

## **WIDECOMBE PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held on Zoom on Thursday 4 March 2021

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

Also present: County Cllr Gribble, District Cllr Parker-Khan and District Cllr Nutley

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

Clerk: Suzanna Hughes

### **4629 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

- District Cllr Cox
- Rob Steemson (DNPA)

### **4630 OPEN FORUM**

There were no comments from members of the public.

### **4644 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.

There were no declarations of interest or requests for dispensation.

### **4645 RATIFICATION OF MINUTES**

Members received the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 4 February 2021 which were approved as a true and correct record.

### **4646 REPORTS**

#### **(a) County Councillor**

Cllr Gribble advised that he would follow up a request from residents to address their concerns about the highway in Lower Town although he stated that, in terms of budget, this is a lower priority than other sections of the highway and he could not therefore promise when the work would take place.

He is aware of the issues previously raised regarding the Hameldown footpath and the parking at Spitchwick and would continue to follow these up.

He reported that he has funded two additional grit bins for Leusdon Hill and Southcombe Hill but asked the Parish Council to liaise with the Highways Engineer, Scott Riddell, about where these should be sited.

#### **(b) District Councillors**

Cllr Nutley understood that the hedges in the car park had been cut. However, Cllr Partridge advised that the hedges around the toilet block have still not been done. Cllr Nutley will follow this up. At a recent meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, members received the community safety annual report delivered by Superintendent Davison. Cllr Nutley also circulated two reports regarding Revocation of the Air Quality Management Areas in Dawlish and Kingskerswell and Increasing the District Council's Recycling Rate. A grant of £2.3m has been awarded under the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme mainly for the Newton Abbot Leisure Centre, Teignmouth Lido and Dawlish Sports Centre. The District is also anticipating a carbon reduction of 280 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> in year 1 of operation (equivalent to the carbon emissions of 100 homes). A reduction of gas and consumption is also anticipated. There is an opportunity to put forward a case for EV charging points in the parish; the deadline is 31 March. After brief discussion, it was agreed that Cllrs Elliott and Fenton would look into this further with a view to making an application.

Cllr Parker-Khan advised that a BAME notice of motion has been put forward. She also advised that Cllr Cox is exploring whether it would be feasible for rural parishes in this area to come together to provide an alternative to the rural skip service. A meeting is being set up and representatives from this parish are welcome to join. It was agreed that Cllr Elliott would represent the Parish Council at such a meeting. She reported that she has attended a COVID recovery workshop at which it was discussed how the district shapes its COVID recovery. For this parish and other rural parishes, the need for broadband connectivity is essential going forward. There has been some feedback from Connecting Devon and Somerset who have agreed to prioritise those areas with either no or very poor internet coverage. She has been trying to follow up the Parish Council's request for information about whether it needs to apply for Change of Use for the Parish Field and the matter of taking a water supply from Teignbridge's toilets. She will continue to pursue this. She drew members' attention to the increase in domestic violence during the pandemic but some money has been made available (£417,000 from the government and £215,000 from the Police & Crime Commissioners Officer) to work with the perpetrators of domestic abuse and their families to help break the cycle and address the taboo that surrounds it. There is an organisation called splitz.org which has been set up to help those who have suffered from domestic violence and give advice. Finally, Cllr Parker-Khan reported that there is a life-saving 'early warning system device which is now available through the NHS for anyone over the age of 65 who contracts COVID or are extremely clinically vulnerable which monitors oxygen levels of patients at home.

(c) DNPA Representative

Rob Steemson circulated the following report:

The banking/bouldering is completed at Newbridge/Deeper Marsh and I have just reminded Highways of their part in the agreement to repair damaged tarmac, clear and repaint the yellow lines plus replacement of all the metal signs that have gone missing over recent years.

Highways have done phase 1 works on the moor above Bowden Lane. I was made aware by Devon County Council of a local complaint regarding the redirection of water run-off and informed them to contact the Council officer in charge. I visited site on Saturday and the work completed is as planned in regard to digging out the original drainage channels which should stop heavy rainfall washing out Bowden lane and dumping it down on the road. The officer in charge informed me immediately after the initial works were completed that when ground

conditions are more favourable they will return to line the cross ditches with granite slabs and add gowan to repair the eroded track on the moor hopefully before the end of March.

As it is now March, the DNPA reminds visitors that it is the lambing and bird nesting season and you will see signs going up requesting dogs to be on a lead.

