

WIDECOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council

held in Church House, Widecombe on

Thursday 4 July 2024 at 7.30pm

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

Also attending: District Cllr and Ashburton Postmaster Rogers

Members of the Public: Two

Clerk: Suzanna Hughes

5021 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- Cllr Elliott
- District Cllr Nutley
- District Cllr Major
- County Cllr Gribble
- Rob Steemson

5022 OPEN FORUM

Ashburton Postmaster Stuart Rogers confirmed that the post van will be able to dispense cash on Widecombe Fair Day using Starlink satellite.

5023 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 Partridge declared an interest in item 5029 (a).

5024 RATIFICATION OF MINUTES

Members received the minutes Parish Council held on 6 June 2024 which were approved as a true and correct

record.

5025 REPORTS

- (a) **County Councillor**

No report.

- (b) **District Councillors**

Cllr Rogers advised that Teignbridge has issued some 'green' grants. Grants of up to £20,000 can be applied for to reduce your carbon footprint. The deadline for applications is 12 August. It might be a fund which may be of interest and relevance to the new Community Hall. It was agreed to send details to Cllr Elliott. The school has contacted him about funding for new play equipment; he has asked whether grant funding would be available for this. The clerk asked whether TDC had any plans to install EV charging points in the car park as this fund could be used to support the cost of this. Cllr Rogers would find out. Cllr Partridge also mentioned a need for electric bike charging points. If TDC is considering installing EV charging points, could they also consider charging points for bikes.

He continues to work on a Connectivity project with TDC and DNPA to try to connect communities with transport to get them to work and higher education. There is central government grant available and he is hoping that next week the application will be submitted. He will continue to keep the Parish Council posted on progress.

He asked whether the Parish Council had received any correspondence from Buckland-in-the-Moor about the mast. They have written to the mast provider asking whether the mast could be sited on the outskirts of Widecombe/use an existing mast. Members of Widecombe Parish Council would need more information before commenting on this.

Cllr Partridge asked Cllr Rogers if he could ask TDC to cut the hedge at the back of the public toilets before Widecombe Fair. Cllr Rogers agreed to follow this up.

(c) **DNPA Representative**

No report.

(d) **Police Report**

During the period 1 – 30 June, there was one criminal offence recorded for this area involving criminal damage to a vehicle, possibly due to an attempt theft of a Land Rover. There were 9 non-crime incidents across the area. These involved missing persons, domestics and firearms licensing. Cllr Partridge advised that she has signed up to the Police Rural Newsletter which includes useful information about what the police are doing in this area and new initiatives etc. She will try and remember to circulate it.

(e) **Delegate Reports**

None.

5026 PROJECTS & ESTATES

(Cllrs Raynor & Partridge)

- **Parish Field**

(i) The income and expenditure for the Parish Field (to 30 June 2024) was received. A balance of £1103.85 was noted.

5027 PLANNING/LOCAL LIAISON

(Cllrs Bibby, Guest & Edwards)

(a) **New planning applications/appeals:**

None

(b) **Planning Decisions/Withdrawals**

- 0142/24 – Springdown, Poundsgate

Replacement of all rotting timber windows with aluminium framed triple glazed units

Members noted that DNPA has granted conditional planning consent.

- 0379/22 – Hatchwell Farm, Widecombe-in-the-Moor

Erection of two agricultural buildings to adjoin an existing agricultural building

Members noted that DNPA has granted conditional planning consent.

5028 FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE

(Cllrs Bibby, Guest & Edwards)

(a) **Payments**

Members received and approved the following payments:

- Clerk's salary and disbursements – £543.04 (July & August)
- HMRC (PAYE) – £189
- G Partridge – Weed spraying around the village – £100
- **Small Grants**

Members agreed to offer two opportunities a year for community groups and organisations to apply for a small grant (October and March).

