

WIDECOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held in Church House, Widecombe on Thursday 7 March 2024 at 7.30pm

Members present: Councillor Y Elliott (Chair), J Bibby, D Edwards, T Guest, C Partridge & S Raynor

Also attending: PCSO Campbell-Mosely, PC Hurrell and two members of the public

Members of the Public:

Clerk: Suzanna Hughes

4968 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- Cllr S Zab
- District Cllr Nutley
- Rob Steemson (DNPA)

4969 OPEN FORUM

PCSO Campbell-Mosely and PC Hurrell introduced themselves. PC Hurrell advised that she had taken over from PC Dudley as the Neighbourhood Beat Manager following his recent retirement. There has been no crime in Widecombe this month. A member of the public alerted them to an illegal rave at Soussons Woods, near Postbridge on 24th February at around 23.20hrs (see attached). Prevention is key. If members of the public are aware of such events, they are advised to call 999. Members of the public are also encouraged to video any other anti-social behaviour particularly relating to driving offences and upload it to Operation Snap on Devon & Cornwall's website. All submissions are reviewed and appropriate actions taken.

Rachel Arrowsmith-Brown spoke to item 4973(a)(iii) and the pre-school's request to make a planning application to install a small, wooden, outdoor shelter in the pre-school section of the parish field. The proposed construction will be open with three, low sides but will provide much-needed shelter against the weather so that the outdoor classroom can be used all year round and in all weathers. It would be flat-pack and therefore could be removed if necessary.

4970 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 4975(a) (though this was not strictly necessary as she was claiming back expenditure which had already been approved).

4971 RATIFICATION OF MINUTES

Members received the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 4 January 2024 which were approved as a true and correct record.

4972 REPORTS

(a) County Councillor

No report.

(b) District Councillors

No report

(c) DNPA Representative

No report.

(d) Police Report

See open forum.

(e) Delegate Reports

Cllr Partridge attended a meeting of the Church House Committee as the Parish Council's representative. There was a conversation about updating the Wifi with a view to being able to link to the church so that payments and donations can be taken digitally in the church. Listed Building Consent will be required as both the Church and Church House are listed buildings. They also discussed the National Trust, the fire alarms and they will also be looking into the cost of improving the heating upstairs.

4973 PROJECTS & ESTATES

(Cllrs Edwards, Partridge & Zab)

(a) Parish Field

(i) The income and expenditure for the Parish Field (to 2 March 2024) was received. A balance of £1303.85 was noted. Cllr Bibby advised that there will be some expenditure soon because some of the tree guards have been damaged by deer.

(ii) There have been no bids for the grazing licence. There has been one enquiry about using the field for four, large pet sheep. Whilst it was hoped there would be more, the four sheep currently graze in a 4.5 acre field and keep it well down. She is, however, looking for an alternative field for grazing over the summer months. She has been given a copy of the licence to look at the terms. Cllr Bibby agreed to follow this up.

(iii) Members considered a request from the pre-school for permission to install a small, wooden, outdoor shelter in the pre-school section of the parish field (subject to any relevant planning permission). This was unanimously supported, provided it is not a permanent structure. If granted by DNPA, the agreement between the pre-school and the Parish Council should be updated to say that the pre-school will be responsible for the upkeep of that structure.

(b) Farming in Protected Landscapes funding application

Cllr Partridge thanked Matt Storrs for the work he has completed to improve the layby at the bottom of Widecombe Hill and to Cllr Elliott for facilitating that.

Sam Hall has extracted the seat from the chestnut stump which has now been ground down. The seat is heavy and in one piece.

The new trees have arrived ready to be planted. The lime will be planted where the chestnut used to be. The plan is to dig the hole, move the seat over the hole and plant the tree inside the seat with a tree guard around it. The horse chestnut will be at the other end of the green. It would be better to plant this once the sycamore has been felled but permission to fell the sycamore has not yet been granted by DNPA.

David Fursdon (Lord-Lieutenant of Devon) has confirmed that he would like to donate one of those trees. He would like to be involved with planting it but this will depend on timings etc. He will also provide a plaque.

It was suggested that a press release is drafted when the project is completed.

(c) Devon Air Ambulance Night Landing Site

The Chair advised that the Parish Council has received an email from parishioners offering their field for a night landing site. On the basis that the requirements for night landing sites have been relaxed since this was last looked into (e.g. no lighting masts are required), it was agreed to ask DAAT to make contact with the parishioners in order to assess the suitability of the site.

