

Compton Bishop Parish Council

Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting 28th July 2025

This meeting was arranged to discuss an Application to Somerset Council for a Street Trading License to sell Pizza's, soft drinks and cake at the Webbington Road Car Park/Pull in by Crook Peak under reference SC729054951. Comments on the application had to be sent to the Licensing officer by the 7th August at the latest. As the next Parish Council meeting was not until 13th August, then this extraordinary meeting was arranged to discuss the application.

Present Councillors C Settle (Chair), D McCarthy, H Dean.
Parish Clerk A Mortimore,
A Higgins – The Applicant.
Residents of the Parish.

To receive any apologies for non-attendance.

Councillors T Mason, D Ham, E Parker and G Hancock.

To receive Declarations of Interest.

Councillor G Hancock declared a conflict of Interest as he was the owner of a business within the parish which serves food and disqualified himself from the meeting and did not attend.

Quorum – Compton Bishop Parish Council's "Standing Orders" allows for a minimum of three Councillors in attendance to transact business so the extraordinary meeting was able to Proceed.

Mr A Higgins (Applicant) – The Chair invited Mr Higgins to speak to the committee on his proposed plans for selling Pizza's on the Webbington Road Car Park/Pull in. He also produced a written report on his proposals for the councillors.

A "question and answer" session with Mr Higgins was then held with both the Councillors and the residents being involved.

Mr Higgins then retired from the meeting so that the Councillors could discuss the application.

Resolution – it was resolved to object to the application for the following reasons: -

- 1) This is in an Area of Outstanding National Beauty with Crook Peak under the National Trust (NT). The Car Park/Pull is on the Webbington Road next to the entrance for around six Footpaths and Bridleways to Crook Peak and the Mendip Hills. This is used by many walking groups and individuals to enjoy the piece and quiet of the surroundings.
- 2) Webbington Road is an unclassified narrow road with a limited parking area and as such the carpark is very often full, with cars parking on the grass verges along with large Mobile Homes and Campervans. This is already an issue with the residents and the parish council.
- 3) The number of vehicles at this parking area is already causing problems without there being a Horse Box and a Truck parked up adding to the problem trying to sell Pizza's. There is already a problem with high vehicle volume and double parking, which poses a hazard to users such as cyclists, pedestrians, horse riders and other vulnerable users. A street trader selling Pizzas would exacerbate the already chaotic situation.
- 4) There is already a fire hazard concern, especially at this time of year, where people have barbecues in the carpark as well as on the NT hills. It was felt that a Street Trader would encourage more barbecues. Due to the nature of the moorland nearby with a lot of gorse bushes this is considered a serious threat especially with climate change. There is no reason to encourage more such hazards.
- 5) The charity run Community Hub in Loxton (just one mile along the road) serves food and drink for walkers as do the two pubs in Cross village which, again, is just along the road in the opposite direction to Loxton. It is felt there is little need for a further outlet in such a spot that is suggested.

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- 6) There are no toilet facilities as this carpark so hygiene could become a serious problem with a Street Trader selling food and drinks along with the increased traffic and foot flow.
- 7) **Litter** – This is already a problem around the car parking area even now. Although the bin is emptied by Somerset Council when required there is still rubbish besides the bin. Only recently a councillor passed the car parking area and noticed more rubbish by the bin. The parish council consider this problem would increase even further, particularly, with large Pizza cardboard boxes being used and thrown away. This could be a particular issue when such food is taken on Crook Peak and the Mendip Hills and discarded. This is an issue that the National Trust was concerned about with a recent email to the parish council.
- 8) Unfortunately, this parking area is a gathering area for young people in their cars on evenings, particularly at weekends with anti-social behaviour. Such a mobile fast-food outlet would only increase the problem.

Conclusion

The Vehicle pull in area has a limited amount of space and is often full most weekends particularly in the summer months. The attraction of a fast-food outlet will only encourage parking along the roadside on an unclassified rural road with no safe footway, frequently used by vulnerable users. The Trader's vehicle/horsebox will take away parking for genuine walkers wanting to access the Mendip Hills (Crook Peak). Vehicles/passing trade parking on the road to purchase food, would be hazardous for walkers, cyclists and horse riders. School minibuses that transport young students park in this area to access the hills and participants for the Duke of Edinburgh Awards.

The Parish of Compton Bishop has many residents that have contacted the Parish Council informing our clerk that this area is an entirely inappropriate place to allow a fast food outlet. Correspondence received has requested that Compton Bishop Parish Council do everything to protect this area of the Mendip Hills AONB.

In view of the above comments Compton Bishop Parish Council feel that the site chosen for the Mobile Pizza Unit is totally unsuitable and strongly object to the application. The Parish Council feel that there are more suitable sites in the locality and more research should have been performed by Mr Higgins prior to this application.

Alan Mortimore
Clerk to Compton Bishop Parish Council