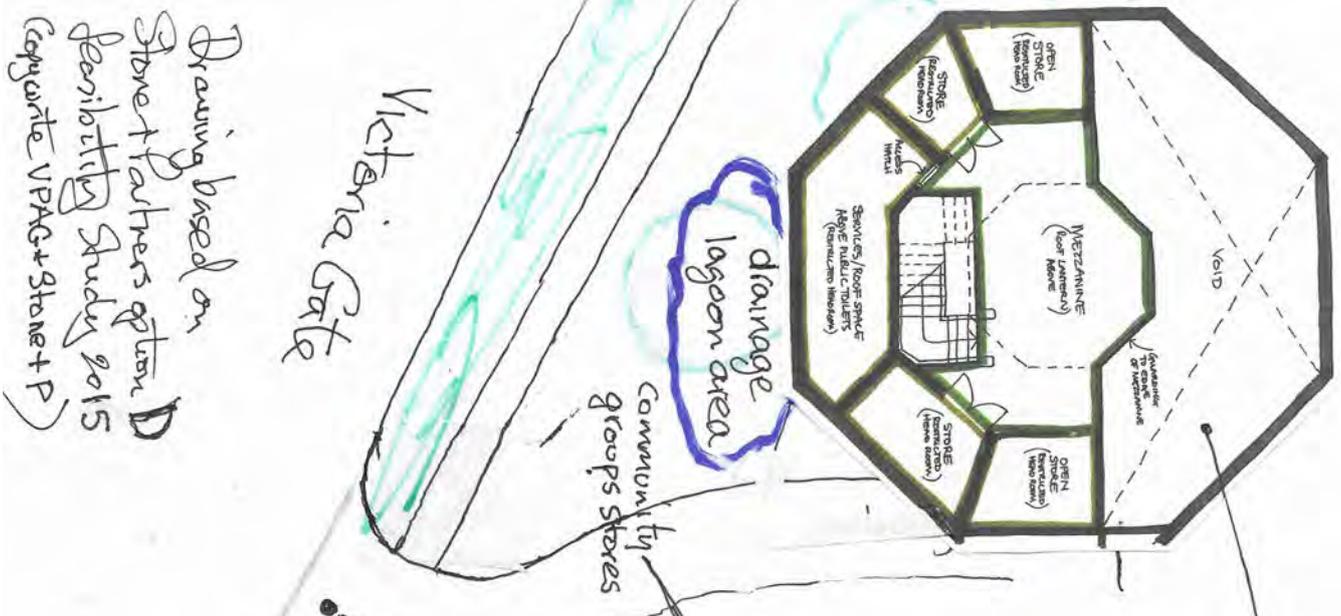
From Council capital spending projections in Scrutiny agendas for the past two years, there has been a sum of £500k allocated to community infrastructure spending. We think now timed for the 2022 financial year. We assume this money is an accrual of any CIL.

There are other things going on for the council at present, Covid 19 and the need for economic recovery. But does the Council have a clear plan to improve our toilets, so that the park can catch up with both Vivary and French Weir Parks. We serve a still growing local population, hopefully the developments driving this can make further contributions.

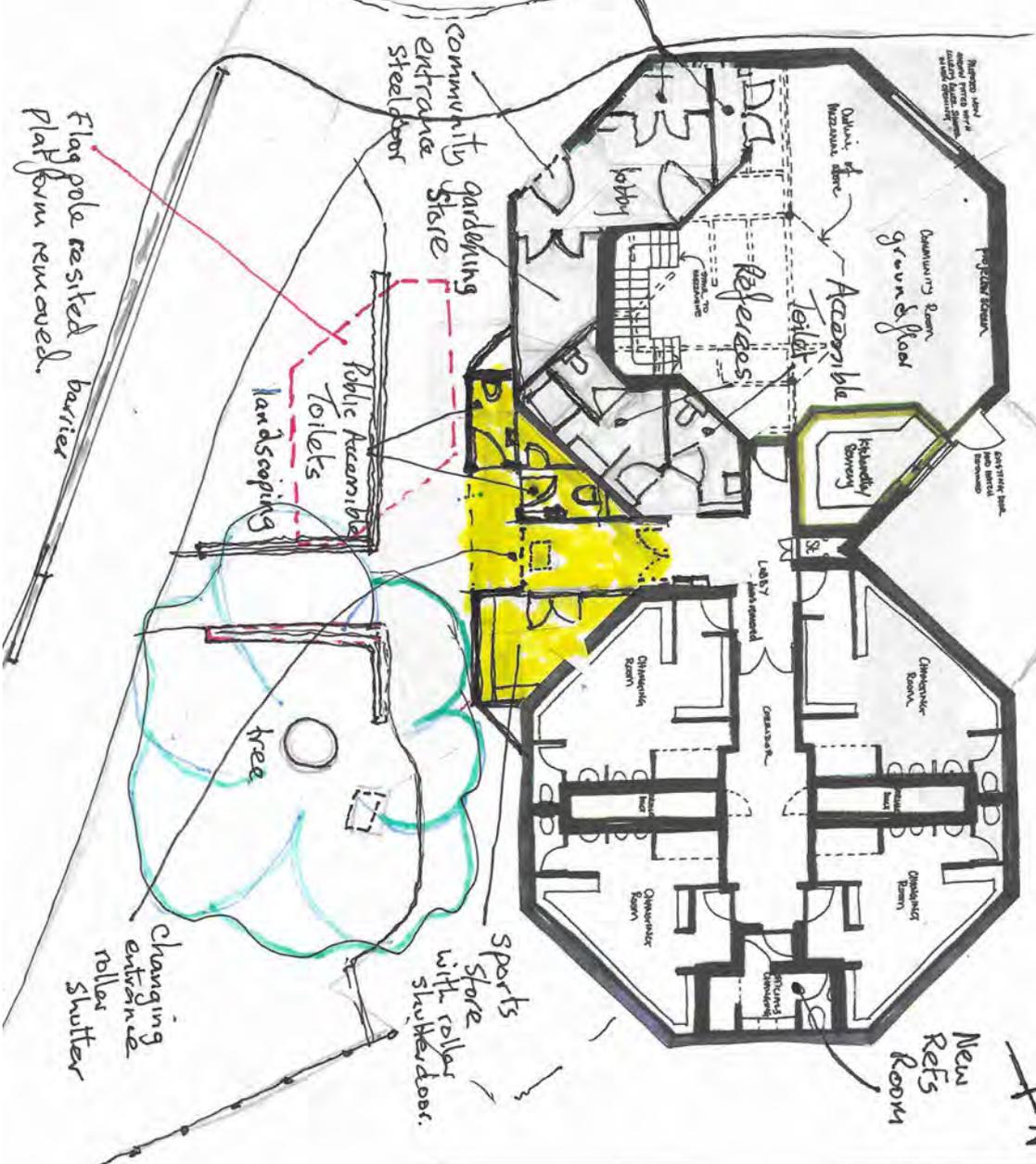
In the November round of meetings please can some capital spending be allocated to this scheme?

*RH* Roger House, Secretary Victoria Park Action Group 22nd October 2020

(Copy to Cllr Simon Coles)



first floor as previous  
 mezzanine floor  
 over



Victoria Park Pavilion  
 Expanded Community Pavilion  
 option D plus.  
 Potential future  
 extension

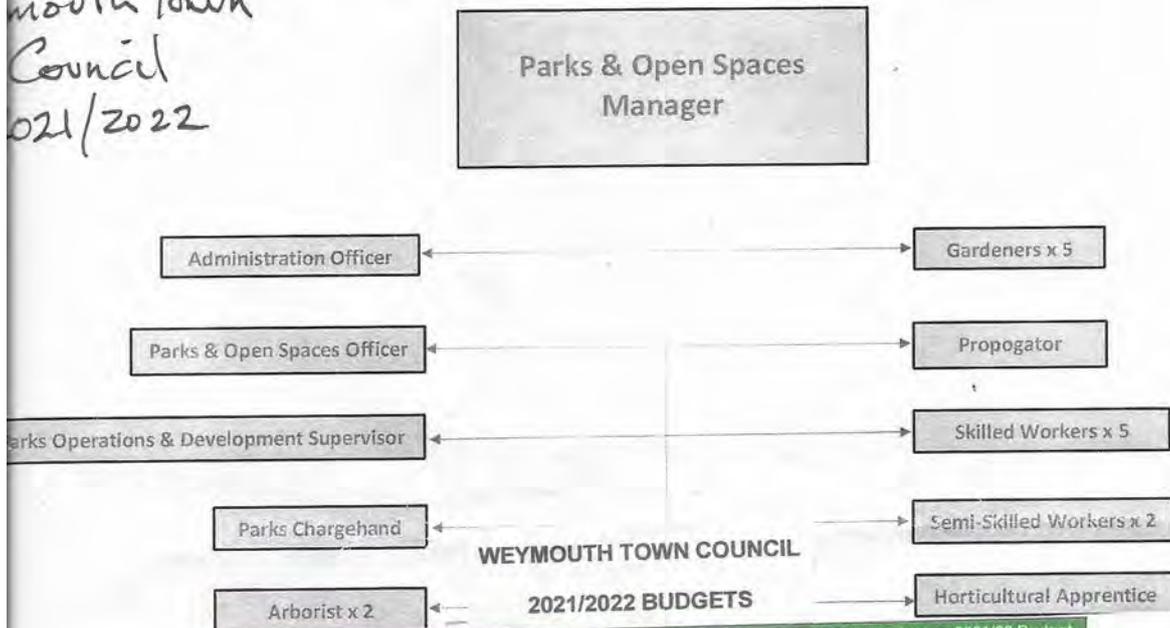
Drawing based on  
 Stone Partners option D  
 Feasibility Study 2015  
 (Copyright VPAC + Stone + P)

Victoria Gate



# Parks & Open Spaces Structure:

Weymouth Town Council  
021/2022



WEYMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

2021/2022 BUDGETS

Service	2020/21 Budget	2021/22 Budget
<b>Parks &amp; Open Spaces</b>		
Allotments	(1,230)	4,760
Cemeteries	(4,060)	(3,560)
Parks & Open Spaces - Staffing Account	784,530	770,450
Tumbledown	0	0
Nursery	47,380	45,880
Parks & Open Spaces	300,860	297,750
Sports Facilities	23,940	24,290
<b>Total Parks &amp; Open Spaces</b>	<b>1,151,420</b>	<b>1,139,570</b>
<b>Operations</b>		
Advertising Drums	(12,230)	(11,940)
Beach & Esplanade	261,390	273,620
Beach Tents	(2,000)	(2,000)
Deckchair Operation	(25,220)	(29,060)
Events	117,700	107,510
Town Centre	140,850	130,740
Community Development	41,710	48,620
Public Conveniences	393,690	376,770
Commercial Road	102,510	103,110
Catering Kiosks	0	(46,240)
Other Property, Clocks & Monuments	13,030	13,030
<b>Total Operations</b>	<b>1,031,430</b>	<b>964,160</b>
<b>Member, Civic &amp; Central Operating Services</b>		
Members	47,900	47,900
Civic & Mayoral	17,830	16,610
Central Operating Costs	882,200	896,370
<b>Total for Member, Civic &amp; Central Services</b>	<b>947,930</b>	<b>960,880</b>
<b>Net Cost of Services</b>	<b>3,130,780</b>	<b>3,064,610</b>
Contribution to Reserves	300,000	300,000
Contribution from Earmarked Reserves	(75,750)	(30,050)
Staffing Contingency	0	19,500
<b>Total Precept</b>	<b>3,355,030</b>	<b>3,354,060</b>
<b>Tax base</b>	<b>18,067.9</b>	<b>18,062.7</b>
<b>Band D Charge</b>	<b>185.69</b>	<b>185.69</b>
<b>2019/20</b>		
Precept	3,370,661	
Tax base	18,152.1	
Band D Charge	185.69	

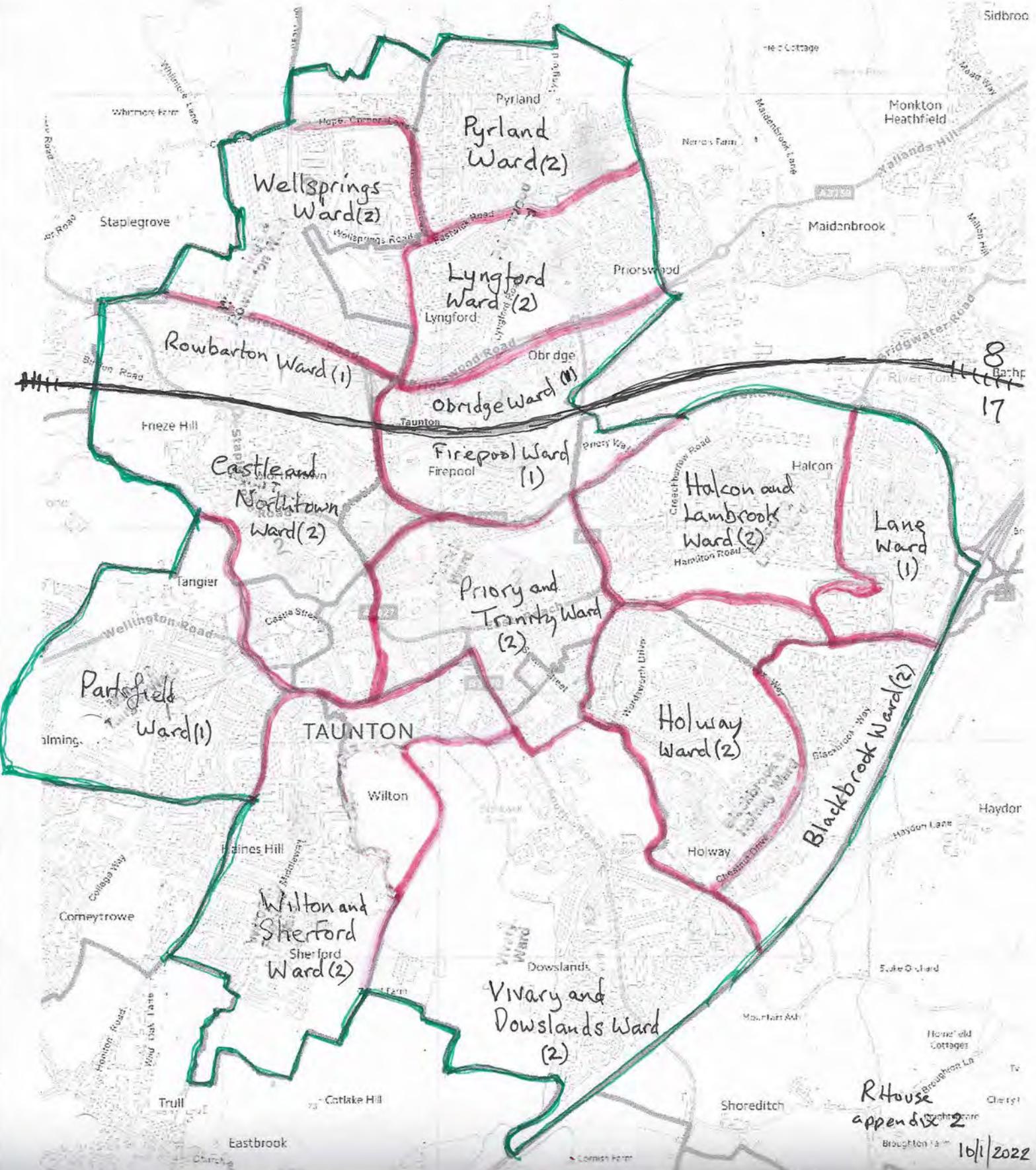
150. New or revised parish electoral arrangements come into force at ordinary parish elections, rather than parish by-elections, so they usually have to wait until the next scheduled parish elections. They can come into force sooner only if the terms of office of sitting parish councillors are cut so that earlier parish elections may be held for terms of office which depend on whether the parish is to return to its normal year of election.
151. For example, a parish that had elections in 2007 could wait until its next scheduled elections in 2011 for new parish wards to come into force. Alternatively, the new parish wards could have come into force at elections in 2009 if the terms of office of the councillors elected in 2007 were cut to two years. If the elections in 2009 were for two-year terms of office then the parish council could return to its normal electoral cycle in 2011.
152. Alternatively, if new or revised parish electoral arrangements are to be implemented in the third year of sitting councillors' term of office, provision can be made to cut short the term of office of existing councillors to three years. Elections could then take place with all councillors serving a five-year term of office, enabling the parish to return to its normal year of election.

#### Council size

153. Council size is the term used to describe the number of councillors to be elected to the whole council. The 1972 Act, as amended, specifies that each parish council must have at least five councillors; there is no maximum number. There are no rules relating to the allocation of those councillors between parish wards but each parish ward, and each parish grouped under a common parish council, must have at least one parish councillor.
154. In practice, there is a wide variation of council size between parish councils. That variation appears to be influenced by population. Research by the Aston Business School Parish and Town Councils in England (HMSO, 1992), found that the typical parish council representing less than 500 people had between five and eight councillors; those between 501 and 2,500 had six to 12 councillors; and those between 2,501 and 10,000 had nine to 16 councillors. Most parish councils with a population of between 10,001 and 20,000 had between 13 and 27 councillors, while almost all councils representing a population of over 20,000 had between 13 and 31 councillors.
155. The LGBCE has no reason to believe that this pattern of council size to population has altered significantly since the research was

# Taunton Town Council – potential wards for 25 Councillors

Projection based on the Full Council Meeting Oct 2021 appendix 6, listing 34536 electors as at July 2021. Anticipate some future growth west of town centre hence expansion of Castle and Northtown ward. North of railway 11,107 electors, 8 members will average 1388 per councillor. South of railway 23,429, electors 17 members will average 1378 per councillor. Average for whole County Town 25 councillors average 1381 electors per Councillor.

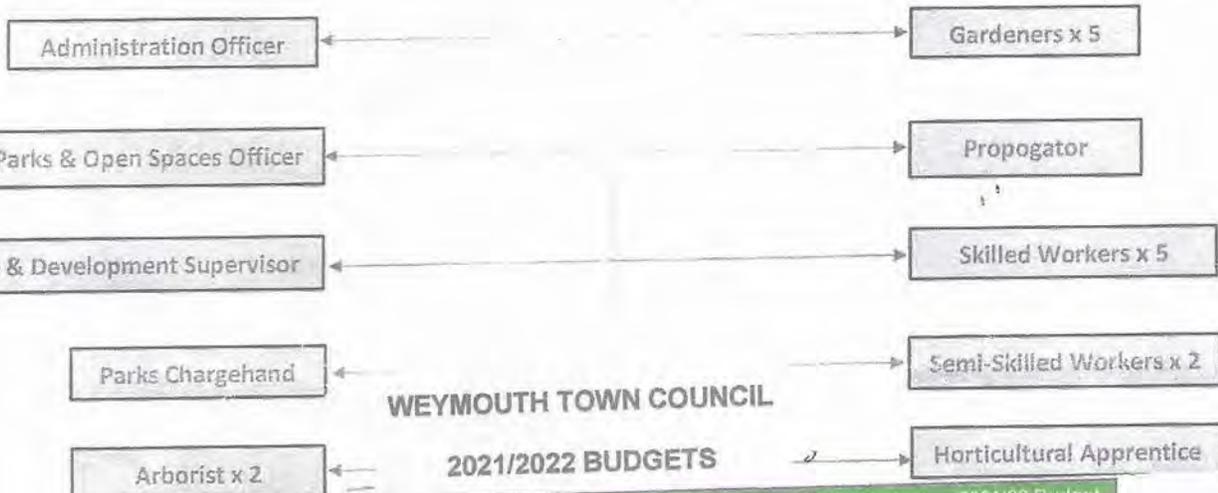


Victoria  
Park Return  
page 3

## Parks & Open Spaces Structure:

for the Weymouth Town Council  
created via Dorset  
Unitary Transition

total precept £3.36 Million  
48000 electors.  
27 elected town councillors



WEYMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

2021/2022 BUDGETS

Service	2020/21 Budget	2021/22 Budget
Parks & Open Spaces	(1,230)	4,760
Allotments	(4,060)	(3,560)
Cemeteries	784,530	770,450
Parks & Open Spaces - Staffing Account	0	0
Tumbledown	47,380	45,880
Nursery	300,860	297,750
Parks & Open Spaces	23,940	24,290
Sports Facilities		
Total Parks & Open Spaces	1,151,420	1,139,570

## Somerset West + Taunton Council Feb 2021 Budget Setting Meeting

### GENERAL FUND DRAFT REVENUE BUDGET 2021/22

Meeting  
Extract

Cost/Ctr	Service Area	Draft Budget 2021-22 (£)	
<b>Commercial Services:</b>			
<b>Street Scene &amp; Open Spaces</b>		<b>2,459,790</b>	
FF000G	Localities - Operational Costs	10,710	
RF000G	Localities - Staffing Costs	0	
SF001G	Grounds Maintenance	289,510	100
SF004G	Community Parks & Open Spaces	1,654,500	800
SF007G	Nursery	84,690	85
SF021G	Trees	177,860	25
SF022G	Play Areas	102,520	35
SF010G	Operation Clean Sweep	140,000	55
<b>Emergency Planning</b>		<b>128,590</b>	
SC005G	Emergency Planning	128,590	
Various	<b>Technical Capital Accounting Adjustments</b>	<b>(2,301,110)</b>	
<b>Net Total Spending on Services</b>		<b>21,019,756</b>	<b>£1100k</b>

Cllr F Smith-Roberts

c/o Governance Team

Somerset West and Taunton Council

PO Box 866

Taunton

TA1 9GS

**Please ask for: Cllr David Fothergill**

**Email: [djafothergill@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:djafothergill@somerset.gov.uk)**

**Direct Dial: 01823 359017 (PA Office)**

**Date: 11<sup>th</sup> January 2022**

Dear Federica

### **Community Governance Review for Taunton**

I am writing in response to the stage 1 consultation that SW&T Council are undertaking in relation to the Community Governance Review for Taunton. I welcome the undertaking of this review which has been proposed for some time now.

You will be aware that the unitary council business case set out the intention to request that a Community Governance Review be undertaken for the unparished area of Taunton in order to create a town council by the vesting day of the unitary council.

There are two areas of focus in terms of the County Council's response to the proposals that it would welcome SW&T's consideration and further involvement with the Council upon:

- The proposed area that the town council would serve, since there are two proposed areas being consulted upon.
- Any relevant considerations and implications for the new unitary council being established on 1 April 2023

### Proposed area of the town council

In terms of the area for a new town council, the consultation proposals mainly reflect two areas. One being the current unparished area of Taunton (as covered by the existing Charter Trustees for Taunton) and the other being the unparished area along with parts of the existing Trull, Bishop's Hull, Comeytrove, Norton Fitzwarren, Staplegrove, Kingston St Mary, Cheddon Fitzpaine and West Monkton parish councils.

The County Council supports the creation of a town council covering at least the unparished area of Taunton and reserves its position in terms of a larger town council area as it would like to assess and better understand the stage 1 public consultation results since that option has impacts on eight existing parish councils and create a much larger town council than originally envisaged.

### Relevant considerations in relation to the formation of a new unitary council for Somerset

All five councils in Somerset are working collaboratively together towards the establishment of a new unitary council for Somerset on 1 April 2023. The transition work towards the new unitary council is already well underway and elections for its 110 councillors are being held in May 2022, based upon existing county council electoral divisions.

