

WIDECOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council

held in Church House, Widecombe on

Thursday 2 January 2025 at 7.30pm

Members present: Councillor Y Elliott (Chair), J Bibby, D Edwards, T Guest, C Partridge and S Raynor

Also attending: District Cllr and Ashburton Postmaster Rogers, District Cllr Major, District Cllr Nutley

Members of the Public: None

Clerk: Suzanna Hughes

5069 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None

5070 OPEN FORUM

Ashburton Postmaster Stuart Rogers advised that the mobile library service will be live in the next couple of weeks following a successful trial in November. He thanked Cllr Edwards for her involvement in the trial. Residents will be able to reserve and collect library books from the Ashburton Travelling Post Office: specific books can be reserved from Libraries Unlimited online, or by phoning Ashburton Library. To reserve a book, residents will need a Travelling Post Office library card and PIN which Ashburton Library staff will set up. Reservations are free during the pilot until 30 June 2025.

5071 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

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.

Cllr Elliott declared an interest in 5076(b) having submitted an application on behalf of Widecombe Community Hall CIO for a small grant.

5072 RATIFICATION OF MINUTES

Members received the minutes Parish Council held on 7 November 2024 which were approved as a true and

correct record.

5073 REPORTS

(a) **County Councillor**

Cllr Rogers advised that County Cllr Bullivant is trying to find out how this parish will benefit from the extra government funding, which was announced in December, to fill potholes and repair roads.

(b) District Councillors

District Cllr Rogers reminded members about the Cost of Living Workshop on 20 November in Ashburton. If anyone needs transport, contact Cllr Rogers.

District Cllr Nutley was aware of the concerns regarding the potential closure of the public toilets. District Councillors are unable to enter meaningful discussions on individual assets until the results of the public consultation are known and subsequent decision by TDC is made in light of that and officer recommendations. They expect to be in that position early in the New Year following which officers will meet with Town and Parish Councils to discuss the outcomes. In the meantime, all information is being compiled to share with towns and parishes including financial and asset information. It is envisaged that they will be having discussions over the next 12 months with Town and Parish Councils regarding toilets and other assets and therefore, in terms of setting the precept, this will be impacted in 2026/27 not 2025/26.

Cllr Raynor advised that when the land (now comprising the car park) was originally conveyed to TDC, one of the covenants on the title deeds was that they built the public conveniences. At this stage, she has not seen a copy of the original conveyance to see if there were any other provisions about maintenance of the public toilets. At the very least, as the gift of the land was on the basis that the toilets were built, there is a moral obligation for them to be maintained. She was also very concerned about the closure of the toilets at Newbridge and the consequential health hazard of there being no facility at this location.

Cllr Nutley advised that The South Devon Alliance (formerly 'Newton Says No') has now disbanded. Some have been accepted into the Independent group but three have not and one is probably joining the Conservatives. The Independents are now the third largest party.

The new fleet of the smaller electric vehicles will soon be delivered but the existing larger waste collection vehicles will remain as it is not feasible to replace those that cover rural areas with electric vehicles.

He advised that he sits on the Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust; they are looking for additional governors. There is also a survey being carried out engaging local people communities on a new 10-year Health Plan for the NHS. To get involved in this, go to www.onedevon.org.uk/10-year-plan

It has been announced that the Princetown Visitor Centre is set to close due to funding challenges. This is subject to consultation.

Cllr Nutley advised that he has £200 available in his Community Fund should the Parish Council require funding for a particular project. It was thought that Leusdon Memorial Hall might benefit from this as a contribution towards the cost of replacing their defibrillator cabinet. It was recommended that they apply directly to Cllr Nutley for this funding.

Cllr Rogers reported that a series of meetings are planned to discuss the White Paper concerning devolution and future local government arrangements across England. All District Councillors have been invited and there will be an opportunity for discussion and

questions. There is currently no time-frame. National Parks are excluded from this White Paper.

