

WIDECOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council

held in Church House, Widecombe on Thursday 7 July 2022

Members present: Councillor Elliott (Chairman for this meeting), Bibby, Butcher, Edwards, Jones, Partridge and Zab

Also present: County Cllr Gribble

Members of the Public: There were two members of the public present.

Clerk: Suzanna Hughes

4811 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- Cllr Hassell
- Cllr Fenton
- District Cllr Nutley
- District Cllr Cox

4812 OPEN FORUM

Michael Welby, representing Widecombe Fair Committee, addressed the Parish Council regarding the fees for the hiring the village green for Widecombe Fair. Given the uncertainty about the success of this year's Fair (the first since the Covid pandemic), he requested that, this year, the level of fees due to the Parish Council for the rental of the green (usually £1200) are determined after the Fair once they have a clearer idea of the income generated. Cllr Elliott thanked Michael for attending and advised that the request was on the agenda and would be discussed at item 4816(d).

4813 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 Butcher declared an interest in item 4816 (d) as a member of the Widecombe Fair Committee. He stated he had no financial benefit or influence but would abstain from taking part in any discussion regarding the fees.

Cllr Partridge declared an interest in items 4816 (b) (i) and (ii).

4814 RATIFICATION OF MINUTES

Members received the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 5 May 2022 which were approved as a true and correct record.

Matters Arising:

(i) The Chairman advised that the deadline for the Tidy Teignbridge Fund has passed but it is something which can be looked into in future years.

(ii) Members noted that the pre-school has returned the signed agreement for use of a part of the parish field for their outdoor classroom and has paid the peppercorn rent.

(iii) The Chairman thanked all those who had been involved in putting on the Jubilee celebrations and particularly Mark Hutchins for arranging the fireworks and Lloyd Mortimore for donating the Jubilee stone.

(iv) The Clerk advised that administrative matters have delayed the transition to online banking but she would continue to pursue these with Lloyds Bank.

(v) Copies of the Good Councillors Guides were distributed to new members.

4815 REPORTS

(a) County Councillor

Cllr Gribble reported that he had been busy trying to get the cattle grids through. Members asked about the locations of the proposed cattle grids as this could cause controversy amongst farmers. There had been no communication from Widecombe Commoners Council. Cllr Gribble said he would try and find out some more information.

He advised that he has been approached by a resident for a grit bin. Cllr Gribble asked whether one could be moved from an existing location to this location as funding for a new bin was limited. Cllr Butcher advised that there are other locations where bins are needed. All existing bins are used. Cllr Butcher also advised that on the Holne side of Newbridge where double yellow lines were recently painted, Highways have now resurfaced up to the yellow lines and painted the lines themselves with black paint. This is not only a waste of public money but is also inconvenient as presumably when the lines are repainted the road will need to be closed again and a diversion, impacting Widecombe residents, put in place. Cllr Gribble will take this up with Highways.

(b) District Councillors

Cllr Nutley was unable to attend the meeting as he is chairing the Ale Tasting and Bread Weighing meeting in Ashburton. He advised that the Ale Tasting Ceremony takes place on Saturday 16th July, 2pm at St Lawrence Chapel where a Medieval Music Group is leading the procession from the courts. All are welcome to attend.

(c) DNPA Representative

No report.

(d) Police Report

None

(e) Delegate Reports

No reports.

4816 PROJECTS & ESTATES

(Lead Councillors: Cllrs Fenton, Partridge, Butcher and Bibby)

(a) Parish Field

(i) Members noted that a Parish Field Committee had been formed and were asked by those heading up that group (Michael and Philippa Brown) to consider a proposal for the planting of an orchard. It was realised at the meeting that the planting plan has not been shared with members and would be circulated after the meeting. The Chairman advised that there would be a maximum of 45 fruit trees which would allow for additional uses of the space. The group have also put forward a proposal for approval by the Parish Council about how the group should consult with parishioners about its plans for the field. Rather than writing to each parishioner individually, they propose that notices are published inviting comments. Cllr Jones raised a concern that Terms of Reference have not yet been drafted and approved and this should be prioritised. It was agreed that both parties need to be clear on the boundaries within which it can operate. After discussion, Cllr Bibby suggested that her husband (retired solicitor) might be prepared to draft some Terms of Reference for which members were very grateful. The document which was previously circulated by Cllr Fenton could be used as a basis. Cllr Jones offered to recirculate this. Cllr Jones suggested that grazing would have a financial impact on the Parish Council and therefore the Parish Council should still be involved in discussions about this. Similarly, Cllr Fenton had suggested a more commercial rent for the pre-school. These matters emphasised the need for Terms of Reference to be drawn up.

Cllr Elliott summarised: the proposal that is going to be shared in the community is that the Committee is planning to create an orchard for the benefit of parishioners unless anyone can respond with a compelling reason not to do so.

Cllr Bibby advised that there is a dead sycamore in the field. She advised that her gardener with the help of Michael Brown's gardener are prepared to fell the tree. Members thanked her for this kind donation.

(ii) There was a lengthy discussion about the grazing licence. Cllr Butcher still had concerns about ponies being grazed in an orchard. Cllr Bibby advised that some advice had been sought from various bodies including the Devon Wildlife Trust. With regard to this year's licence, members were advised that ponies were currently being grazed in the field. There were concerns raised by some members that they had not formally agreed this but it was noted that consultation had taken place via email and that members had been given the opportunity to comment. It was not possible to wait until July's meeting to agree formally as it would have been too late for the ponies to start grazing and therefore the Chairman, on the understanding that due process had been followed and given the timescales involved, had authorised the agreement. It was noted that not all members had been informed of this decision. Moving forward, it was accepted that all members should be involved in all email communication. Members agreed to approve the updated licence agreement and authorised the Chair and the grazier to sign it. Members were informed that the current grazier has expressed an interest in using the field again next year but would need advance notice of its availability.

