

## **WIDECOMBE PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council  
held on Zoom on Thursday 2 July 2020

Members present: Councillor Hassell (Chairman), Booty, Edwards, Elliott, Fenton, Partridge,  
Routley and Whiteside

Also present: County Councillor Gribble

Members of the Public: None

Clerk: Suzanna Hughes

### **4564 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

- Rob Steemson (DNPA)

### **4565 OPEN FORUM**

There were no members of the public present.

### **4566 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & 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.

There were no declarations of interest.

### **4567 RATIFICATION OF MINUTES**

Members received the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 4 June 2020 which were  
approved

and signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record.

### **4568 REPORTS**

(a) County Councillor

Cllr Gribble advised that he needs to set up a site visit with the Highways Engineer regarding the  
footpath from Bowden Lane to Hamel down about which the Parish Council has received  
correspondence. He advised that it is a public right of way but not a public highway.

(b) District Councillors

No reports.

(c) DNPA Representative

Cllr Steemson sent the following written report:

Dartmoor generally remains very busy with recreational visitors and the issues they bring.

Following

up from a recent video conference with Highways etc I have a meeting at Newbridge area today  
to try

and get the yellow lines repainted, damaged and removed banking/boulders replaced, signs  
reinstalled.

The enforcement officers have been present virtually daily and are doing as good a job as  
possible but if the other works are done as soon as possible it will block off the key areas where  
the

first vehicles start parking.

There has also been a large and increasing amount of people illegally camping etc on the Holne  
side

of the Dart Valley on DNPA land who say they are staying until at least 20 July. Police/Rangers continue to visit/monitor daily whilst we get the appropriate legal paperwork/injunction in place for removal.

(d) Police

No report.

(e) Delegate Reports

Cllr Elliott reported that she joined the online webinar “Managing road danger and speed: Implementing 20mph limits” by Landor Links on 25th June 2020.

Main areas covered included:

- Road safety is not just about avoiding injury and/or risk but also about ensuring a ‘freedom from’

any exposure to harm. As such, we should not have to wait for an accident before considering a change to existing situations.

- Data was shared predominantly for urban areas, but these demonstrated that there is a 63% reduction of fatal injuries when changing road speeds from 30mph to 20mph limits.

- Reducing speed limits to 20mph can also be shown to have a positive impact on the NHS – this is

regarded as one of the cheapest and most effective methods for improving public health.

- There is widespread public resistance to reducing speed limits to 20mph. The current road infrastructure has been designed and developed across the country for drivers, rather than pedestrians, cyclists, horse-riders etc. As such, motorists are in a privileged position. With this in

mind, the following quote was shared: “When all you’ve known is privilege, equality feels like oppression.”

- It was considered that there is a ‘cultural blind-spot’ around motoring and systemic unconscious

bias (for example, the majority of people think it is unacceptable for the public to be subject to the

cigarette fumes of others, but not to the fumes of vehicle exhausts in the same situation).

- If a change to a speed limit is sought, you must be clear about what you want to achieve and who

will enforce it.

- You can consider a ‘buffer zone’ to slow traffic on approach to a village/area with a 20mph limit.

- Community engagement is very important to identify and local fears around current speed limits

and areas perceived as dangerous. Identifying any behaviour (such as refusing to walk / cycle in particular areas) due to safety concerns is equally important as a change to speed limits may enable more people to access spaces that they currently do not or where they feel unsafe. This will

help to highlight the benefits of a change of speed limit and the purpose of change.

- A Devon County Council Policy for implementing 20mph limits in certain areas on an Authoritywide

basis would be most helpful for developing consistent rural expectations and instilling values.

In respect of Widecombe Parish, and in light of a local petition by Peter Reynolds last year to reduce

the speed limit through Widecombe Village:

- Inadequate pavement space through Widecombe, and in particular past the school and up into the

village, means that an increased number of pedestrians are forced to share road space.

Therefore,

a reduction in the speed limit could reduce the risk of injury.

- Clarity on DCC's policy position would be useful to understand how Widecombe fits into the speed

limit setting process locally.

