

WIDECOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held in Leusdon Memorial Hall, Leusdon on Thursday 11 May 2023 at 7.30pm

Members present: Councillor Y Elliott (Chairman), J Bibby, D Edwards (from item 4879), S Jones, C Partridge (from item 4879) and S Zab

Also present: District Cllr John Nutley, District Cllr Huw Cox and District Cllr & Ashburton Postmaster Stuart Rogers

Members of the Public: Two

Clerk: Suzanna Hughes

4875 ELECTION OF CHAIR

It was proposed by Cllr Jones, seconded by Cllr Bibby and unanimously agreed by all members present and voting that Cllr Elliott is elected as Chair. Cllr Elliot accepted the position and signed her Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

4876 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

It was proposed by Cllr Zab, seconded by Cllr Bibby and unanimously agreed by all members present and voting that Cllr Jones is elected as Vice Chair. Cllr Jones accepted the position and signed her Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

4877 DECLARATIONS OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

Declarations of Office were signed by Cllrs Elliott, Bibby, Jones and Zab.

4878 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

County Cllr Gribble

4879 VACANCIES UNFILLED AT THE ELECTION BY REASON OF INSUFFICIENT NOMINATIONS

Applications were received from Daf Edwards and Claire Partridge. It was agreed that both are co-opted into two of the vacant seats. They both signed their Declarations of Acceptance of Office and joined the meeting.

The Chair advised that there are three seats remaining and encouraged people to come forward to fill those vacancies to offer more representation across the parish.

4880 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

All members were reminded of their responsibility to complete a Register of Interests form and return it to Teignbridge District Council by 1 June 2023.

Members were 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. None were declared.

There were no requests for dispensation (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).

4881 DELIVERY OF AGENDAS BY EMAIL

Consent was obtained from all members present to deliver agendas by email.

4882 OPEN FORUM

Ashburton Postmaster Stuart Rogers advised that the parish of Widecombe has, until recently, been served by the Post Office van out of the General Stores. He assured members that the Post Office service will continue to serve the parish despite the recent closure of the Stores. The van is currently having some work done to it but will be returning. A grant has been secured from Link, the access to cash group, to enable the work to be done on the van. Once completed, the van will be situated in the car park and will connect to the Café on the Green every Monday, 9.30 – 11am. The Plunkett Foundation has also been approached for support with the General Stores.

Miles Fursdon, Snow Warden, referred to the list of grit bin faults submitted to DCC. He has checked on a couple of those and they have not yet been addressed. He questioned whether the partnership between the Parish and DCC was worth anything. The parish provides free tractors, salt spreaders, gritters, labour and time but DCC don't appear to be fulfilling their role. Cllr Partridge advised that she had received some follow up emails from DCC following the reports she had submitted; she also checked some bins around the village and they have been filled.

With regard to pothole repairs, the water should be drained before they are capped. Failing to do this is the reason why the one at Bittleford has been repaired three times this winter. Cllr Jones also commented about the cover on the drain on Stone Hill which keeps lifting.

A question was asked about obtaining additional bins. Cllr Gribble had previously advised that funding was an issue but if bins were not being used, they could be relocated. Miles advised that there are three bins in Manaton parish which are never used. It was suggested that the Parish Council could write to Manaton Parish Council asking whether they could be relocated to Widecombe.

4883 RATIFICATION OF MINUTES

(a) Members received the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 2 March 2023 which were approved as a true and correct record.

(b) Members received the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 2 March 2023 which were approved as a true and correct record.

4884 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

It was agreed to maintain the Committee structure as follows:

- Projects and Estates: Cllrs Edwards, Partridge and Zab
- Planning and Finance: Cllrs Bibby and Jones

The following roles and representatives were also agreed:

- Trees – Estates Committee
- Widecombe Fair – Cllr Zab
- Widecombe & District Sports Group – Cllr Partridge
- Parish Field – Cllr Bibby and the Estates Committee
- Snow Warden – Miles Fursdon

- Sandbag Co-ordinator – Cllr Edwards
- Defibrillator – Judy Southcombe
- Highways and Footpaths – whole Council
- Affordable Housing – whole Council
- Parish email communication system – Tim Hassell
- Educational Trust – no representative
- Church House – no representative
- Climate and Environment – no representative

4885 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. There were no amendments.

(c) General and Financial Risk Assessment

Members received the General and Financial Risk Assessment. There were no amendments.

(d) Statement of Internal Control

Members received the Statement of Internal Control. There were no amendments.

(e) Fixed Assets Register

Members received the Fixed Assets Register (April 2023) and agreed that it accurately reflected the Parish Council's assets.

(f) Investment Strategy

Members reviewed the Investment Strategy. There were no amendments.

(g) Anti-fraud and Corruption Policy

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

(h) Complaints Procedure

Members reviewed the 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 the GDPR documents. There were no amendments.

(j) Equality and Diversity Policy

Members reviewed the Equality and Diversity Policy. There were no amendments.

(k) Co-option Policy

Members reviewed the Co-option Policy. There were no amendments.

4886 MEETING DATES

After a discussion, it was agreed to revert to monthly meetings from September. They will take place on the first Thursday of the month and will, where possible, alternate between Church House, Widecombe and Leusdon Memorial, starting at 7.30pm. There will be no meetings in August or December. The dates will be published within the parish and in the Parish Link and the arrangement will be reviewed in six months.