(iii) Members considered quotations for a new wooden field gate at the entrance to the parish field.

- Mole Valley £92.80 + VAT (diamond brace gate in larch)
- Tuckers £98.45 + VAT (diamond brace, hardwood gate)
- Wynnstay £146 + VAT (diamond brace, hardwood gate)

- Rattery Saw Mills £149.60 + VAT (Devon field gate in Douglas Fir)

After discussion, it was agreed to accept the quote from Rattery Saw Mills. Cllr Zab will order the gate and it was agreed that a volunteer group will collect and hang it.

(b) Village Strimming

Having declared an interest in this item, Cllr Partridge left the meeting for this item.

(i) Members retrospectively approved the strimming of the centre of the village by Geoff Partridge prior to the Jubilee celebrations (authority for this was originally given by the Chair, in consultation with the clerk, at a cost of £80).

(ii) Members considered a quotation of £150 from Geoff Partridge for trimming the centre of the village including the four roads out of the village. It was agreed that given that budgets are limited (particularly as the income from Widecombe Fair may be reduced), it was agreed to decline the work this time.

(c) Fixed Assets Register

Cllr Partridge presented an updated fixed assets register which now includes a photographic schedule. There was a query about the noticeboard in Ponsworthy. It was agreed that a discussion with the owners of the property would be needed to establish this but in the meantime it is in good condition.

Cllr Jones also queried the ownership of the Widecombe Fair sign. It was agreed that this must belong to the Parish Council. In terms of condition of those assets, most are generally in an acceptable condition although the Golden Jubilee is looking rather tired. No action was agreed at this stage in terms of repair/maintenance.

Cllr Partridge has a key to the Poundsgate noticeboard but she believed that Amanda Routley had another and she would retrieve this. It was also agreed that a small notice should be put inside the noticeboard saying where the keys can be obtained from.

It was agreed that Cllr Partridge would update the document to include a photo of the Widecombe Fair sign (value not agreed) and a value added for the recently purchased armed forces benches.

(d) Widecombe Fair

Members considered the proposal put forward by Michael Welby in the open forum. After discussion, and acknowledging the unusual and unpredictable circumstances of this year's Fair, it was agreed that this year's rent should be agreed between the Fair Committee and the Parish Council once the Fair Committee has details of the income generated. The date by which the rent (if any) is paid was therefore extended to 1 October. It was agreed that the terms of the agreement would be changed to reflect the request.

(e) Chestnut Tree

Concerns were raised about the condition of the horse chestnut on the green which has received recent soil amelioration treatment. After discussion, including whether this tree and the sycamore tree should be felled, it was agreed that quotations should be sought to reassess the condition of all the trees for which the Parish Council is responsible for review in September's meeting.

4817 PLANNING/LOCAL LIAISON

(Lead Councillors: Cllrs Edwards, Elliott, Jones & Zab)

(a) New planning applications/appeals

(i) 0245/22 – Sherwell Farm, Poundsgate

Extension of existing barn to allow under-cover feeding

Members agreed to support this application. It appears to be in accordance with the DNPA Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan 2006-26 particularly Policy COR18 “development of existing business”.

The application also seems sensible and in accordance with the current thinking as far as the environmental impact of open feeding areas.

(b) Planning Decisions/Withdrawals

(i) 0130/22 – Land North East of Cator Gate, near Widecombe-in-the-Moor

Retrospective permission for change of use to a secure dog walking field including provision of a parking area and shelter

Members noted that DNPA has refused to grant planning permission.

(ii) 0147/22 – The Old Mill, Ponsworthy

Siting of caravan/log cabin within the residential curtilage of the dwellinghouse known as The Old Mill to be used as ancillary accommodation to that dwellinghouse

Members noted that DNPA has issued a Certificate of Lawfulness.

4818 FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE

(Lead Councillors: Cllrs Edwards, Elliott, Jones & Zab)

(a) Payments

Members received and approved the following payments:

- Cheque no 001106 – Clerk’s salary and disbursements (July & August) – £526.42
- Cheque no 001107- HMRC (PAYE) – £165.00
- Cheque no 001108 – DALC (Good Councillors’ Guides) – £32.27
- Cheque no 001109 – G Partridge (Strimming) – £80
- Cheque no 001110 – Wollens (North Hall field lease) – £1661.50

(b) New policies for adoption

(i) Safeguarding

The clerk advised that she did not think that this Council needed a Safeguarding Policy as it does not work with children and vulnerable adults. This was agreed.

(ii) Equality & Diversity

It was agreed to approve and adopt this policy as circulated.

(iii) Co-option Policy

It was agreed to approve and adopt this policy as circulated.

4819 HIGHWAYS

The clerk advised that the Highways Officer has not removed the sign at the bottom of Southcombe Hill. He will find out if someone else has removed it. She has also asked him about the fallen sign at Rowden Cross.

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

4820 CORRESPONDENCE

None

4821 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

4822 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting will be held in Leusdon Memorial Hall on 1 September 2022 at 7.30pm.

Signed Dated