

## **WIDECOMBE PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held in Leusdon Memorial Hall on Thursday 5 May 2022

Members present: Councillor Hassell (Chairman), Bibby, Edwards, Elliott, Fenton, Jones, Partridge and Zab

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

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

Clerk: Suzanna Hughes

### **4793 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

It was proposed by Cllr Elliott, seconded by Cllr Edwards and unanimously agreed by all members present and voting that Cllr Hassell is re-elected as Chairman.

### **4794 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN**

It was proposed by Cllr Hassell, seconded by Cllr Jones and unanimously agreed by all members present and voting that Cllr Elliott is re-elected as Vice Chairman.

### **4795 DECLARATIONS OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE**

To be signed at the next meeting.

### **4796 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None

### **4797 OPEN FORUM**

There were no comments from members of the public.

### **4798 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.

### **4799 RATIFICATION OF MINUTES**

(a) Members received the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 3 March 2022 which were approved as a true and correct record.

(b) Members received the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 3 March 2022 which were approved as a true and correct record.

### **4800 REPORTS**

(a) County Councillor

Cllr Gribble reported that he had been dealing with hedgerows, potholes and drainage. He has received a call from the Widecombe Fair Committee about accommodating a turning area at the top of Widecombe Hill. He will follow this up with DCC.

(b) District Councillors

Cllr Nutley advised that two pieces of land in Teignmouth are being sold off to the NHS to create a hub. Decarbonisation work is almost complete on the leisure centres but work is still to be completed on Forde House offices. Talks are still going on about the redevelopment of Newton Abbot. Recycling collections are back on track although there is still a shortage of drivers. Security staff are having to be recruited to attend meetings of TDC due to recent disruption.

Cllr Cox reported, in respect of the Ukrainian refugee crisis, that there are 92 families in Teignbridge who have been matched, 25 have arrived. There is a good support group in Ashburton. Payments are being made by TDC, housing checks are being done by TDC and DCC is carrying out the DBS checks.

(c) DNPA Representative

No report.

(e) Delegate Reports

No reports.

#### 4801 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

It was proposed by the Chair and agreed that the roles and responsibilities are allocated as follows:

Planning and Finance: Cllrs Jones, Edwards, Elliott and Zab

Projects and Estates: Cllrs Fenton, Partridge, Butcher and Bibby

The clerk advised that training is available for new members through DALC. This also includes Planning training. It was also agreed to order some copies of the Good Councillors Guide.

#### 4802 REVIEW OF PARISH COUNCIL GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTS

(a) Standing Orders

Members reviewed the Standing Orders. There were no amendments.

(b) Financial Regulations

Members received the Financial Regulations. It was agreed that these will be updated to include online banking and the methods which the Council will be adopting at item 14(d).

(c) General and Financial Risk Assessment

Members received the General and Financial Risk Assessment. It was agreed to add further details regarding the use of the Parish Field by the pre-school and a requirement for them to have their own insurance. A paragraph about internet banking will also need to be added.

(d) Statement of Internal Control

Members received the Statement of Internal Control. A minor amendment was agreed referencing therevised number of meetings per year.

(e) Fixed Assets Register

Members reviewed its fixed asset register. It was agreed to add the new Poundsgate notice board (value £1,050). There was a discussion about various other items in the parish and it was therefore agreed that the register should be reviewed by Projects & Estates.

(f) Investment Strategy

Members reviewed its Investment Strategy. There were no amendments but it was agreed that this was something the Finance Committee could review.

(g) Anti-fraud and Corruption Policy

Members reviewed its Anti-fraud and Corruption Policy. There were no amendments.

(h) Complaints Procedure

Members reviewed its Complaints Procedure. There were no amendments.

(i) GDPR documents (Privacy Notices, Subject Access Request Policy & Data Breach Response Plan & Retention of Documents Policy)

Members reviewed its GDPR documents. There were no amendments.

(j) Additional Policies

It was agreed that the following policies would also be useful:

- Safeguarding policy
- Vexatious Persons
- Equality and Diversity policy
- Co-option policy
- Parish Field policy (when uses have been agreed)

## 4803 PROJECTS

(Lead Councillors: Cllrs Fenton, Partridge, Butcher and Bibby)

(a) Parish Field

(i) The Chairman reported that he and Cllr Elliott had met Mr and Mrs Brown who are going to form a Committee and do a straw poll of people in the parish about what they might want to use the parish field for. They will come back to the Parish Council with proposals at a future date to suit them.

(ii) No applications were received for sheep grazing. However, an application has been received for pony grazing. After discussion and consideration of the merits and drawbacks of allowing pony grazing in the field, it was agreed that the Council were in favour of Cllrs Fenton and Bibby corresponding with the applicant to establish more information before the Council formally accepting it. It was also agreed that should the application be accepted, a new pony grazing licence would need to be drafted.

It was noted that the pre-school had not yet signed their agreement. Cllr Elliott offered to follow this up.

(iii) Cllr Fenton reported that he and the Chair had carried out an inspection of the pre-school area of land. Cllr Fenton believed that, in the future, the Parish Council should consider charging a more commercial rent to the pre-school rather than a peppercorn rent of £1. It was noted that in March's meeting, the peppercorn rent had been agreed for a further year and the Parish Council could not review it again until the end of that term.

Cllr Fenton advised that they had also observed that the pre-school has planted a number of trees inside the fence without seeking the Parish Council's prior permission.

Cllr Fenton noted that the pre-school has erected some fencing. The agreement states that they are responsible for the maintenance of any fencing which they erect.