4884 REPORTS

(a) County Councillor

Cllr Gribble was not present at the meeting.

(b) District Councillors

Cllr Nutley advised that TDC would be arranging training for the newly elected District Councillors. The Council will be made up of Councillors representing the following parties: 26 x Liberal Democrats, 10 x South Devon Alliance, 9 x Conservatives and 2 x Independent. Cllr Cox advised that the first Full Council meeting is being held on 23 May.

(c) DNPA Representative

No report

(d) Police Report

PCSO Paul Wilson (Chudleigh Police Office) sent a report covering the period 1 March 2022 – 27 February 2023.

'This report covers the parish of Widecombe in the Moor, which include the village and surrounding area on Dartmoor including its road network.

The Parish is served by the Neighbourhood Police team, working out of Ashburton Police station and Chudleigh Police office. The Parish forms part of the Teignbridge Coastal and Rural sector and has the beat code JA2I

The team is led by Inspector Steven Philp, Sgt Seth Saunders is the Neighbourhood Sergeant and PC Andy Dudley is the Neighbourhood Beat Manager. At this time there is no dedicated PCSO for the parish so other PCSOs are picking up tasks when required.

In the period 1st April 2023 to the 5th of May 2023, in the Widecombe area there were 3 offences recorded,

2 dog offences (Livestock)

1 Harassment

There were a further 5 other non-offence incidents in the same period, responded to by the Police. These types of incidents include, for example, concerns for welfare, traffic incidents and anti-social behaviour.

We are keen to hear any ideas that would help us support the local community in the future and in particular any places we could hold a Police surgery. Surgeries give the community the chance to meet the local Police team and discuss any local policing concerns they may have.'

(e) Delegate Reports

None

4868 PROJECTS & ESTATES

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

(a) Parish Field

(i) Grazing licence – members noted that the tenant no longer required the Field for grazing and that this will therefore need to be re-advertised. A notice will be placed in the Parish Link and on the Parish Field gate.

There was a brief discussion about the water supply which has been agreed by TDC. The Chair would follow this up with Tim Hassell.

There was also a brief discussion about the location of the Parish Field boundary in relation to the stream. It is hoped to have an informal conversation with the owner of the adjacent land.

(d) Affordable Housing

Members received and noted information from Mary Ridgway, TDC, updating the Council on the project. It is hoped that the properties will be completed late summer. Flyers have been produced encouraging registration on Devon Home Choice. Clerks from adjoining parishes in the allocations cascade have also been notified so they are aware of the allocations arrangements. Applications are not currently live; the first advert will be on Devon Home Choice for 14 days instead of one week. The 106 agreement requires Teign Housing to inform the Parish Council when the adverts are going out.

4889 PLANNING/LOCAL LIAISON

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

(a) New planning applications/appeals

(i) 0197/23 – Great Dunstone, Ponsworthy

Erection of agricultural storage barn with roof mounted photovoltaic panels and related cabling. Members noted a report by members of the Planning Committee and it was agreed to support this application on the grounds that:

– Its scale is appropriate for this location and it is lower in height than the adjacent Dutch barn

– The proposal comes within DNP's planning framework regarding agricultural buildings (Local Plan 2019-2036 Policy 5.8 (a) and (e)) especially as it will provide secure, locked facilities not otherwise available.

(b) Planning Decisions/Withdrawals

(i) 0088/23 – Pink Cottage, Ponsworthy

Listed Building Consent – addition of chimney cowl to existing chimney pot to prevent furtherwater ingress

Members noted that DNPA has granted Listed Building Consent.

(ii) 0501/22 – Primms Cottage, Poundsgate

Replacement House and Studio

Members noted that DNPA has refused to grant planning permission.

(iii) 0022/23 – Kings Cottage, Ponsworthy

Use as a residential dwellinghouse

Members noted that DNPA has issued a Certificate of Lawfulness.

4890 FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE

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

(a) Payments

Members received and approved the following payments:

- Clerk's salary and disbursements (May and June) – £511.04
- HMRC (PAYE) – £177
- Sam Hall (felling of horse chestnut) – £672
- J Bibby (padlock and bone meal plant food for orchard) – £23.55
- Lee Accounting (SW) Ltd (internal audit of accounts) – £108

(b) Donation

Members noted a donation of £225 to the Jubilee Orchard from Widecombe Fair Committee

(c) Insurance renewal

Members received and accepted a quotation from Community First for £149.32. It was agreed to commit to a three year long term agreement.

(d) Signatories

It was agreed that the account signatories would remain unchanged.

(e) Audit 2022/23

(i) Members noted 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, approved and authorised the Chair and Clerk/RFO to sign Section 1 of the Annual Return (Annual Governance Statement 2022/23)

(v) Members received, approved and authorised the Chair and Clerk/RFO to sign Section 2 of the Annual Return (Accounting Statements 2022/23)

4891 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

Highways issues had already been raised in the open forum.

4892 CORRESPONDENCE

Letters of thanks were received and noted from Leusdon Memorial Hall and the Coronation Committee for grants recently awarded to them by the Parish Council.

4893 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

None

4894 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting is Thursday 29th June at 7.30pm in Church House, Widecombe.

Signed Dated