

WIDECOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held on Thursday 6 June 2019 in Church House, Widecombe

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

Also present: District Cllr Parker-Khan, District Cllr Nutley & District Cllr Cox

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

Clerk: Suzanna Hughes

4437 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- County Cllr Gribble

4438 OPEN FORUM

A parishioner addressed the Council about the proposed increase in the precept which she is against. She advised that she has carried out some research, which she shared with members, about the financial challenges of an increasingly ageing population, including fuel poverty, and the demands that are already being placed on parishioners to fund services such as adult social care. She asked members to therefore reconsider increasing the financial burden on those who are already deprived. If, however, the Council does proceed to increase the precept, she asked that members give consideration to the minimum turnout level; percentage majority for vote to succeed; what happens if the precept is raised and the project falls through; and as the scope of the hall has already reduced to 60% of the original plan, will the end result really be what is really wanted. A further question was asked about how the figure of £695,000 was derived. Cllr Elliott confirmed that this was based on estimates and is not, at this stage, a quotation. A question was asked about whether there was any progress with regard to an Air Ambulance night-landing site. The clerk advised that the Widecombe Fair Field had been identified as a possible site but she was not aware of any further progress. The clerk agreed to follow this up.

4439 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 Elliott declared an interest in item 4445(a).

Cllr Booty declared an interest in item 4446 (a)(iv).

4440 RATIFICATION OF MINUTES

Members received the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 16 May 2019 which were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record.

4441 POLICE REPORT

No report.

4442 COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

No report.

4443 DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Cllr Parker-Khan informed members that she was one of the three newly elected District Councillors serving this ward who very much intend to work together for the benefit of the community. Of interest, she advised that she had received a presentation from Devon Communities Action Group about ways to help local communities reduce, reuse and recycle. Grants, as well as help and support, are available for those communities looking for support. For more information see their Facebook page CAG Devon. Cllr Nutley introduced

himself and concurred with Cllr Parker-Khan that he was here to help the community. He has been dealing with problems with speeding traffic and horses and he has spoken to DCC and DNPA. He advised that he has been appointed by TDC as a member of DNPA. He reminded members that locality funding is available from each of the District Councillors. Cllr Cox introduced himself and echoed everything Cllrs Parker-Khan and Nutley had already said.

4444 ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In addition to those agreed at the last meeting, the following roles and responsibilities were also agreed:

- Widecombe & District Sports Group representative – Cllr Morley
- Widecombe Fair Committee – Cllr Fenton
- Church House Committee representative – Cllr Fenton
- Education Foundation – Cllr Fenton
- Sandbag store – Cllr Edwards
- Trees – Cllr Fenton
- Defibrillator guardian – Judy Southcombe
- Snow Warden – Miles Fursdon

4445 MATTERS ARISING

Parish Poll

(i) Members considered information circulated prior to this meeting and it was agreed to reverse the resolution made previously to hold a formal parish poll and that an informal poll is the preferred method to establish support for increasing the precept for the new community hall. (NB. A formal poll is expensive (£600-£1500), it does not allow for postal or proxy votes, voting hours are restricted to 4pm-9.00pm on a day chosen by TDC, polling cards are not issued and there is no provision to notify all households by post that there is going to be a vote).

(ii) Members discussed the arrangements that would need to be made for an informal parish poll and considered proposals drafted by the Chairman and circulated prior to this meeting:

- After discussion, and consideration of various options, it was agreed that the question to be asked will be:

Do you support an increase in the annual parish precept (part of your annual council tax bill), as stated in the accompanying fact sheet, so that Widecombe Parish Council can take out a loan in order to make a grant to the Widecombe Community Hall CIO towards the capital costs of building a new community hall in Widecombe?

- After discussion, it was agreed by members that the process for postal votes would be as follows:

A stamped addressed envelope will be sent to anyone who has requested a postal vote along with a voting slip. The stamped addressed envelope will have a voter number on it and this will be ticked off a list and the number blacked out. Another person will open the envelope and record the vote. No connection will be made between the vote and the individual.

- After discussion and consideration of polling station voting hours, it was agreed that voting will take place on a Thursday between the hours of 3pm and 10pm in locations in Widecombe and Leusdon. Somebody will tick off names on the electoral register and they will be issued with a voting card. They will cast their vote in a voting booth prior to placing it in a ballot box (the same as a formal election/poll) to ensure the vote is anonymous.

- It was agreed that there should be two open meetings to allow people to ask questions about the proposed vote. A Thursday evening was agreed for a meeting in Widecombe and a Saturday morning for a meeting in Leusdon.

- It was agreed by members that the results of the vote would be valid for four years. This will allow the Widecombe Community Hall CIO time to generate funds before a loan application is made.