The Connectivity Fund has been signed off, the audit process having now been completed. The Ring and Ride service bus service will cover six wards and it is hoped to be launched in the spring. Pricing structures are being worked on and volunteer bus drivers are being recruited.

(c) **DNPA Representative**

No report.

(d) **Police Report**

No report.

(e) **Delegate Reports**

No report.

5074 PROJECTS & ESTATES

(Cllrs Raynor & Partridge)

(a) **Parish Field**

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

(b) **Parish Field Grazing Licence**

Cllr Bibby confirmed that no changes are required to the terms of the licence. This will run from 1 April to 30 November. An advert will be sent to the Parish Link with a view to considering applications in March's meeting.

(c) **Hedge around the public toilets**

Cllr Partridge has been liaising with TDC about the maintenance of the hedge around the public toilets which has not been cut for some time. It transpires that TDC is not responsible for the section around the sub-station which is owned by what was formerly South West Electricity Board. She has contacted both parties with a view to arranging both sections to be trimmed simultaneously.

5075 PLANNING/LOCAL LIAISON

(Cllrs Bibby, Guest & Edwards)

• **New planning applications/appeals:**

(i) 0488/24 – Lizwell Farm, Widecombe-in-the-Moor

Construction of a covered dung store and general purpose building and resurfacing and extension of farm track

Members unanimously agreed to support this application.

(ii) 0489/24 – Lizwell Farm, Widecombe-in-the-Moor

Construction of a covered dung store and storage

Members unanimously agreed to support this application.

(iii) 0490/24 – Lizwell Farm, Widecombe-in-the-Moor

Construction of a covered feeding/loafing area and a covered handling area

Members unanimously agreed to support this application.

(b) **Planning Decisions/Withdrawals**

None

5076 FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE

(Cllrs Bibby, Guest & Edwards)

(a) **Payments**

Members approved the following payment:

- Clerk's salary and disbursements, Radar keys – £295.26

(It was agreed that the Radar keys will be kept at The Café on the Green, The Old Inn and by Widecombe Fair Committee.)

- HMRC (PAYE Q3) – £213.80
- Sam Hall – To grind sycamore stump on the green – £216 (£96 to be claimed from FiPL grant)
- L Mortimore – Cleaning and re-engraving time capsule stone – £300
- **Small Grants Scheme**

Members considered five applications for a small grant. It was agreed to allocate funding as follows:

- £300 to Leusdon Memorial Hall towards an unlocked defibrillator cabinet

(+ £200 from District Cllr Nutley's Community Fund as discussed at item 5073(b).

- £500 to Widecombe Community Hall towards the ongoing site landscaping and car park completion
- £200 to Widecombe PCC towards special internal lights
- £500 to Spitchwick Cricket Club towards new cricket nets

The application from Widecombe PCC for a grant to help with the cost of maintaining the churchyard was rejected on the basis that the small grant scheme does not assist with running costs.

(c) **Budget 2025-26**

Members received and considered draft budget proposals for 2025/26. After discussion, the budget proposals and the level of precept to be demanded were approved. The precept was set at £7113 representing an increase of 2%.

5077 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

- Road Warden Scheme – Cllr Raynor advised that three volunteers have now attended the Highways Safety Awareness training course. Reading materials are also to be circulated. Tarmac has now been delivered and funding for all the equipment required (2 sets) has been approved. Once the funding has been transferred to the Parish Council, the equipment will be purchased and the volunteers will be able to start work.
- The clerk advised that she has chased a response from the Highways Engineer, Scott Riddell, regarding the missing directional signs. He advised that the department has been short-staffed but a technician is now in place who will look into this.

5078 CORRESPONDENCE

None

5079 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 Elliott to follow up with TDC about the condition of the benches.

Cllr Partridge encouraged use of the red telephone kiosk. With there being no mobile phone signal, it is important that the facility is retained.

5080 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on 6 February 2025 in Church House, Widecombe.

Signed Dated