It was noted that an outdoor classroom doesn't need planning permission but a Forest School would. This was the advice given by DNPA when the agreement was first drawn up.

Following a discussion, it was agreed that no further actions were required at this stage.

Cllr Partridge suggested that the Parish Council should obtain a quote to replace the gate onto the road.

#### (b) Jubilee

The deadline for the purchase of a gas beacon has passed and therefore approval for its purchase was not required.

#### (c) Post Office

Cllr Elliott spoke to Stuart Rogers, Ashburton Postmaster, who would like to bring an outreach service to rural villages including Widecombe. They are hoping to come up once a week with a portable trolley for around 1.5 hours. They are speaking with the General Stores about location. In order for them to make it financially viable, they need 20 visitors each week. They are seeking the Parish Council's help to promote it. This was supported by the Parish Council.

#### 4804 ESTATES

(Lead Councillors: Cllrs Fenton, Partridge, Butcher and Bibby)

##### (a) North Hall Lease

Members received, approved and authorised the Chair and Clerk to sign the lease of North hall field car park and the photographic schedule. It was also agreed to ask Wollens to draft an underlease for the Sports Group.

#### 4805 PLANNING/LOCAL LIAISON

(Lead Councillors: Cllrs Edwards, Elliott, Jones & Zab)

##### (a) New planning applications/appeals

###### (i) 130/22 – Land North East of Cator Gate, nr Widecombe

Retrospective permission for change of use to a secure dog walking field including provision of a parking area and shelter

It was agreed to make no comment.

(ii) 0123/22 – Land formerly part of Langworthy Farm, north of Rowden Cross, Widecombe-in-the-Moor Barn for storage of hay, machinery and housing of livestock (18m x 12m)

Members agreed to support this application with the following comments:

- The design, appearance and materials are consistent with, and typical of, other farm buildings in Widecombe and the surrounding area.
- The visual impact will not be significant.
- The impact on a small local business will be significant to enable ongoing and appropriate land management and compliance with modern farming requirements.
- Brian Beasley's comment about negatively impacting a tranquil landscape completely ignores the fact that this is managed farmland – this requires machinery and animals, which must be housed appropriately.

(b) Planning Decisions/Withdrawals

(i) 0022/22 – Little Barnyard, Poundsgate

Side extension and replacement of existing roof finishes, window and door units

It was noted that DNPA has granted conditional planning permission.

(c) Other planning matters

Members noted an exchange of emails between the clerk and DNPA's Enforcement Officer regarding the planning application on Thornhill Lane (0252/21). The Enforcement Officer has been in touch with the agent who dealt with the planning application and has sent him a photo of the works from his site visit. The agent will speak to the landowner (having previously advised him to build it strictly in accordance with the approved plans) and will let DNPA know the outcome.

## 4806 FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE

(Lead Councillors: Cllrs Edwards, Elliott, Jones & Zab)

(a) Clerk's Salary

Members noted that the National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC) has reached an agreement on the new rates of pay applicable from 1 April 2021. The new rates have a 1.75% increase applied. Clerk's salary will be backdated accordingly.

(b) Insurance renewal

Members received and accepted the quotation of £182.94 from Community First for 2022-23.

(c) Audit 2021/22

(i) Members received and noted the year end bank reconciliation.

(ii) Members received and noted the internal auditor's report to agree that this Council is confident that the internal audit arrangements provided by Lee Accounting (South West)

Ltd provides excellent reassurance for the public that the financial systems are robust and fit for purpose and to continue with their appointment as the Internal Auditor to the Parish Council.

(iii) Members agreed that this Council is exempt from a limited assurance review under s9 of the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015 and to sign the Certificate of Exemption

(iv) Members completed and approved Section 1 of the Annual Return (Annual Governance Statement 2021/22).

(v) Members received, approved and signed Section 2 of the Annual Return (Accounting Statements 2021/22).

(d) Online banking

Members approved the transition to online banking and authorised the current signatories to complete and sign the application form giving all signatories access to online banking. Members also approved the arrangement whereby the clerk both sets up and approves the online payments. It was also agreed to add Cllr Elliott as a signatory and delete Cllr Fenton.

(e) Payments

Members received and approved the following payments:

- Cheque no 001100/1101 – Clerk's salary and disbursements (April, May & June) – £770.61
- Cheque no 001102 – HMRC (PAYE) – £174.60
- Cheque no 001103 – DALC (Training) – £90
- Cheque no 001104 – Lee Accounting (SW) Ltd – £108
- Cheque no 001105 – Community First – £182.94
- DALC annual membership fee – £122.08 (taken from first instalment of precept)

#### 4807 HIGHWAYS

Cllr Edwards advised that the sign at the bottom of Southcombe Hill, which was previously on the floor, has now been taken away. The clerk advised that she had previously reported to DCC that the sign was in need of repair and the Highways officer agreed to have a look at it. The sign at Rowden Cross is also on the floor. It was noted that there had been some recent vandalism of signage in the parish.

Cllr Bibby reported that a van had gone into the ditch near Stokes Cottages on the Natsworthy Road due to erosion of the highway. She was advised to report this direct to Highways.

Cllr Partridge commented that the road sweeper does not go as far as is needed in the village. It only goes as far as the bottom of Bowden Lane but the yellow lines extend beyond this and it does not go down the road towards the Rugglestone Inn at all. She also commented that TDC has still not cut the hedge by the toilets. It was agreed that the clerk would write to TDC about both matters.

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

4808 CORRESPONDENCE

None

4809 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 advised that there will be a meeting next week about the future of the Parish Link.

4810 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting will be held in Church House on 7 July 2022 at 7.30pm in Church House, Widecombe.

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