- It was agreed that a loan application would not be made by the Parish Council until Widecombe Community Hall CIO has 80% of the funds in place and planning permission has been granted. It was further agreed that Widecombe Community Hall CIO would need to advise the Parish Council that these criteria have been met by 31 October of a particular year to allow the Parish Council time to make the loan application and meet TDC's deadline (usually end of January) for the proceeding financial year's precept demand.
- It was to be noted that the figures quoted in the factsheet may vary due to fluctuating interest rates. It was agreed unanimously that an allowance of 5% should be made for annual inflation. If rates increase by more than 5% when the loan is taken, the loan value would reduce. Following these decisions, jobs were divided up and allocated to individual members as listed on a separate document, and it was agreed that an update on progress would be given by all members at the next meeting.

(b) Parish Field

Cllrs Fenton and Whiteside reported that they had walked around the field and suggested that consideration might be given to alternative community uses. Cllr Fenton proposed that all members give thought to this with a view to discussing it further after the walkabout in July. In the meantime, he proposed that the Council accepts the quotation provided by Mick Clare for repair to the fencing. This was agreed.

(c) Newbridge

Members considered a request from Rob Steemson, DNPA, for a contribution of £500 to fund work around the Newbridge cattle grid to stop cars parking near the gate as Highways have no extra funds. Members agreed that whilst the problem impacted on Widecombe parishioners, it wasn't actually in the parish and it was queried whether Holne had also been approached in which case the contribution could be shared. Members agreed that they would also like to see a plan of the proposals together with details of the costings.

(d) Leat opposite the tennis court

Members received a report about the responsibility for and ongoing maintenance of the area around the historic leat following a visit made by DCC Highways and County Cllr Gribble which was attended by Richard Casey. It was particularly noted that BT is not able to cut branches of trees which are within the curtilage of a privately-owned property even when they are resting on BT cables. It was therefore agreed that Cllr Fenton would ask the resident of Coombe whether they would be happy for the parish to trim the branches on her behalf.

(e) Poundsgate Noticeboard

Cllr Partridge reported that DNPA do not have any spare noticeboards which could be used to replace the noticeboard in Poundsgate. However, it has been suggested that she talks to 'Moor than Meets the Eye' as there might be funding for a board provided it includes some interpretation. It was agreed that Cllr Partridge should follow this up with 'Moor than Meets the Eye'.

(f) Friends of Widecombe School

Members received a request from Friends of Widecombe School for a grant towards the school. It was agreed that the application should be considered in September at the same time as other s137 grant applications. 4446 PLANNING

(a) New applications/appeals

(i) 0142/19 – Erection of manure store and covered feed area at Hatchwell Farm, Widecombe-in-the-Moor (Amended plans)

Members agreed to continue to support this application.

Members also received and noted correspondence from a neighbour regarding this application.

(ii) 0439/18 – Appeal against the refusal of planning permission for the construction of a new

dwelling (under National Planning Policy Framework para 79)

Members noted the appeal and agreed they had no additional comments to those already made previously by this Council. (iii) 0197/19 – Installation of single storey wooden cabin inside the property curtilage to be used as part of an art studio and overflow accommodation to the main house at Middle Cator Farm, Widecombe

Members agreed to support this application.

(iv) 0193/19 – Erection of a general-purpose agricultural barn (27x12m0 with hardstanding at Sherwell Farm, Poundsgate

Having declared an interest, Cllr Booty left the meeting for this item

Members agreed to support this application.

(b) Decisions

(i) 0144/19 – Erection of woodstore at Southcombe Barn, Widecombe-in-the-Moor Members noted that DNPA has granted conditional planning permission.

(ii) 0059/19 – Installation of 20m telecommunications column mast accommodating three antennas, pole mounted satellite dish, ancillary equipment cabinets, cabling, landscaping and access track at Land at Newbridge Hill, Poundsgate

Members noted that DNPA has granted conditional planning permission.

(c) Other

Members were informed that Chris Hart, DNPA, would be happy to run a session for members of the Parish Council and/or the Planning team on planning and how to respond to planning applications. All members expressed their interest and support for this.

4447 FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE

(a) Payments

Members received and approved the following payments:

£235.77 Cheque no 001020 – Clerk’s salary and disbursements (June) – £235.77

£12,656 Cheque no 001011 – Widecombe Community Hall CIO – £12,656 (transfer of grant)

4448 HIGHWAYS

There were no new issues reported.

4449 CORRESPONDENCE

None.

4450 MATTERS OF INFORMATION AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN

None.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 10.00pm.

Signed Dated

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Thursday 4 July 2019 at 7.30pm.

This will be preceded by a walkabout of the village starting at 6.30pm outside Church House.