Relevant considerations and implications that we would ask to be considered by SW&T Council when completing the Community Governance Review are:

- Alignment of electoral arrangements with other town councils following the first election to the new town council
- Alignment of electoral / warding arrangements with the electoral divisions for the new unitary council for Somerset
- Further engagement with the County Council on the area to be covered by the new town council to ensure it aligns with the design of the proposed relevant Local Community Network covering
- Consultation with the County Council and the Local Government Reorganisation Joint Committee / Implementation Executive when seeking to set the initial precept for the new town council
- Consultation with the County Council and the Local Government Reorganisation Joint Committee / Implementation Executive when seeking to outline the services that could be provided by the new town council and / or any assets, future investment /

funding arrangements or liabilities that SW&T may intend to transfer to the new town council

- Consultation with the County Council and the Local Government Reorganisation Joint Committee / Implementation Executive when seeking to transfer any staff or existing contracts to the new town council

In the light of the above, the County Council would ask that these matters are considered by SW&T Council and that further joint work be undertaken to provide assurance that there are no adverse implications for the new unitary council. To support that further work and engagement, the County Council would respectfully request that timetable for the stage 2 consultation is revised and commenced after the May 2022 elections so that the newly elected council can be consulted upon and inform the decision on the final proposals.

The County Council remains committed to working with SW&T Council to develop the new town council for Taunton by 1 April 2023.

Yours sincerely



**Cllr David Fothergill**  
**Leader of Somerset County Council**

**Cc:**

**Cllr Derek Perry, Chair of Community Governance Review Working Group**

**Andrew Pritchard, Chief Executive, Somerset West and Taunton**

**Patrick Flaherty, Chief Executive, Somerset County Council**



West Monkton Parish Council

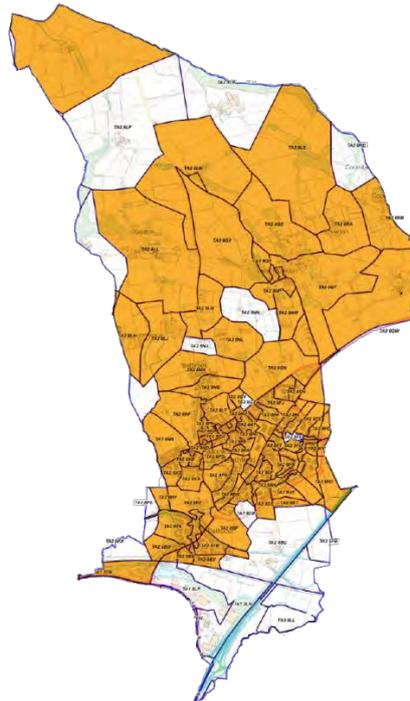
## Community Governance Review to form Taunton Town Council

### Consultation Response

#### Section 1: Introduction

West Monkton Parish Council (WMPC) has prepared this response to the Community Governance Review (CGR) to form Taunton Town Council consultation. Although WMPC welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation, it must be said from the outset that it is incredibly disappointed and dismayed that the Parish of West Monkton has been incorporated into the CGR.

To inform its response WMPC took the opportunity to send a survey to every household in the Parish. A copy of the full survey and an analysis of the responses received is available at Appendix A. There are 2449 households in the Parish. A response was received from 492 households covering almost the full extent of the Parish, the response rate was above that received from the parish in relation to the survey conducted in the development of the Neighbourhood Plan<sup>1</sup>. A map highlighting the postcodes in yellow that a response was received from is available in Figure 1 below.



**Figure 1: Map of location of survey responses by postcode.**

In developing the survey questions, WMPC was mindful of the Somerset West and Taunton Council (SWT) Consultation Survey questions, The Local Government Boundary Commission for England Guidance on Community Governance Reviews (The Guidance) and The Local Government and Public Involvement in

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<sup>1</sup> West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine Neighbourhood Plan Survey 2016 received 439 responses across 2 parishes.

Health Act 2007 (The Legislation). The remainder of this document outlines the response of WMPC to the consultation, structured in line with the Guidance which outlines the criteria for undertaking a CGR stating at paragraph 52 that ‘Section 93 of the 2007 Act requires principal councils to ensure that community governance within the area under review will be:

- reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area and
- effective and convenient and informed by the responses received from members of our Community.

Paragraph 53 also identifies influential factors that SWT as the principal council should take into account including:

- the impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion and
- the size, population and boundaries of a local community or parish

The points made throughout this document are informed by the views of the community that WMPC represents.

## **Section 2: The Parish of West Monkton**

The Parish of West Monkton lies to the north east of Taunton and contains a network of locally distinctive villages and hamlets surrounded by an ecologically rich and diverse farmed landscape with business areas and retail on the southern periphery (Hankridge Retail Park, Creech Castle Business Area). The historic and picturesque parishes include the villages and hamlets of Gotton, Goosenford, parts of Coombe, Overton, Bathpool, Monkton Heathfield and West Monkton.

A small part to the northwest of the parish of West Monkton falls within the Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

The Monkton Heathfield Phase 1 (MH1) Development commenced in 2011 and between 2012 and 2021, 1291 properties were constructed and completed in the Parish, significantly increasing the number of households. The table in figure 2 confirms the number of properties completed each year in the MH1 development.

<b>Date of Completion</b>	<b>Number of properties</b>
2012/13	28
2013/14	149
2014/15	265
2015/16	226
2016/17	256
2017/18	145
2018/19	84
2019/20	49
2021/21	89
Total	1291

**Figure 2: MH1 Completion Dates and Numbers<sup>2</sup>**

The Parish is diverse, containing a mix of rural, sub-urban and business areas and has changed a lot in the last decade. The number of electors in the Parish is now 4314<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Somerset West and Taunton Council 2021

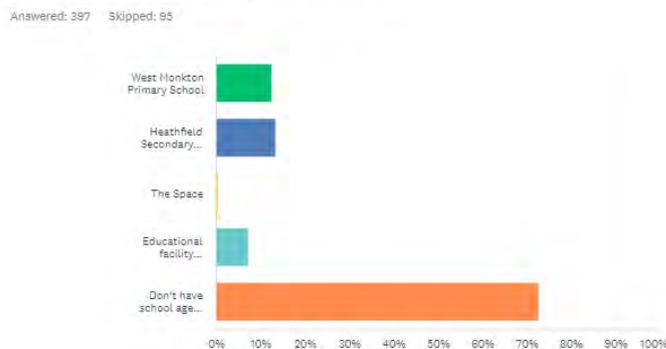
<sup>3</sup> Somerset West and Taunton Council 2021

Despite this change and the diversity of the Parish, a local community exists. Paragraph 49 of the Guidance confirms that ‘Parish and town councils vary enormously in size, activities and circumstances, representing populations ranging from less than 100 (small rural hamlets) to up to 70,000 (large shire towns)’. The extent and size of the Parish is therefore within the parameters of the guidance.

Paragraph 51 of the Guidance states that when defining a Parish ‘...The pattern of daily life in each of the existing communities, the local centres for education and child care, shopping, community activities, worship, leisure pursuits, transport facilities and means of communication generally will have an influence.’

The responses to the WMPC Survey confirm that a pattern of daily life exists within the Community in the Parish. The majority of the community with school age children attend the educational establishments in the Parish (West Monkton Primary School, Heathfield Secondary School and The Space) as illustrated in the chart in Figure 3. The Cedar Centre is also located in the Parish which opened in September 2012 to support students with Autism access mainstream school life.

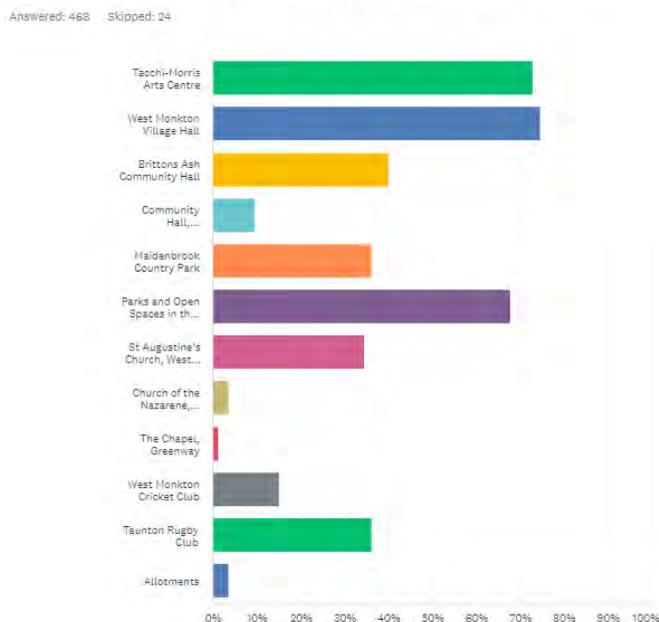
If you have school age children or children that have recently left school, which education facility do they attend?



**Figure 3: Use of Educational Facilities in the Community**

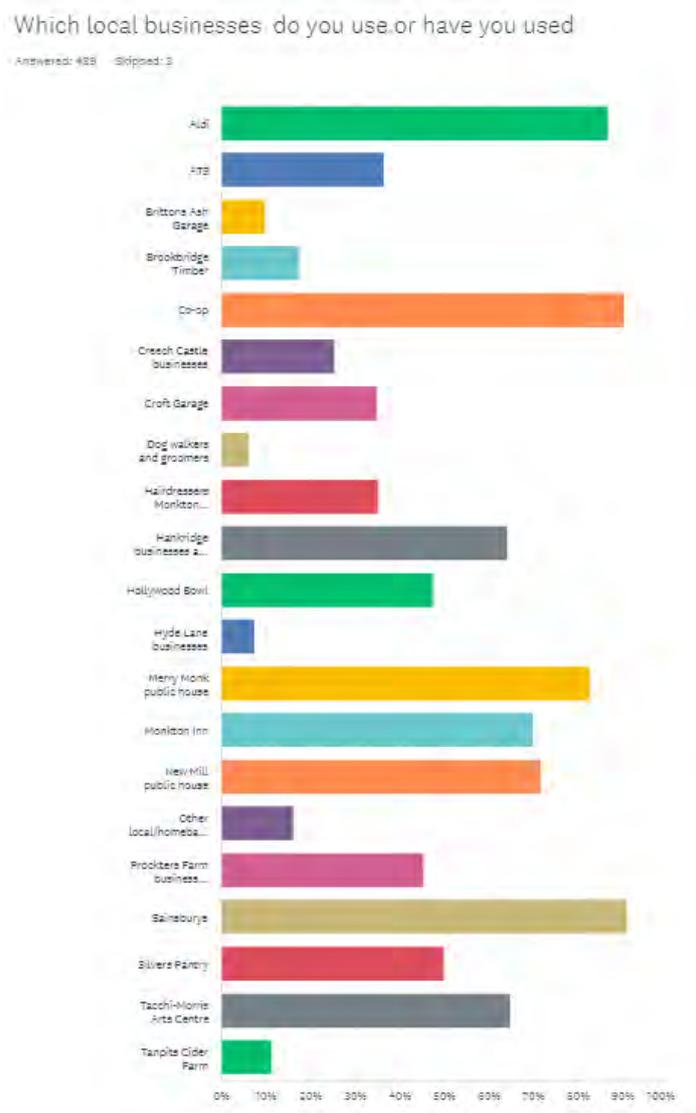
In addition, members of our community use the community facilities available in the Parish as part of their daily lives as illustrated in the chart in Figure 4.

Which of the following community facilities have you used?



**Figure 4: Use of Community Facilities in the Parish.**

Furthermore, members of our community use the expanse of local businesses that are available in the Parish as part of their daily lives as illustrated in the chart available in Figure 5. Although an option to select Monkton Elm Garden Centre wasn't provided in the survey in error, some 40 respondents confirmed their use of the shop and restaurant in the written comments (available in full in Appendix A) and if a tick box was provided many more respondents would likely to have confirmed their enjoyment of the Garden Centre.



**Figure 5 Use of Businesses in the Parish**

**Section 3: Community Governance in West Monkton Parish – reflective of the identities and interests of the community**

Paragraph 55 of the Guidance states that ‘Parish councils have an important role to play in the development of their local communities’ and that ‘the aim for communities across the country is for them to be capable of fulfilling their own potential and overcoming their own difficulties, including community conflict, extremism, deprivation and disadvantage. Communities need to be empowered to respond to challenging economic, social, and cultural trends, and to demographic change.’ WMPC works with local businesses, charities and community groups and engages volunteers to develop a vibrant and cohesive community. Examples include supporting local charities, working with the Community Council for Somerset (CCS) Village Agent to support residents in need, including a Crisis donation, engaging volunteers in activities like running Brittons Ash Community Hall, keeping an eye on local watercourses, litter picking

and planting trees in and maintaining Maidenbrook Country Park. WMPC also develops regular community initiatives engaging and supporting local businesses and partners. Examples include a recent 'Sunflower Seed Initiative' and 'Hi Vis initiative', working with a local business and schools to encourage growing / planting and safer cycling and walking – both linked to WMPCs Climate Emergency declaration and achieving WMPCs vision and objectives. These initiatives are all documented on the WMPC Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/westmonktonparishcouncil>).

WMPC allocates a proportion of its budget each year for community groups to apply for. This funding has enabled a volunteer led youth club to be established for young people in the local community, funding for the local scout group for new equipment and the refurbishment of Tacchi Morris Arts Centre to provide a community café / hub.

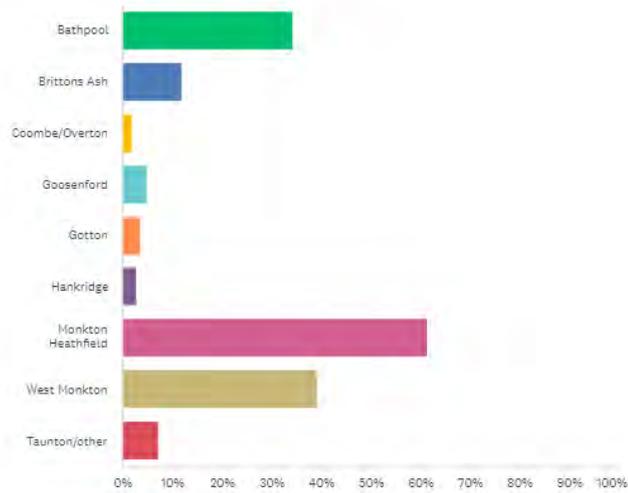
WMPC has a rolling programme of initiatives aimed at both supporting and building the community and reducing the carbon footprint of the Parish. One upcoming initiative is Parish Food Boxes where donations of non-perishable food items are distributed to local people who are in need.

Paragraph 56 of the Guidance states that 'Parish councils can contribute to the creation of successful communities by influencing the quality of planning and design of public spaces and the built environment, as well as improving the management and maintenance of such amenities....' WMPC contributes to the design of development permitted in the Parish in part through the Policies included in the Neighbourhood Plan but also through engaging with Developers in advance of planning applications being submitted, through their determination and during the development to influence the design and environment of the Parish. WMPC is currently working with the Developer of MH1 to negotiate the adequate completion and handover of the public open space so that it can be managed, maintained and improved by WMPC to meet the needs of our Community. WMPC is also working with the Developer of MH1 to enhance the facilities of Taunton Rugby Club and West Monkton Cricket Club by obtaining the Sports Field that was allocated under the MH1 development but not delivered, WMPC is eager to deliver sports pitches that will allow additional facilities to be included e.g. Tennis Courts and a BMX track. WMPC will use the knowledge and experience it has gained through MH1 to shape and respond to the emerging MH2 planning application to ensure that the best possible development is achieved for the community. WMPC has designed the layout of Maidenbrook Country Park to benefit the health and wellbeing of residents, including a new cycleway and footpath to improve safety by taking adults and school children away from a busy main road. WMPC has also funded the addition of outside gym equipment at Farriers Green park and provided funding to the Cricket Club to improve the facilities available.

Paragraph 58 of the Guidance states that 'It is clear that how people perceive where they live - their neighbourhoods - is significant in considering the identities and interests of local communities and depends on a range of circumstances, often best defined by local residents....' WMPC asked the community in its survey which area they felt they belonged to. The chart available in Figure 6 below shows that our community identify themselves as being part of the key areas of West Monkton Parish with only 7% responding so say that they felt they belonged to Taunton.

Which of the following areas do you feel you belong to?

Answered: 469 Skipped: 3

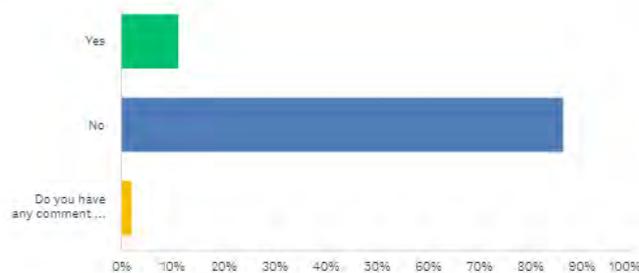


**Figure 6: Which areas our Community feel they belong to.**

Paragraph 59 of the Guidance states that ‘Parishes in many cases may be able to meet the concept of neighbourhoods in an area. Parishes should reflect distinctive and recognisable communities of interest, with their own sense of identity. Like neighbourhoods, the feeling of local community and the wishes made in community governance reviews of local inhabitants are the primary considerations’. WMPC in its survey asked the community whether they felt the area in which they live should be incorporated into Taunton Town Council. The chart available in Figure 7 confirms the feeling of the local community – 86% of the community do not want the area in which they live to be part of Taunton Town Council.

Do you think the area in which you live in West Monkton Parish should be incorporated into Taunton Town Council?

Answered: 487 Skipped: 5



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	11.29% 66
No	86.65% 422
Do you have any comment to make?	2.05% 10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>487</b>

**Figure 7 Should the area in which you live in West Monkton Parish be incorporated into Taunton Town Council**

Paragraph 61 of the Guidance states that ‘Building a sense of local identity may make an important contribution to cohesion where a local area is facing challenges arising from rapid demographic change. In considering the criteria, community governance reviews need to home in on communities as offering a

sense of place and of local identity for all residents'. As outlined in Section 3 above, WMPC has a clear vision and objectives. One key area of focus for WMPC is our community. Work is underway to strengthen the community further with the recent recruitment of the Assistant Clerk Community, whose role is to focus on developing and building our community through many initiatives including the roll out of a Community Survey to understand the skills and needs of our Community, to ensure that WMPC responds to the changing demographic profile of the Community and strengthen the community cohesion that already exists.

#### **Section 4: Community Governance in West Monkton Parish – effective and convenient**

Nine proactive, committed and passionate Parish Councillors represent our local community, in addition to fulfilling the roles of Chair and Vice-Chair, the Councillors are responsible for specific areas including footpaths, Brittons Ash Community Hall (a Parish Council asset), allotments, highways, water resilience, safe routes to school, public open spaces, children's play areas and recreation, transportation and community.

There are four employees, a Clerk, Assistant Clerk, Assistant Clerk (Community) and Litter Picker. In total the Clerks are employed for 250 hours a month but regularly exceed their hours delivering services for the community.

The Clerk and Assistant Clerk are CiLCA<sup>4</sup> qualified and the Clerk is in the second year of studying to achieve a Level 4 in Community Governance Qualification. In addition, all nine Parish Councillors have attended training courses provided by SALC<sup>5</sup> and regularly attend other training and workshops that are available.

As more than two thirds of the members of the council were elected and because the Clerks are qualified, WMPC can and has declared the General Power of Competence introduced by the Localism Act 2011 that gives councils the power to do anything an individual can do provided it is not prohibited by other legislation. This power has enabled WMPC to expand the services that it provides for the community and go over and above what some other Parish Councils do. This enables WMPC to be more effective and convenient. Paragraph 64 of the Guidance states that 'In responding to the requirement for effective and convenient local government, some Parish Councils are keen, and have the capacity to take on more in the provision of services .... The 2007 Act provides a power of well-being to those parish councils who want to take on more, giving them additional powers to enable them to promote the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of their areas'.

Furthermore WMPC is cost effective, the 2021/22 Parish Council budget is £207,112 and the precept demand was £63,509. The services that WMPC provides for the community cost each household on average only £31.00 per year.

In partnership with Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Council, WMPC embraced another opportunity provided by the Localism Act 2011 by developing a Neighbourhood Plan made in April 2018, securing additional CIL funding for the Parish to spend on local initiatives.

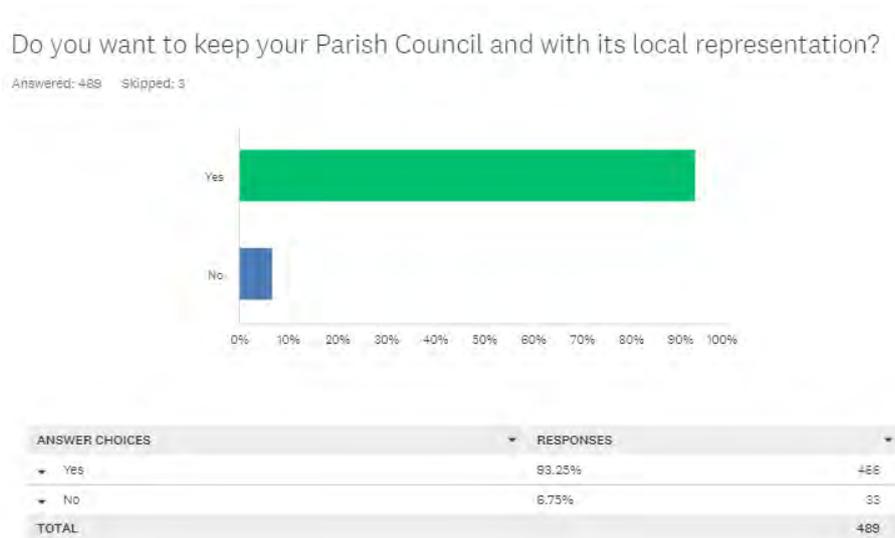
WMPC has a clear vision and objectives that it is working to achieve focused in particular at improving the environment and the community with a clear vision that 'WMPC and the local community work together to protect and improve the social, recreational and environmental well-being of West Monkton and the lives of all who live, visit or work here'. A copy of WMPCs Vision and Objectives is available here:

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<sup>4</sup> Certificate in Local Council Administration

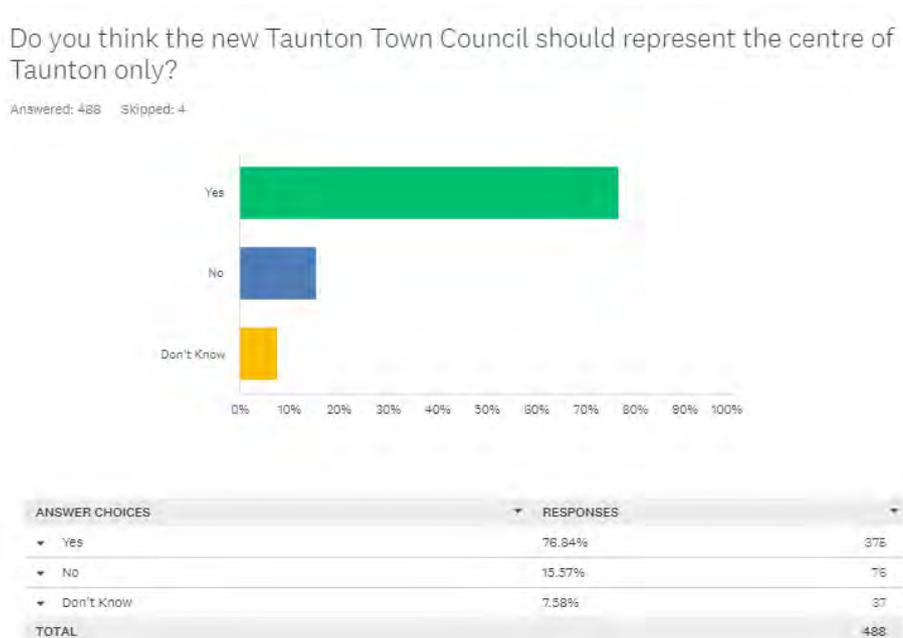
<sup>5</sup> Somerset Association of Local Councils

Paragraph 50 of the Guidance states that ‘Parish councils continue to have two main roles: community representation and local administration. For both purposes it is desirable that a parish should reflect a distinctive and recognisable community of place, with its own sense of identity. The views of local communities and inhabitants are of central importance.’ WMPC in its survey asked the Community if it would like WMPC to continue as it is with its local representation. Overwhelmingly 93% of respondents said that they did, illustrated in the chart in Figure 8 below.



