

WIDECOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council
held on Zoom on Thursday 4 June 2020

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

Also present: County Councillor Gribble, District Councillor Nutley and District Councillor Cox

Members of the Public: There was one member of the public present.

Clerk: Suzanna Hughes

4550 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- District Cllr Parker-Khan
- Rob Steemson (DNPA)

4551 OPEN FORUM

A member of the public spoke in support of his planning application (0216/20 & 0217/20 – Southcombe Barn. Widcombe-in-the-Moor) which members were considering at 4857 (a).

4552 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. Cllr Partridge declared an interest in item 4555 (a).

4553 RATIFICATION OF MINUTES

Members received the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 7 May 2020 which were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record. Cllr Nutley reported on two matters arising from the minutes: Mast at Newbridge (ref 0059/19)

This approved mast is proposed as part of the Home Office initiative for improvement of the private Emergency Service Network communications (blue light services). The Home Office has contracted that to EE and, on the back of delivering that project, EE would seek to add separate publicly available mobile telephone antennae boosting the service in this location. They have yet to start this permission – may be due to local pressure on the landowner to review his consent for the site? I am aware that alternative sites have recently been discussed informally but no applications have been forthcoming as yet. Their agreed code of conduct requires early community engagement. Airband Airband is a wireless broadband internet service – quite separate from that dealing with mobile phones. We all do however now use internet based audio/video based calls to communicate more during lockdown as you will be aware. You cannot access this wireless network by a mobile handset. It needs a specific connection to an antennae on a building or dwelling. I am not aware that Airband has any plans to add further masts in this area as they were only contracted to provide coverage to properties which fell outside of existing BT broadband coverage. In any event most of the commercial operators will only go to remote rural locations where there is a defined demand for their service unless there is govt subsidy. In the Widcombe area I am aware of the general strength of feeling against all telecommunications installations over a number of years. That will obviously put most operators off – they are unlikely to go where they will receive opposition and where the commercial benefits may also be marginal. If the community now feels differently then they could approach the mobile operators direct to identify what is needed. In most cases where there is community support we have been able to find a discrete location for the necessary equipment.

4554 REPORTS

(a) County Councillor Cllr Gribble advised that he was aware of the parking issues at Newbridge and Spitchwick and was addressing the problem. Cllr Routley confirmed that the road sweeper has cleared the yellow lines and that they were now visible (and therefore enforceable). Parking Enforcement Officers have been out and have issued a number of tickets.

(b) District Councillors Cllr Nutley advised that TDC Planning Committee meetings are restarting virtually next week. The Annual Meeting of the Council is being held on 28 July. He has also circulated a TDC Coronavirus Residents' Update. Cllr Cox advised that a discretionary grant scheme is being made available for businesses that are unable to access other grants. Cllr Fenton suggested that information relating to this scheme could be published in the newsletter and through the Parish Council's communication portal. The Rural Skip service has been cancelled until the end of July. Due to large volumes of recycling, TDC is running behind on some of its recycling collection rounds. Recycling Centres have been reopened but there are long queues.

(c) DNPA Representative No report.

(d) Police No report.

(e) Delegate Reports No reports.

4555 ESTATES

(Lead Councillors: Cllrs Fenton & Whiteside) (a) Sycamore Tree, Widecombe Green Having declared an interest, Cllr Partridge left the meeting for this item. The Chairman informed members that having discussed the proposed works with the DCC Highways Engineer, it is considered necessary to apply for a road closure whilst the works are carried out. The costs associated with closing the road were not included in the quote which was accepted by the Council at the last meeting and therefore members were asked to approve additional expenditure to ensure the work is carried out in accordance with the advice given by DCC. After discussion, it was agreed to approve the additional costs associated with the road closure (exact costs to be confirmed) provided the total cost does not exceed the highest quote received. The costs will be circulated to members.

(b) Risk assessments Members received and approved a risk assessment to be used by all Council contractors, as advised by DALC. It was noted that reference was made to a Health and Safety Policy which would also need to be drafted.

4556 PROJECTS

(Lead Councillors: Cllrs Edwards) (a) Poundsgate Noticeboard Cllr Partridge confirmed that the Poundsgate noticeboard was now in place. Members thanked Cllr Partridge for her efforts to achieve this. Members approved the purchase of a key safe box to fix under the noticeboard.

4557 PLANNING/LOCAL LIAISON

(Lead Councillors: Cllrs Booty & Elliott)

(a) New planning applications/appeals

(i) 0216/20 & 0217/20 – Change of use of barn to bunk barn and retreat barn and Change of use of two barns to two holiday lets at Southcombe Barn, Widecombe-in-the-Moor Cllr Elliott advised that she had visited the site with the Chairman and had circulated to members an outline of the material considerations for each application for their consideration. After brief discussion, it was agreed by a majority of members to support the application.

(ii) Members received amended plans for the Widecombe Community Hall. It was considered that the amendments addressed comments previously made and were therefore an improvement: a reduction in the external lighting and a change to the appearance of the access

bridge. It was agreed that it was not necessary to submit further comments to DNPA.

4558 FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE

(Lead Councillors: Cllrs Partridge & Routley)

(a) Payments Members received and approved the following payment for approval:

- Cheque no 001046 – Clerk’s salary and disbursements (May) – £257.47

4559 HIGHWAYS

(a) The Chairman advised that he had been contacted by Cllrs Routley and Partridge regarding the parking situation on Dartmoor. He had also experienced the issue first hand when driving through. PC Dudley is aware of the situation and has been on foot patrol with the landowner, Patrick Simpson. Parking tickets have also been issued. It was agreed that there was little else the Parish Council could

do other than keep the authorities that are able to enforce the law informed. It was also agreed that it would be beneficial to plan earlier for this next year to ensure that double yellow lines are visible etc at the start of the season and that the relevant authorities are reminded about the need to enforce parking restrictions in these locations. Cllr Partridge suggested that a clearway might be considered.

She acknowledged that people are generally not as familiar with these but it gives parking enforcement greater powers. There is also an option to buy in enforcement. This has been done in Cornwall. Cllr Partridge agreed to look into this. 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

4560 CORRESPONDENCE

(a) Members received an email from a parishioner asking the Parish Council to make representations to the relevant bodies regarding the mobile phone coverage in the parish. Members also considered the information provided by Cllr Nutley at item 4553. Members considered whether the Parish Council should take steps to ask parishioners for their view about whether they want to see improvements to mobile phone coverage. The Chairman also asked members to consider whether this was a Parish Council issue. After discussion, members agreed by a majority that the Parish Council should not get involved in trying to address this issue.

(b) Members received an email from Roger Claxton asking the Council to review how long it required the Coronavirus webpage to stay up bearing in mind that it lists the contact details of volunteers. It was agreed that people are still accessing services and that displaying the page was still necessary. Those who have offered their contact details are aware that they are listed on the website.

4561 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 Fenton expressed concern that some businesses in the parish might be struggling and that it might be helpful to compile some information about accessing funding and other support etc. This was considered a good idea and the Chairman asked Cllr Fenton to put together some ideas. District Cllr Cox said that he had already produced something similar and would forward it to Cllr Fenton for reference.

4562 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting will be held on Zoom on 2 July 2020 at 7.30pm.

Signed Dated