5029 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

(a) Cllr Raynor advised that she has received and circulated to members a copy of the Road Warden Scheme Agreement which requires signing. She advised that the Parish Council will need to agree to take out and maintain insurance to cover which is sufficient to indemnify DCC. She advised that DCC covers public liability but not the volunteers themselves. The clerk will check with the insurers but believes that as long as the volunteers are volunteering on behalf of the Parish Council, they will be covered by Widecombe's existing policy. It was therefore agreed that the Road Warden Scheme volunteers would be volunteering on behalf of the Parish Council. If volunteers are using their own vehicles, they will need to ensure that they are covered by their own motor insurance policy.

Cllr Raynor informed members that there are currently 14 volunteers and at least 4 are prepared to attend the two-day Chapter 8 training. The Parish Council will have to organise and pay for this initially and claim back the cost through a grant. The same applies to new

equipment. Storage of the equipment will also need to be arranged. At this stage, it was agreed by a majority of members that Cllr Raynor signs the agreement on the Parish Council's behalf with a view to keeping the scheme under review. There was a brief discussion about the Highways Officers and that some appear to be more helpful and accommodating than others in terms of getting things done. It was agreed Cllr Rogers would try and pursue this with DCC.

(b) Members noted the response of the Highways Officer to issues previously raised. Responses are

shown in italics below:

- The road surface at Parkland Head is very poor and continues to deteriorate. The whole stretch really needs resurfacing. Are you able to visit and assess this please with a view to scheduling appropriate repairs?

w3w for the damaged road surface area is: *livid.trudges.pacifist*

We are aware of this. There are no safety defects that meet our criteria for immediate treatment. However, this is being looked at by our contractor with a view to patching it.

- There are still many missing directional signs. These have been reported previously but include:
- Hare Foot Cross at the top of Widecombe hill – there are two missing ones for Widecombe and one for Hound Tor.

w3w: *returns.matchbox.backhand*

- Hemsworthy Gate – Widecombe sign

w3w: *rinses.someone.unfounded*

- Cold East Cross – several signs are missing

w3w: *firework.spurring.contracting*

These are not a priority for DCC at the present. I will look at them when my work load allows.

- The sign at Forder Bridge (the splash) in Ponsworthy is standing at an angle and needs reseating in the ground.
- There is a nasty bit of sunken road forming on the junction to Cockingford on the Widecombe – Ponsworthy road. The drain or something like that is collapsing under the road.

w3w: *donation.scatters.fits*

I will look at this when I can.

- Cars are continuously parking in front of the cattle grid at Dartmeet causing an obstruction. It has been suggested that signage is erected telling drivers not to block the cattle grid. Is this something you can look at?

It is frustrating that they are doing this. Drivers are responsible for their own actions. We are looking at possible ways of dealing with this.

New issues reported:

- The width sign for Ponsworthy Bridge at Parkland Head is virtually illegible and needs replacing.
- At the first turning to Leusdon, the metal pole to which another width sign is attached is corroded and needs replacing.

Cllr Partridge will send photographs to the clerk for onward transmission to the Highways Officer.

5030 CORRESPONDENCE

None

5031 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

- There was a brief discussion about a Parish Council Facebook page. It was agreed that Cllr Raynor

would continue to look in to the logistics of creating and managing this.

- Members discussed an email from Judy Southcombe advising that there had been a recent incident

where the Ambulance Service were very slow finding the code for the defibrillator. Whilst in this instance everything was fine in the end, the previous recommendation to keep the cabinet locked has now changed and it is now not recommended to have a locked cabinet. For now, Judy has displayed the code on the cabinet but suggests that the Council considers purchasing a new, unlocked cabinet (£495 + VAT) as the existing cabinet cannot be converted. After a brief discussion, it was agreed that more information was needed to establish whether displaying the code on the cabinet would be sufficient or whether there were other issues to consider. It was noted that the benefits of a locked cabinet included prevention of theft and damage to the defibrillator and ensured that the Ambulance Service were called.

(c) Cllr Raynor raised local concerns about the parking on Southcombe Hill. This was exacerbated

following a recent incident whereby the road was blocked by a car belonging to a guest at one of the holiday cottages which is understood to have experienced a handbrake failure and slipped backwards onto the road. It was agreed that there should be a discussion with the residents about the general parking issues in this location.

5032 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on 5 September 2024 in Church House, Widecombe.

Signed Dated