**Figure 8: Keeping the Parish Council and its local representation**

When the community was asked if they thought the new Taunton Town Council should represent the centre of Taunton only 15% thought that it should represent a wider area illustrated in the chart in figure 9 below.



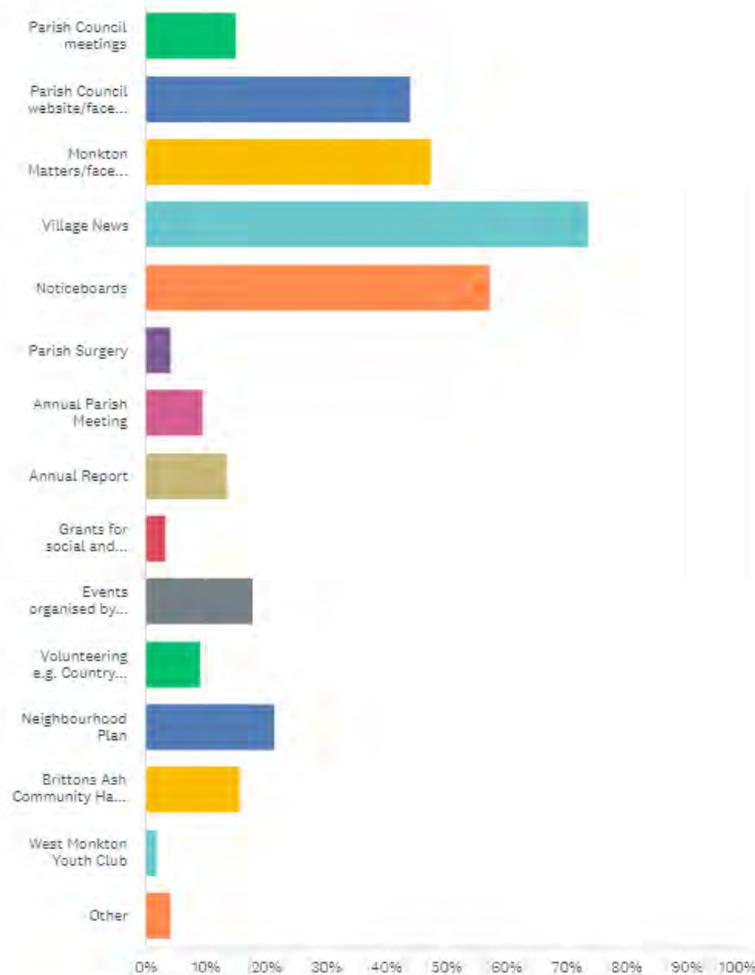
**Figure 9: Area of Taunton Town Council**

Paragraph 62 of the Guidance states that ‘The Government believes that the effectiveness and convenience of local government is best understood in the context of a local authority’s ability to deliver

quality services economically and efficiently, and give users of services a democratic voice in the decisions that affect them'. WMPC is the only Parish Council of the eight included in this CGR (and other local Parish Council areas) to have a contested election in May 2019, where 11 candidates stood for 9 Parish Councillor seats. WMPC elections also took place in 1987 and 1991. As far back as 1983, WMPC has always had a full complement of Parish Councillors and any vacancies that do arise are quickly filled. The Parish Councillors that represent our community have been truly democratically elected by the electorate and through a variety of techniques WMPC engages and consults with the local community. In its survey WMPC asked the community to identify whether they access, use, attend or participate in the techniques WMPC uses. The chart in Figure 10 illustrates the responses received.

West Monkton Parish Council communicates and engages with the local community via the following methods. Which ones do you use, access, attend or participate?

Answered: 464 Skipped: 28



**Figure 10: WMPC Communications and Engagement with the Community**

**Section 5: Influential Factors**

Paragraph 66 of the Guidance states than ‘When reviewing community governance arrangements, principal councils may wish to take into account a number of factors, to help inform their judgement against the statutory criteria’. These include the influential factors of the impact on community cohesion of community governance arrangements and the size, population and boundaries of a parish. Points in relation to these two factors are outlined in 5(a) and (b) below.

## **Section 5(a): The impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion**

Paragraph 67 of the guidance states that 'Setting up parishes and parish councils clearly offers the opportunity to strengthen community engagement and participation, and generate a positive impact on community cohesion. In conducting community governance reviews (whether initiated by itself or triggered by a valid petition), the principal council should consider the impact on community cohesion when deciding whether or not to set up a parish council'. If a Town Council is created to incorporate all or part of West Monkton Parish there would be an extremely negative impact on the community cohesion that exists. Throughout this consultation response points have been made about the Community that exists, the patterns of daily life that exist, the initiatives that are taking place in the Community, the work of WMPC to represent the community, the feeling of our Community about where they belong and how they identify as being part of West Monkton Parish.

Paragraph 69 of the Guidance states that '...A key contributor to community cohesion is integration which is what must happen to enable new residents and existing residents to adjust to one another'. As stated in Section 2, the Parish of West Monkton has grown significantly in the past decade but the majority of new buildings were completed by 2017, most of the people that now form our Community have been part of our Parish for more than 5 years and work to join the community that existed before the development with the new is well underway and established.

Paragraph 74 of the Guidance states that '...It would be difficult to think of a situation in which a principal council could make a decision to create a parish and a parish council which reflects community identities and interests in the area and at the same time threatens community cohesion'. To incorporate part or all of West Monkton Parish into Taunton Town Council would mean that SWT would create a Town Council that doesn't reflect community identities and interests and threatens the community cohesion that already exists – in contradiction with the Guidance. Paragraph 74 of the Guidance further states that '..Principal councils should be able to decline to set up such community governance arrangements where they judged that to do so would not be in the interests of either the local community or surrounding communities, and where the effect would be likely to damage community cohesion'. WMPC urges SWT to decline to set up a community governance arrangement that incorporates all or part of West Monkton into Taunton Town Council as the Guidance clearly states as it will damage community cohesion.

## **Section 5(b) The size, population and boundaries of a local community or parish**

Paragraph 16 of the Guidance states that 'A community governance review offers an opportunity to put in place strong, clearly defined boundaries, tied to firm ground features, and remove the many anomalous parish boundaries that exist in England'. The boundary of West Monkton Parish is already clearly defined with no anomalous boundaries. A green lung exists from Creech Castle to Hestercombe House in the form of Maidenbrook Country Park and the Somerset Wood, it provides a clear separation of the Parish from Taunton Town. Toneway, the railway and the river with their green infrastructure to the south, and the M5 to the east, provide clear demarcation barriers between the settlements which assists in preserving the individual identify of our parish and community.

Paragraph 83 of the Guidance states that 'As far as boundaries between parishes are concerned, these should reflect the "no-man's land" between communities represented by areas of low population or barriers such as rivers, roads or railways. They need to be, and be likely to remain, easily identifiable. For instance, factors to consider include parks and recreation grounds which sometimes provide natural breaks between communities but they can equally act as focal points. A single community would be unlikely to straddle a river where there are no crossing points, or a large area of moor land or marshland.....' and that '...Whatever boundaries are selected they need to be, and be likely to remain, easily identifiable'. If a

Taunton Town Council was created incorporating all or part of West Monkton, the existing natural boundaries of rivers, motorways and Country Park that exist around West Monkton would be broken and the Town Council would straddle the natural breaks; in contravention of the Guidance.

The adopted TDBC Core Strategy (2011 – 2028) includes Policy SS1 Monkton Heathfield. The Policy states that ‘Within the area identified at Monkton Heathfield, a new sustainable neighbourhood will be delivered through a coordinated and comprehensive approach, including:

- A country park within the green wedge between Monkton Heathfield and Priorswood;
- A multi-purpose ‘green necklace’ of landscape and public open space surrounding the settlement providing allotments, outdoor recreation and wildlife habitat. This will also include:
  - A 20m wide buffer of woodland planting around the boundaries facing bat activity from Hestercombe House SAC;
  - Off-site offset woodland habitat in accordance with the recommendations of Hestercombe House SAC Appropriate Assessment to compensate for the loss of habitat of lesser horseshoe bats. The off-site offset habitat should be functional prior to the commencement of any development north of the A3259; and
  - A belt of landscaping between the motorway and the development areas

The Concept Plan in figure 11 below forms part of the SS1 Policy and clearly illustrates the green necklace and natural boundary that exists between the Monkton Heathfield Development, the wider West Monkton Parish and Taunton Town. To incorporate all or part of West Monkton into Taunton Town Council would not be in keeping with the adopted Planning Policy which documents the Monkton Heathfield Development as a ‘new sustainable neighbourhood’ with a clear green necklace and wedge separating it from Taunton Town.

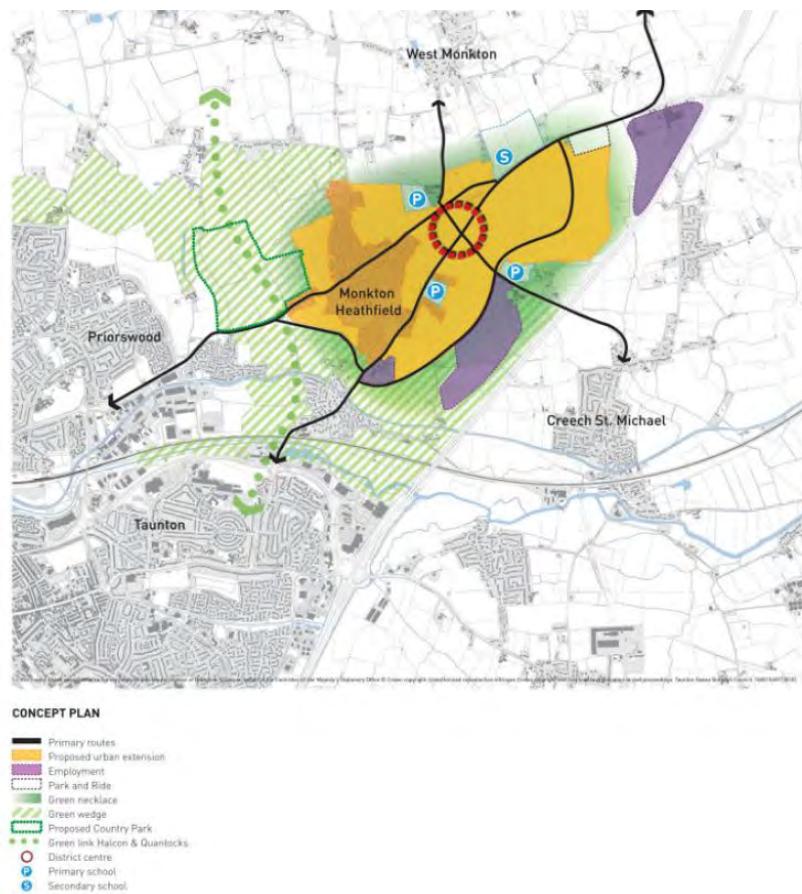


Figure 11 Policy SS1 Concept Plan

Furthermore, the Vision for Taunton Garden Town identifies that Taunton is a ‘Town of Neighbourhoods’ and identifies Monkton Heathfield as a neighbourhood in its own right, as illustrated in Figure 12 below.



Figure 12: Vision for Taunton Garden Town : Taunton; A Town of Neighbourhoods

**Section 6 Summary**

Throughout this response clear points have been made about how the existing Community Governance arrangements in West Monkton are:

- Reflective of the identities and interests of the community
- Effective and convenient
- Enable community cohesion and

- Reflect the size, population and boundaries of the community.

The Guidance and Legislation clearly states that these are the points that SWT, as the Principal Authority, must consider whilst conducting a Community Governance Review.

The points made and evidence provided are not just those of WMPC but of our community that we represent.

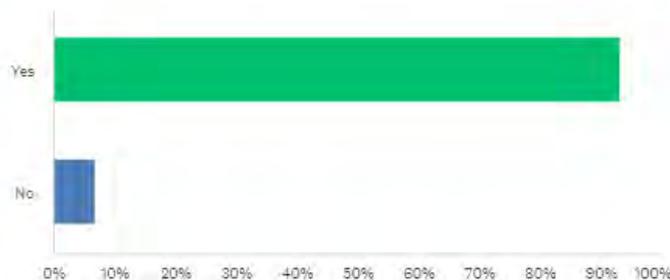
To incorporate all or part of West Monkton Parish into Taunton Town Council will remove the excellent community governance that already exists, the local representation of our Community and the proactive work and services that WMPC provides for the community.

Paragraph 33 of the Guidance states that ‘Principal councils will need to consult local people and take account of any representations received in connection with the review. When undertaking the review they must have regard to the need to secure that community governance reflects the identities and interests of the community in the area under review, and the need to secure that community governance in that area is effective and convenient.’ WMPC urges you to consider this response fully and conclude that the Community Governance that already exists in West Monkton reflects the identities and interests of the community and is effective and convenient.

The view of our Community is very clear and is expressed in the response to the question in the chart below. Our Community wants to keep its Parish Council as it is with its excellent local representation.

Do you want to keep your Parish Council and with its local representation?

Answered: 489 Skipped: 3

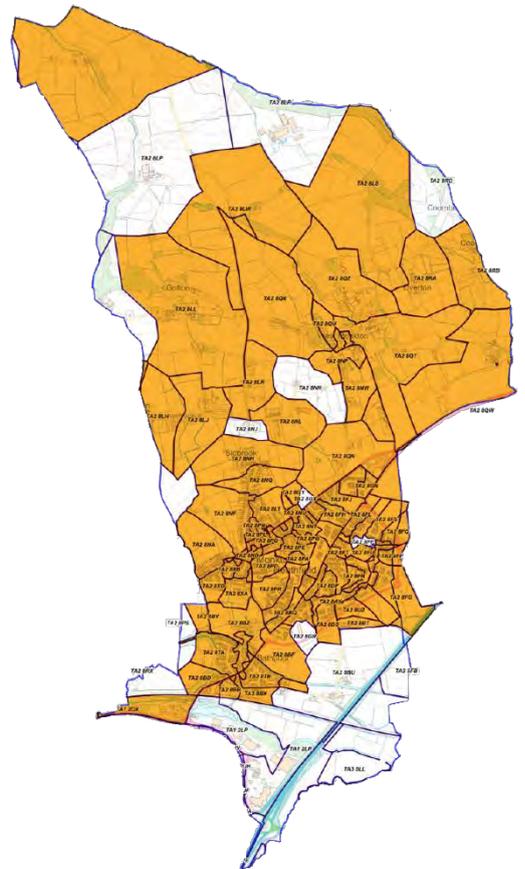


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	93.25%	488
No	6.75%	33
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>489</b>

## Appendix A: Survey Responses

### Question 1: Results of survey collection by postcode

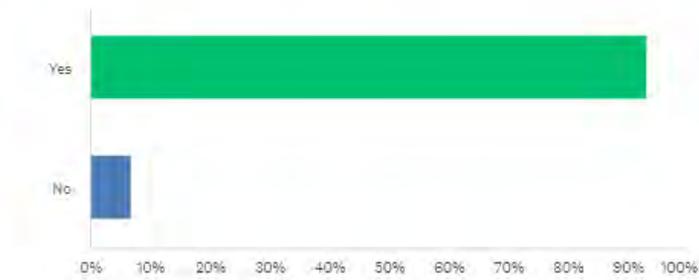
Post Code	Replies	Post Code	Replies	Post Code	Replies
TA1 2DX	1	TA2 8GH	3	TA2 8PL	4
TA2	2	Ta2 8GJ	4	TA2 8PN	3
TA2 7EU	1	TA2 8GL	6	TA2 8PP	20
TA2 7UF	1	TA2 8GM	1	TA2 8PQ	4
TA2 8AX	11	Ta2 8GN	5	TA2 8PR	17
TA2 8AY	5	TA2 8GW	2	TA2 8PX	1
TA2 8BB	2	TA2 8GY	4	TA2 8QN	6
TA2 8BD	4	TA2 8GZ	1	TA2 8QT	6
TA2 8BE	2	TA2 8LH	9	TA2 8QU	4
TA2 8BF	6	TA2 8LJ	6	TA2 8QW	4
TA2 8BJ	3	TA2 8LL	4	TA2 8QX	7
TA2 8BP	1	TA2 8LN	2	TA2 8QZ	7
TA2 8BQ	3	TA2 8LP	1	TA2 8RA	1
TA2 8BS	4	TA2 8LS	3	Ta2 8RB	2
TA2 8BT	1	TA2 8LT	17	TA2 8SW	1
TA2 8BW	4	TA2 8LW	3	TA2 8TA	22
TA2 8BX	4	TA2 8NA	7	TA2 8TB	15
TA2 8BY	4	TA2 8NB	1	TA2 8UZ	5
TA2 8BZ	3	TA2 8ND	2	TA2 8XA	9
TA2 8DA	2	TA2 8NE	1	TA2 8XB	10
TA2 8DP	4	TA2 8NF	11	TA2 8XD	10
TA2 8DS	6	TA2 8NH	13	TA2 8AX	1
TA2 8FA	3	TA2 8NL	4	TA2 8BS	1
TA2 8FB	5	TA2 8NP	6	TA28BX	1
TA2 8FB	2	TA2 8NQ	19	TA28BZ	1
TA2 8FD	6	TA2 8NR	4	TA2 8FH	1
TA2 8FE	2	TA2 8NS	1	TA2 8FJ	1
TA2 8FG	6	TA2 8NT	8	TA2 8FL	1
TA2 8FH	6	TA2 8NU	3	TA2 8FN	1
TA2 8FJ	5	TA2 8NW	4	TA2 8FQ	1
TA2 8FL	5	TA2 8NZ	3	TA2 8FT	1
TA2 8FN	6	TA2 8PA	1	TA2 8FU	1
TA2 8FP	4	TA2 8PB	3	TA28GY	1
TA2 8FQ	5	TA2 8PD	1	TA2 8NE	1
TA2 8FS	5	TA2 8PE	5	TA2 8NW	1
TA2 8FT	1	TA2 8PG	6	TA5 2EJ	1
TA2 8FU	3	TA2 8PH	4	Skipped	3



Question 2:

Do you want to keep your Parish Council and with its local representation?

Answered: 488 Skipped: 3

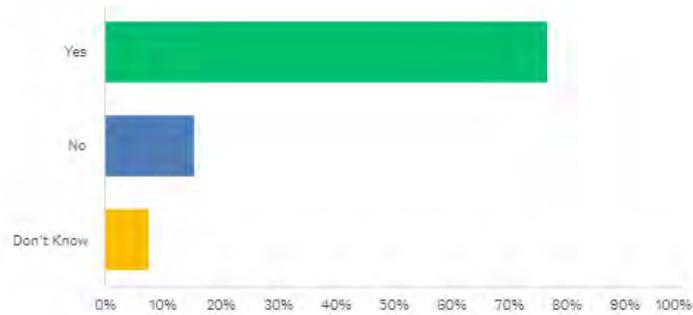


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	93.25%	488
No	6.75%	33
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>489</b>

Question 3:

Do you think the new Taunton Town Council should represent the centre of Taunton only?

Answered: 488 Skipped: 4

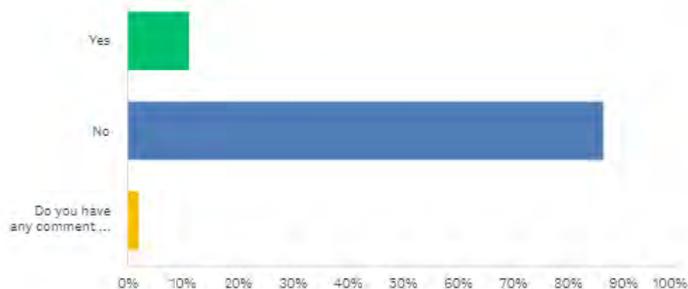


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	78.84%	378
No	15.57%	76
Don't Know	7.58%	37
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>488</b>

Question 4:

Do you think the area in which you live in West Monkton Parish should be incorporated into Taunton Town Council?

Answered: 487 Skipped: 5



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	11.29% 65
No	86.65% 422
Do you have any comment to make?	2.05% 10
TOTAL	487

Question 5: Comments regarding question 4

- I think it would be too large an area to cover.
- Our preference is to remain a Parish Council but this is based on much greater involvement and communication by our local councillors.
- I think the Parish Council has the best interests of West Monkton area.
- The Parish fully understands parish issues.
- Concerns about loss of local knowledge and local representation.
- We are served well by our Parish Council. This is likely to deteriorate catastrophically with a town council arrangement.
- I feel very strongly that we should keep our Parish Council because it is made up of local people who know this area well and would get things done!
- Think it should have a say as a parish but governed by Town Council.
- West Monkton is an independent area in Somerset West and Taunton not part of Taunton.
- Completely inappropriate for our rural community.
- It would lose its village/community 'feel' and lose what makes a village with character, its individuality. I don't think its service standards would remain as high.
- West Monkton PC is a very active and is doing a 'great job'. I think a new Taunton Town Council should give its full attention to Taunton and not have to 'worry' about the surrounding parishes.
- The current set-up works well for the residents of MH. The parish council is excellent.
- Think it is clearly of benefit to West Monkton residents that have dedicated parish council protecting its interests.
- There is no way Taunton have the expertise to look after our Parish or any other parish.
- The Parish Council is a waste of space. Too many people with vested interests. Fed up with hearing 'our hands are tied - we have no powers' so what is their use?
- The Parish Council does a wonderful work in the area Taunton Town Council need to concentrate what resources they have on making our town council attractive to visitors and businesses.
- Parish Councils are an important for local decision making.
- It is important to have a local council to look after local interests and the needs/interests of the local community.
- We believe local representation, local people, are best pleased to both represent and respect our village.
- What a waste of time and money that could be better spent improving the Parish!