Due to current and ongoing COVID guidance and a specific request from Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service, of whom many officers are currently supporting the National Health Service, the wider Dartmoor Fires Partnership has requested that no swaling takes place again this year. Natural England have supported the cutting of any vegetation that was being planned to be burnt this season.

(d) Police

No report.

(e) Delegate Reports

No reports.

#### 4647 PROJECTS

(Lead Councillors: Cllrs Edwards & Clare)

(a) Parish Field

Members received and discussed the reports on the proposed use of the parish field including an outdoor classroom for the pre-school, as an orchard, for grazing and whether the Parish Council should explore the provision of allotments.

With regard to allotments, the Chairman advised that there would be significant work involved to set up allotments and therefore it was important to establish whether there is a genuine desire for them. He reported that following an initial enquiry about allotments from a resident, they had now changed their mind. Cllr Fenton suspected that many residents in the parish were unaware of the field and suggested, that when social distancing restrictions are lifted, the Parish Council should organise a field open day to show it to the community and gather their ideas for its use.

There was a brief discussion about whether there would be space for allotments in the future if areas were allocated now for use by the pre-school, as an orchard and for grazing. It was agreed that there would still be scope for other uses at a later point.

Cllr Fenton suggested that the Parish Council tries to gauge the level of interest and that no decision regarding allotments should be made this evening.

Cllr Partridge suggested that allotments in this location would only be of interest to those who live in close proximity to them and therefore interest may be limited. She proposed that an article is published in the Parish Link and circulated on the parish communication system inviting those who are interested in allotments to come forward. This was agreed and Cllr Partridge and Fenton would draft something for circulation.

The Chairman advised that he had obtained some planings from Glendinnings to create a less muddy area at the entrance to the field.

Cllr Fenton asked whether the Parish Council would be letting the field for grazing this year. After discussion, it was agreed that the pre-school should take priority and later in the year grazing could be explored. Cllr Clare will ask the pre-school for their view on grazing and how the field can be used for both purposes.

It was noted that DNPA had not yet confirmed whether a change of use application is required to enable the pre-school to use the field. Cllr Elliott proposed that the Parish Council gives permission for the pre-school to use the field as soon as DNPA has confirmed that change of use is not required.

This was agreed by all.

#### 4648 ESTATES

(Lead Councillors: Cllrs Fenton & Whiteside)

No items.

#### 4649 PLANNING/LOCAL LIAISON

(Lead Councillors: Cllrs Booty & Elliott)

(a) New planning applications/appeals

(i) 0057/21 – Littlecott Farm, Widecombe-in-the-Moor

Erection of agricultural barn (retrospective)

The following material considerations were noted:

- The barn was built in 2017 and no objections have been raised at Widecombe Parish Council about this.
- The barn is in-keeping with other local agricultural buildings and modest in scale, with no new services required.
- Submission of planning applications prior to construction are preferred, to enable consideration of plans and potential necessary amendments.

Members agreed to support the application.

(b) Planning Decisions/Withdrawals

None

#### 4650 FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE

(Lead Councillors: Cllrs Partridge & Routley)

(a) Payments

Members received and approved the following payment:

– Cheque no 001069 – Clerk's salary and disbursements (Feb) – £277.86

#### 4651 HIGHWAYS

There were no new highways issues.

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)

Cllr Routley reported that the new top stones at Newbridge are becoming loose again. Cllr Gribble offered to report this.

#### 4652 CORRESPONDENCE

(a) Members received a request from a TV network based in USA and England to film some drama sequences in Widecombe. It was agreed that further information should be sought before a fee could be agreed.

(b) Members noted letters of thanks from the community groups who had been awarded a small grant from the Parish Council.

#### 4653 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

(a) It was noted that a letter has been written to TDC regarding the removal of the Dartmeet telephone box and the lack of consultation with the Parish Council. A response has been received acknowledging that TDC provided DNPA with a link to the consultation from BT, but it would have been better to instead (or also) consult directly with the individual parishes and to have followed up the lack of comment from those parishes. TDC has sent a letter to BT supporting the Parish Council's case for reinstatement though a response from BT states that the telephone was rarely used (averaging one call per month) and that it isn't feasible to provide telephone boxes solely for emergency use. The Chairman advised that he was awaiting a response from DNPA following which he would write to the MP.

(b) Cllr Edwards reported that there are plenty of sandbags in the store.

(c) Cllr Clare advised that the Widecombe Fair Committee will be meeting to discuss whether there will be a Fair this year. It is hoped that a decision will be made by mid-April.

#### 4654 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Zoom on 1 April 2021 at 7.30pm.

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