- Community consultation would give a clearer indication of perceived risks and dangers in order to

support any lobbying for change

A discussion followed regarding the installation of a 20mph speed limit. Cllr Fenton considered it a

good idea but was unclear on the process for obtaining one. Cllr Gribble advised that it would be reviewed by the SCARF team (Speed Compliance Action Review Forum). [DCC and the Police have

developed a joint procedure to allow speed concerns to be assessed in a consistent manner]. It was

noted that speeds can't be reduced from 40mph to 20mph without a buffer zone of 30mph. The Chairman suggested that the school would need to support the proposal. It was agreed that Cllr Elliott

should write to the headteacher, Des Stokes, asking for his view and ask him to canvas the opinion of

parents and staff. It was also noted that parents parking on the school playing field is having a positive

impact on roadside parking and reducing the number of pedestrians on the highway. Whilst this had

been introduced for social distancing purposes it would be interesting to establish whether the school

would consider continuing this measure to increase the safety of the children. It was further noted that

this had been discussed by the school about five years ago but it was unclear why discussion had

stopped.

4569 ESTATES

(Lead Councillors: Cllrs Fenton & Whiteside)

No items.

4570 PROJECTS

(Lead Councillors: Cllrs Edwards)

(a) Tree Stump Carving

Cllr Edwards reported that a group of locals have been recruited to establish an opinion in the parish

regarding the tree stump carving. Four different carvers have been contacted. In the meantime, while

discussion is underway, the tree needs to be protected. It has been noted that people have been

climbing on it.

4571 FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE

(Lead Councillors: Cllrs Partridge & Routley)

(a) Audit 2019/20

(i) Members received and noted the year end bank reconciliation.

(ii) Members received and noted the internal audit report and to confirm that this Council is confident that the internal audit arrangements provide excellent reassurance for the public that the financial systems are robust and fit for purpose and to continue with the appointment of Lee Accounting (South West) Ltd as the Internal Auditor to the Parish Council

(iii) Members agreed that this Council is exempt from a limited assurance review under s9 of the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015 and to sign the Certificate of Exemption

(iv) Members completed, approved and authorised the Chair and Clerk/RFO to sign Section 1 of the Annual Return (Annual Governance Statement 2019/20)

(v) Members received, approved and authorised the Chair and Clerk/RFO Section 2 of the Annual

Return (Accounting Statements 2019/120).

(b) Payments

Members received and approved the following payments:

- Cheque no 001047 – Hooke Highways (Chapter 8 road closure) – £562.20
- Cheque no 001048 – Clerk's salary and disbursements (July) – £257.67
- Cheque no 001049 – Aspect Tree Consultancy Ltd (to be reimbursed to the clerk) – £96
- Cheque no 001050 – HMRC (PAYE Q1) – £57.20
- Cheque no 001051 – Lee Accounting (South West) Ltd – £108
- Cheque no 001052 – G Partridge (Felling of sycamore tree including Licence fee) – £2000
- Cheque no 001053 – Clerk's salary and disbursement (August) – £257.47
- Cheque no 001054 – Artisan Projects Ltd (Poundsgate noticeboard) – £1260

(c) Health and Safety Policy

Members received and approved the draft Health and Safety Policy.

4572 PLANNING/LOCAL LIAISON

(Lead Councillors: Cllrs Booty & Elliott)

(a) New planning applications/appeals

None.

It was noted that a new planning application had been received since the publication of the agenda

(0286/20 – Removal of a non-original porch canopy and the erection of an enclosed entrance porch at

Hannaford House, Poundsgate). As the next Parish Council is not until 3 September, it was agreed to

make no comment.

(b) Decisions

(i) 0550/19 – Erection of new Community Hall, associated new access point, parking and breakout

space, Hayes Field, Widecombe-in-the-Moor

Members noted that DNPA has granted conditional planning permission.

(ii) 0161/20 and 0162/20 – Installation of a flue and roof windows into the west facing roof elevation of the barn, Lower Blackaton, Widecombe-in-the-Moor

Members noted that DNPA has granted conditional planning permission.

4573 HIGHWAYS

No new issues were reported.

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)

4574 CORRESPONDENCE

None

4575 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

None

4576 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting will be held on Zoom on 3 September 2020 at 7.30pm.

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