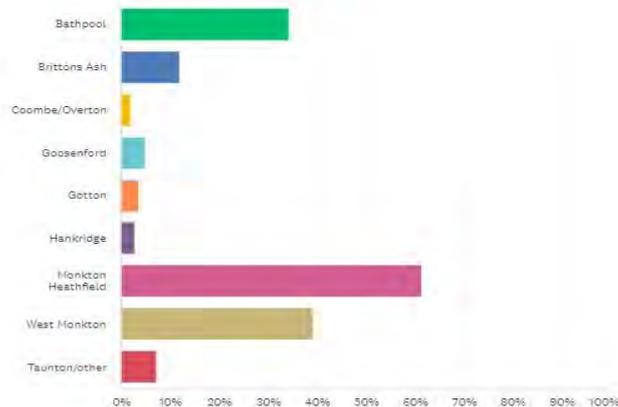
- To include the rurality of WM Parish (and others) is a nonsense.
- We should be represented by members of our own community who know our local issues.
- We think it's very important to retain local parish councils.
- Absolutely not. Village should not be run the same as towns.
- Too much messing about with Local Councils - stop interfering!
- We need a local elected Parish - to represent best our local community - not a central government!
- WMPC have worked hard for what has been achieved locally.
- Parish Councils have worked well for many centuries and promote genuine localism. Don't mess with them!
- As long as we were still represented by the local parish council.
- The area which forms the garden town should under one authority.
- I think that they should work in unison to give the parish council a place to raise local issues that need additional powers/wider representative to resolve. It's not an either/or it's an and.
- I have no confidence in the larger councils in Somerset and it would also be a costly exercise with little benefit to tax payers.
- Taunton Town Council should look after town only NOT Parish.
- If Taunton Town Council had complete control of our Parish, we would not see the green spaces in local development which West Monkton Parish Council have worked hard for.
- What is the case for proposing all or part of the Parish will be included in a new Taunton Town Council? What would the benefits/advantages to WMPC residents be?
- What they have done to the area is a disgrace to the whole community they have caused mayhem to the traffic situation are they going to repay my fuel rates for getting to the shops.
- Definitely not, I believe this is a money grabbing attempt.
- Absolutely not we need a parish council to represent our village as it's been swallowed up with new housing, another excuse to try and redevelop everywhere and remove important local parishes.
- I think that Taunton Town Council needs to be laser focused on making the most of Taunton Centre and not be clouded by taking on 'Greener Pastures.'
- Monkton Heathfield is almost part of Taunton now due to the huge number of new houses so may as well have the same council
- As a resident for 60 years plus, my view is that the local councillors of the parish council are only there for themselves just like the national government!
- The current WMPC has been utterly useless in matters of the new development.
- If you move to a village, you want it to have its own identity and autonomy.
- A town council will not cater for the needs of the outlying rural parishes.
- Taunton Town Council will not use funds from developers for the parish area and will absorb them into their budget.
- West Monkton is a historic conservation village and has little if any parallels with a town centre council. The village will in effect have no representation and will be swamped.
- Local issues need to be dealt with by local parish councils.
- Loss of local control is unacceptable bigger is rarely better.
- I am on board with a unitary council but think that parish council are an important board to report in to the Somerset Council.
- Because it is a rural parish not just residential housing.
- The needs of a small village are different from those of a town centre location. Our village identity needs to be preserved - its why people move out of town, us pensioners are ignored out here.
- Keeping our Parish Council means that representatives who actually live in the community and are passionate about where they live can continue to ensure that decisions made regarding the Parish are the right decisions for those who live there.
- Monkton should be included in every way as part of Taunton, as people life, work and travel across all areas.
- All of the garden town should be within one Council area.

- There is a high risk that amalgamation of the Parish Council will lead to funds and assets; accumulated within the Parish by local people; being swallowed up into a much larger organisation, with the responsibilities for the care and well-being of the local community delegated to a higher level, resulting in a poor service and representatives that may have less interest in local community matters.
- The needs of the town centre are different to the outskirts.
- Too much centralisation is not a good thing. Local representatives know what is right for our area.
- I feel very sad that on visiting the new Country Park at the bottom of Yallands Hill as there was nowhere for us oldies to sit and get our breath back. Also, a distinct lack of dog or rubbish bins. I doubt this is the right site to make these comments, if so, perhaps you would be kind enough to forward them onto the appropriate department. I really enjoyed the Country Park that is right on my doorstep.
- I feel that although West Monkton remains a distinct village Monkton Heathfield is now part of the Taunton conurbation.
- I don't live in the parish; however, I don't think it should be incorporated.
- No, we do not believe the area in which we live in West Monkton Parish should be incorporated into Taunton Town Council. In Bathpool, Monkton Heathfield and other areas of the Parish we feel we have a sense of community represented by local trusted Councillors.
- West Monkton council appears to be very much only representing the original village. The focus on traffic is Yallands Hill and the result is a rat run passed the schools around Milton Hill for example. There are zero signage on the WRR of being a 30mph limit or school children crossing. If they could have adapted to the new developments rather than resent us, I may have had a different result. But the Nimby's should go.
- The needs of villages are distinct and separate to that of the town.
- The current system of local councillors allows both local representation AND the election of a number of councillors covering the political spectrum. Reducing the number of councillors in a centralised council will both remove any local representation AND reduce the quality of representation dramatically as the political diversity of the current councillors will be lost.
- I don't think we will get as much support if it's amalgamated.
- The local area should be looked after by local people who know and understand the area they represent.
- With major disruption and constant building currently happening in our location we need to have some voice over what is actually been decided. Taunton Deane have not been helpful and do not understand or care about local issues.

Question 6:

Which of the following areas do you feel you belong to?

Answered: 489 Skipped: 3



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Bathpool	34.36% 168
Brittons Ash	11.86% 58
Coombe/Overton	1.64% 9
Goosenford	4.91% 24
Gotton	3.68% 18
Hankridge	2.86% 14
Monkton Heathfield	61.35% 300
West Monkton	39.26% 192
Taunton/other	7.16% 35
Total Respondents: 489	

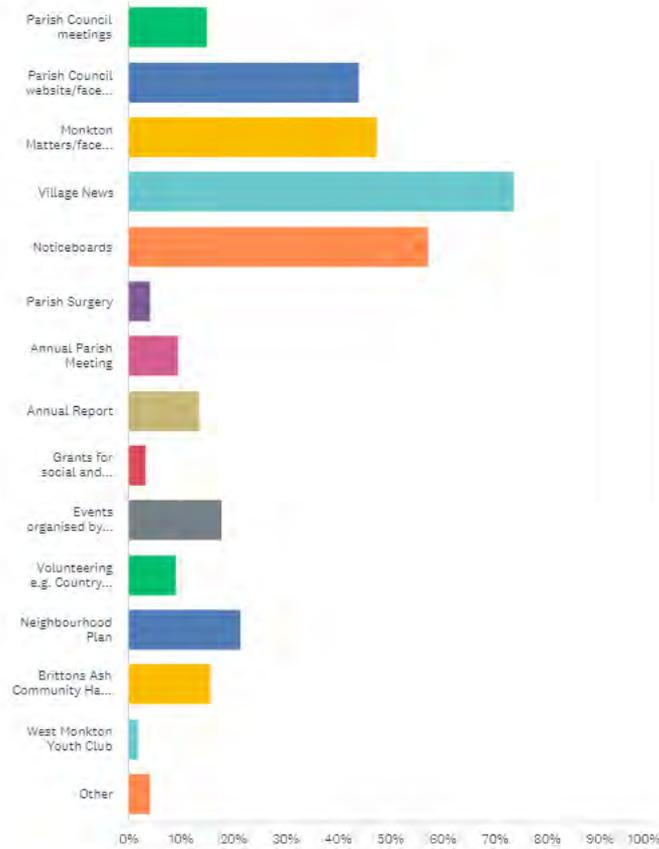
## Question 7: Comments to Question 6

- I live in Taunton which is the town - not to be confused with a desire to be governed by a separate body within the town.
- The Parish Council should remain to support the local areas interests.
- Due to extended housing I feel we are joined to Taunton now.
- Because we are part of Taunton.
- Feel part of wider Taunton community as well as local community.
- I'm a new arrival to Taunton with my young family I recognise I'm in Bathpool but there aren't enough services here and depend more on Taunton Creech and occasionally North Petherton.
- Taunton is our town
- I live in the Taunton Urban Area - A Garden Town.
- The town is an important integral part of the community.
- Cheddon Fitzpaine
- Still believe that we are part of Taunton area.
- I feel that you have your local area Bathpool and then wider belonging to Taunton.
- Keep it at it is, Taunton Council don't look after grass cutting well, so they won't look after parish.
- I'm in between West Monkton and Monkton Heathfield.
- Broomfield, on the boundary of West Monkton and Broomfield parishes.
- Sidbrook
- Taunton as the wider area
- I'm part of the town of Taunton
- Even though we a part of a rural location I think the villages form Taunton as a town so it's important for communications to be holistic.
- Cheddon Fitzpaine
- Monkton Heathfield
- As an arts centre we feel we serve the whole of Taunton, but very much belong to Monkton Heathfield and West Monkton in terms of our location.
- Priorswood
- I was born in Taunton and grew up there but I moved here to get away from the town centre and feel less a part of it so I count the two as being separate.

Question 8:

West Monkton Parish Council communicates and engages with the local community via the following methods. Which ones do you use, access, attend or participate?

Answered: 464 Skipped: 28



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Parish Council meetings	15.09% 70
Parish Council website/facebook page	44.18% 206
Monkton Matters/facebook page	47.63% 221
Village News	73.71% 342
Noticeboards	57.33% 266
Parish Surgery	4.31% 20
Annual Parish Meeting	9.70% 46
Annual Report	13.58% 63
Grants for social and well-being/climate resilience	3.45% 16
Events organised by the Parish Council e.g. Sunflower competition, hi via vest initiative	17.89% 83
Volunteering e.g. Country Park, litter picking, water watchers	9.27% 43
Neighbourhood Plan	21.55% 100
Brittons Ash Community Hall activities	15.73% 73
West Monkton Youth Club	1.94% 9
Other	4.31% 20
<b>Total Respondents: 464</b>	

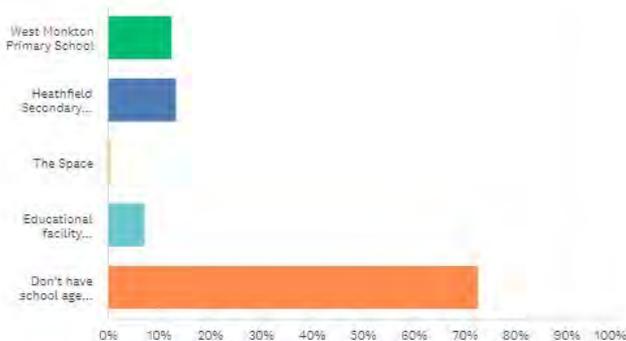
Question 9: Comments to Question 8

- Hartnells Farm Facebook Page
- WI Meeting
- Like the news delivered more regularly to our area missed many times
- The park and open spaces map
- Just any new literature through the door
- I have been resident 2 years so getting to know the various methods of WMPC
- Neighbourhood Watch
- Village Agent
- Speed watch
- Local chit chat
- Talking to local councillors
- West Monkton cricket club
- I didn't know the parish council was present elsewhere than website.
- West Monkton Village Hall, although it should be called Monkton Heathfield Village Hall.
- Hartnells farm Facebook group
- Speaking with Councillors who live in the areas as they walk around the development.
- St Augustine's Church
- Facebook

Question 10:

If you have school age children or children that have recently left school, which education facility do they attend?

Answered: 397 Skipped: 95

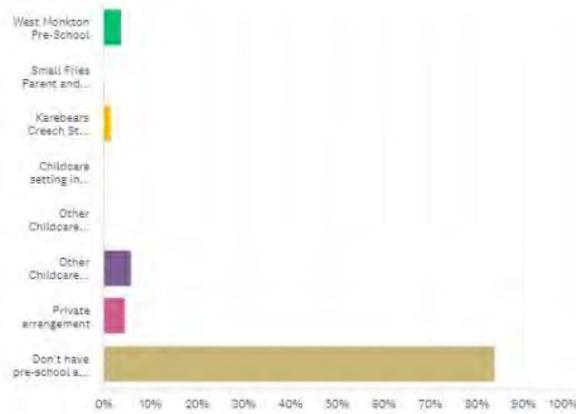


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
West Monkton Primary School	12.59%	50
Heathfield Secondary School	13.35%	53
The Space	0.50%	2
Educational facility outside the Parish	7.30%	29
Don't have school age children	72.80%	289
Total Respondents: 397		

Question 11:

If you have pre-school age children, which childcare setting do they attend?

Answered: 232 Skipped: 060

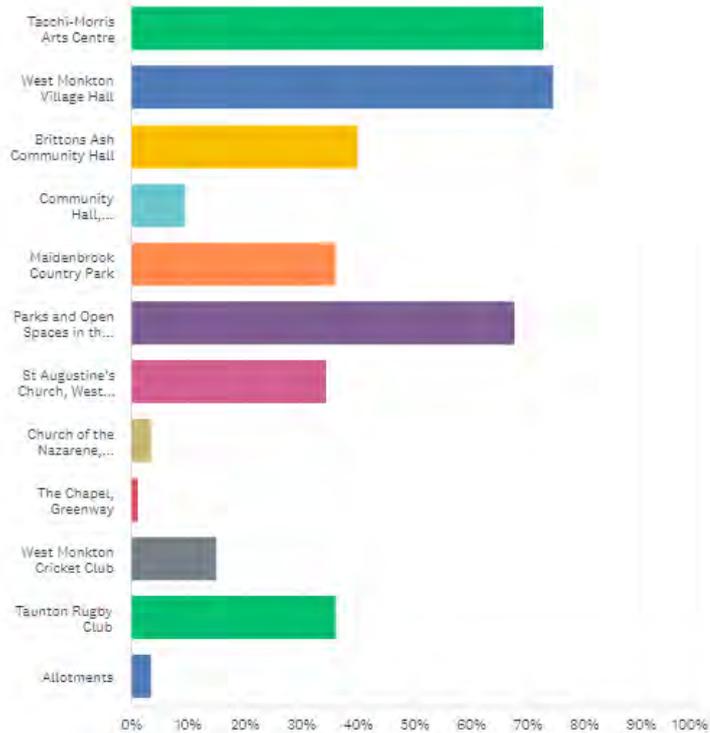


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
West Monkton Pre-School	3.88% 3
Small Fries Parent and Toddler Group	0.00% 0
Karebears Creech St Michael	1.72% 4
Childcare setting in Cheddon Fitzpaine	0.00% 0
Other Childcare arrangements in the Parish	0.00% 0
Other Childcare arrangements outside of Parish	6.03% 14
Private arrangement	4.74% 11
Don't have pre-school age children	84.05% 198
Total Respondents: 232	

Question 12:

Which of the following community facilities have you used?

Answered: 468 Skipped: 24



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Tacchi-Morris Arts Centre	72.86%	341
West Monkton Village Hall	74.57%	348
Brittons Ash Community Hall	40.17%	188
Community Hall, Heathfield Drive	9.62%	48
Maldenbrook Country Park	36.32%	170
Parks and Open Spaces in the Parish	67.74%	317
St Augustine's Church, West Monkton	34.62%	162
Church of the Nazarene, Bathpool	3.63%	17
The Chapel, Greenway	1.28%	6
West Monkton Cricket Club	15.17%	71
Taunton Rugby Club	36.32%	170
Allotments	3.63%	17
Total Respondents: 468		

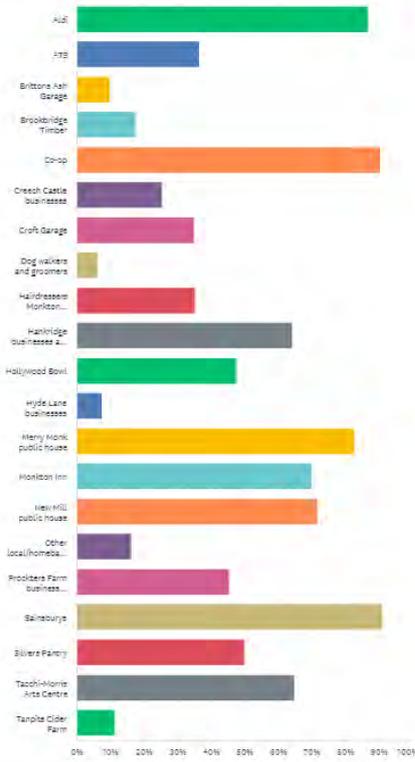
Question 13: Is there a community facility in the Parish not included in the list in Question 12? Please specify.

- What has happened to the sports area / field planned for the area along the new A38?
- GP pharmacy surgery supermarket things too small
- Children's play parks
- Somerset Wood
- Feel the canal and its towpath should be included that we use daily and is essential.
- Local shared sports facilities, this is not provided for the parish on a significant scale.
- Allens Brook, dog walk
- Football club
- Somerset Woods
- Taunton Deane Bowls Club
- Monkton Elm Garden Centre
- Cheddon Fitzpaine Village Hall
- The SPACE
- Canal

Question 14:

Which local businesses do you use or have you used

Answers: 488 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ Aldi	88.71% 424
▼ ATS	36.40% 178
▼ Brittons Ash Garage	8.82% 48
▼ Brookbridge Timber	17.59% 88
▼ Co-op	80.39% 442
▼ Creech Castle businesses	25.36% 124
▼ Croft Garage	34.87% 171
▼ Dog walkers and groomers	6.13% 30
▼ Hairdressers Monkton Heathfield, Bathpool and mobile	35.17% 172
▼ Hankridge businesses and retail	64.21% 314
▼ Hollywood Bowl	47.44% 232
▼ Hyde Lane businesses	7.36% 36
▼ Merry Monk public house	82.82% 408
▼ Monkton Inn	68.94% 342
▼ New Mill public house	71.57% 350
▼ Other local/homebased businesses e.g. financial advisor, PR, beauty, cleaning	16.16% 79
▼ Prockters Farm business complex/Cosseys Business buildings	45.40% 222
▼ Sainsburys	81.00% 448
▼ Silvers Pantry	48.90% 244
▼ Tacchi-Morris Arts Centre	64.83% 317
▼ Tanpits Cider Farm	11.25% 58
<b>Total Respondents: 488</b>	

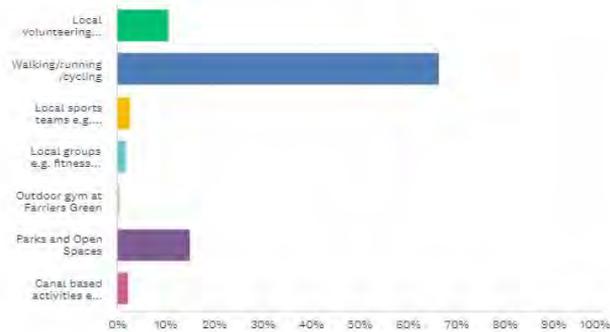
Question 15: Is there another Parish based business that you use / would like to add to the list in Question 14?

- We need / lack a post office as parking at Creech is very limited.
- Monkton Elm Garden Centre (commented by 40 residents of the parish)
- The cinema (commented by 3 members of the parish)
- Jenks and Son, Maven marketing, JBS Plumbing, CEF Dogwalkers, Tracy Bird Beauty
- More vigilance and policing of fly tipping and please see adjoining letter enclosed
- Chemist and doctors' surgery
- Independent food supplier like a farm shop that can do fruit/veg butchers and baked goods sourced locally, similar to Pynes at North Petherton.
- Local trade people (plumber, decorator)
- Layzs Ricks Chop Van
- Chemist/pharmacy
- Heathfield Window Cleaning- Monkton Heathfield
- Post Office
- Below ground solutions Blundells Lane
- Qualified trades people e.g. electricians, carpenters, plumbers etc
- Car boot at Procktors farm
- Carz opposite Procktors Farm and Empower at Procktors Farm
- Mc Donalds
- The car wash, Whites Landscaping
- Mill Autos
- B & Q
- Hestercombe
- The Tyre Bay Blundells Lane West Monkton

Question 16:

What leisure activities in the Parish do you partake in?

Answered: 422 Skipped: 70



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Local volunteering/fund raising	10.66% 48
Walking/running/cycling	66.59% 287
Local sports teams e.g. cricket, rugby, football	2.84% 12
Local groups e.g. fitness, art, sewing, table tennis, singing, pantomime	1.90% 8
Outdoor gym at Farriers Green	0.47% 2
Parks and Open Spaces	15.17% 64
Canal based activities e.g. fishing, paddle-boarding	2.37% 10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>422</b>

Question 17: Is there a Parish based sports team, activities group or other that wasn't included in the list in Question 16? Please specify.

- Local sports teams (commented on by 18 residents)
- Local groups (commented on by 49 residents)
- Parks and open spaces (commented on by 217 residents)
- Canal based activities (commented on by 91 residents)
- Farriers Green outdoor gym (commented on by 22 residents)
- Walking / running / cycling (commented on by 34 residents)
- Martial arts, football, swimming, sports centre
- We think every roundabout in our area should be planted out.
- WI meeting
- Would love more clubs for families with children such as outdoor fitness /family games.
- You don't have an activity that I do, I am a ballroom dancer also there is not any places to dance except the Lawns so I have to travel to other places so that I do.
- Theatre
- Thursday Coffee morning at the village hall
- Ruishton Football Club covers the parish area for under 18's
- Line dancing
- Volunteering
- Pilates
- Badminton Clubs x 3
- Bell Ringing x 2
- Yoga

Question 18: Is there anything else you wish to add? Comments below:

- The impact of the Toneway road improvements is having a severe impact on local businesses across the whole area and there seems to be little recognition or understanding of its impact. The area needs a new motorway junction at Walford Cross and doesn't need another Bus Gate at Monkton Heathfield.
- The Parish Council fully recognises and supports the villagers of West Monkton and represents the views at County level and successfully so.
- Yes, I would like to keep West Monkton Parish Council they are a key part of the community. I would however like to feedback - please stop pushing the traffic to be forced off Yallands Hill - it has always been a main road and there cannot be another bus gate at Monkton elm - traffic is horrendous with one bus gate in the parish let alone two of them. When will we have shops opposite the new primary school? When will the village have a football pitch?
- West Monkton is a well-managed and well represented community. I cannot see the need to add another layer of local administration which would water down resources.
- Local representation satisfies local needs / requirements. Don't change it!
- Parking needs sorting in Hartnells Farm.
- I think it is important that the area has a clear voice to be heard. There are a lot of changes in the area and if the parish council was absorbed into a wider town council the local issues could be lost amongst a lot of other town issues. It would be good for the parish council to have a seat at any wider town council to be able to input and share information.

- If you are serious about climate change then this whole area needs a good bus service into town, not just on weekdays but also evenings and weekends.
- Stop building in Monkton Heathfield / West Monkton!
- Keep West Monkton Parish Council
- 1) Would be nice to receive copy of village news in our postcode area. 2) General upkeep and maintenance of boundary fences/bus shelters etc could be better. 3) Removal of graffiti on road bollards.
- We appreciate the level of local parish council input with regards to keeping footpaths cut back and village signage being traditional and metal not modern and reflective as would likely be replaced by a town council. Also parish council input on matter such as planning and lighting is so that it actually 'cares' about the local area and isn't mass managed as a tick box exercise from someone with no vested interest in the area.
- It would be a shame to lose the Parish Council. I'd be concerned that Taunton Town Council would not have the same local focus and the West Monkton Parish area would be competing with the other farmer parish councils for funds and priorities etc.
- Losing local parish representation would be a real shame - the parish would lose its identity and become lost to areas/issues that shout the loudest outside the area!
- Monkton Heathfield is a maturing community served by a Parish Council which manages to strike a difficult balance amidst considerable change. I feel that the area would be underserved by a central town council and would be worse off as a result.
- I strongly oppose the proposed town council.
- Aged 91, am not able to involve myself in much that occurs in the Parish.
- The support required to allow the country park to be a reality has been lacking.
- Enjoying walks around Monkton Heathfield, West Monkton have now become quite dangerous with the speed and number of vehicles now using our roads. Signage seems to have no impact on compliance with speed restrictions.
- There seems to be a lot of new residential developments in Taunton and surrounding areas and this will only keep growing in regions such as this, integration with other parishes and Taunton will help better navigate around this town. The transport situation with traffic roadworks and taxis has been a let-down for us. We were on the verge of leaving Taunton.
- Nothing locally for children 8-14 years as in North Petherton i.e. basketball or something similar.
- We do not want West Monkton Parish Council to be absorbed into the greater part of Taunton. Village life has been disrupted enough with all the building and traffic.
- We need a local Parish to support the hard-working people who live here.
- Taunton is becoming too large therefore we need to keep our local Parish Council.
- Stop the rat run through Monkton Heathfield and enforce the speed limit and weight limit.
- Please consider that we now have enough new housing within the parish and not ruin what's left of the lanes and green spaces by building more. Thank you.
- Am quite new to the area (11 months) so am not really involved in any activities. Aged 62 living alone.
- Speed of cars through Hob Close - speed bumps required. Parking on kerbs - difficult for people with buggies/emergency vehicles. 20mph signs in main estate, Hob Close gets missed out during these initiatives, lots of families with young children, trying to prevent accidents i.e., children walking in roads to avoid cars, then cars speed up road likely to get hit or worse, raised with counsellor, informed no action as roads not adopted by the council yet. Dogs in Hob Close play park, no signs again. Signs in main estate, missed out.
- You are doing wonderful work.
- Your efforts make our area lovely place to live.
- Thank you!
- These are, currently, too many levels of government. Unitary authority is an excellent way forward, I am of the opinion that Parish Councils are generally talking shops with very little real power or influence.

