

## **WIDECOMBE PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council

held in Church House, Widecombe on

Thursday 6 February 2025 at 7.30pm

**Members present:** Councillor S Raynor (Chair for this meeting), J Bibby, D Edwards, T Guest and C Partridge

**Also attending:** District Cllr/Ashburton Postmaster Rogers and District Cllr Major

**Members of the Public:** Three

**Clerk:** Suzanna Hughes

### **5081 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

- Cllr Y Elliott
- District Cllr J Nutley
- County Cllr P Bullivant
- Rob Steemson (DNPA)

### **5082 OPEN FORUM**

A resident reported a poor quality pothole repair and asked who was responsible. He was advised that DCC's contractors would have carried out the repair as the Community Road Warden Scheme was not yet up and running. District Cllr Rogers suggested that the photo is sent to him so that he can follow it up. Cllr Edwards advised that she had also reported and sent a photograph of a poor quality repair direct to Meg Booth (DCC's Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport) and within a few weeks the repair had been made good.

### **5083 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION**

Members were reminded of their responsibility to continually update their Notice of Registerable Interests and invited to state whether they have any interest in the items to be discussed during this meeting in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct.

Unforeseen requests for a Dispensation to be considered at this point only if there was no way a Councillor would have been aware of such before the meeting.

There were no declarations of interest or requests for dispensation.

### **5084 RATIFICATION OF MINUTES**

Members received the minutes Parish Council held on 2 January 2025 which were approved as a true and

correct record.

### **5085 REPORTS**

- (a) **County Councillor**

Cllr Bullivant was unable to attend the meeting but sent an update advising that the DCC budget for 2025/26 will have additional funds to increase numbers of road repairs; there is also an additional £83 million that will be spent on roads (DCC budget is usually c. £50million – the £83million is in addition to this. Government has now confirmed that Devon County Council elections will go ahead in May.

**(b) District Councillors**

District Cllr Major reported that the TDC budget, although not yet confirmed, has gone through Overview and Scrutiny this week and is available to view on TDC's website. A 2.99% increase rise in council tax is proposed. TDC has committed to maintaining 100% council tax support and the household support fund. There will be changes to how people can apply for housing benefit to streamline it for care leavers and social needs requirement applicants.

District Cllr Rogers advised that it is important to encourage families to apply for the household support fund. You can now reapply for pension credit. The schools have also come to him for ideas on how to save money on packed lunches and snacks.

He has asked TDC for feedback on the public toilet consultation and he will meeting with the relevant Portfolio Holder this week.

There is a new Head of Housing, John Williams, who has pledged to meet with Stuart to get feedback about the allocation of affordable housing and future needs.

He is meeting to discuss with the relevant Portfolio Holder about whether parishes who are not eligible for the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) can access unspent money from other parishes. He will be allocating his £1000 community fund at a tea party in Ashburton hosted by Royal British Legion after the May elections. Groups will have the opportunity to bid for funds on the day.

The 'Ring and Ride' bus is in build at GM Coachworks and will be ready in the spring. Volunteer drivers and administrators are needed. It will cost under £10 from Widecombe to Newton Abbot.

He has had a conversation with Ali Clarke (DNPA) as there is a demand for access to green business advice. He hopes to circulate a list of available green grants and will arrange a series of workshops to help raise awareness.

**(c) DNPA Representative**

Rob Steemson was unable to attend the meeting. He advised that he was aware that many Highways signposts have been damaged by storms and these have been reported. He has also reported that the fallen green lane gate at Blackaton Cross to DCC; it is their responsibility as are the date and drains at the top of Bowden Lane. Work at Blackaton has been completed and he will be meeting the new DCC Public Rights of Way Warden soon as they now plan to undertake works on Thornhill Lane and at the top of Bowden Lane onto the moor.

**(d) Police Report**

In the period 1 – 31 December 2024, there was 0 criminal offences recorded for the area. There were 3 non-crime incidents across the area. These involved firearms licensing and animals/wildlife logs.

In the period 1 – 31 January 2025, there was 2 criminal offences recorded for this area: 1 x malicious communication and 1 x theft. There were 12 non-crime incidents across the area which mainly included firearms licensing and snow related incidents.

(e) **Delegate Reports**

No report.

**5086 PROJECTS & ESTATES**

*(Cllrs Raynor & Partridge)*

(a) **Parish Field**

There was no change to income and expenditure for the Parish Field.

(b) **Teignbridge District Council owned benches**

Members received a response from TDC advising that they do not have the funds to repair/replace the damaged benches in the car park. An offer of an old metal bench has been made but the Parish Council will need to arrange installation.

After a brief discussion, it was agreed that Cllr Raynor would send District Cllr Stuart Rogers photos of the benches with a view to tapping into unspent capital to replace/repair them. He is meeting with the relevant Portfolio Holder, on Tuesday and will raise this matter with him.

\

**5087 PLANNING/LOCAL LIAISON**

*(Cllrs Bibby, Guest & Edwards)*

- **New planning applications/appeals:**
- 0011/25 – Shop on the Green, Widecombe-in-the-Moor

Change of use from part business/part residential to full residential

After discussion and review of the relevant material considerations, it was agreed, by a majority of members, not to comment on this application.

(b) **Planning Decisions/Withdrawals**

None

**5088 FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE**

*(Cllrs Bibby, Guest & Edwards)*

(a) **Payments**

Members approved the following payments:

- Clerk's salary & disbursements – £290.37
- Marlpark Electrical Ltd (installation of new defibrillator cabinet) – £73

**5089 HIGHWAYS**

**Potholes and other highways maintenance issues can be reported direct to DCC:**

Online: <https://www.devon.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/report-a-problem/>

Telephone: 0345 155 1004

Email: [customer@devon.gov.uk](mailto:customer@devon.gov.uk)

- Road Warden Scheme – Cllr Raynor advised that DCC has now confirmed that a payment of £785.95 will be made for purchase of tools and equipment. It was noted that the team will be repairing holes that do not meet the County Council’s criteria. The volunteers will now identify a priority list and a plan of action. Residents are still very much urged to report potholes to DCC.

**5090 CORRESPONDENCE**

Members received an email from a resident together with a paper on the impact of dogs off leash on wildlife

requesting that the Parish Council asks DNPA to make it compulsory for dogs to be on leads from 1 March to

31 July in order to protect ground nesting birds and lambs.

Rob Steemson (DNPA Ranger) has advised that the DNPA byelaw review is on hold until the camping byelaw

court case result is confirmed. The current DNPA advice during March to July is that dogs should be on a lead

throughout the period and signs are displayed at appropriate moorland gates and public rights of way along

with increased press/media awareness and campaign.

**5091 MEMBERS’ ITEMS FOR INFORMATION OR GENERAL DISCUSSION, FOR INCLUSION ON FUTURE AGENDAS AND/OR ITEMS REQUIRING URGENT ATTENTION**

*Members are reminded that they have not received the statutory notice of this business to be transacted and should therefore recognise that any decision made may be taken to be unlawful if challenged in the future*

Cllr Edwards suggested that DNPA’s Head Ranger, Simon Lee, is invited to the Annual Parish Meeting.

Cllr Guest had been asked about a 20moh speed restriction outside the school. Having discussed this previously, there was little appetite to pursue this.

Cllr Raynor reminded members that the painting of the metal benches needs to be completed when the weather improves.

**5092 NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on 6 March 2025 in Leusdon Memorial Hall.

Signed ..... Dated .....