4974 PLANNING/LOCAL LIAISON

(Cllrs Bibby, Raynor & Guest)

(a) New planning applications/appeals

(i) 24/0014 – Village Green, Widecombe

Permission to fell sycamore tree T1 (tree in in poor physiological health and had cambial dysfunction and bark necrosis on the main stem)

This is an application submitted by the Parish Council

(ii) 0088/24 – Top Lodge, Ponsworthy

Replacement dwelling

Whilst not having an opportunity to visit the site to discuss the new plans with the applicant, members agreed to support this application for the following reasons:

The proposed new layout looks far more sensible than the current situation and the increased floor space is within DNPA limits and not excessive.

Previous planning permission was approved, but lapsed before it was enacted.

The planned improvements for insulation seem very sensible and consideration is given to sustainability and environmental credentials, which is commendable.

The structural report confirms that the existing building has serious moisture ingress and a deteriorating framework and moreover it would be more economic to demolish and rebuild than to carry out the extensive refurbishment required.

(b) Planning Decisions/Withdrawals

(i) 0034/24 – Bonehill Bungalow, Widecombe-in-the-Moor

Single storey extension for utility/plant room

Members noted that DNPA has granted conditional planning permission.

(iii) 0473/23 – Rowden, Widecombe-in-the-Moor

Agricultural building

Members noted that DNPA has determined that Prior Approval is granted.

4975 FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE

(Cllrs Bibby, Raynor & Guest)

(a) Payments

Members received and approved the following payment:

- Clerk's salary and disbursements – £277.37
- C Partridge – £314.30 (trees and wildflower mix – FiPL)
- Church House (hire of hall April 2023 – March 2024) – £50
- Geoff Partridge – £80 (high tree work – FiPL)
- Matt Storrs – £1434.22 (layby improvements – FiPL)

(b) Annual Parish Meeting

This will be held on Wednesday 22nd May at Church House and it was agreed to use it as an opportunity to showcase everything that is happening in the parish. Invitations will be sent to all groups asking for a representative to speak for a couple of minutes. A couple of other topics could also be discussed: Devon Air Ambulance Night Landing site (depending on how this progresses), Curlew project, FiPL improvements etc. These topics can be confirmed nearer the time.

4976 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

Members commented on the road closure notifications which are sometimes unclear and misleading.

There is a missing finger post in Leusdon on one of the signs.

4977 CORRESPONDENCE

(i) Members received and noted a letter of thanks from Roger Claxton for the Parish Council's support for the Widecombe website.

(ii) Devolution Deal Consultation

Devon and Torbay's deal

Members were invited to comment.

(iii) Parish and Town Council Conference with TDC

Tuesday 12 March 2024, 4-7 pm, Courtenay Centre, Newton Abbot.

Members noted details of this event.

(iv) 'One Teignbridge – Working Together for a Better Future

Invitation to attend the community leaders workshop: Tuesday 26 March 2024, 10am – 12.30pm,

Forde House, Newton Abbot.

Members noted details of this event.

4978 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 Partridge expressed her disappointment that, for several years, TDC has not trimmed the hedge behind the toilets.

The street cleaner has visited the village but the standard of work was poor; the yellow lines have not been exposed and mud has been spread across the road.

It was noted that The Shop on the Green is on the market.

Cllr Edwards reported that the sandbag store door doesn't shut. It was agreed that Cllr Guest would look to see if some adjustments could be made.

Cllr Partridge commented that the village sign coming from Dunstone looks tired. It is unlikely that DCC would fund a replacement but this is something the Parish Council might be able to fund relatively cheaply.

Cllr Partridge advised that she and Judy Southcombe have looked into grant funding. An application to Viridor would be complex and the tennis court may not fit their criteria. However, an application to Awards for All may be an option. They will fund a maximum of £20k and the application form is fairly simple. Members agreed for Cllr Partridge and Judy to make an application.

There have been some problems with the school bus which has been told by the school not to park on the yellow zig zags as this is for emergency vehicles only. This means that the bus has been blocking the road causing inconvenience to residents and is a potential issue for emergency vehicles needing to pass through.

Cllr Edwards has had some communication with DCC but it was agreed that a site meeting would be beneficial. The Chair also offered to meet with the headteacher as it has become a health and safety issue.

4979 NEXT MEETING

4 April 2024 at 7.30pm in Leusdon Memorial Hall

Signed Dated