- As a resident on one of the new developments I sometimes feel as though we are regarded as aliens.
- Taunton Town Centre is a poor state - any future town council needs to put all its efforts into revitalising the town council, and leave parish council well alone.
- As I do not have children the news that is delivered allows me to see events and what can be done, I do not want to rely on website/internet.
- It would be great shame to lose the Local Parish Council I am totally against the idea. Local council for the local people.
- Not sure how much 'say' the Parish Council have now!
- Please find enclosed letter that was dumped with remains of a McDonalds and various drinks and bottles dumped after car left Coker Close late PM! Perhaps you could issue said named on letter with a warning.
- A Taunton Town Council will not be as sympathetic to local issues as a Parish Council is with locally elected members. It would not be as appreciative to local issues as its members who all live locally - bigger is not necessarily better.
- We are very happy living and for me formerly working in Monkton Heathfield. For me its massively important we retain a village feel. I don't see how this will be the case if we become swallowed under Taunton Town Council. Please retain ALL parish councils locally. Many thanks.
- Taunton Town Council needs to put its own house in order before looking to take over anything else. The town, from when we moved here 60 years ago, has become a poor example for people now wishing to move here.
- Keep the status quo.
- West Monkton Parish Council are doing a pretty good job and keeping the community informed of what's going on. I see no reason at all to change anything that's not broken.
- We are building a lovely community with some amazing outdoor spaces.
- Can we start to more actively engage the community in responding to the climate emergency and focussing on local solutions to each of the 5 categories in the Prince William, BBC Earth shot programme.
- The local scout group is not able to meet in the Parish. Due to covid and the size of the group. West Monkton Scouts need a hall of a suitable size to they can meet regularly in the Parish and have somewhere to store their equipment.
- I live in the village of Monkton Heathfield - keep it that way! If I wanted to live in a town I would move!!
- WMPC has a challenge to balance the needs of residents in the rapidly growing new estates with the needs of existing residents in more rural locations.
- It is difficult to see how a Taunton Town Council would have capacity to consider WM issues alongside the many pressing issues which undoubtedly exist in the central area.
- Local WM representation would be 'lost' amongst the needs of the greater central population.
- Please please stay local and focused on parish affairs - to amalgamate and become part of Taunton Town would be such a mistake.
- WM is unique and forming part of a wider range of parishes will add no value to the village - smaller localised parishes typically thrive and are run more efficiently. This is evidenced across the country. A loss of control/assets to, in my opinion, a very incompetent bunch will be a negative for the village. If a businessman/business woman (who has actually achieved something in business) was there to run a larger council, then this would be a different debate all together but I am afraid I have no trust in local councils.
- It's not a very friendly neighbourhood like it used to be when one used to be able to get out and about.
- I am sad to say that more goes on in a mortuary than goes on in Bathpool alas.
- I do not want to become part of Taunton Council. I'm proud of our individual representation with decisions being made locally via a small panel and council. A more personal council via the parish.
- Start football club
- Scouting and guiding
- Love the zip scooters
- Utterly dismayed with our council, no regard for residents in our local area.

- For this questionnaire and leaflet sent, I am supposed to make a decision about whether it stays local or goes to Taunton. I haven't received any information about pros and cons to staying/joining either. So this questionnaire has been filled out with the opinion of stay local - but I don't really have my argument as to why I've done this.
- Can we stop building residential houses? There are few jobs, no industry, poor infrastructure, few GPs, there is nothing attracting employers to invest in Taunton but lots of housing.
- Lived in Brittons Ash for 64 years which has always been part of West Monkton Parish Council and I wish it to remain so and the funds it receives accordingly.
- We only need to view the road work fiasco in Taunton which shows what a town council is bad at = no joined up thinking and traffic chaos everywhere.
- Too elderly to partake in leisure activities but have cycled for many many years and attended keep fit classes.
- My wife and I believe the smaller a council is, the more efficient it can be on local matters and easier to approach its councillors.
- The developments over the past several years have done nothing to enhance the local area whatsoever! An out-of-date plan devised by out of date 'powers' that be! The local parish council has always been the same, run by individuals who only see their own blinkered points of view, and in a few cases their own personal gain, no names mentioned, they know who they are! It used to be a nice place to live once upon a time, but no longer!
- I would very much like to see a post office in the Parish.
- Our identity at this local level is with the parish area not with Taunton. We live in Monkton Heathfield and that is what we put on our address not Taunton.
- Living in Monkton Heathfield where we moved to for a better quality of life has now become intolerable due to poor planning and leadership. The money that should have been used for our infrastructure has been squandered elsewhere.
- I am very disappointed that the village I moved to has become so built up and traffic is a nightmare.
- I am now looking to move out of the area.
- I am over 90 not very mobile and so my participation in local activities is minimal.
- My wife and I have lived here for around 10 years, our son and his wife and children for about 5.
- We enjoy the local sense of identity, with the schools, restaurants, playing fields and lovely walks.
- We feel it is important to maintain this sense of community and would be very disappointed if it were taken from us or compromised.
- The basketball nets in the park opposite the cricket club are not suitable as the ball gets stuck in the chains, maybe that is the reason for low usage.
- Monkton Heathfield is no longer a village. The school has moved to Bathpool. The busy main road has cut us off. There is a sense of isolation. The 20mph speed restriction has done nothing to ease volume of traffic.
- I have lived in Taunton and am proud of it being our main town however when I moved to West Monkton it was important to me to be moving to a village. It is now important that the village/parish can fight for its identity.
- The inclusion of the outlying parishes into the town council will mean they lose control of their community identity. One Council cannot adequately represent the needs of residents living in the town and those living in the rural parishes. WMPC does a good job in understanding and representing the needs of the local residents which will be completely lost if it is dissolved.
- For as long as possible it would be beneficial to remain a Parish and attend to our own business, not to be included in Taunton Town Council.
- Prefer to keep West Monkton Parish as it is at present.
- Yes, we need to help reduce the speed limit on the new western relief road before there is a serious accident, also the grass verges need attention. The grass is very high and looks awful.
- I believe that we will lose local contact if solely part of Taunton Council. Much of what West Monkton Council has is local and sometimes personal contacts.

- It feels like this village parish is the only thing left to keep it as a village and the Parish Council is important to myself as a resident.
- I think it would be useful to have another shop as well as the Co-op in walking distance in Monkton Heathfield due to the new amount of residents on the new housing estates.
- Our Parish Council are doing an amazing job and if it changed it wouldn't be such a nice one, bigger is definitely not better on this occasion.
- Change can bring fresh ideas and forward and outward thinking, sharing of ideas and long-term vision.
- It was disappointing after a few attempts no one from the local parish respond to my concerns, so I took it to my MP who helped.
- Strongly believe in the local parish council. Need to keep local identity. Resident 40 years. Local issues need local representatives who understand the area.
- Too many houses have been built in the Monkton area. The Parish Council should put a stop to this.
- How come Brittons Ash Community Hall gets the only mention as an example of assets to be lost. There is a long-standing Village Hall that rarely gets a mention by the current parish council, remember the old village still exists.
- The Parish Council best represents the interests of the West Monkton village community, local detailed knowledge of planning in a conservation area together with the village road system is a pre-requisite.
- Am against losing our parish council as I like the idea of having a smaller group of local people acting in our best interests. I also appreciate that we are able to contact WMPC directly when issues arise and are not fobbed off or added to a list of conflicting needs from other areas. We pay a premium rate of council tax to be part of the parish and rightly so, when we benefit from a specialised and personal service that would be lost entirely if we merged into one town council. I appreciate the regular updates from Cllr Mark Besley with regard to developments/issues in the local area and feel that without this local support there would be no end of town councillors doing what they want in the interest of generating more money without caring for the needs of local villagers and members of the parish. SAVE WMPC! (Unless of course a new town council will tackle lack of 30mph signage and anti-social driving.
- Please please give us some good bus shelters soon, one that shield you from the wind on the main road, its dreadful waiting for buses at the moment. Why did they put them in before you changed the bus stops? It's a disgrace.
- Keep the villages and enclaves going and run it from Taunton HQ.
- The Parish of West Monkton should be allowed to keep its identity and retain its Parish Council which administers the affairs of the Parish with thought and efficiency to a very high standard.
- Our Parish Council is invaluable in helping the community and I would like to see this asset kept as it is.
- It would be nice if residents living on new developments in particular along the new WRR were made to feel part of the community, the fact that we are not is why I have no particular desire to support the West Monkton Parish Council.
- Parishes should be kept separate so they can represent the local views rather than Taunton centre taking priority.
- We strongly feel that our local Parish council does a superb job in servicing the local community. After all isn't serving the "local" community what it's all about?
- Unfortunately, I have never felt the Parish Council represents me and my family. Too much emphasis has been on retaining the old ways, of what it was like to be a small village, opposed to what we are which is a suburb of Taunton.
- The parish has failed to adapt and embrace the inevitability of change and this has led to many of my local friends and neighbours feeling left behind or forgotten.
- Setting community boundaries based on ecclesiastical parishes is out of date, and no longer relevant to the majority of residents.
- I think this could be a lifeboat for those in SWT likely left out of the new Unitary Authority arrangement, and another potential waste of rate-payers money following the creation of SWT. Why not wait until the Unitary Authority is running and get their input.

- The parish council know the local area and the issues, not sure the town council will. Local contacts again not the same for the town council. Will the town council just be like having Taunton Deane council before it took over west Somerset!
- Given the change to a unitary council for Somerset it is right that Taunton town now needs a local council to focus on its local needs. However, it is not right that the Taunton council should subsume the existing parish councils. These areas would then lose local representation who are ensuring the issues of those parishes are being addressed.
- All the councils need to talk to each other and not have all the road works happening at the same time, trying to get round Taunton while all the road works was happening was really hard, there was no planning into and no consideration with the locals.
- We feel that any funding given to the new Taunton Town Council will be swallowed up by Taunton itself (which it needs desperately) with little left for the other areas. It is bound to lead to our area getting less representation by people who know the area.
- I don't think merging the parish councils to one big Taunton council would be good for the local community. Local needs to kept local.
- Overall, I feel parish councils add an additional level of cost and bureaucracy. Therefore as long as a town council provides similar services and provides mechanisms for all voices to be heard it will be a more efficient and effective model. As a bigger council it will have more weight when it comes to planning and highways etc
- The road and traffic through the village is a shambles and they need to install the bus gate.
- A wonderful place to live and work. Also, many events and activities for all age groups.
- I am currently working hard as a volunteer to help create the Somerset Wood & Country Park. This will be a real amenity for all local communities & a lasting legacy. Should Taunton take over any of the parishes this could have a detrimental effect on what we are trying to do.
- What benefit would there be to adding village parishes? Would it give more powers to ensure house builders actually deliver what was set in the approved planning applications? Developers seem to build more houses whilst dragging their feet with providing roads, amenities etc.
- A cynical person might think the soon to be displaced SW&T councillors are making a shameless attempt at a power grab so they can maintain their over-inflated self-worth.
- As residents of West Monkton Parish, we appreciate and value the impartiality of the 'non-political' Parish Council, and would not wish to be represented by a large Town Council whose members may make decisions based upon political affiliations. We believe the benefits currently enjoyed by our local community should remain paramount, and this is best served by local people elected by local residents in the form of a locally accountable Parish Council.
- I feel the local council should keep its assets. We've been living in the parish for a year and the parish council are much more active than our last one was. It's nice. They were even helpful before we moved. Hard work shouldn't be taken away. It should be there for the community to continue to enjoy.
- Thank you for all your hard work.
- I would prefer the authorities remain as they are, this way around we will have representation that has our best interests at heart.

# Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Council Community Governance Review

## Parish Council Survey results

On the 19<sup>th</sup> of October 2021, a decision was reached by Somerset West & Taunton Council (SWT) “that a community governance review be undertaken of the unparished area of Taunton and surrounding parishes (Trull, Bishop’s Hull, Comeytrowe, Norton Fitzwarren, Staplegrove, Kingston St. Mary, Cheddon Fitzpaine, West Monkton) with a view to the creation of a parish or parishes and council(s) to serve all or part of that area.” This was accompanied by a commitment on the part of SWT to carry out a consultation exercise across the area involved.

Consequently, Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Council (CFPC) resolved to engage with the community of CF and establish their views on the matter. The December 2021 issue of our parish newsletter (distributed to every household within the parish) laid out the facts and explained to residents the need to at least resolve the outstanding issue of the unparished area in and around the centre of town. A survey form modelled on the one used by SWT together with a pre-paid return envelope was inserted into the newsletter and residents were asked to share their viewpoint with their Parish Council by means of either the paper form or the online equivalent on the CFPC website. Residents were also informed that SWT were carrying out their own public consultation and were provided with the SWT online link. Residents were urged to complete both the CFPC survey AND the SWT survey.

This report presents the results of our CFPC survey form where 116 responses were received:

**Q1 and responses:** We need your postcode to validate your status as a member of our community

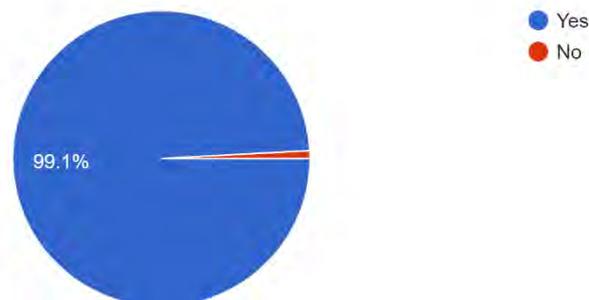
116 responses

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### **Q2 and responses:**

Do you want to keep your Parish Council and with its local knowledge and representation?

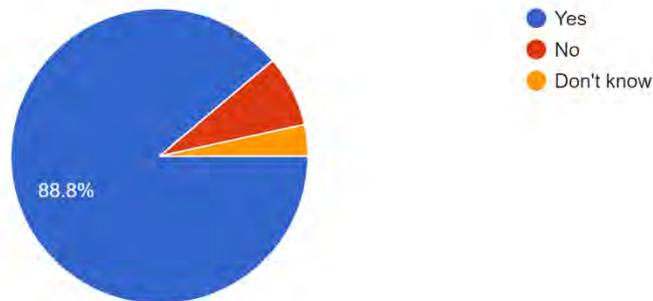
116 responses



### Q3 and responses:

Do you think the new Taunton Town Council should represent only the currently unparished centre of Taunton?

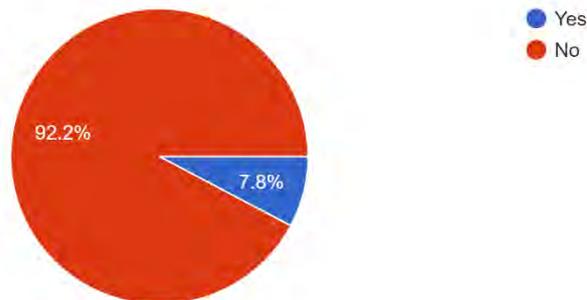
116 responses



### Q4 and responses:

Do you think the area in which you live in Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish should be incorporated into any future Taunton Town Council?

116 responses



Do you have any comments to make?

1. In my opinion, SWT's review is not motivated by what's best for our parish.
2. The Parish Council for Cheddon Fitzpaine is vitally important as a link with the Parish community to look after our interests and concerns
3. We need to keep our Parish Council in Cheddon Fitzpaine as they are the best forum for our interests locally.
4. Border of the parish may need adjusting. It would make some sense for Nerrols to be incorporated within Taunton, but certainly not the rest of Cheddon Fitzpaine.
5. Absorption of the parish councils into one large council may seem sensible on paper to "improve efficiency", but it is at expense of the loss of voice for the residents of these parishes. It would be inevitable that such a solution would mean residents would lose influence on decision making for their area, to the detriment of those areas.

6. Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Council should remain as our Parish Council. Who else can possibly know the needs of the people better in this area!!!!
7. I believe in communities and the importance of having Parish Councils to understand and represent them. People choose to live in rural communities for a reason, and I cannot see how their needs could be represented in the same way if they were forced to be part of a Taunton Town Council. Therefore I support the Parish Council for Cheddon Fitzpaine remaining in place and independent.
8. The Cheddon parish should only incorporate the rural element of Cheddon. Any new boundaries should ideally not span urban and rural areas.
9. Thank you for all of your hard work for Cheddon Fitzpaine. It would be such a shame to lose all of the local knowledge and for this to be absorbed into a larger town council.
10. local knowledge from local people
11. I don't think an all incorporating town council would.could ensure specific local representation for each area of Taunton.
12. Leave the parishes as they are, they work and look after their community well. The unparished areas need a Town Council to look after them the same as in the Parishes.
13. My concern is where will it stop, will we then merge further and before long all is lost as the majority become better supported. Much better to improve support where its needed (Taunton Town). A brighter future would see a new Parish welcomed and supported from the surrounding Parish Councils.
14. The current system works well. There is no benefit from changing it
15. the area would be too large and the parish community will be lost especially with all the new build developments
16. I chose to live in a village not a town.
17. the existing council cannot manage what they have now, what makes them think they can do better with a bigger anti social behaviour, graffiti, homelessness, road works. The town centre is a disgrace!
18. However, parts of cfpc are becoming more urbanised. If the PC is retained, we must continue to ensure the PC gets proper opportunity to influence issues beyond the PC boundary which impacts on the parish eg; transport, infrastructure and planning.
19. Local parish councillors have direct local indirect knowledge and best interests at heart
20. The local parish council is very proactive and decisions made provide what I consider is great value for money due to their local knowledge.
21. keep it local. local people making local decisions
22. Surely the title says it all. Taunton town council. We are on the fringes and there is a reason why we do not live in town.
23. Looking at the map overleaf, the town council parish should be the unparished area only. Maybe North and south
24. presumably if SWT proposal was to go ahead, we end up with local councillors only. Not happy about that
25. i think that cheddon fitzpaine parish council should remain and the unparished area to be taken over by taunton town council
26. Having attended the CFPC meeting on the 6th of December 2021, and hearing Mike Rigby talk on the arguments for restructuring the boundary when making a new Town PC for Taunton town centre - I want to add most strongly, that I think the two separate issues, (having a Town Council for the un-parished area, and re establishing the boundary for the town centre), should be done completely separately, as doing them together is NOT taking an opportunity, it is misleading people on a very important issue and effectively a land grab.

27. I feel most strongly that this decision should be democratic too, and am shocked to learn that SWaT will be making the final decision on the new parish council and boundary themselves - this is so wrong on every level.
28. If SWaT want to look at the urban/rural boundary at a later date - they MUST also redress the way finance is distributed to rural parishes so that they do not loose out.
29. I am really saddened to see yet another government issue sweeping in like this, (straight after the unity issue), loading people with so much information, then giving them little time to reply at Christmas - also, at time when Covid has changed out lives in so many ways.
30. It feels to me that Councils are taking advantage of this situation, rushing mass decisions through, bamboozling people with masses of information to the point that they don't understand or don't have the time, to the equipment/facilities to fairly understand or reply
31. Outlying parishes have different needs to the town and should not be amalgamatedi very much like the work done by cfpc. They know the area better than anyone and always do their best for residents. Long may this continue.
32. town councils don't understand the high value of our green spaces, they might support new development. Rural solutions - no new homes. save cheddon fitzpaine.
33. The manner in which the SWT have conducted themselves in the matter to date has generated a great deal of mistrust in their motives. SWT did not follow the advice of its own working group when it made its decision in October and I would ask them to respect the outcome of the consultation when completed.
34. As a resident of Cheddon Fitzpaine Village I am concerned to maintain the unique character of this Conservation Area. I believe Cheddon Fitzpaine PC is better placed to understand and support the needs of this area. Conservation Areas have statutory protection but also rely on the local councils respecting the intent of this legislation not just the letter. I don't think a single Taunton council could do this successfully.
35. There is a real risk that if the Cheddon Fitzpaine PC was abolished it would send a signal to potential developers that there is no distinction between the centre of Taunton and these outlying villages. Taunton should be doing everything they can to preserve these areas and the creation of a single town council would be a very deliberate step in in the other direction.
36. By having a central decision making organisation will not reflect the wishes or understand the views of local residence
37. The town council needs the revenue from the outlining few estates which are part of the change the councils have presided over, Without the new estates money the town council wont have enough to make the difference. We will all benefit from. The parished area here, has no facilities.
38. I can see that there is a case for joining up of parishes eg CF & WM
39. I would envisage Cheddon parish council and all other parishes to be subsets of the core town council.
40. While I understand that Taunton as a whole has overlapping communities among the parishes, when it comes to management and distribution of funds for anything, it has been proven for the longest time that the smaller and even more localised parish councils would do a far better job and with more sincerity than the more generic Taunton Town council.
41. In Cheddon Fitzpaine we have one of the finest village halls in Somerset. It was built in 2000 with initially, local fund raising, and a grant (if memory serves) of £20,000 from our local Parish Council, which was provided by increasing the precept for a set number of years. It was this local support that helped secure the Lottery, and local authority grants which enabled the hall to be built. I have been a trustee of the Memorial Hall for over 30 years and am now chair, and I truly believe that without the support of our P.C. at the time, our beautiful hall

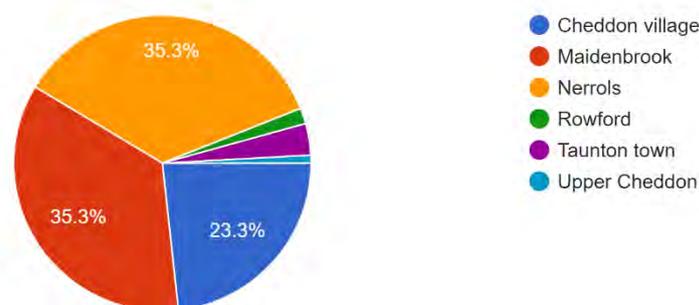
would not have been built, which would have been a huge loss to the community. I do not feel that this level of help would have been provided by an amorphous Taunton Town Council.

42. I feel that the likes of Cashford gate we should be part of Taunton even is the village of Cheddon Fitzpaine and West Monkton remain outside. The better reflects the reality on the ground.
43. Depends on council tax
44. Our Parish council have used their local knowledge to produce a neighbourhood plac and deliver exceptional value for not much money.
45. Any question of incorporation of the parishes should be proposed by the parishes and not by an outside agency. Id this proposal is good for the parishes then they will support it. It must not be imposed.
46. To me, it would be bonkers incorporating this parish into a town centre Parish Council. The current PC has representatives from across the parish collecting, representing and dealing with resident concerns.
47. our parish councillors are local people and can be easily approached in person by parishioners. They have extensive knowledge of the history of their parish and concerns of parishioners. This makes them best qualified in administrating local matters.

#### Q5 and responses:

Which one of the following areas do you feel you belong to and identify with most

116 responses



#### Additional Comments:

1. Cheddon Fitzpaine PC is doing a great job and will be able to do an even better one when it is in complete control of all the CIL revenue expected to accrue from future developments in the parish.
2. To me, there is a very distinct difference between living in a town/city (urban life), to living in the countryside (rural life) - the needs and priorities are different for both and the parishes need to reflect this.
3. The Parish councils should have some of the services provided by SW&T devolved down to them, including the finance to support this.
4. we are a historic village and do not want to be included with an urban town council if a separate council is created for the unparished area, the parish councils should ensure they have a strong voice on the Taunton town council. The reason? The town is the major

economic and social driver and decisions in the town council area will have impact on the parishes. It is only right that the parishes have an input to these decisions.

5. SWaT need to do a hell of a lot more to give people a fair chance to understand and comment on all the policies they are pushing ahead with. I am very dubious about how they effect change and quite frankly, Councils should be helping us, yet I feel they can be trusted and need policing... very sad.
6. My preference is the SWT restrict any changes to the un-parished area and make no changes to any of the existing PC. There are many other changes to the Somerset Council structure in the next few years and any discussion of wider change in the parish structure should be delayed until after the new arrangements of the Unitary Council are in place and people can view any parish boundary changes with this in place. Otherwise it seems like SWT are rushing this through in advance and I would question the motivation for doing this.
7. SWT should be embarrassed at the way they are proceeding in this matter.
8. Always a matter of concern when parishes (communities) are threatened with losing identity, however, not all change should be considered detrimental.
9. Thankyou for bringing this to our attention
10. Parish councils provide a worthwhile contribution to community governance and are mostly often first responders to any issue/concern in their local area. They are best placed communicators in communities and are a substantial economically viable tier of local government. Devolved governance to local parishes have historically long term objectives to facilitate a dialogue between parishioners and town councils. It is incomprehensible that town councils could take over current responsibilities in parishes provided to a large degree by voluntary parish councillors who make a valuable contribution by investing their time and energy into local issues. Former district councils devolved into larger unitary authorities are not yet proven to be a successful transition to local governance and in many respects it is premature to be debating further changes while communities are already to address changes. Any danger of losing the only effective economic tier of administration should be rejected.
11. I don't see the need to fix something that is clearly working so well for us. We have a Taunton postcode but we do not live in Taunton and for most there are important reasons why.
12. I have drawn on the hard copy what I regard as Taunton as now and where the growth has come from. Phase 2 as West Monkton develops may need including too.
13. I agree that there should be a parish council for the unparished area of Taunton. This new PC if formed will have many challenges over the forthcoming years such as reenergising the town centre which all agree is in a critical state. Parishes such as ours, Monkton Heathfield etc will receive a standard of support from such a PC well below that which they deserve.

## **Conclusion**

CFPC believe the survey questionnaire that is the basis of this report clearly constitutes a full and fair consultation with our local community on the Local Governance Review undertaken by SWT. We feel that the number and nature of responses received provides clear evidence that there is no appetite within our parish for changing the third-tier status quo. We therefore call upon SWT to give full weight to this evidence during its Local Governance Review decision-making process.

**From:** [Helen McGladdery](#)  
**To:** [Prouse, Marcus](#); [Cllr Perry, Derek](#)  
**Subject:** Comeytrove PC response  
**Date:** 17 December 2021 14:49:57

---

Dear Marcus and Derek

Please find below the agreed response from Comeytrove Parish Council. Please confirm receipt of this email

The Parish Council are open minded in principle to the concept of becoming part of the Town Council subject to further information becoming available in the second round of consultations.

Kind regards

**Helen McGladdery**  
**Clerk to Comeytrove Parish Clerk - CILCA**

**Comeytrove Parish Council Privacy Policy can be found by following the attached link:**

**[http://www.comeytrove-pc.gov.uk/\\_UserFiles/Files/Comeytrove%20Privacy%20policy.pdf](http://www.comeytrove-pc.gov.uk/_UserFiles/Files/Comeytrove%20Privacy%20policy.pdf)**

# **Creech St Michael Parish Council**

## **Community Governance Review**

Creech St Michael Parish Council [CSMPC] is supportive of the “unparished” area in Taunton becoming Taunton Town Council. However, CSMPC is NOT supportive of the 8 parishes Trull, Bishops Hull, Comeytrove, Norton Fitzwarren, Staplegrove, Kingston St Mary, Cheddon Fitzpaine and West Monkton Parish Council, forming a new Taunton Town Council.

When people make the decision of where they wish to reside, consideration and choice is given to whereabouts in the country they would like to reside, a decision then follows as to whether residing in a town environment, a semi-rural or rural location is their choice. For parishioners who reside on the periphery of Taunton to suddenly finding themselves, surrounded by fields in the countryside, to being faced with being moved from living in a “Parish” to being classified as residing within a “Town Council” is undemocratic and unacceptable.

West Monkton Parish Council [WMPC] is a neighbouring parish to Creech St Michael and has a very proactive team of 9 PCllrs, a Clerk and Assistant Clerk, who recently expanded their Clerk team and have employed an Assistant Clerk Community whose new role is to build and develop the WM community. As more than two thirds of the Parish Councillors were elected, and their Clerk and Asst Clerk are CILCA qualified, WMPC have been able to declare the General Power of Competence, and this has enabled the Parish Council the power to expand the services they provide for their community, and these extra local services exceed what some other Parish Councils are able to provide.

The PCllrs work closely with the local businesses within their Parish, and the PC is very supportive of local charities, including the shared responsibility with Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Council, of the running of the new and developing Maidenbrook Country Park and Somerset Wood. WMPCllrs are also very aware and keen to address the current climate change crisis and are working hard towards addressing and reducing the carbon footprint within the Parish.

The WMPC is bordered and surrounded by open countryside, with an area of the Quantock Hills being within the Parish boundary, an AONB, together with many villages and hamlets. Residing in West Monkton currently offers its parishioners a feeling of place and local village identity. There is a “green necklace” to ensure division from Taunton Town, the Taunton to Bridgwater Canal runs through the Parish, as well as public open spaces to encourage wildlife and outdoor recreation, and for keen gardeners there are allotments available. WM Parish has undergone changes over the last 10+ years and it now also incorporates one of Taunton’s Urban Extensions, locally referred to as MH1. The WMPCllrs have actively worked with the builders, Persimmons and Redrow, as the build out has progressed, with the intention to take over, manage and improve the open spaces within the MH1 development. The WM parish now has an additional 1291 homes and more than 4,000 residents, who have all chosen to reside in this “out of town” location. West Monkton has a very active community, a newly establishing youth club, local scout group, a thriving village cricket club, and offers its residents a choice of different clubs and activities within its two village halls. WM also has a very up to date and informative Parish Council Website and FB page. The West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine Neighbourhood Plan was adopted in 2018 which has secured and enabled additional CIL for spending in the Parish.

The 8 “proposed” Parish Councils must be permitted to make the decision of remaining as a “Parish” or becoming a “Town” Council. Following the recently conducted WMPC Survey regarding the “unparished Taunton Council” the residents of West Monkton have clearly indicated their preference

by 86.65% to remain as a Parish Council and the WMPC have submitted a very detailed response making a very strong case for remaining a "Parish" Council. The West Monkton parishioners and Parish Council's preference/decision to remain as a "Parish Council" should be respected by the Somerset West and Taunton District Council.

# KINGSTON ST MARY PARISH COUNCIL

*Chairman: Cllr Paul Townsend*

*Clerk: Katie Gibbins*

*Hayrig, Nailsbourne,*

*TAUNTON, TA2 8AG*

*Tel: 01823 451505*

*Email: clerk@ksmpc.org.uk*

15 December 2021

## Community Governance Review of Taunton and Surrounding Parishes

### Introduction

Please find below Kingston St Mary Parish Council's submission to Somerset West and Taunton Council's (SW&T) Community Governance Review (the Review), for the unparished area of Taunton and the surrounding parishes, including Kingston St Mary, with a view to the creation of Parishes or Councils to serve this area.

Kingston St Mary Parish Council (Parish Council) held an Extraordinary Parish Council Meeting on the 24 November to consider the Review. This Meeting was attended by Parish, District and County Councillors and a large number of local residents. The views expressed by the local community, together with the findings of Kingston St Mary's Community Plan and Housing Needs Survey will form the evidence base for this submission to SW&T.

### Summary

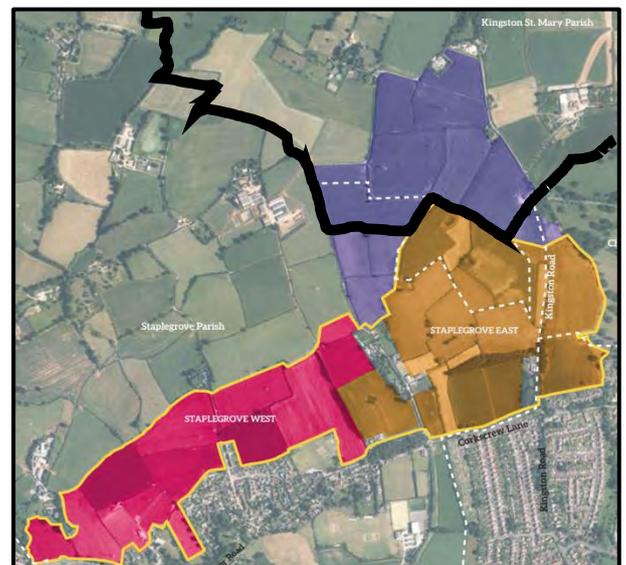
Local residents attach the highest importance to being separate from Taunton, which together with the evidence presented below amply demonstrates that Kingston St Mary should remain a standalone Parish and not be subsumed into a new Taunton Town Council.

The land in the Parish is used mainly for working farms and is partly within the Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Beauty, which is very different to the urban nature of Somerset's County Town. The vast majority of residents have a strong affinity with Kingston St Mary and identify the Parish as their home. This derives mainly from its rural environment and its community facilities, which feature greatly in residents' daily lives. Consequently, it is evident that the current community governance arrangements within Kingston St Mary reflect the identities and interests of Parish residents and should therefore remain unchanged.

The Staplegrove East development is however of great concern to residents, as approximately 50% of the proposed 915 homes, will occupy a small number of currently unpopulated fields at the extreme south of Kingston St Mary Parish. The Staplegrove East development will be a more urban environment, when compared to Kingston St Mary Parish, and have its own educational, recreational and community facilities. Therefore, its residents are unlikely to identify with Kingston St Mary's mainly rural community.

The local community, support adjusting the Parish boundary, as shown opposite, to exclude the part of the Staplegrove East development which extends into Kingston St Mary Parish. It is also clear that Kingston St Mary Parish should remain a predominately undeveloped rural environment, which protects the Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) from the urban expansion of Taunton.

The proposed boundary change, as outlined above, would improve future community cohesion and the delivery of local services. It would also provide more effective and convenient local government reflective of the identities and interests of both the Kingston St Mary and Staplegrove communities.



## Kingston St Mary's Separate Identity

Two of the most significant messages to come from Kingston St Mary's Community Plan, are the desire for local residents to remain separate from Taunton and preservation of the rural environment. This was borne out by 89% of parishioners who attach the highest importance to the separation of Kingston St Mary Parish from Taunton and the surrounding villages and hamlets by fields and open countryside. This is closely aligned with an appreciation of the Parish's rural environment, with 93% of residents regarding this as very and extremely important.

The land in the Parish is used mainly for working farms and is partly within the Quantock Hills AONB, which is recognised by residents as being important to the Parish. In addition, there was no appetite at the Parish Council's Extraordinary Meeting for Kingston St Mary to be subsumed by a Taunton Town Council, although, parishioners value the amenities Taunton provides.

It is clear that residents strongly identify with Kingston St Mary as their home, with 82% of respondents to the Community Plan highly valuing local community facilities (i.e. the Church, Pub, School, Playing Field and Pavilion and Village Hall). Although Kingston St Mary does not have a general store it is encouraging to note that 69% of residents would, if available, visit one on a weekly basis and 42% are prepared to volunteer to help run a community shop.

The following unsolicited messages were recently received by the Parish Council, supporting the separation of Kingston St Mary from Taunton:

- "I just wanted to voice our support for the local voice status quo and we have no desire to become part of 'Greater Taunton' geographically or politically."
- "We recognise the very good work that the Parish Councillors do day to day to protect the interests of residents and the environment of Kingston St Mary, in many matters that require very local knowledge to reach a balanced view. Kingston is not just an indiscriminate part of Taunton town and we need our local Councillors focussed on local issues for the benefit of all."

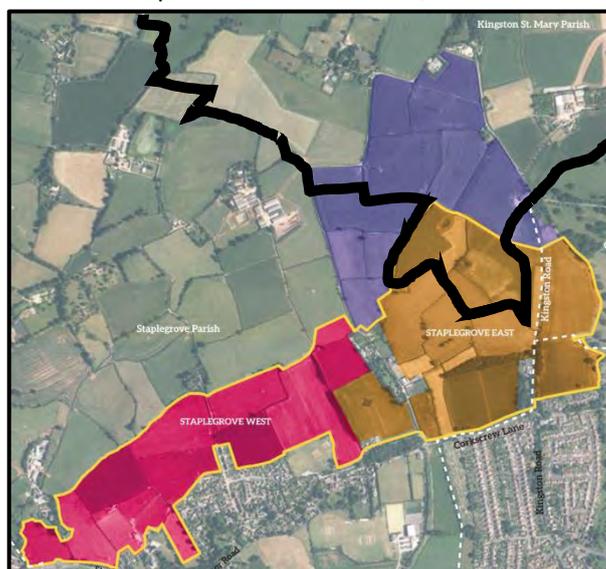
From the above it can be seen that the vast majority of residents have a strong affinity with Kingston St Mary as their community of place. Kingston St Mary's sense of identity derives mainly from its rural environment, its community facilities, which feature greatly in residents' daily lives, and the historic character of the Village, represented by its Grade I Church, Grade II\* Manor House and other scheduled buildings.

The recent well attended Extraordinary Parish Council Meeting demonstrates that current community governance arrangements are effective, valued by residents and that Kingston St Mary's Parish Council is able to represent local concerns.

## Kingston St Mary Boundary Change

The proposed Staplegrove urban expansion of some 1600 houses is of great concern to the residents of Kingston St Mary Parish. Particularly the Staplegrove East development for 915 homes, of which approximately 50% will occupy a small number of currently unpopulated fields at the extreme south of Kingston St Mary Parish, as shown opposite. If these new homes remain within Kingston St Mary, they would effectively double the number of properties and residents in the Parish.

At the extraordinary Parish Council Meeting, it was very clear that local residents would prefer the south of the Parish to remain an undeveloped rural environment, protecting the Quantock Hills AONB from the urban expansion of Taunton. The consensus of the Meeting was that Kingston St Mary's Parish Boundary should be altered to exclude Staplegrove East, by being redrawn to reflect the northern perimeter of this planned urban development.



The Staplegrove East development of 915 homes will be geographically small and therefore a more urban environment, when compared to Kingston St Mary Parish. Consequently, its residents are unlikely to reflect the interests and identify with Kingston St Mary's mainly rural community. The Staplegrove development is projected to have its own educational, recreational and community facilities, which will be geographically separate from those in Kingston St Mary Village. It would therefore not be logical for approximately 50% of Staplegrove East residents to be included within Kingston St Mary Parish and the remainder to be within what is currently Staplegrove Parish. The Staplegrove East development is more likely to be viewed by its residents as an extension of Staplegrove West and it would therefore be logical for the residents of both Staplegrove East and West to be in the same Parish.

## Conclusion

It is evident that the current community governance arrangements for Kingston St Mary reflect the identities and interests of Parish residents and should therefore remain unchanged.

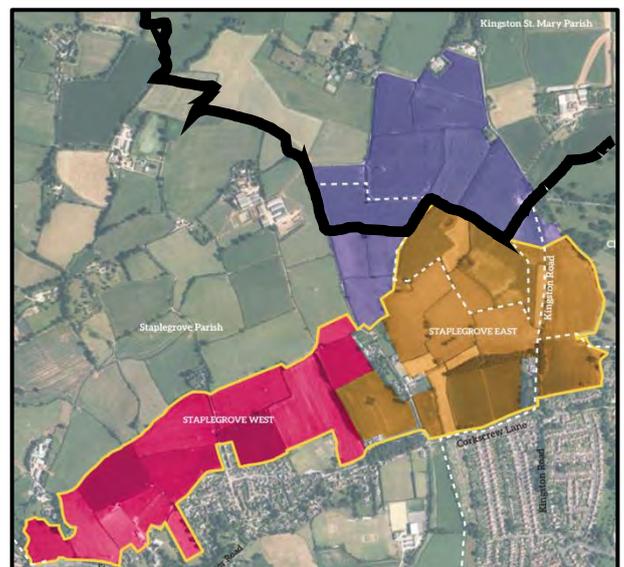
Kingston St Mary Parish Council's primary role is to secure the longer term sustainability and conservation of Kingston St Mary's Village, Hamlets and the surrounding countryside. The Parish Council also endeavours to protect the natural environment, enhance the character and appearance of the Parish and improve community facilities. These goals are best pursued by a Kingston St Mary Parish Council, comprised of dedicated local residents meeting locally, who are active members of the local community, rather than by Town Councillors meeting in Taunton, who although democratically elected will be remote and have different priorities and concerns compared to the issues affecting Kingston St Mary's parishioners.

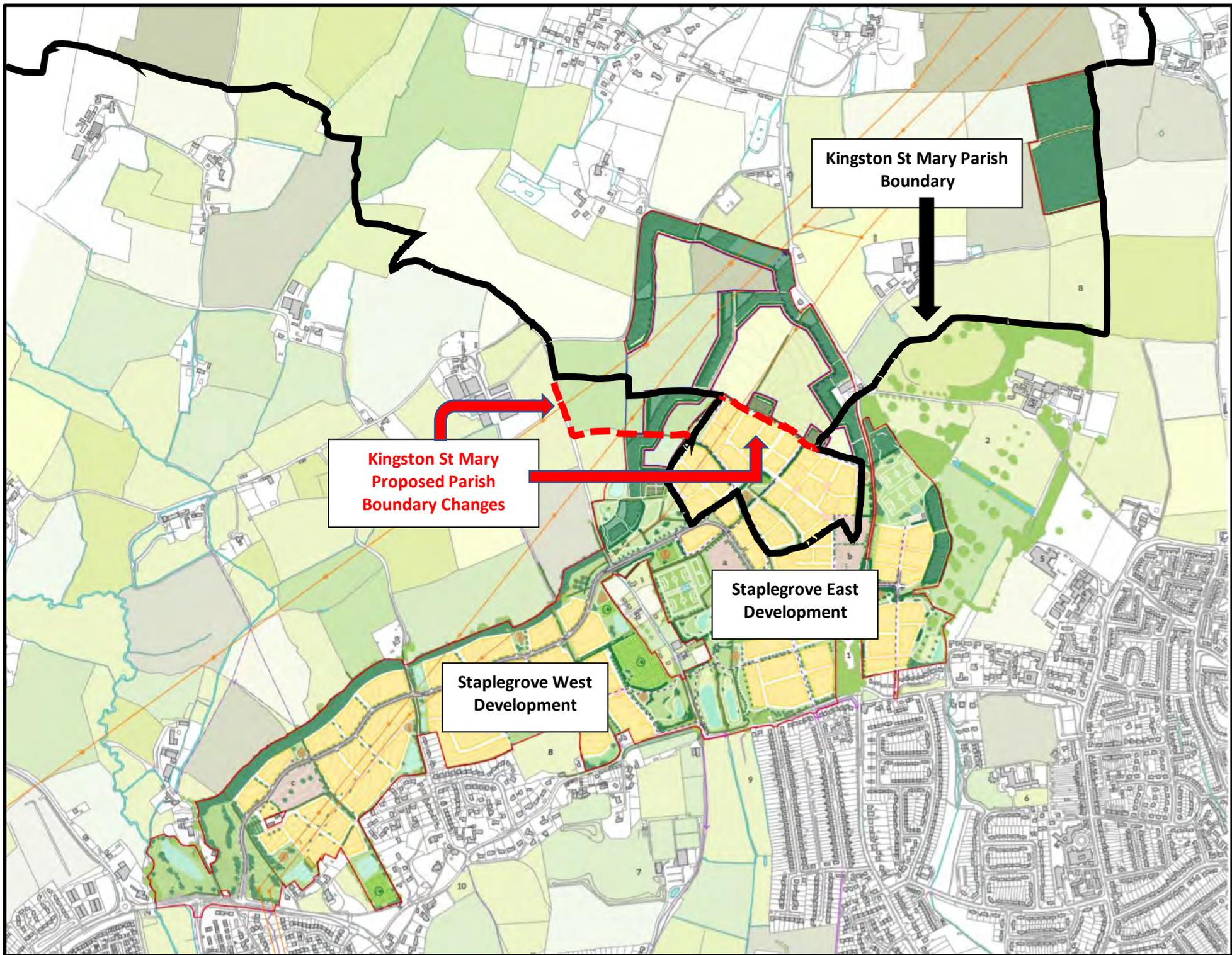
The Boundary Commission recognises that Parish Boundaries can become anomalous if new housing developments are built across them and that boundaries should reflect the "no-man's land" between communities, represented by areas of low population. Community Governance Reviews are also an opportunity to put strong Parish Boundaries in place based on the landscape's physical features.

SW&T's Terms of Reference state that the Community Governance Review:

- will consider whether any changes should be made to the boundaries of existing parishes, with regard to current and projected patterns of population, development, community identity, linkages and the delivery of local services; and
- that parishes should reflect distinctive and recognisable communities of interest, with their own sense of identity and that electors should be able to identify clearly with the parish in which they are resident.

It is clear from the preference of Kingston St Mary Parish residents together with the Boundary Commission's Guidance and the Review's Terms of Reference, that Kingston St Mary's Parish Boundary should be revised to correspond with the northern limit of the proposed Staplegrove East Development, as shown opposite and below.





Kingston St Mary Parish  
Boundary

Kingston St Mary  
Proposed Parish  
Boundary Changes

Staplegrove East  
Development

Staplegrove West  
Development

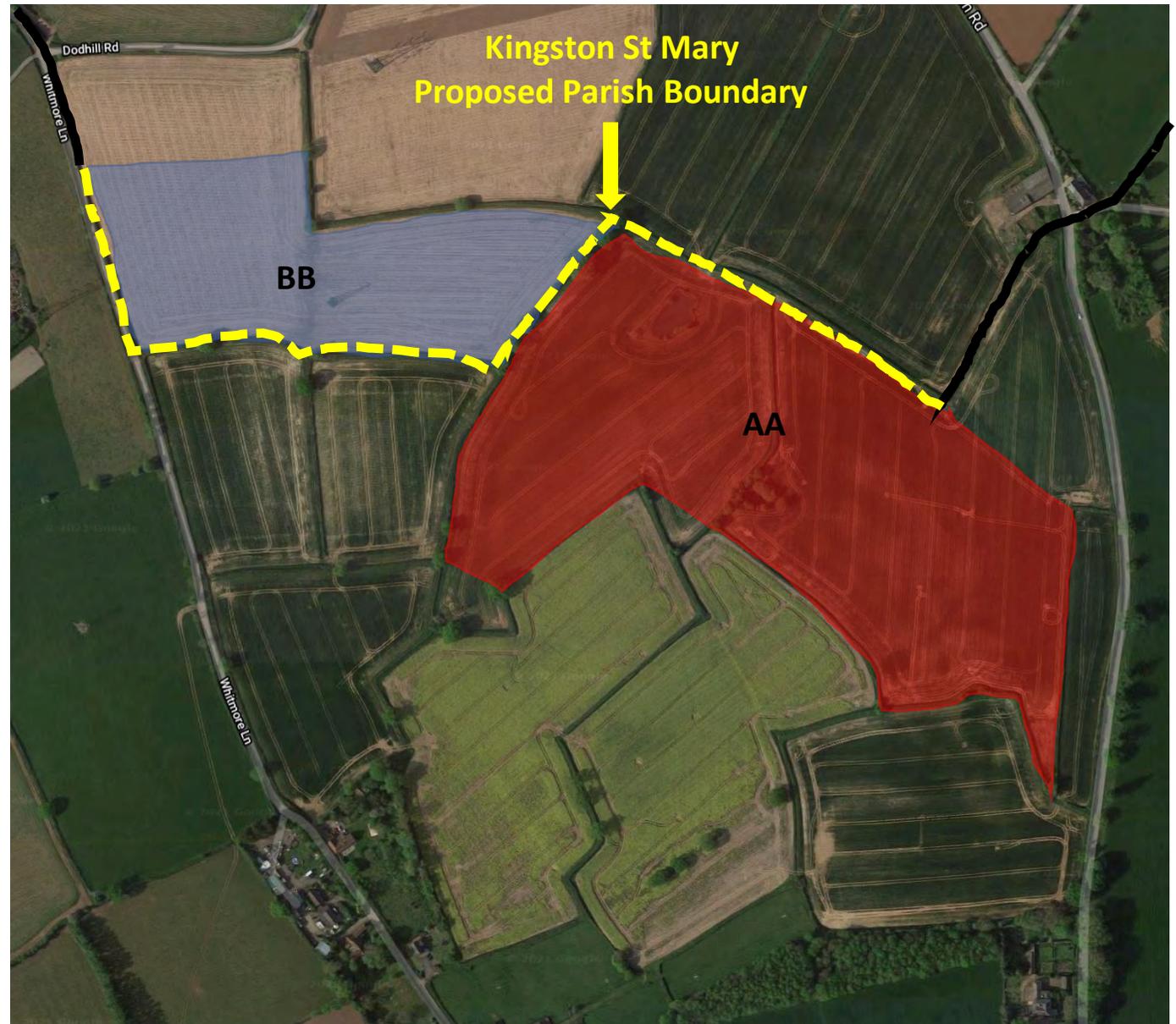
SW&T's Community Governance Review is scheduled to be completed by mid-2022, which will almost certainly be before the Staplegrove East site is developed. Consequently, any revision to Kingston St Mary's Parish Boundary originating from the Review should, in accordance with the Boundary Commission's Guidance, be based on the landscape's current physical features.

The area 'AA' is currently in Kingston St Mary Parish. It is proposed that this becomes part of what is currently Staplegrove Parish, as it delineates the northern extent of the Staplegrove East urban development.

The area 'BB' is currently in Staplegrove Parish. It is proposed that this becomes part of Kingston St Mary Parish, as the current boundary does not fully correspond to any physical features as recommended by the Boundary Commission.

The proposed change to Kingston St Mary's and Staplegrove's Parish boundaries, as shown opposite, is based on current field boundaries, with hedges forming the physical features, separating the two Parishes.

It is important to note that the exact placement of the boundary may need to be revisited in future, should changes be made to the extent of the proposed Staplegrove East development.



**From:** [Helen Mcgladdery](#)  
**To:** [Prouse, Marcus](#); [Cllr Perry, Derek](#)  
**Cc:** [Mike Leach](#); [John Hunt Independent](#)  
**Subject:** Response from Bishops Hull  
**Date:** 10 December 2021 10:08:56

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Dear Marcus and Derek

Please find below the agreed response from Bishops Hull Parish Council to the Community Governance Review. Please can you confirm receipt.

Bishops Hull Parish Council fully supports a Town Council for Taunton to include the Unparished areas. However, the Parish Council feels further information would be required to make an informed decision about the possibility of Bishops Hull being included within any new Town Council.

Kind regards

**Helen McGladdery**  
**Clerk to Bishops Hull Parish Council - CILCA**

*Bishops Hull Parish Council Privacy statement and Privacy policy can be viewed by following the links below:*

<http://www.bishopshull.org.uk/Parish/BHPCprivacyNotice.pdf>

<http://www.bishopshull.org.uk/Parish/BHPCprivacyPolicy.pdf>

## **STAPLEGROVE PARISH COUNCIL**

### **CHAIRMAN**

**Ian Talbot**  
**Magnolia Cottage**  
**Manor Road**  
**Staplegrove, Taunton**  
**Somerset TA2 6EQ**

**01823 259506**

### **CLERK**

**Janet Coates**  
**16, Stoneleigh Close,**  
**Staplegrove, Taunton**  
**Somerset TA2 6ET**

**01823 276702**

**staplegroveparishcouncil@hotmail.com**

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18 January 2022

### **GOVERNANCE REVIEW FOR TAUNTON**

SCC and SWT have both made commitments to deal with the unparished area of Taunton to bring its local government structure in line with the remainder of Somerset by establishing a Town Council or a number of Parish Councils. Taunton is the only town in Somerset not to have a Town Council.

The vote by SWT to expand the scope of the Governance Review has taken the Parish Council by surprise particularly as it followed on from the Secretary of State's decision that Somerset would be a unitary authority.

The unparished area has been in existence since 1974 and during that time there has never been any pressure from parishes to join in to form a Town Council. Over the years the issue has risen to the surface several times. The Somerset Association of Local Councils (SALC) has offered on several occasions to assist in the process of "parishing". One has to wonder why there is sudden urgency to move on this issue and whether it is a political move by SWT members to establish a power base in Taunton prior to the abolition of SWT.

The major local government reorganisation which is underway, leading to a unitary authority for Somerset will mean new ways of working and possible devolution of services to town and parish councils. Changes are inevitable in order to achieve the stated objective of saving £15 Million.

The establishment of local community networks (LCNs) where councils can come together to deliver services efficiently may be a more organic way of developing larger units and possibly leading to an enlarged Town Council. An LCN covering a larger area would be the logical forum to discuss strategic issues affecting "Taunton" e.g.. Transport, highways and major housing projects.

In the absence of any detailed information about these future structures Staplegrove would rather retain its present position as a separate PC until the situation becomes clearer but would agree that council/s for the unparished area be formed so that there can be active representation and participation in the developing reorganisation.

Staplegrove is, in terms of area, the second smallest of the peripheral parishes but unlike say KSM which is totally rural, has multiple elements.

The parish is physically divided by key roads which in some ways define the parish. To the south of Bindon Road is a industrial /commercial area and a railway maintenance yard. Between Bindon Road and the A358 is a large housing estate with the village school at its centre and to the north of the A358 is the Grove and the original core of the village centred around the Church and Manor. Further north is a large rural area of farmland with scattered housing forming about 60% of the parish area.

**Visit our website [www.staplegroveparish.co.uk](http://www.staplegroveparish.co.uk)**

The parish cannot be clearly defined as urban or rural, town or country. We feel it is inappropriate to suggest boundary changes which will also affect adjacent parishes at this time.

Staplegrave Parish Council January 2022

## **NORTON FITZWARREN PARISH COUNCIL**

Clerk: Janet Gobey  
5 Court Road, Norton Fitzwarren  
Taunton, Somerset, TA2 6SZ

Tel: 01823 259439 email: [nfpc@btinternet.com](mailto:nfpc@btinternet.com)

10<sup>th</sup> January, 2022

### **Response to proposal that the new Taunton Town Council should include the parish of Norton Fitzwarren**

Norton Fitzwarren Parish Council voted unanimously at the Parish Council meeting on the 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2021 following representations from the public to reject Somerset West & Taunton Council's proposal for Norton Fitzwarren parish to be included into the new Taunton Town Council.

Norton Fitzwarren parish is 3 miles in distance from Taunton, the present parish boundary follows the Back Stream which in turn follows Silk Mills Lane from Cross keys roundabout to Netherclay Lane. On the western side of Silk Mills Lane is a rural green wedge which separates the parish of Norton Fitzwarren from Taunton and is an obvious boundary.

The Parish Council has undertaken a comprehensive consultation with residents and village organisations to ascertain their views. Each household or business has received a postal survey, an online survey has been organised and face to face meetings held. This consultation has shown that the residents of Norton Fitzwarren parish do not consider themselves, or wish to be part of Taunton Town. Our results show that residents are overwhelmingly in favour of retaining the Parish Council, they do not wish to join Taunton Town Council and just become another urban extension but wish to remain as a separate community with their own Council. This is the will of the residents and it should not be ignored.

Our survey has had an excellent response 382 responses received, 120 online and 262 postal responses. The result of the survey shows 98% of residents are in favour of retaining Norton Fitzwarren Parish Council. The survey has also shown that the Parish Council is very well thought of in Norton Fitzwarren for the way in which it takes care of the village. The residents have a strong voice and more

representation with the Parish Council. If the parish was amalgamated into the town council their representation will be greatly reduced.

The Parish Council owns or holds the following facilities in the parish:

Allotment Site – see below

Vilberie Road children's play area and land on which the Brock House Children's Nursery is built.

Recreation ground of the village hall

Playing field, Manor Park

The Parish Council will be involved in running the new playing field which should be open next year.

#### Allotment site

The Parish Council set up the site in 2008 following demand from parishioners and it became a first statutory site for many years in 2010 when the Parish Council bought the land when the farm was sold. The allotment site has been a huge success and is fully let every year.

The Parish Council supports the parish newsletter Norton News, without our funding the parish newsletter could not continue and with it a vital source of information for the residents especially the elderly would be lost.

The Parish Council also supports the Church Benefice Office by paying 50% of the rent for All Saints Church, Norton Fitzwarren and St. Johns Church, Staplegrove.

The Parish Council pays for dog bins, litter bins, grass cutting, weed clearance, hedge cutting, parish footpath clearance and until volunteers came forward, litter clearance also contributes to the upkeep of the churchyard and playing field.

In fact there is hardly a public facility in the parish which the Parish Council does not pay for or contribute to, so it has no concerns that future responsibilities could not be managed.

Norton Fitzwarren Parish Council is known to be very active and the following are projects completed in the last few years:

Refurbishment of highway fingerposts

Dropped kerbs in the older part of the village

Replacement village name signs  
Additional village name sign for Great Western Way  
(following a request from new resident of Langford Mead development to show they were entering Norton Fitzwarren).  
Repairs to church flag pole and church tower lighting  
Vehicle activated signs, Pen Elm  
Defibrillator at village centre  
Numerous litter and dog bins  
Outdoor exercise equipment  
Fencing at allotment site  
Repairs to the bank on Halse Water  
Replacement trees due to ash dieback disease at allotment site  
CCTV for village hall  
Security gates for village hall car park  
Match funding for 2 replacement boilers at village hall  
Part purchase of the hill fort  
Ongoing nature trail at the playing field which includes tree planting and seating.

The Playing Field Association will be especially hard hit, at present they receive maintenance funding from SWT Council via the Parish Council, they have said that the loss of this funding and the Parish Council would be devastating and that they could not manage without the support of the Parish Council.

A large sum of money is due to the parish for the development and maintenance of the new playing field and the development of Ford Farm, who would administer these funds? The Norton Fitzwarren Playing Field Association are not set up to cope with this, they wish the Parish Council to hold the funds.

What guarantee is there that without the Parish Council the funds would be used for the benefit of the parish and not disappear into the general funds of Taunton Town Council?

The Parish Council has received letters of support from the Parochial Church Council of All Saints Church, Playing Field Association, Village Hall and the Editor of the Norton News. These letters are included with our response to SWT Council.

Brock House Children's Nursery which is built on Parish Council land, has also expressed concern and wish to continue with the Parish Council.

The survey also shows that residents use the local services extensively and that the Parish Council is their 'go to' place for local concerns. There are many comments praising the Parish Council among the responses, some of which are newcomers to the village.

A copy of the 120 online parish survey responses and summary of the 262 postal responses is included with these documents.

As you see from the above, the attached letters of support and parish survey show that the case for Norton Fitzwarren to retain its parish council and to continue to represent the parish and support the local facilities is overwhelming.

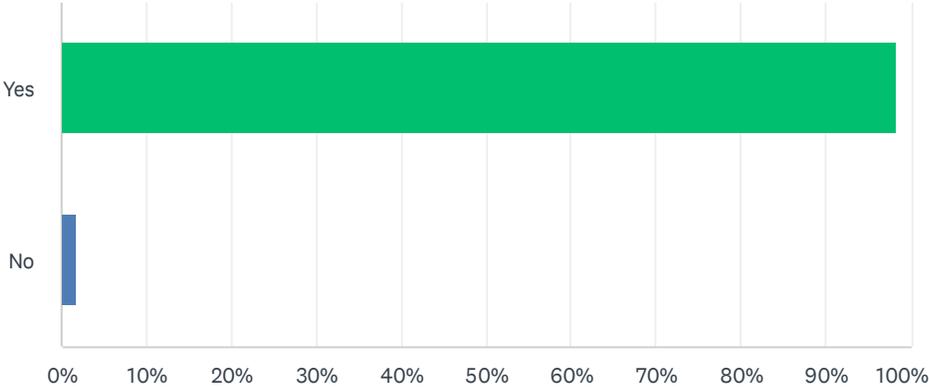
Janet Gobey  
Clerk to the Parish Council

## Q1 Please confirm your postcode

Answered: 119 Skipped: 0

# Q2 Do you want to keep the village status and the Parish Council with its local representation?

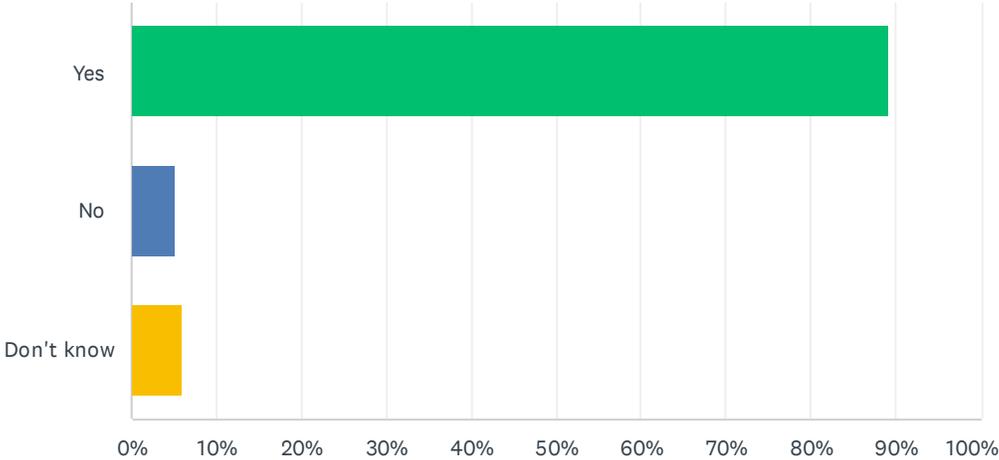
Answered: 118 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	98.31%	116
No	1.69%	2
TOTAL		118

### Q3 Do you think the new Taunton Town Council should represent the centre of Taunton only?

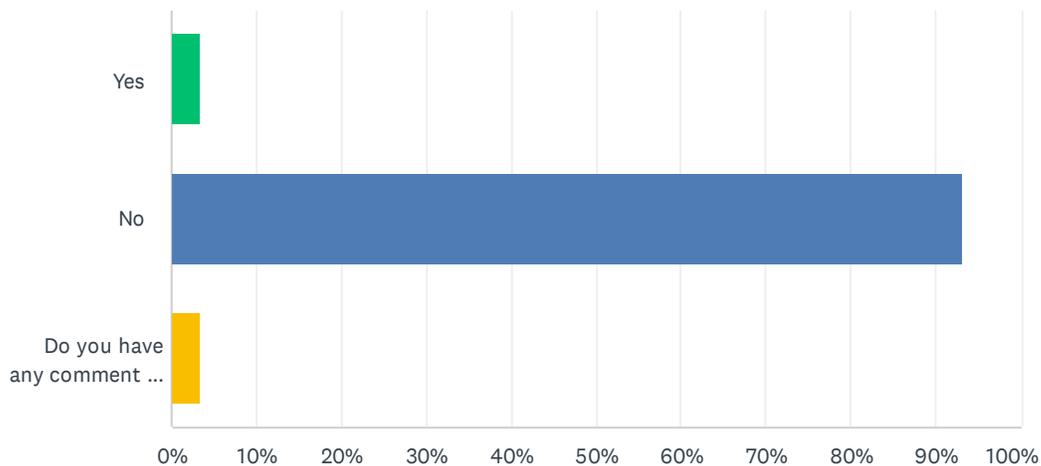
Answered: 119 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	89.08%	106
No	5.04%	6
Don't know	5.88%	7
TOTAL		119

### Q4 Do you think the area in which you live in Norton Fitzwarren Parish should be incorporated into Taunton Town Council?

Answered: 118 Skipped: 1



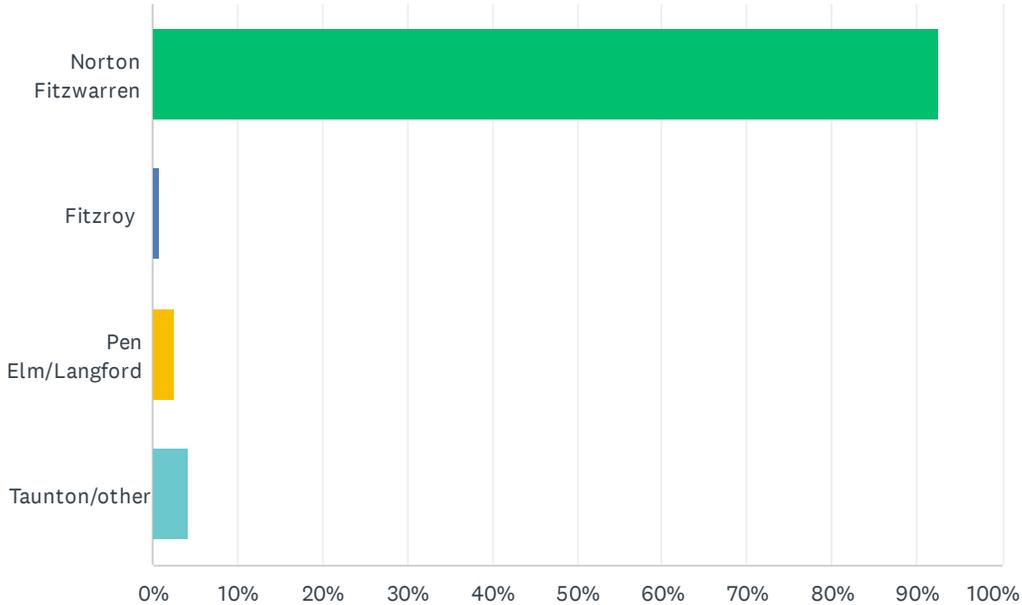
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	3.39%	4
No	93.22%	110
Do you have any comment to make?	3.39%	4
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>118</b>

Q5 If you ticked that you had a comment to make in Question 4, please  
make your comment here.

Answered: 32 Skipped: 87

### Q6 Which of the following areas to you feel you belong to:

Answered: 119 Skipped: 0



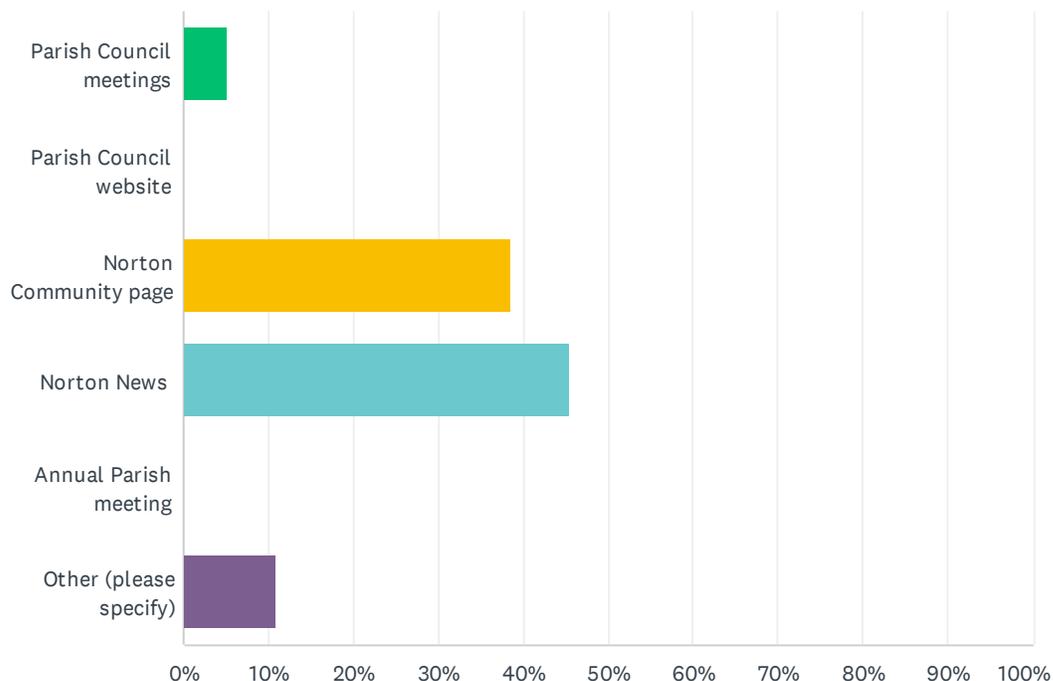
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Norton Fitzwarren	92.44%	110
Fitzroy	0.84%	1
Pen Elm/Langford	2.52%	3
Taunton/other	4.20%	5
TOTAL		119

Q7 If you ticked 'Taunton/other' in Question 6, please specify.

Answered: 21 Skipped: 98

### Q8 Norton Fitzwarren Parish Council communicates and engages with the local community via the following methods. Which ones do you use, access, attend or participate in?

Answered: 119 Skipped: 0



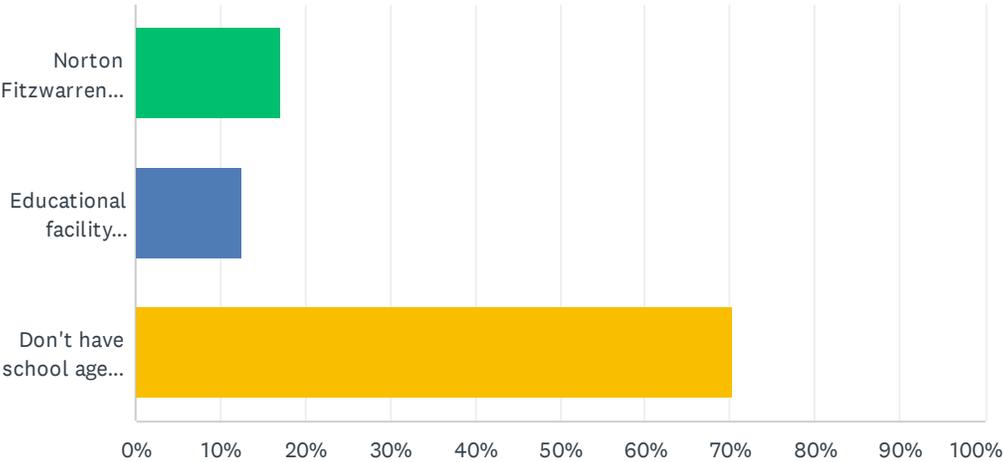
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Parish Council meetings	5.04% 6
Parish Council website	0.00% 0
Norton Community page	38.66% 46
Norton News	45.38% 54
Annual Parish meeting	0.00% 0
Other (please specify)	10.92% 13
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>119</b>

Q9 If you ticked other in question 8 please specify.

Answered: 26 Skipped: 93

### Q10 If you have school age children or children that have recently left school, which education facility do/did they attend?

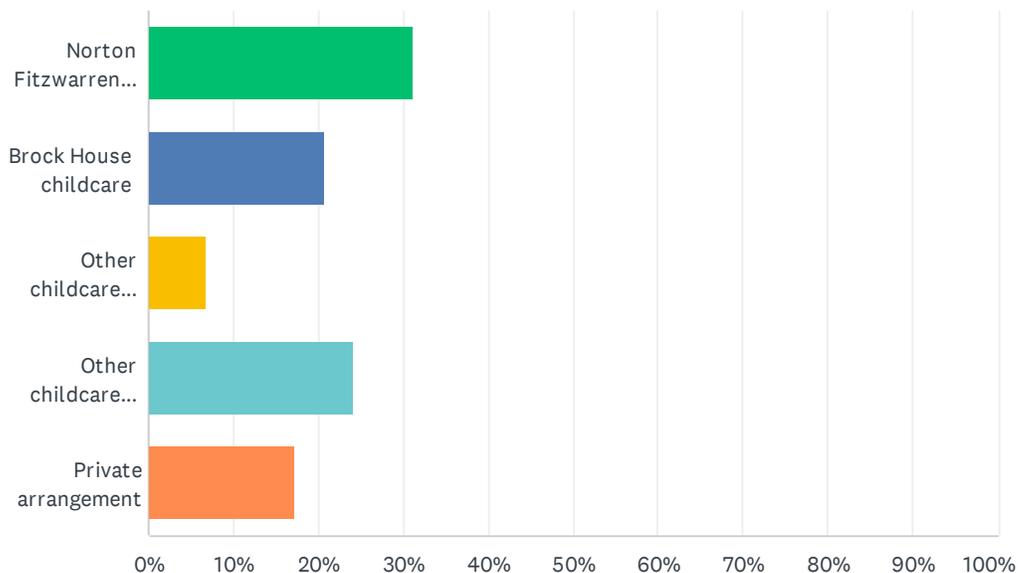
Answered: 111 Skipped: 8



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Norton Fitzwarren Primary School	17.12%	19
Educational facility outside the Parish	12.61%	14
Don't have school age children.	70.27%	78
TOTAL		111

### Q11 If you have pre-school age children which childcare setting do they attend?

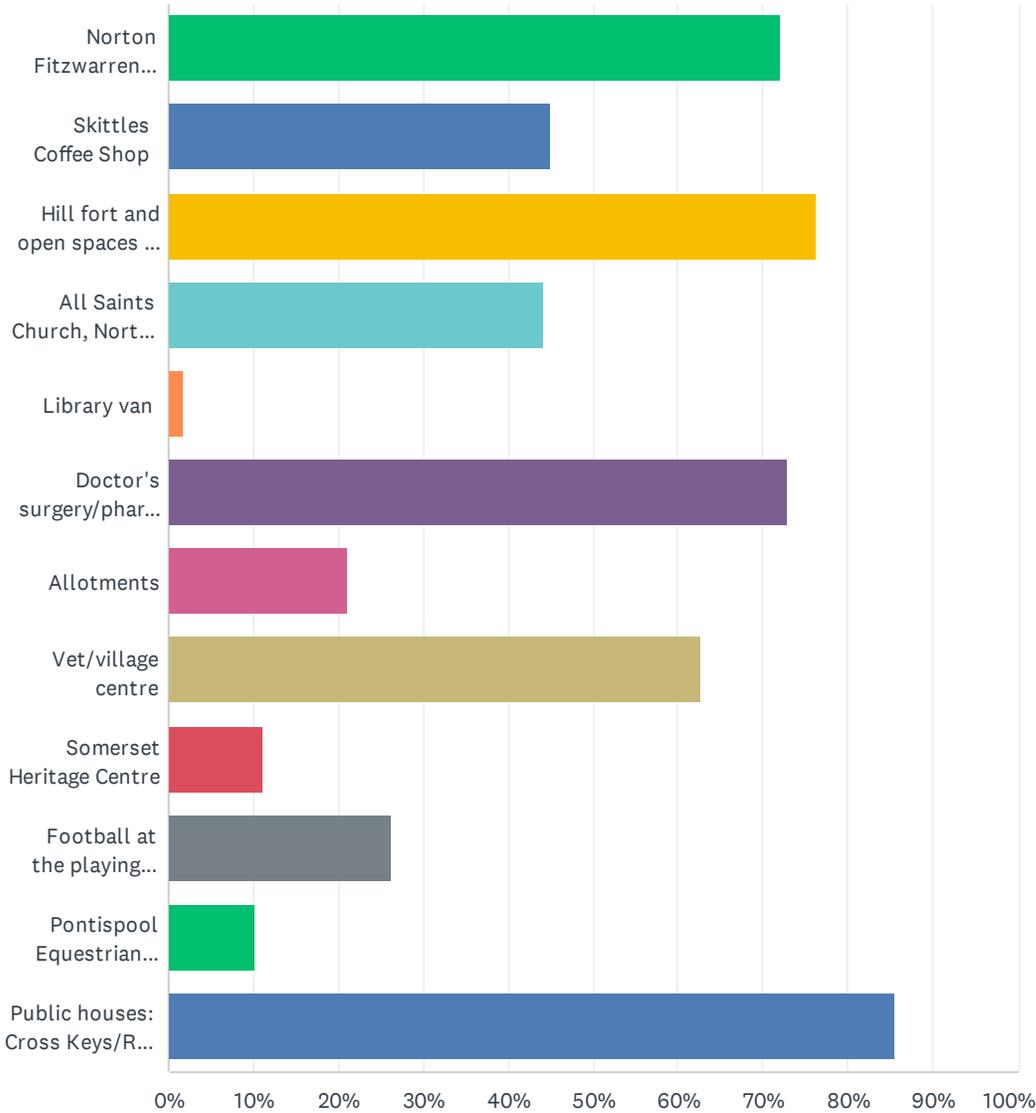
Answered: 29 Skipped: 90



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Norton Fitzwarren Pre-school	31.03%	9
Brock House childcare	20.69%	6
Other childcare arrangements in the Parish	6.90%	2
Other childcare arrangements outside the Parish	24.14%	7
Private arrangement	17.24%	5
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>29</b>

# Q12 Which of the following community facilities have you used?

Answered: 118 Skipped: 1



## Parish Survey

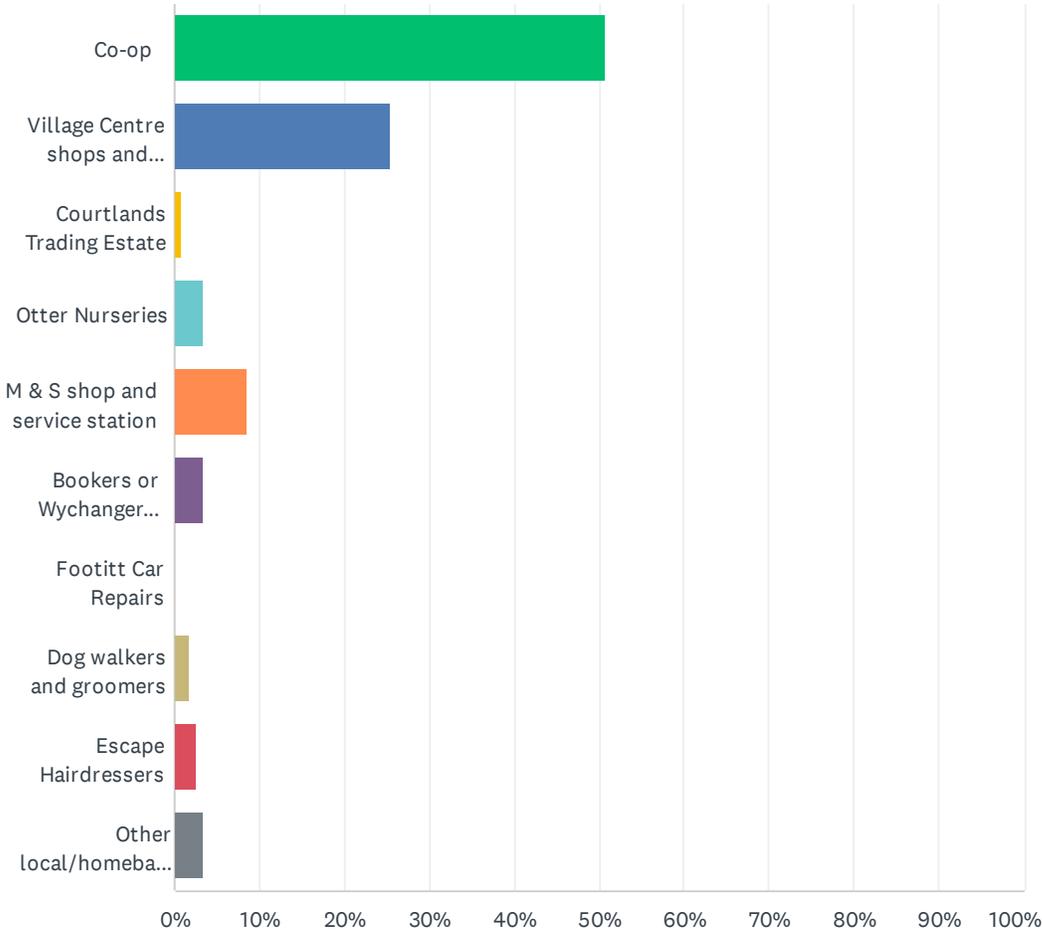
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Norton Fitzwarren Village Hall	72.03%	85
Skittles Coffee Shop	44.92%	53
Hill fort and open spaces in the Parish	76.27%	90
All Saints Church, Norton Fitzwarren	44.07%	52
Library van	1.69%	2
Doctor's surgery/pharmacy	72.88%	86
Allotments	21.19%	25
Vet/village centre	62.71%	74
Somerset Heritage Centre	11.02%	13
Football at the playing field	26.27%	31
Pontispool Equestrian Centre	10.17%	12
Public houses: Cross Keys/Ring of Bells or Allerford Inn.	85.59%	101
<b>Total Respondents: 118</b>		

**Q13 Is there a community facility in the Parish not included in the list in Question 12? Please specify.**

Answered: 18 Skipped: 101

# Q14 Which local businesses do you use or have you used?

Answered: 118 Skipped: 1



## Parish Survey

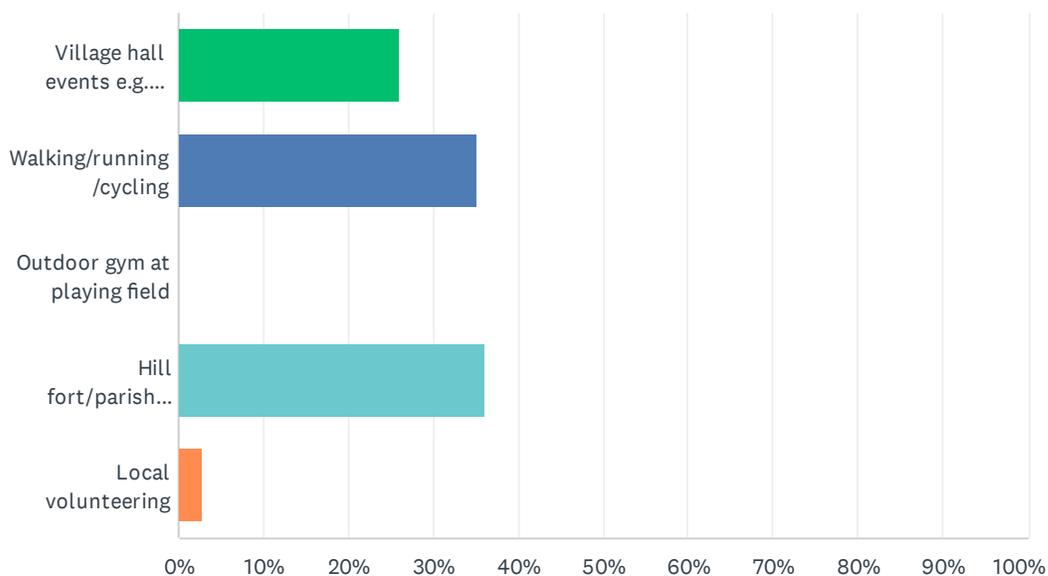
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Co-op	50.85%	60
Village Centre shops and take-aways	25.42%	30
Courtlands Trading Estate	0.85%	1
Otter Nurseries	3.39%	4
M & S shop and service station	8.47%	10
Bookers or Wychanger Stores, Great Western Way	3.39%	4
Footitt Car Repairs	0.00%	0
Dog walkers and groomers	1.69%	2
Escape Hairdressers	2.54%	3
Other local/homebased businesses e.g. financial advisor, PR, beauty, cleaning.	3.39%	4
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>118</b>

**Q15 Is there another Parish based business that you use/ would like to add to the list in Question 14?**

Answered: 50 Skipped: 69

## Q16 What leisure activities in the Parish do you partake in?

Answered: 108 Skipped: 11



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Village hall events e.g. fitness, line dancing, akido, singing, film night quiz night, theatre school, toddler dance & group.	25.93%	28
Walking/running/cycling	35.19%	38
Outdoor gym at playing field	0.00%	0
Hill fort/parish footpaths	36.11%	39
Local volunteering	2.78%	3
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>108</b>

**Q17** Is there a parish based sports team, activities group or other that wasn't included in the list in Question 16. Please specify.

Answered: 22 Skipped: 97

Q18 Is there anything else you wish to add? Please use the box below.

Answered: 40 Skipped: 79

### **Summary of the postal parish survey responses:**

The responses received by post from residents total 262 and are almost identical to the responses received from the identical online survey, questions 2,3 and 4 dealt with the inclusion of Norton Fitzwarren into the Town Council.

**Q1:** Postcode requested.

**Q2.** Do you want to keep the village status and the Parish Council with its local representation? **Answer yes 98%**

**Q3.** Do you think the new Taunton Town Council should represent the centre of Taunton only? **Answer yes 87%**

**Q4.** Do you think the area in which you live in Norton Fitzwarren parish should be incorporated into Taunton Town Council? **Answer no 96%**

The Charter Trustees for Taunton resolved to respond to Somerset West and Taunton Council's Stage 1 Consultation on the Community Governance Review for Taunton as follows;

- We believe that a single Town Council should be set up to cover at least the whole of the currently unparished area of Taunton.

Norton Fitzwarren Village Hall  
Station Road  
Norton Fitzwarren  
Somerset  
TA2 6RQ

Janet Gobey  
Clerk to the Parish Council  
Norton Fitzwarren Parish Council

13 December 2021

Dear Janet

Ref: Norton Fitzwarren Village Hall, Registered Charity No 247449

With the knowledge that Somerset West and Taunton Council are wishing to include the Parish of Norton Fitzwarren into a new Taunton Town Council and its subsequent loss of the Parish Council I felt duty bound to express in writing the impact this may have on the Village Hall and it's future.

I have had the privilege of being the Chairman of The Trustees and the Management Committee for the last 7 years and the help and support I have received from the Parish Council with financial means during that time has been paramount in making the Village Hall the hub of the Village as it is now.

Since May 2016 the Village Hall has received the following amounts of financial help which includes match funding from the Village Hall

Replacement Railings due to H & S.	May 2016.	£2451.04	
Rent for the Youth Club.	July 2016.	£573.50	
Replacement Boilers.	Nov 2016.	£5000.00	Match funding by the Village Hall
Anti Climb Paint for a seating area.	Nov 2017.	£11.99.	To eliminate anti social behaviour.
Installation of CCTV.	Jan 2018.	£3409.20	
A New Floor to the Marshall Hall.	May 2018.	£5910.00	Match funding by the Village Hall.
Salt for Paths.	Feb 2019.	£43.00	
PPE for the Covid outbreak.	July 2020.	£400.00	
Upgrade to the CCTV.	March 2020.	£1197.00	
Barrier to the Main Carpark.	July 2020.	£2796.00	
Flag for Somerset Day.	April 2021.	£180.00	
Covid Support Team thank you day.	July 2021.	£2200.00	

If it wasn't for the generosity of the Parish Council (via the grant application system) many of the above would not have been carried out by the Village Hall and would therefore be detrimental to its purpose.

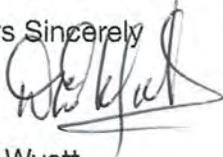
The Village Hall is also registered with Somerset County Council as a Place of Safety and during my tenure has been called into action on two occasions, which also means that the integrity of the

Village Hall externally and internally must be set at a certain standard to allow the Place of Safety to function as it should do, again without the help of the Parish Council this standard would be in question.

In Summary

If the Village of Norton Fitzwarren should lose its status of VILLAGE and then by default lose its Parish Council I envisage being set in a queue with the begging bowl in hand knowing that the further you are from the New Town Council the less likely you are to receive the funds that you need to function, so we as a Village must work hard to remain the Village of Norton Fitzwarren and I assure you, we of the Village Hall will work hand in hand with the Parish Council to maintain its status.

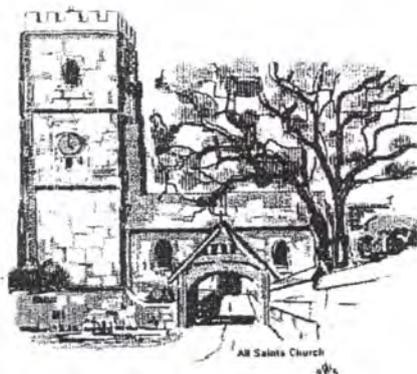
Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Don Wyatt', written over the typed name.

Don Wyatt

Chair

NFW Village Hall and Friends of the Village Hall



## All Saints, Norton Fitzwarren

**Andrew Ritchie**  
Churchwarden – All Saints' PCC  
Fitzroy Farm  
Fitzroy  
Norton Fitzwarren  
TAUNTON  
TA2 6PH

Telephone: 07808 611273  
Email: ritchieah@btinternet.com

9 December 2021

Dear Janet

I have read that Somerset West and Taunton Council's (SWT) Community Governance Review may lead to the inclusion of the Norton Fitzwarren Parish in a new Taunton Town Council, with the consequential loss of the Parish Council; and I write now to convey the concern of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) at the potential impact for our church if this were to happen.

Our church has for many years benefited from a close relationship with the Parish Council, which has always been willing to provide financial support, mainly by way of Community Grants; and we fear that the loss of the Parish Council would bring to an untimely and unwelcome end this strong financial support that the church has hereto received. Here is a list of funding grants provided to the church over the past 5 years:

March 2017	£176	Electricity charges for floodlighting
May 2017	£400	Purchase of a new mower for churchyard maintenance
February 2018	£176	Electricity charges for floodlighting
May 2018	£684	Scaffolding costs for refurbishment of clock dial
January 2020	£1,500	Share of rent and set up costs for Benefice Office
July 2020	£1,451	PPE and equipment to help with the reopening of the church
June 2021 (ongoing)	£1,260	Share of rent for Benefice Office to July 2022
September 2021	<u>£2,783</u>	Repair to the village flagpole on the tower
	£8,430	
Ongoing, annually	£350	From SWT via the NFPC, for churchyard maintenance

The mission and ministry of our church are strongly supported by local bodies including the Parish Council, Village Hall and Norton Fitzwarren Primary School. In addition to the significant financial support received from the Parish Council, which I have detailed above and which enables us to afford to site the Office and pastoral hub at the very heart of our community, the mutual collaboration and relationships we enjoy locally allow the church to serve our community and allow many people to benefit from our presence and activity. The benefits from such local links are often intangible, and yet vital to the flourishing of a community; and we fear that the proposed reorganisation, and loss of our Parish Council, would detrimentally affect our mission and erode our effectiveness.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Ritchie

# Norton Fitzwarren Playing Field Association

Please reply to:  
38 Wesley Close  
Taunton  
Somerset  
TA1 4YA

07778 068661

Email: [louivic@icloud.com](mailto:louivic@icloud.com)

Janet Gobey  
Clerk to the Parish Council  
Norton Fitzwarren Parish Council

[nfpc@btinternet.com](mailto:nfpc@btinternet.com)

8<sup>th</sup> December 2021

Dear Janet

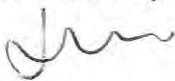
The Playing Fields Association are aware of a proposal by Somerset West and Taunton Council, that adjoining parishes, such as Norton Fitzwarren Parish Council, would be included into the Town Council and therefore abolished.

We are extremely concerned to learn that the maintenance grant of £760 for playing field maintenance will also disappear when the Somerset West and Taunton Council is disbanded. As a registered charity Norton Fitzwarren Playing Field Association rely heavily on the maintenance grant for the upkeep of the playing field for the local community.

Norton Fitzwarren Parish Council is crucial in providing us financial support to make-up shortfalls when needed and providing backup to our unpaid volunteers to provide a facility for the local community.

The loss of the Parish Council would be devastating for Norton Fitzwarren Playing Fields Association. We would therefore like to register our full support for keeping Norton Fitzwarren Parish Council.

Yours sincerely



Louise Woodmason  
Secretary  
On behalf of Norton Fitzwarren Playing Field Association Committee

The Norton News  
c/o Norton Fitzwarren Village Hall  
Station Road  
Norton Fitzwarren  
Near Taunton  
TA 2 6RQ

December 10th 2021

Dear Janet

We write this on behalf of the Volunteer group who give up their time and effort to produce the monthly Norton News.

We are aware of the proposal of SWT Council to include Norton Fitzwarren in a Taunton Town Council.

We as a group of Volunteers who strive to ensure a thread of communication within our Parish of Norton Fitzwarren are gravely concerned of the consequences should this proposal go forward.

The Norton News relies heavily on the established and unwavering financial support of our Parish Council. To produce this vital method of communication particularly amongst the elderly and housebound within our Village is crucial in keeping residents informed of the life and events within our Village. To put the position in perspective....over the last 5 years the Norton News has received over £ 8,000 towards our printing costs f

The revenue we raise by way of advertisements of local businesses does not cover the increasing cost of printing. Without the financial support from our Parish Council the Norton News will without question...fold. Thus leaving residents with little or no information as to what's happening in our Village. This would also mean a loss of profile for our local businesses who use our magazine as a medium to make (particularly new) residents aware of their services.

We therefore strongly object to this proposal as it will lead in our opinion a reduced Village benefit.

Yours sincerely

*Cindy Thomas.*

Cindy Thomas  
Editor of the Norton News